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TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 16 June 2021

Present: Councillor H Cameron (Chair)

Councillors	B Kenny	J Johnson
	C Spriggs	S Williams
	KJ Williams	A Brame
	G Wood	P Gilchrist
	M Booth	P Cleary

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded viewers and attendees that the meeting was webcast and a copy was retained on the Councils website.

2 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

3 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor Spriggs declared a personal interest in Minute 6 (Libraries Consultation Update) as a board member of Get It Loud In Libraries.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting of the Tourism, Communities Culture and Leisure Committee held on 3 March 2021 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

5 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

There were no questions from the public or Members, or any statements or petitions.

6 LIBRARIES CONSULTATION UPDATE

Councillor Spriggs declared a personal interest in as a board member of Get It Loud In Libraries.

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced this report which provided an update on the work undertaken to deliver a public and stakeholder wide consultation on the draft Library Strategy and proposed new library model. Consultations had already taken place with Government and staff and there was a proposed public consultation on the 'have your say' online platform for 6-8 weeks, with a stakeholder mapping exercise. There would be offline consultation methods too.

Members questioned issues with particular libraries and officers took comments away for consideration and response.

Resolved: That:

- (1) the action being undertaken to deliver the public consultation on the draft Library Strategy and proposed new model be noted and the proposed date of June 28 2021 for start of the public consultation be approved.**
- (2) the proposed date for the Director to bring a report to Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee 17 November 2021 to present a Final Libraries Strategy with recommendations, and accompanying findings and outcomes of the public consultation be approved.**

7 INCOME GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES RELATING TO THE FUTURE OPERATION OF THE FLORAL PAVILION THEATRE AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

Dave Mackenzie, the Commercial Manager from the Floral Pavilion, presented this report which provided an information on the development of income generating opportunities across a number of sites including the Floral Pavilion Theatre & Conference Centre, Wirral Sailing Centre, West Kirby (WSC) and other sites where catering is provided as part of the Wirral Council offer.

Members questioned the development of the catering service at the Williamson Art Gallery and were informed that existing staff were used to run it and it did make a profit but the facilities were limited which limited the range on offer.

Resolved: That

- (1) the contents of this report be noted; and**

- (2) the development and implementation of future medium and long-term income proposals set out in this report be supported.**

8 EUROPA POOLS – OPTIONS FOR 2021 PROVISION OF LEISURE FUN POOL

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Libraries and Customer Engagement, Andy McCartan, introduced this report which provided information and options regarding the reinstatement of the Leisure Pool provision at the Europa Pools facility in Birkenhead for the 2021 school Summer holiday period. The Leisure Pool facility had been closed since March 2020 as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and closure of the fun pool had been considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Committee had asked to keep the option to reopen for Summer based on the release of restrictions on 21 June but that has been pushed back by a month. A mezzanine floor had been fitted which allowed for dry events to take place, and the lane swimming pool was open as activity could be controlled and so it did not represent a health risk.

In answer to Members questions it was clarified that there was a cost involved in refilling the pool and staffing.

The Director of Public Health, Julie Webster, informed Members that the North West region was the epicentre of 'delta variant' cases with a 59% increase in the previous week, in a younger age group including children. She advised not to open for the numbers of customers needed to make it viable.

Members expressed concerns at children having missed out socially during the pandemic and there was demand if it were reopened. If it were not reopened there could be events such as inflatables at the Guinea Gap swimming pool. Members were also aware that if restrictions were removed on 19 July a full reopening could take place although they noted that the local situation may still carry risk of the virus spreading.

Councillor Allan Brame proposed reopening subject to no further restrictions imposed by the Govt. This was seconded by Councillor Christine Spriggs.

Resolved (6:5)- That

- (1)** the information and options presented in the 'Europa Pools – options for 2021 provision of leisure fun pool' report be noted; and
- (2)** the Director of Neighbourhood Services be instructed to undertake and facilitate the necessary steps for the reopening of the Leisure Pool for the 2021 school Summer holiday period 19/07/21 – 05/09/21 (inclusive) subject to there being no covid restrictions imposed by the Government during that period.

