

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31 JANUARY
2017**

Present: Councillor Pickett (Chairman), and
Councillors M Burton, Daley, Ells, Fort, Lewins, Naghi,
Revell and Mrs Stockell

Also Present: Councillor Perry

98. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Hinder and Wilson.

99. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor M Burton for Councillor Hinder
Councillor Daley for Councillor Wilson

100. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman, in his opinion, accepted an urgent update to item 13: River Festival, as the material had not been circulated to members when originally requested by the Member for East Ward.

101. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Perry was in attendance as a Visiting Member and wished to speak on item 13: River Festival.

102. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

Councillor Revell requested further clarification on other significant interests and disclosable pecuniary interests. The Legal Officer proposed to discuss this with Councillor Revell outside of the meeting.

103. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

104. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

105. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Chairman advised the Committee that an expected petition had been removed from the agenda for consideration at a future meeting.

106. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

107. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

108. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman provided an update on the work programme and advised that the Maidstone Museums Capital Programme and 20 Year Plan report would be presented to the 7 March 2017 meeting of the Committee.

109. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman proposed that item 16: Medium Term Financial Strategy – Fees and Charges be taken in advance of the other items as two Officers were in attendance to speak to this item alone.

RESOLVED: That the change to the order of business be noted.

110. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY: FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement provided an overview of the proposed fees and charges for service areas within the remit of the Committee. The Director assured the Committee that, although some increases were above inflation, they had been calculated to take account of costs and the market rate.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- An increase in the charge for school visits to the Museum was proposed. This was based on the results of a bench marking exercise with similar organisations.
- It was proposed that the charge for use of the Museum's glass room should be decreased in order to encourage short term use by smaller groups.

Members requested clarification on mooring fees and the hire of Jubilee Square from the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, who confirmed that this would be circulated to Members after the Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy fees and charges for Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee for 2017/18, as set out in detail at Appendix A to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, be approved.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

111. REFERENCE FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - LAND AT GORE COURT ROAD

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented the referral from Policy and Resources Committee that recommended the implementation of a semi-natural buffer within the Senacre Recreation Ground.

In response to questions the Director explained that the one-off costs of planting the buffer would be paid for by the developer. There would be no cost to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the relevant Officer be delegated to implement a semi-natural buffer within the Senacre Recreation Ground bounding the new hedgerow to increase its value for wildlife and long term protection.

112. VERBAL REPORT OF THE MEMBER FOR EAST WARD - RIVER FESTIVAL

The Chairman outlined the procedures for a Member's report to Committee and clarified that the Committee must decide whether or not to take the matter further and request an Officer report on the subject to a future meeting.

Councillor Naghi delivered a verbal report on the River Festival which covered:

- Councillor Naghi wished for the River Festival to be reinstated
- For this to happen, the River Festival Committee required the Council's support
- The support required to put on the event included officer resources, through the Safety Advisory Group and the Cleansing Department cleaning up after the event
- In 2017, the traditional date of the river festival coincided with the Ramblin' Man Festival

- However both events should be able to coexist, as those who had not bought tickets for Ramblin' Man could enjoy free entertainment at the River Festival

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement informed the Committee that the Festivals and Events Strategy required events to be self-financing, and that it was unlikely that the Council would be able to contribute to the River Festival from available resources.

RESOLVED: That it be agreed that the Council facilitate the River Festival Committee, including links to the Safety Advisory Group and clean up after the event.

For – 5 Against – 0 Abstain – 4

113. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - STRATEGIC PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 3

The Head of Policy and Communications introduced the report detailing the progress of key strategies, plans and key performance indicators (KPIs) within the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee's service areas.

The Committee was asked to note that, with regard to the KPI relating to the number of children taking part in formal educational activities on and off the museum site, the performance had improved but not reached target.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Policy and Communications advised that:

- The target of 19,625 for footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre was for the year. The report would be amended to show that the target would be missed.
- It had not been a full year since the Museum began to close on a Monday and so the quarterly effect could not yet be reported on.
- There were several opportunities that were soon to come on stream for the Museum including a new Ancient Civilisations gallery and projects with outside groups and partners.

