

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillors Harper (Chairman), Cuming, Fermor, Fort, Harper, Hinder, Joy, Lewins, Spooner and Mrs Wilson

117. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received by Councillors Hastie and Mrs Hinder.

118. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following members were present as substitute members:

- Councillor Mrs Joy for Councillor Hastie
- Councillor Spooner for Councillor Mrs Hinder

119. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

120. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

121. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

122. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

123. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

124. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 17 December 2018 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

125. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

126. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

127. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed the items on the Work Programme and made the following changes:-

- Briefing Notes for the Museum's Consultation Results and Fundraising Strategy and the Future Governance Options Update would be circulated to the Committee by Ms Victoria Barlow, Museum Director in due course.
- Future of Leisure Provision in Maidstone – this item was moved to March.
- 80th Anniversary of the start of WWII – this item was also moved to the March meeting.
- An update from the HCL Committee Workshop would be presented to the March meeting.

Councillor Mrs Joy undertook to update any Member on the Joint Heritage Bid - All Saints Church after the meeting.

Mr John Foster, the Interim Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, advised that the demolition of the former public house on the Maidstone East Station site had been delayed due to the presence of asbestos. This would considerably delay the Art installation.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

128. 2018/19 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS UPDATE QUARTER 3

The Committee considered the report of Ms Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager, which detailed the progress of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee that related to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

It was noted that:-

- 1 out of the 5 targeted KPIs achieved their target, compared to 4 in quarter 2.

- The Hazlitt Theatre achieved its target and increased its performance by 10% compared to 2017/18.
- The target for the number of students benefitting from the Museum's educational service was not achieved in quarter 3 although there were 762 more visits compared to the same period in 2017/18.
- Footfall at the Museum and Visitor Information Centre was down to 11,586 against a target of 16,250.
- The number of approaches to the Visitor Information Centre was 455 against a target of 782.
- 184,401 people, against a target of 186,079, used the facilities at the Leisure Centre during the period.

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

- There was a Member Workshop scheduled for the first week in March to discuss KPIs for 2019/20 and any suggestions from Members for new KPIs should be forwarded to the Officer in advance of the Workshop.
- The KPIs for the Museum needed to be re-profiled as there were seasonal trends/fluctuations and the equipment used to measure footfall was not accurate.

The Committee KPIs for Parks and Events should be included for 2019/20's suite of KPIs.

RESOLVED: That

1. The summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.
2. KPIs for 2019/20 be profiled to give more context in order for the Committee to make an informed decision on what KPIs to take forward.

Voting: Unanimous

129. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-45 ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered the report of Mrs Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance which identified key actions that the Council was required to take in the short to medium term to ensure that the Council was on course to achieve the Strategic Plan outcomes.

It was noted that any suggested improvements and/or amendments made by the Committee were due to be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 February 2019.

The Committee made the following comments:-

- That clarity needed to be put in the narrative as to what was meant by high quality parks and/or that a KPI could be considered for a neighbourhood park to be provided within 10 minutes walking distance of residential areas or put this in the achievements between 2019-24.
- It was felt that the introduction and snapshot for a Thriving Place weighted heavily on economic development. Therefore the following bullet points should be included:-
 1. Development and commencement of delivering the new gallery at the Museum
 2. Events which assist people in increasing their pride in communities and our environment
- The first bullet point should read "Reviewing and delivering leisure and cultural services that are fit for the future e.g. sports facilities".

That reference to the outcome focussed commissioning and service delivery should be made clearer in the narrative.

The Committee requested a copy of the paper be circulated to them prior to consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED: That the suggested amendments made by the Committee to the high level key actions be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Voting: Unanimous

130. 3RD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Mr Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented a report which set out the financial position for the Committee at the end of Quarter 3 2018/19 against the revenue and capital budgets.

The Committee noted that:-

- Although there had been an underspend against the revenue budget of £151,000, it was expected to reduce to an underspend

of £19,000 by the end of the financial year.

- There had been income shortfalls on the Adventure Zone and Lockmeadow Market but this had been offset by increased income from the Crematorium and savings arising from staff vacancies.
- The additional income from the Leisure Centre was being set aside for the review of leisure provision.
- The Crematorium car park project had overspent and a final analysis of that budget was due to be reported to the Committee's March meeting.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Green advised that he would be reporting back in June on the final outturn and it would be at that time the Committee would have an opportunity to put forward proposals to utilise any underspend.

RESOLVED: That

1. The revenue position at the end of the third quarter and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances had been identified, be noted.
2. The capital position at the end of the third quarter be noted.

131. FEES & CHARGES 2019/20

The Committee considered the report of Mr Green which set out the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 for the services within the remit of the Committee.

It was noted that the main source of income from the fees and charges for this Committee was the Crematorium.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Green advised that:-

- The Maidstone Management Allotments Committee managed the allotment sites on behalf of the Council.
- The charges for Bereavement Services were competitively priced and were benchmarked against other providers in the region.
- A briefing note would be prepared by Officers on the effectiveness of the Woodside Walk Book and circulated to the Committee.

The Committee requested that the service providers for activities that come under the responsibilities of the Committee such as the Allotments Management Committee, Serco and Parkwood Leisure present their annual reports to the Committee to enable a dialogue to be formed and

that this should be built into the Committee Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That

1. The proposed discretionary fees and charges as set out in Appendix A to this report be approved.
2. Key service providers be invited along to the Committee to present their annual report and that this is built into the Committee Work Programme.

Voting: Unanimous

132. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & BUDGET PROPOSALS

Mr Green presented a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy which set out budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the revenue budget was close to being balanced for 2019/20 and good progress had been made in reducing the budget gap for 2020/21.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Green advised that:-

- The revenue budget identified that a significant amount of money had been spent on all the parks, not just Mote Park. However, the capital works in Mote Park were expected to generate a financial return.
- The savings identified for festivals and events were in relation to direct expenditure and would not impact on staffing resources as Officers would continue to facilitate events in the borough.

The Committee felt that the budget and strategic plan did not necessarily align at present and it needed to ensure that the resources were sufficient to enable the strategic plan to be delivered.

RESOLVED: That

1. The revenue budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A to the report, 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 to the report, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.
3. The Committee ensures that the resources are better aligned to coincide with the aspirations of the Strategic Plan.

Voting: Unanimous

133. PROGRESS REPORT: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2027

The Committee considered the report of Andrew Williams, Parks and Open Spaces Manager, which provided an update on the progress made in the delivery of the Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

Mr Williams highlighted that:-

- A review of the strategic and non-strategic play areas had been undertaken. The principle being that families should have access to a play area within 1 km (or 12 minutes walk) from where they live.
- The implementation of a pro-active tree safety inspection programme was moving from a 4 year cycle to a 3 year cycle.
- The grant scheme for Strategically Important Play Areas maintained by Parishes had been implemented.
- The team were working with developers and Planning Officers at pre-application stage to plan and develop open spaces on new housing developments.
- A Parks and Open Spaces Stakeholder Group would be developed during 2019-20.
- Projects such as the Go Green Go Wild had been developed to progress bio-diversity in partnership with local community groups.
- Officers worked collaboratively with other agencies to develop a quality of life programme.

The Committee requested that their thanks be noted to the staff and volunteers for all their hard work.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) That the first annual summary of progress for Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Strategic Plan be noted.
- 2) That a letter of thanks from the Committee be sent to the staff and volunteers.

Voting: Unanimous

134. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.42 p.m.