

## The Executive – 10 July 2019

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Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **10 July 2019** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe  
Vice Chairman: Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr D S Efde  
Cllr S P Smith  
Cllr I H Ward

Cllr M J Webb  
Cllr A L Williams

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr G J Ioannou.

### **NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Cllrs Mrs L Shaw, S E Wootton

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Scrutton	- Managing Director
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People & Communities
D Tribe	- Assistant Director, Transformation & Customer
S Worthington	- Democratic Services Officer

### **139 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **140 THE BEAGLE EVENT**

The Executive considered the report of the Strategic Director providing details of an event aimed at celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launch of HMS Beagle.

In response to a Member question about advertising and promotion of the event, officers advised that the marketing and communications strategy was linked to sponsorship as the sale of advertising was part of the Council's sponsorship approach. It was emphasised that the Council's website and Discover 2020 social media sites were being used to promote the event, as well as the usual press routes. The Council would also be accessing Essex 2020's press routes, including Visit Essex and its work on Mayflower 400 next year. Greater Anglia would be allocating poster space on railway platforms between Rochford and Rayleigh to promote the event. A poster competition would be launched within the local schools to design posters promoting the event to be displayed on railway platforms and in other public places.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question as to whether or not an app was planned for the computer generated 3d image of HMS Beagle, similar to the Mary Rose app, that the CGI was the subject of separate funding. An application was being made to the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The artist who was undertaking this work had done something similar at the University of Southampton in respect of the Grace Dieu, Henry V's flagship in Agincourt. A 3D schematic would be created from the available blueprints which would be put onto a panorama. The conditions of National Lottery applications stipulate that the software has to be publicly available, which was achievable and would be hosted. It was hoped, subject to additional sponsorship funding, to embed a QR code at the observation point which could be picked up immediately by smartphones. The software was akin to a Youtube link, which meant that anyone could access it from anywhere; this would ensure that it was accessible to all, including those with restricted mobility who would not be able to access the observation point.

In response to a Member question about the car park, officers confirmed that as part of the capital works approved in December, the Council was making a grant to RSPB to install the observation point and a new car park and a culvert that would allow people to access the car park. These would be lasting legacy items, as would the CGI, that would remain on the island after this event for more general public use. The car park on site would be used as the Council's event space rather than for car parking.

Members asked about ticket arrangements for the event and were advised that access to the event would be by ticket only. The Council would subscribe to Eventbrite, a company that would manage ticket sales for the event. Those buying tickets via Eventbrite would navigate a drop down menu and would have to choose which car park they wished to travel from and which times they would want to visit the event. Eventbrite was available digitally, thus volunteers on duty at the event would be able to access digital ticket codes for attendees and issue wristbands, which would act as tickets advising of what buses to use, what car parks to use and journey start and end times.

Concern was expressed by a Member relating to the financial viability of the project, drawing particular reference to the projected sale of tickets appearing somewhat elevated. It was emphasised that there was a real possibility that the event could end up costing the Council a lot of money. The point was made that many residents were unaware of the significance of the Beagle in terms of the heritage of the Rochford District and there did not appear to be sufficient captivating activities on offer to attract children to the event. Concern was raised about committing the proposed amount of money to the project in the context of the potential for insufficient tickets being sold for the event to offset this. It was felt that the tickets were priced too high to attract families in the context of the range of activities currently proposed not being sufficiently innovative, exciting or inclusive for different age ranges.

The point was further made that ticket sales were likely to be low unless the price was reduced. Officers agreed, in response to these concerns, that the

risk to the Council was one of cash flow and demand. Officers suggested that at the planned review of progress in September/October the uptake of sponsorship for the event would be clearer. Officers emphasised that this was a unique and therefore untested project. The Council was specifically curating activities for children, including educative activities, outdoor activities and interactive activities. In addition, local historians and academics would also be targeted; the event was to be an authentic experience and not trivialised in any way. The Council was also seeking for the event to be part of the British Science Festival, so it would be serving an educational, as well as a family entertainment, purpose.

Officers emphasised that the problem with scaling down the project was that the park and ride element was the single highest cost contributor. There was a difficult balance to strike between getting the right amount of attractions on site and keeping people engaged, while also offering value for money and value for time. It was planned to use the park and ride as part of the event experience, with volunteers trained to give guided tours of the District on the buses. Although there were a number of potential sponsors willing to promote the project and be associated with it, this could not be formalised until approval was given by Members for the project.

In response to a Member question relating to engaging children in the event, officers advised that there were a number of school PTAs that were interested in the event. In addition, the school poster competition would further engage children. Officers would also be willing to do school assemblies about the event. A sale or return arrangement had been organised with a publisher of children's books for a book telling the story of the Beagle and the role of Charles Darwin. In addition, the Sedgwick Museum in Cambridge has a range of educative interpretation aimed at children, including the Beagle and Darwin.

