

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JANUARY  
2020**

**Present:** Councillors Bartlett, Brindle, Cox, Fort, Harper,  
Lewins and Perry

**Also Present:** Councillor Purle

83. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Blackmore
- Councillor Gooch
- Councillor B Hinder
- Councillor Webb

84. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Substitute Members were present:

- Councillor Brindle for Councillor B Hinder
- Councillor Perry for Councillor Blackmore

85. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had agreed that Agenda Item 16 – The Relocation of the Mela Event to Mote Park, would be taken after Agenda Item 12 – Question and answer Session from Members of the Public.

86. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Purle was present as a Visiting Member and indicated that he wished to speak on Agenda Item 16 – The relocation of the Mela Event to Mote Park.

87. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

88. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of Lobbying.

89. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED**: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

90. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2019

**RESOLVED**: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

91. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

92. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

93. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that he intended to make a change to the order of business in order that the report on the Relocation of the Mela to Mote Park could be discussed before Agenda Item 12 – Reports of Outside Bodies.

94. THE RELOCATION OF THE MELA EVENT TO MOTE PARK

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development introduced the report which summarised the benefits of relocating the Mela to Mote Park, which were:

- Improved Accessibility;
- The potential to increase attendance, sponsorship fees and the number of stalls at the event;
- The longevity of the Mela event within Maidstone as an established part of the cultural calendar; and
- Relocating the Mela would help the Council to achieve the objectives set out within the Thriving Place priority of the Corporate Strategy.

The Committee noted that the funding requested by the Mela organisers was seed funding which would increase the likelihood of attracting further funding from third parties.

The Committee commented as follows:

- That this was a long-standing event that provided opportunities for the communities of Maidstone to celebrate; and
- That Mote Park was the right venue as it was more accessible for all.

**RESOLVED**: That

1. The Mela relocates to Mote Park; and
2. A grant of £5,000 per year for three years, starting in 2020, is given to Kent Equality Cohesion Council to run the Mela in Mote Park.

95. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the Work Programme.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development advised that the Mote Park Visitor Centre and Estates Service Building would be taken off and that the Bus Station Improvement Project would be added to the programme and was likely to be presented in March 2020.

**RESOLVED**: That the updates to the Committee Work Programme be noted.

96. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no Reports of Outside Bodies.

97. ERL Q3 BUDGET & PERFORMANCE MONITORING 19-20

The Interim Head of Finance and the Data Intelligence Officer introduced and summarised the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget & Performance Monitoring Report 2019/20. The most significant points were explained, including:

- That the net revenue underspend of £75k is projected to be £4k by the end of the year;
- The Capital Programme had been reprofiled to reflect the current position of the scheme, there had been a net of overspend of £72k; and
- Of the 8 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 7 are targeted, 3 had missed their quarterly target by 10% or more and 1 had missed their quarterly target by less than 10%.
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In response to questions from Members, Officers advised the following:

- That expenditure of repairs and maintenance of Community Halls varied between years and would event out over the medium term; and

- That Officers would work to promote activities, such as the Mote Park Adventure Zone, in the Council's Insight Magazine.

Members expressed their concerns that the Visitor Information Centre was in the wrong location and that relocating it to the Town Hall should be considered at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED**: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 for 2019/20, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 3 be noted; and
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 3 for 2019/20, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

98. FEES & CHARGES 2020/21

The Interim Head of Finance introduced the report, which indicated that all of the charges within the remit of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee are discretionary totalling a value of £477k across 2019/20.

There were no price increases recommended as it was thought that this would have a negative impact on demand, although there were inflationary rental increases for the business terrace expansion and boot fair charges.

**RESOLVED**: That the proposed discretionary fees and charges set out in Appendix 1 to this report are agreed

99. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report, which confirmed that a standstill budget had been proposed, with inflationary increases only.

It was confirmed that a Council Tax increase of 2% had been proposed, to be approved by Council in February 2020.

Delays in savings were shown in the report and it was proposed that a one-off payment from the Kent Business Rates Pool reserve would be used to offset this delay.

The Committee noted that the Capital Budget Proposals within the report allowed for long term investment whilst achieving other objectives.

The Committee expressed interest in opening the Town Hall for functions and events in order to increase income for the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The Revenue Budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee;
2. The Capital Budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix B, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee; and
3. This Committee recommend to the Democracy & General Purposes Committee that Officers look at options for promoting the Town Hall at weekends to increase income for the Council.

100. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.