

CABINET MEMBER - THE LEADER (CULTURE, LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO)

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the meeting of the Cabinet Member - The Leader (Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio) held on Friday, 17 November 2023 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Steve Pitt (in the Chair)

Councillors Russell Simpson
John Smith
Mary Vallely

13. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

14. Declarations of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Seafront and Events Fees and Charges 2024-25

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

DECISION: That the fees and charges be approved in accordance with the attached schedule (appendix A)

16. Market Strategy

The report was introduced by Rebecca Alexander, Places and Markets Manager.

In response to questions she advised that:

- It was recognised that there are a number of regular traders at both Cosham and the City Centre who have been there a long time. There was scope to add additional traders but recognising that they do not want to damage the offer that is already there. There is a trial market on the first weekend of December in the City Centre where there are 15 applicants. It was hoped that they would sign on as casuals following this.
- There is a project due to be delivered in February/March 2024; the Future High Streets Public Realm piece. Part of the strategy says they will look at how the space is being used and how much is left to add future traders.

- The team spend a lot of time trying to engage market traders. The longest standing stall closed recently as he had retired but he had indicated that competing with supermarkets was a difficult task. The high street is changing and it is about the city facilitating and providing positive environments to move forward. They must respond to the businesses that want to come in.
- Placement is very tricky and if look at other markets the withdrawal of fruit and vegetable stalls is common. The team do target areas such as fruit and vegetable stalls but they are seeing locally that they are not existing generally across other markets.

The Leader said that this strategy was an important piece of work that was needed to drive more footfall back into the City Centre.

DECISION: That the new Market Strategy and associated 5 year Action Plan (Oct 23) be adopted to provide focus for current activities.

17. Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy Annual review

The report was introduced by Jane Lamer, Head of Economic Growth and Skills. This was a refresh of the strategy and they had seen significant progress against targets. All of this work is cross Council and the branding work and visitor economy work in London was led by Jane Singh.

The Leader said that when the strategy was developed it was citywide with various partners that the Council adopted. Opposition members said this was a report that was needed after covid changed the dynamic of the high streets. The focus on the high streets was welcomed and members thanked Jane for her report.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

18. Library Outreach Team update

The report was introduced by Clare Liddell, Service Development Manager. She introduced the following officers as part of the team who were present at the meeting:

Catherine Burland, Volunteer Futures Project Officer. Her remit is to extend volunteering to groups who may not normally have the opportunity to volunteer and to ensure a citywide approach to volunteering.

Julie Duffy, Visual Impairment Officer. Julie works to support people with print and vision impairment across the city through 1-1 support, classes, groups and workshops and supports other council services.

Jacqueline Garrard and Patricia Garrett, Learning and Outreach Officers. They work out in the community delivering books to housebound people,

support volunteers, visit schools and nurseries and groups, hold workshops and have an important role in leading children's services in libraries. They also manage and deliver the Summer Reading Challenge and the bookstart programme.

Clare then showed a short film that highlighted the work of the outreach team. The film was made by Enableability.

Members said that the video was impressive and in response to a question, Clare said that the video would be shared on all social media channels and also the Big Screen.

Councillor Vallely said she had recently met with staff at the Cosham library and she was impressed with the refurbishment works there.

Councillor Simpson said although the city was lucky with multiple libraries, there was no library between the North End Library and the Cosham Library. He also felt that it would be great to have more than one mobile library in the city.

The Leader said it was important to note that in the current climate, other councils are closing libraries but Portsmouth has recently refurbished Cosham library and there are improvements due to the North End library soon. It was important to keep a focus on libraries as they benefit the community so widely.

Members thanked the team for all their excellent work.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

19. Youth Engagement Project delivered by The D-Day Story

The report was introduced by Ross Fairbrother, D Day Story Manager.

Members congratulated Ross and his team on the project and felt that it was one of the best projects they had seen. Building trust with young people is essential for community projects and this was done very well. The project was a great launchpad into D Day 80 next year.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

20. Ready, Set, Read! The 2023 Summer Reading Challenge

The report was introduced by David Percival, Libraries and Archive Services Manager.

In response to a question David advised that libraries issued 35,000 items last year, compared to 36,000 items this year which was an increase of just under 3%. The online option was also welcomed by members.

Members congratulated David and his team on the success of this event and felt it was a great project in the city.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

21. Visitor Economy Update

The report was introduced by Jane Singh, Visit Portsmouth Tourism and Marketing Manager.

Members congratulated Jane on all the work that the team have achieved promoting the city, particularly as it is a small team.

The Leader added that he is a trustee on the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust where they closely look at the Association of Leader Visitor Attraction figures and Portsmouth is outperforming some key London venues which is fantastic.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

22. Bransbury Park Leisure Centre update

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

The Leader said that Wimbledon Park Sports Centre is currently open but it does not have a long term future without a significant investment. There is a one court sports hall in the existing community facilities. If a community use agreement can be reached then they will have replaced like for like the offer that is at Wimbledon Park Sports Centre. The GP surgery is still being pursued with the NHS.

In response to a question, the Leader said he could not yet say the location of the four courts as the school has not given permission. It would be central to the city and it was expected more would be revealed soon. The value engineering is ensuring that the scope of the project is done in the most cost effective way. In order to bring the cost of the overall project into the cost envelope the decision has been made that if a community use agreement can be made with the school then they will have achieved what the project scope was originally about and therefore the business case for leaving the sports hall in at Bransbury disappears, and with the pressure of the cost envelope that is a welcome solution to make sure they can still deliver the core activity.

The Leader added that the decision to close Wimbledon Park Sports Centre would not be made until the community use agreement is made with the school. If this is not made, then the decision on whether two courts can be included in the Bransbury leisure centre would have to be revisited. Neither BH Live nor Sport England regard the inclusion of the two-court sports hall as key to the business case.

The Leader (Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development) noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.

Councillor Steve Pitt
Chair