In response to a Member question as to whether discounted tickets could be offered via the schools, officers advised that if the event management plan was signed off in December a launch would follow. There was a certain amount of theatre involved in revealing a unique event such as this; the publicity campaign in the run up to the launch would focus each week on a particular contributor to the event to create a sense of expectation. Responding to a Member question as to whether HM Revenue and Customs had been invited to become involved in the event, officers confirmed that the Coastguards, Marine Police, Fire and Police Services and the RNLI would all be participating in the event, the latter telling the story of modern smuggling and HM Revenue and Customs could also be invited to participate.

In response to a Member question around publicity for the event, officers advised that there was a joint RDC/RSPB communications plan that included the various stages of the campaign, including a launch event in September/October and working alongside Essex 2020.

Cllr S P Smith moved a motion seconded by Cllr D S Efde that a working capital of £25,000 be approved and that costs be underwritten up to £25,000, subject to a review of progress in September/October.

### Resolved

- (1) That the Beagle Event be designated as a Silver project to be reported through the Council's Project/Programme Management Office.
- (2) That a drawdown of £25,000 be approved from earmarked reserves to provide a working capital budget for the Beagle Event in accordance with the Budget and Funding Plan set out in Confidential Appendix A.
- (3) That the costs of the event be underwritten up to £25,000 if these cannot be fully recovered from the projected income streams from ticket sales and sponsorship, subject to a review of progress in September/October.
- (4) That the draft Event Management Plan and associated Equality Impact Assessments be reported back to the Executive before the Event Management Plan is submitted to the region's Safety Advisory Group.  
(SD)

### 141 LEISURE AND CULTURE STRATEGY 2019 – 2024

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial seeking approval of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2024.

The Portfolio Holder for Community commended the strategy and thanked officers for all their hard work on this. He drew particular attention to page 7.10 of the report which detailed in excess of 650,000 visits to Clements Hall and Rayleigh leisure centres during 2018/19; the leisure contract was a significant contract for the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reiterated that the strategy clearly set out where the Council wanted to go and provided early steps in the Council's new leisure contract. He emphasised the strategic importance of this to the Council – the figure of 650,000 visits to Clements Hall and Rayleigh leisure centres provided an indication of how many people within the District and future afield this would influence. This was key to the way in which the Council was viewed by its residents. If we get this wrong or don't appreciate its significance in terms of the potential impact on large numbers of residents, then the pitfalls are significant. As this evolved it was important to see more that reflected the strategic importance of this to the Council.

Members raised the issue of poor maintenance of the grounds immediately surrounding Rayleigh Windmill, which were overgrown with weeds. Officers confirmed that this grounds maintenance issue would be addressed outside

the meeting. Members did, however, emphasise that when this issue was raised with the Council Street Scene team the response received had been positive and work had taken place the same day on removing weeds, etc.

In response to a question relating to page 7.11 of the report around adults within the district undertaking less physical activity than the national average, while the percentage of adults classed as obese in Rochford was higher than the national average, officers advised that the strategy indicated that this should be addressed via networking with partners; looking at best practice; and working with leisure partners. Obesity and mental health and wellbeing were key priorities for the Council to tackle.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question as to whether residents attending, for example, private gyms and yoga classes, etc were factored into the percentages cited on page 7.11 of the report around take up of physical activity, that data is available from various sources such as the Active People Survey, which included those accessing private, as well as Council, facilities. Sport England would be a key consultee going forward.

### **Resolved**

That the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 – 2024, set out in appendix 1, be approved. (ADA&C)

## **142 COUNCIL PROJECTS PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICE**

The Executive considered the report of the Strategic Director presenting the latest version of the Projects Programme Management Office (PMO) Dashboard.

The Portfolio Holder for Community drew Members' attention to page 8.7 of the report and the reduction in households occupying B&B accommodation. There were only 5 households in B&B accommodation in July, which equated to a reduction of 81% - a phenomenal result. He commended the Housing team for this significant achievement.

In response to a Member question relating to progress in respect of the Kings Head, Rochford, officers confirmed that it was anticipated that commercial units would be ready in September and residential units would be ready in October. Power supply issues had delayed progress but work was moving forward. The Asset team was working with the developers to do on site visits. A lot of work was happening inside the building.

Responding to a Member question as to whether the use of B&B accommodation by the Council could be eradicated by the end of the year, officers advised that the Council's aspiration was that use should be zero. However, there were always people coming forward who needed temporary accommodation; however, turn around was vastly improved and the completion of the Kings Head would help with this.

Members drew particular attention to the conversion of Francis Cottee Lodge. Initially there was huge public outcry when this project was first proposed. The project was now delivered; it was a well-kept, well maintained facility and a real success.

In response to a Member question relating to the first item on page 8.7 of the report, relating to increasing homelessness prevention work, officers confirmed that the Government grant funding was coming to an end this year. The Council had, however, built in a commitment to keep those posts for a few years and was looking at different options to retain those staff as part of the prevention project; the officers saved the Council on average around £4,000 per calendar month per officer.

**Resolved**

That the latest version of the Projects Programme Management Office (PMO) Dashboard be noted. (SD)

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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