RESOLVED: That

1. The summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2016/17 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and corporate strategies and plans be noted.
2. That it be noted where complete data was not currently available.
3. That it be noted that no further actions to be taken or amendments to the Quarter 3 report were identified.

114. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-20, UPDATE 2017-18

The Head of Policy and Communications introduced the report setting out proposals for a refresh of the Strategic Plan 2015-20 for 2017/18.

The Committee debated the document and recommended further amendments.

RESOLVED:

That the following amendments to the draft Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2017-18 Update be recommended to Policy and Resources Committee:

<u>Plan Page</u>	<u>As presented</u>	<u>Committee's amendments</u> (additions in bold)
Respecting the Character and Heritage of our Borough Section		
5	Maidstone is the county town of Kent. In terms of its geography it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the Borough population lives in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst as the same time protecting the environment and landscape that makes the Borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work and visit.	In terms of its geography Maidstone Borough is largely rural and the countryside currently offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Maidstone is the county town of Kent. A focus on achieving economic prosperity recognises that protecting the environment both built and natural is essential in making this a great place to live, work and visit.
5	We mean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving and resilient urban and rural communities • Listening to our communities • Respecting our heritage and natural environment • Devolving services where we can and working with Kent County Council to do the same 	We mean: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving and resilient urban and rural communities • Listening to our communities • Respecting our heritage, history and natural environment. • Devolving services where we can and working with Kent County Council to do the same
5	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and honour our Parish Charter 	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and honour our Parish Charter

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Communication and Engagement Action Plan • Work with our Parishes and Communities on the design of their communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Communication and Engagement Action Plan • Work with our Parishes and Communities on the design of their neighbourhoods • Deliver our Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy • Adopt and deliver our Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan
Ensuring there are good Leisure and Cultural Attractions		
5	There is always something to see or do in Maidstone with the river, two museums and a theatre in the town centre, four green flag parks, a well-used leisure centre, a castle, various markets and a variety of festivals and events held across the Borough and throughout the year.	There is always something to see or do in Maidstone Borough with its quality parks and open spaces, rivers, museums, opportunities for sporting, leisure, musical and cultural pursuits, historic buildings and monuments , markets and a variety of festivals and events held throughout the year.
5	<p>We mean:</p> <p>Maidstone has leisure and cultural offers which attract visitors and meet the needs of our residents.</p>	<p>We mean:</p> <p>Maidstone offers a great range of sport, leisure and culture which meets the needs of our residents and attracts visitors.</p>
5	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt and deliver the Destination Management Plan with a shared statement of intent to manage, develop and promote our Borough • Deliver the Festival and Events Strategy • Adopt and deliver the museum 20 year plan • Deliver the programme of projects a sustainable future for Mote Park 	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Destination Management Plan • Maximise the benefits of our sports, leisure and cultural assets to support and enhance Maidstone's economic performance • Deliver the Festival and Events Strategy • Adopt and deliver the Museum 20 Year Plan • Support a sustainable future for Mote Park

For – 8

Against – 1

Abstain – 0

115. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT -
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented the report which set out the details of revenue budget proposals for the services within the remit of the Committee. The Committee was informed that the reduction in the New Homes Bonus would have no effect on the budget, but would affect capital expenditure and may require the Council to borrow to fund capital projects.

In addition to the budget proposals included at Appendix B the Director advised that Policy and Resources Committee had requested that the Committee consider the growth allocation of £50,000 annually to the Museum for the years 2017/18 and 2018/19. In response to a question it was explained that removal of the growth projection might result in the withdrawal of the Museum educational service, an additional day of closure and staff redundancies.

RESOLVED: That the budget proposals for services within the remit of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee, as set out in Appendices B and D to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

For – 5 Against – 0 Abstain – 4

116. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9:06 p.m.