

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 3 MARCH 2014 IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE
CASTLE, HERTFORD AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss I Sigmatic, in the Chair

Councillors: P Boyle, Miss C Geall, P Ruffles, Dr L Radford and Miss J Sartin, Mrs B Haddock (for part of the meeting), A Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr A Turner
Ms N L Villa, Town Clerk
Ms T Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Finance Manager
Mr T Hardy, Events Assistant (for part of the meeting)
Mr N Brand (for part of the meeting)
1 member of the public

413. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D Poole (unwell)

414. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mis Geall and Miss Sartin declared a DPI on any matters relating to the Hertford Museum, should it be discussed in the course of the meeting.

415. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

416. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

Town Centre Fingerposts

An update regarding the relocation of the fingerposts at Sainsbury's was requested. It was confirmed that an East Herts Planning Officer had appealed to Sainsbury's to relocate the signage and was continuing to do so. Evidence of the interaction was requested.

Feedback Forms

It was requested that feedback forms be referred to the Committee, in order that either positive or negative feedback could be noted.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be received and noted.

417. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

418. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee received a report summarising activity at the Tourist Information Centre (TTIC). The Committee sought confirmation that the TTIC was no longer closing for lunch periods on a Saturday. The Town Clerk confirmed that authorisation had not been given to close for brief periods on a Saturday unless staffing was particularly short. Concern was also expressed that the cover on a Saturday, which was the main shopping day, was reliant on volunteers and wished to ensure that the TTIC was properly staffed on a Saturday.

It was confirmed that the new website would have a facility for purchasing items online and it was further confirmed that new Town Guide would be reviewed by members prior to publication.

It was requested that further information be sought to ensure that the services offered by the TTIC were in line with other similar TIC's and that comparisons be made with actual footfalls of other towns on a like for like basis.

The increase in event ticket sales and retail sales in January were noted, and it was requested that future reports indicated profit margins of sales.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

419. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS

The Committee received a detailed report on the proposed events programme for 2014 as well as feedback of the events that had already taken place.

The Committee noted the range of events included in the report and felt it was a remarkable and varied programme for a small town to achieve. It was requested that future reports included a table of all the events, including the Carnival and meetings of the Entrepreneurs' Network.

A follow up report detailing the income and expenditure of the Valentine's evening was requested in order to gain an understanding as to whether it would be appropriate to run other similar events in the future and whether such events could eventually assist in funding the other non-profit making events.

It was confirmed that a band had been booked to play at the Teddy Bear's Picnic. The arrangements for the Open Air Cinema were discussed and it was confirmed that there would be a Pimms tent at the event. The need for security

was considered, given that alcohol was to be sold, however it was felt that the evening would run smoothly with just police and PCSO attendance. Logistics of the day were also discussed, including arranging for separate seating areas for those with chairs and those with just blankets.

It was confirmed that it was hoped that a sponsor would be available to fund the marquee at the beer festival and it was noted that the barrels would have to settle 24 hours prior to the event, meaning the marquee would require overnight security/monitoring.

A discussion took place regarding the Christmas Lights display and it was confirmed that the fairy lights in the trees in Parliament Square would be reinstalled in 2014. Further gaps in the display would also be filled although there had been some issues with regard to infrastructure which needs to be resolved before additional displays can be erected.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

420. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

The Committee received a report summarising the various projects designed to assist the economic health and development of the town centre during the current financial difficulties.

The Committee was pleased to note that the GoHertford website visitor numbers were increasing significantly and it was requested that the maintenance of the GoHertford website be included in the list of priorities.

It was requested that East Herts Council be made aware of the Council's interest in making improvements to the street environment of Maidenhead Street, and that the Council would wish to be represented at the working group to share ideas. East Herts Council had further confirmed that the Town Centre Enhancement funding could be carried over into 2014/15

Feedback to Committee was requested of the Town Centre Co-ordinator's attendances and achievements at the regular traders meetings, to establish what can be learned from these meetings.

The high number of Independent businesses in Hertford compared to the rest of the South East was noted and it was felt that this was something that should be published in a press release, at the time of the Independents' Day celebration on 4 July.

