

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 JULY 2017

Present: Councillor Pickett (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Butler, Cox, Ells, Hastie,
Mrs Hinder, Lewins and Perry

Also Present: Councillors Harper, Naghi and Round

22. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

23. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were noted:-

Councillor Perry for Councillor Fort
Councillor Cox for Councillor Mrs Wilson

24. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

25. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

The following Visiting Members were noted:-

Councillors Harper and Naghi for Agenda Item 12 – Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan and Agenda Item 13 – Museum 20 Year Plan

Councillor Round – Observing

26. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

27. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

28. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to recommendation 3 of the Bereavement Services – Developing Services Report being checked for accuracy.

Note: Recommendation 3 was checked with the Officer concerned and it was explained that the £220,000 was the sum set aside from the original £645,000 budget to use for the expansion of the Vinters Park Crematorium car park and improvements to disabled access.

30. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

31. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or statements from members of the public.

32. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme.

It was noted that the Report on the Plaques and People Protocol would be presented to the Committee in September.

Due to Members' concerns about the number of reports going to the September Committee meeting, the Chairman undertook to discuss this with the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development to consider whether any reports could be moved to October or November.

In response to a question from a Visiting Member, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development advised that updates on issues discussed last year would come back to the Committee in time. Of particular note was the issue which related to the strip of land adjacent to Maidstone United Football Ground, which would have to go to Policy and Resources Committee first and then be considered by this Committee if appropriate.

In response to a question from a Member, it was noted that a framework was being developed for disposal of land and would be presented to Policy and Resources Committee for adoption.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

33. MAIDSTONE PARKS & OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR PLAN

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development presented a report on the Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

The Committee was informed that this was the final version of the 10 Year Plan which detailed how the Council would manage the parks and open spaces that were under its control. The report set out how the challenges would be met using the evidence base produced for the Local Plan and the results of the Residents' Survey.

In response to questions from Members, Officers explained that:-

- The provision of new open spaces would come forward through the planning system and would be a priority in deficit areas.
- Initiatives were being drawn up under health and wellbeing to encourage cycling in the Council's parks and open spaces.
- Some of the Council's parks and open spaces had been used as receptor sites but had not been made into Nature Reserves.
- There would be annual updates to the Committee on the progress of the 10 Year Plan.
- The Grove Green Play Area would be reviewed.
- Although the river had not been included in the Plan, Whatman Park in the town centre was included.

RESOLVED: That the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan as set out in Appendix I to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be adopted subject to the amendments identified by Members at the meeting being made.

Voting: For: Unanimous

34. MUSEUM 20 YEAR PLAN

The Museum's Director presented a report on the Maidstone Museum's 20 Year Plan.

In response to questions by Members, the Officer explained that:-

- The current stock in the Museum Shop is valued at £5,000 and the figures quoted in Appendix 1 are for running costs.
- The Museum did not have the budget to re-open the Museum on a Monday during the holiday period. However, the 20 Year Plan did work towards a 7 day a week Museum.
- The Education Officer was working with local teachers to cover areas within the curriculum.
- When the Museum is closed visitors to Maidstone wanting tourist information can go online or contact the Council by telephone.

- The staff at the Museum are multi-disciplined and to separate out the Tourist Information element and put it back in the Town Hall would not be affordable or practical.
- Parking issues at the Museum do need to be addressed and various provisions had been introduced to enable visitors with disabilities to park at the Museum (with prior notice) and informing coach operators that they can drop off groups at the Museum and then park at the Sittingbourne Road coach park.
- Unfortunately the Carriage Museum would not be able to cater for school visits as it does not have the required facilities.
- Officers would look at the STEAM agenda to see if there could be linkages with universities to help with the educational side.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Museum's 20 Year Plan attached as Appendix I to the report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development be adopted.
- 2) That the Museum's Strategic Board be given approval to develop a detailed Action Plan in pursuit of fulfilling the Plan.

Voting: For: Unanimous

35. DURATION OF MEETING

6.45 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.