

Leisure and Culture Policy Development Advisory Group
5 JANUARY 2017

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Chowen (Chairman), Christine Costin, Matthew French, Tony Hogben, Nigel Jupp, Adrian Lee and Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillors: Roger Clarke, Christian Mitchell, Ben Staines and Michael Willett

Also Present: Kate Rowbottom

22 **TO APPROVE THE NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The group agreed the notes of the meeting held on 17 November 2016.

23 **SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

This item was withdrawn by the Chairman and would be heard at the next meeting of the group.

24 **YEAR OF CULTURE AND ARTS AND HERITAGE STRATEGY**

The Chairman sought the advice of the group on initial discussions about a *Horsham District Year of Culture* that would help inform the Arts and Heritage Strategy that the group had discussed on 7 July 2016. The Chairman explained the context of the cultural offer in the district, and that the Arts Council England had ranked the district in the lower half of national analysis of local authority areas. The forthcoming cinema proposals for the town, and the economic development strategy were amongst the catalysts for the need to re-energise a strategic approach.

The *Horsham District Year of Culture* was mooted for 2019. It would take 2 years to plan and would provide data about the cultural offer, appetite and demand in the district which would in turn inform and drive the future cultural offer. The year would seek to utilise the existing providers around a shared cultural Vision and public art.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the group discussed:

- The uniqueness of Horsham, and its successful past cultural events, such as cricket and 'in bloom', led by local people
- Investment in, and protection of, the cultural offer
- The existing budget provision for the museum and capitol theatre
- The current profitability of cinema, and how the council could best benefit

- Whether cinema would have longevity, or be vulnerable to changes in demand
- Service delivery options elsewhere

Officers explained that their challenges were:

- Delivery of the year, in addition to existing service provision, and the resources and skills required
- Enhancing the visitor economy and understanding the catchment area
- Consideration of the existing infrastructure in the district in comparison with infrastructure elsewhere
- Prioritisation and the need for a long-term vision
- A need to set tangible objectives

The Chairman, noting the support of the group for a year of culture, surmised that the cultural appetite of the district needed to be tested in order to understand the prospective future offer. The Chairman requested that officers prepare a written briefing on the current offer, costs, profit, and future programme for the Capitol theatre, including any assumptions relating to any potential future impact on market share, aligned to a longer-term vision for culture in the district.

25 **BROADBRIDGE HEATH LEISURE CENTRE UPDATE**

The Chairman re-ordered the agenda so that this item was heard first. On 23rd November 2015 Cabinet approved the redevelopment of the leisure centre at Broadbridge Heath, to be called 'The Bridge'. The necessary budget was approved by Council on 9th December 2015. The design phase of the project has been completed and the group received a draft report on the appointment of the building contractor for the construction of the leisure centre.

After undertaking a market testing exercise, the Council's professional team recommended selecting a contractor through a single stage design and build route. Tender documents were developed and a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was prepared to seek expressions of interest from contractors. Of the five contractors selected for ITT stage, 3 declined to bid. The evaluation process was a 60/40 quality/price split assessment, to ensure a blend between an assessment of the quality of the project and a competitive price.

The Chairman thanked Members that had responded to the circulated report prior to the meeting and explained his appreciation of the robustness of the evaluation process. Minor changes to the design and changes to the fabric and proposed materials had been suggested to reduce cost, without compromising the new facility. This has been undertaken to ensure that the project was within budget.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the group discussed:

- The timeline for completion including any impact of the minor changes that had been made to ensure that the project was within budget
- That a quality build with good project management should be prioritised and supported in favour of the building of a 'standard' leisure centre
- The due diligence process built in to the council's procurement methodology, including understanding, and examining the track record of the preferred bidder
- That 3 bidders at the ITT stage had won other contracts elsewhere, so had not progressed to the next stage
- That there would be a community and reputational benefit of 'The Bridge' as a gateway to the district
- That the name 'The Bridge' as advised previously to the group, had been chosen consequent to an exercise undertaken with local schools
- That the current leisure provider was engaged and very supportive of the new centre

The Chairman had confidence that the indicative timeline would be met, save for any unforeseen circumstances, and asked that members note that three specific risks relating to the site were currently being resolved by officers. The benefit of the advisory function was demonstrated by the early opportunity for members to ask questions in order for officers to be well-prepared for the decision making meeting of Cabinet on 12 January. The Chairman surmised that he would report the views and support of the group to the Cabinet meeting.

26 **KEY PERFORMANCE UPDATES**

This update was withdrawn.

The meeting closed at 20:50

CHAIRMAN