9 CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 4

The Director of Resources introduced this report which provided Members with an overview of budget performance for the Committee's area of activity. The financial information details the year-end revenue and capital outturn position, as reported at quarter 4 (Apr-Mar) 2020/21. The accounts remained subject to final audit.

There had been a £7.2 million overspend on revenue for number of reasons including an overspend in community patrol. There had also been favourable factors including savings from not hosting events which helped offset loss of income from golf, libraries and leisure centres. There had been some Government compensation for loss of income which amounted to around 75% of losses in eligible income.

Resolved -

That the year-end revenue outturn position of £7.256m adverse and the performance of the capital programme, as reported at quarter 4 (Apr-Mar) of 2020/21 be noted.

10 2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING AND 22/23 BUDGET PROCESS

The Director of Resources presented this report which highlighted the processes for monitoring the 2021/22 budget and the budget setting process for 2022/23. The Committee was accountable for ensuring that the Committee budget remained within the relevant envelope and was to take collective responsibility via the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that the whole Council budget remained in balance at all times, by agreeing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line, should a deficit be forecast.

One of the key documents required to enable the Council to receive approval for exceptional financial support was a balanced five-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This document was prepared by Officers and required committee oversight and approval, with proposals being taken to workshops and then in further report to Committee.

Members noted that the planned zero based budgeting system would be trialled by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee before being undertaken by all Committees. Councillor Helen Cameron proposed that resolution 4 be amended to reflect that. This was seconded by Councillor Christine Spriggs.

Resolved - That

(1) the content of the report and the current forecast position of savings for 2021/22 and the ongoing work being undertaken to mitigate any under-achievement be noted.

- (2) the current proposals within this report from the Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2022/23 – 2025/26 be included and the Director of Neighbourhoods to develop them into full business cases, where appropriate, for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget proposals to Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval.**
- (3) a series of budget workshops be convened to identify any alternative savings/income/reductions in pressures to ensure that a full suite of costed and deliverable proposals can be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval.**
- (4) it be noted that the Zero Based Budgeting project would be piloted by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.**

11 APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2021/2022

The Chair introduced this report which was to enable the Committee to review the continuing need for various advisory committees and to appoint Members and named deputies to serve on those that are to be retained in 2021/2022. The Chair reported to Members that she had been advised by officers that the report was to be referred to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee for consideration since it more naturally fell within that Committee's terms of reference which included responsibility for parks, open spaces, countryside management and the Council's duties as coastal protection authority.

Members were concerned at the loss of influence in the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee because of the importance of the Park to tourism, culture and heritage, and that the Environment Committee would not meet until September 2021.

The Chair proposed that this Committee retain responsibility for appointments to Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Gillian Wood.

Resolved – That

- (1) Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee retain responsibility for the appointment of the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee and the Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to the Birkenhead Park Advisory Committee and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.**

(2) a report on the continuance and composition of the Hilbre Island Nature Reserve Management Committee be referred to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee for consideration since it more naturally falls within that Committee's terms of reference which include responsibility for the Council's duties as coastal protection authority. Pending consideration of this matter by that Committee the membership of the Management Committee shall remain as presently constituted in respect of those persons who are Members of the Council; any vacancies to be appointed by the Monitoring Officer who shall carry out the wishes of the Group Leader of the former Member.

12 HERITAGE CHAMPION

At Annual Council on 28th September 2020 elected Members endorsed the new Constitution which had included the appointment of Member Champions in order that the Council could benefit from the experience, knowledge and interests of Members, in particular thematic areas including Heritage.

Councillor Christine Spriggs nominated Councillor Jerry Williams. This was seconded by Councillor Helen Cameron.

Resolved –

That Councillor Jerry Williams be appointed as Heritage Champion for 2021/2022.

13 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

Members made suggestions for additional to the Work Programme.

Resolved -

That the work programme for the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year be agreed subject to the addition of:

- 1. the Culture Plan for 2021 be shared to include the anniversary of Birkenhead Park and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**
- 2. The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum to revisit efficiency savings and events.**