

CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development held on Friday, 17 July 2020 at 11.30 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Steve Pitt (in the Chair)
Councillors Stephen Morgan
Claire Udy

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jonas who was having technical difficulties joining the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Portsmouth Coronavirus Memorial Trust

James Daly, Cultural and Development Projects Officer, introduced the report.

Councillor Udy said it was important to make sure that key workers were included as part of this as they also had played a vital role during the pandemic.

Councillors Morgan and Udy both supported the recommendations.

DECISIONS:

- (1) Officers were authorised to establish a new charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) in order to support the anticipated public desire for memorials following the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic.**
- (2) The Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services (in consultation with the City Solicitor) was delegated the authority to finalise the constitutional documents of the CIO.**

4. Landing Craft Tank Project Update

The report was introduced by Dr Jane Mee, Museum and Visitor Services Manager.

Councillor Morgan said he supported the recommendations and was keen to be kept informed of any updates and said if he could help in terms of the funding to let him know. Councillor Udy said she was looking forward to this opening.

Councillor Pitt said this had been a challenging time and project costs were bound to increase when work had to cease during the COVID-19 pandemic. On the shortfall of the fundraising, the NMRN were in advanced conversations with a number of potential funders which were on the cusp as lockdown happened. Councillor Pitt and officers caught up with the NMRN yesterday and it was very much a partnership committed to doing everything possible to get things moving.

DECISIONS:

(1) The Cabinet Member noted the achievements of the project to date.

(2) Agreed that the council works with its project partner, the National Museum of the Royal Navy, to secure the outstanding funding required to deliver the project as planned and the Cabinet Member approved officers seeking a further financial contribution from the council should the need arise.

(3) The Cabinet Member approved a request to the National Heritage Lottery Fund, asking if residual funds from the Transforming the D-Day Museum project might be used in these exceptional circumstances to support the LCT 7074 project.

(4) The Cabinet Member noted the intention to run a crowd-funding campaign to raise funding to cover additional costs incurred as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

(5) The Cabinet Member noted the uncertainty with respect to visitor numbers post Covid-19 and the impact this will have on the delivery of the LCT 7074 business plan once Landing Craft Tank opens as part of The D-Day Story later this year.

5. Culture & Leisure response to the COVID-19 pandemic March-June 2020

Lindy Elliott, Library and Archive Services Manager introduced the report.

Councillor Morgan said it would be useful to receive a future paper on the broader impact to the department and the impact on the business plan in terms of outcomes, as a result of COVID-19. Councillor Pitt said a report on lessons learnt would be drawn up later in the summer.

Councillor Pitt said it was important to bring forward this paper to capture the work of the service. He drew attention to some of the key points the service had achieved including the museum team becoming community advisors, the parks team working throughout the pandemic and all the work of the libraries team to get the three libraries re-opened at the earliest possible stage and also ensuring that the Summer Reading Challenge could launch for children in time for the Summer holidays, which was vital. He said these update reports would come forward to future meetings and thanked all staff in Culture and Leisure for their continued efforts.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

6. Economic Development Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic March - June 2020

Mark Pembleton, Economic Growth Manager introduced the report.

Councillor Morgan thanked officers and said he was liaising with Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration, on the final stages of the lobbying of the high streets fund and would send a letter of support next week.

Councillor Udy said she also hoped to write a letter of support.

Councillor Pitt read out one of the many emails thanking the team for their efforts in supporting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also wished to point out that this has been quite stressful for members of the team as they have worked really closely with businesses in financial difficulty to provide advice on financial support. The team has gone above and beyond and he thanked Mark and his team for their efforts in supporting the local businesses.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

7. Natural History Collection

Christine Taylor, Curator of Natural History introduced the report. All Members were very supportive of the work taking place and thought it was very exciting to have some many collections available in the city.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

8. Seafront accessibility

The report was introduced by Gina Perryman, Access & Equality Advisor.

Josie Dalling added that officers are listening to as many views as possible in terms of finding a solution. It was a good opportunity to do this currently with the new sea defences being considered, to really think about how those families can enjoy the beach and to get something in place.

Councillor Pitt said the stakeholder Advisory Group met yesterday. He had also spoken to Portsmouth Disability Forum around creating a bespoke stakeholders group, particularly bringing in people with learning disabilities, to ensure they are not just looking at access but accessibility for people with a wide range of disabilities.

The opposition spokespeople thanked officers for looking into this and taking this forward.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

9. COVID 19 Portsmouth Discretionary Business Grant Scheme - report back of the Standing Order 58 decision of 4 June 2020

The Cabinet Member noted this decision.

Mark Pembleton gave members a brief update on the business grant scheme.

To date, £1 million had been awarded to 200 businesses out of the £1.9 million awarded by Central Government. 380 applications were received over the two week window. There will be another round of applications for the remaining money as officers are aware that some businesses have missed out. This will be launched in the next week or two.

Councillor Morgan said that he was continuing to lobby government about local discretion over underspend and Councillor Pitt gave his thanks for this.

The meeting concluded at 12.20 pm.

Councillor Steve Pitt
Chair