

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillor Garten (Chairman) and
Councillors Forecast, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Hastie, Hinder,
Naghi, D Wilkinson and Young

**Also
Present:** Councillors Burton, Cleator, Jeffery, Parfitt-Reid and
Russell

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bryant and Harper.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor D Wilkinson for Councillor Harper
Councillor Young for Councillor Bryant

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Garten be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hastie be elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

6. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Burton, the Leader of the Council, and Councillor Russell, the Lead Member for Leisure and Arts, attended the meeting to set out their priorities for the coming year and to introduce reports as appropriate.

Councillor Parfitt-Reid, the Lead Member for Communities and Engagement, indicated her wish to speak on item 15 (2022/23 Events Plan).

Councillors Cleator and Jeffery attended the meeting as observers.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

10. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from local residents.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

13. ORAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council set out his priorities in relation to the economic development element of his portfolio explaining that this would involve reminding people that Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and open for business through his role in liaising with the business community and other partners such as Kent County Council Economic Development, Locate in Kent and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership. One of his overriding ambitions was for everyone to work together to build Maidstone's positive reputation.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Committee that he also had responsibility for capital projects and there would be decisions which would involve input from this Committee. He would also be seeking the Committee's input on the projects to be included in the Council's submission to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

RESOLVED: That the briefing from the Leader of the Council be noted.

14. BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND ARTS

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts set out her priorities for the coming year making reference to the Museums' five-year plan and the Leisure Centre and sport. The Lead Member explained that she believed that leisure and the arts could improve the feel-good factor of Maidstone and

help to restore pride in the Borough. She looked forward to working in a positive and collaborative manner for the residents of Maidstone.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to aspirations in relation to the future of the Leisure Centre and the Carriage Museum. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement confirmed that the opening of the Carriage Museum as a regular occurrence could be taken forward.

RESOLVED: That the briefing from the Lead Member for Leisure and Arts be noted.

15. 2022/23 EVENTS PLAN

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts introduced a report setting out details of the programme of events planned for the 2022/23 financial year emphasising the need to proactively promote these events to maximise attendance and the feel-good factor of the Borough.

The Lead Member for Communities and Engagement addressed the Committee reiterating the importance of proactively promoting events to attract visitors and build the economy.

During the discussion, reference was made to (a) the need for interactive thinking across Council departments to promote and publicise events and (b) the resourcing of events by the Council and in partnership with others.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

16. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

The Lead Member for Leisure and Arts introduced a report setting out the financial and performance position for the services reporting into the former Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee as at 31 March 2022 (Quarter 4). It was noted that:

- Financial performance showed an overspend against budget of £86,000 for the year.
- The main areas of overspend were the Leisure Centre, the Business Terrace and the Market.
- Income from all these services was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and a recovery was expected in 2022/23.
- In the case of the Market, budgets had been adjusted downwards in 2022/23 recognising that even without the pandemic it would have been difficult for the Market to have met its targets.
- Capital spend showed a mixed picture with two projects overspending, but a significant underspend on the Mote Park dam.
- Performance indicators were unfortunately all in negative territory, but the direction of travel was positive.

During the discussion:

- The Director of Finance and Business Improvement noted a request that the performance reports be printed in colour in future.
- The Leader of the Council advised the Committee that he had requested an update position on Business Terrace performance and the Innovation Centre to see how they were performing to target.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 be noted.
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.
4. That Annual Performance for 2021/22 be noted.

17. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.03 p.m.