

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 March 2023 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Steve Pitt (in the Chair)

Councillors George Fielding
Russell Simpson

Apologies for Absence

Linda Symes

11. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Symes who was unwell. Councillor Pitt advised that this would have been Councillor Symes' last meeting before stepping down as councillor at the end of this municipal year. He wished to place on record his thanks for her service to the Council, particularly in her role as former Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development prior to Councillor Pitt. Members wished her well for the future.

12. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Library and Archive Service Charges 2023

The report was introduced by David Percival, Library and Archives Service Manager.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member, Mr Percival advised that officers could accommodate a suite of bookings if requested.

Concern was raised by one of the opposition spokespeople regarding the increase in charges for the use of the Steinway model piano due to financial pressures on music teachers. Mr Percival explained that the bookings for the piano to date had been from professional musicians, some of whom were charging entry fees for recitals and piano hire charges had not been reviewed for a number of years. The Cabinet Member said that each case would be considered individually and if someone wanted to hire the piano for an educational purpose, this would be looked at differently as there is a remit to support education

DECISION: The proposals provided in Appendix 1 for the increases in room and equipment hire charges for the Menuhin Theatre on the Third Floor Central Library and hire of IT Training Suites at Carnegie; Cosham

and Central Library were agreed and will be implemented from 1st April 2023, in order to ensure full cost recovery of these services.

14. Revenue Funding Grants 2023-2024

The report was introduced by Claire Looney, Commissioning and Partnerships Manager.

The Cabinet member said that he knew from conversations with the Arts Council that Portsmouth's ongoing commitment to supporting arts organisations with revenue funding is a real benefit to the city. He added that the grants to Portsmouth Guildhall, Ports Fest, New Theatre Royal, Kings Theatre, Peter Ashley Activity Centre, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Aspex Visual Art Trust had not been increased for some time, they are therefore within inflationary pressures a real term cut and the organisations accept that the Council is in a difficult funding position. These grants are reviewed annually and if it is felt that any organisation reaches a level where its financial resilience allows the Council to make a further reduction in public support to increase finding for another organisation or for a new organisation this will be reviewed.

Members were in agreement and felt that it was disappointing that only two organisations the Council provides funding for were successful in gaining National Portfolio Status from Arts Council England. Councillor Pitt said he meets regularly with the regional Director of Arts Council England to put forward the case for Portsmouth

DECISION: The Cabinet Member agreed the Revenue Grant payments as outlined for the financial year 2023/24.

15. Reviving Victoria Park Project (information report)

The report was introduced by Laura Young, Project Manager.

Members said the report was encouraging and commended Laura for her work in securing the grant uplift which had ensured the project can continue as planned.

The Cabinet member noted the report.

16. Pyramids Performance 12 Months After Re-opening (information report)

The report was introduced by David Moorman, Sports and Leisure Strategic Development Officer.

Opposition members raised concern over the loss of gig space at the Plaza following the reconfiguration of the Pyramids and felt that work needed to be done to find another medium sized venue in the city. Councillor Pitt agreed that it was not ideal however said the new business model that the Guildhall

has been developing around The Box is filling that market and bringing additional business into the Guildhall.

The Cabinet member noted the report.

The Cabinet Member wished to thank the opposition spokepeople for their support and involvement with the portfolio over the last year, as this was the last meeting of the municipal year.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 am.

Councillor Steve Pitt
Chair