In regard to publicising the Heritage Weekend, it was requested that this was consolidated with a list of the heritage buildings that were opening that weekend and that the Council registered on the central heritage open days' website.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the progress made on delivering the Council's Town Centre priorities and the planned activities.
- b) The Committee **approves** the additional priorities for the period to 31 March 2015.
- c) The Committee **agrees** to join an East Herts Working Group to link in on discussions on enhancement of Maidenhead Street and town centre related items.

421. THE FUTURE OF THE TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee received a report outlining options relating to the future of the Town and Tourist Information Centre in Hertford.

The lease to the current property was due to expire in 2016 and it was therefore considered important to start early discussions on how the Council would wish to see the TTIC evolve over of the next few years.

The Committee was firmly of the opinion that the TTIC provided a vital service for both residents and tourists and that in order to develop further it need to be situated in a central location in the town centre. It was noted that there was no immediate urgency to take a final decision given that the current lease did not expire until October 2016, therefore a firm decision would not be required until late 2015. In the meantime it was felt that short term improvements could be made to the signage of the TTIC to make it more visible, improving the colours, and having directional finger posts.

The Mission statement included in the report was approved pending correction of grammatical errors.

The proposed Visitor Strategy was discussed and was seen to be a useful document although the Committee wished to remain realistic of what could be achieved in Hertford. Amendments were requested in regard to travel time to London and to incorporate and acknowledge all relevant bodies into the strategy, included the Hertford Museum, Theatre and Corn Exchange.

In general the Committee endorsed the proposed direction of the strategy and believed that components of it were very useful, however it was considered that the strategy could be condensed and reiterated to be a realistic working document for Hertford.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approves** the Mission Statement and objectives detailed in the report.
- b) The Committee **defers** the adoption Tourism Strategy pending further development.
- c) The Committee **confirms** that the TTIC will remain as a Town Centre location and recognises it as a core Council service and critical to the development of the Visitor Strategy.

422. VENUE HIRE UPDATE

The Committee received a report detailing the hire revenues for the Castle and Mill Bridge Rooms for the first nine months of 2013/14.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report.

423. THE CASTLE VENUE REPORT – GROSS MARGIN

The Committee received a report outlining a measurement for gross margin for venue hire, highlighting the revenue required for venue hire to break even as a business activity.

The Committee noted the apportionment of salary costs had been amended to show a more realistic use of staff time spent on venue hire. With this amendment and the projected increase in bookings as a result of targeted marketing the projected figures for moving into 2014/15 showed the activity moving into profit. Whilst members recognised that the assumptions for the projected income were optimistic, nevertheless they felt the exercise had been a useful one and the target figure could be worked towards.

It was noted that as a result of this report there needed to be a review around the wider apportionment of staff salaries.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

424. CCTV STATISTICS

The Committee received a report from the Finance Manager outlining the recent CCTV statistics. A more detailed explanation of the 'public request' category was requested to receive assurance that members of the public did not have access to CCTV images.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

425. PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC - PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee had received copies of the minutes of the Planning Sub Committee meetings held on 9 December 2013, 6 January, 20 January, 3 February, and 17 February 2014.

The Committee also received a copy of the amended Planning Aspirations for Hertford which had been recommended to the Committee for adoption.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The minutes of the Planning Sub Committee be received.
- b) The Planning Aspirations for Hertford be adopted and be **RECOMMENDED** for inclusion in the Constitution.

426. FINANCE – THIRD QUARTER INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2013/14

The Committee received a report on the income and expenditure for 2013/14 TO 31st December 2013.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the income and expenditure to 31st December 2013.

427. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to the business matters of the other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

428. CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING ITEM

Following a request from the Personnel Sub Committee, each Committee had been asked to review its staffing requirements to ensure the structure remained lean and fit for purpose. The Castle and TIC staffing establishment had been under constant review following the recent staffing changes and therefore no major changes were required. However the Committee was asked to consider a proposal for changes to Castle based posts.

Following a vote it was **RECOMMENDED** that the proposed revised staff structure be referred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 2145.