

TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25 July 2023

Present: Councillor H Cameron (Chair)

Councillors	P Martin	G Bennett
	P Jobson	J Johnson
	T Laing	C McDonald
	G McManus	R Molyneux
	K Stuart	M Redfern

16 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website.

17 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

18 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to consider whether they have 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 the nature of the interest. No interests were declared.

19 MINUTES

The chair requested that minute be altered so as to substitute "claiming" for "noting" in relation to Jean Robinson's statement on Woodchurch Leisure Centre.

Resolved – that subject to the above changes, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2023 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

20 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that one public question had been received.

Percy Hogg asked a question relating to Bromborough Civic Centre and the decision made at Policy and Resources Committee on 12 July asking why members of this committee who also were on the Policy and Resources committee overruled a well thought through decision by this committee which had evaluated the issue at length.

The Chair responded to say that this Committee had not commented on the merits of the two contending bids but arranged a workshop to discuss the three options and agreed to undertake further due diligence on both of the bids.

The chair also confirmed she attended Policy and Resources Committee on 12 July during which the Committee discussed the long list of assets proposed for disposal and considered whether a decision could be made on each in the public session. The Committee resolved that Bromborough Civic Centre needed to be debated within the exempt session as members needed to refer to the confidential information detailed within the exempt appendix. Therefore, all discussions on this matter, including her own contribution, took place within the exempt session.

21 **2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2023)**

The Finance Business Partner presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, which provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, which enabled the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

At the end of Quarter 1, there was a forecast adverse position of £1.821m on the Committee's revised net revenue budget, of £13.911m. This position was based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and changes to Council funding.

Members queried capital programme in relation to play equipment in New Brighton and were informed that this was superseded by an application to use the space as a Water sports Centre. The Capital was therefore used instead for equipment in the Tennis Centre. Members were also concerned by the £1.4m adverse variance in the Floral Pavilion and what the plans would be moving forward. It was noted that these were historic, un-met income targets and could be put forward as an unachievable budget pressure. Members also questioned defibrillators, their placement in council owned spaces and maintenance. Members were informed they were in place and maintained and there had been a capital bit to put in to place additional defibrillators in parks in Wirral.

Resolved – that,

- 1. the Directorate forecast adverse position of £1.821m presented at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- 2. the progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- 3. the forecast level of reserves and balances at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- 4. the forecast capital position presented at Quarter 1 be noted.**

22 TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhood Services presented the report which provided performance information in relation to the group of Neighbourhood Services that report to the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee. The report is iterative, and the report was based on discussion with Members through working group activity in 2021 and discussions in 2022.

Members discussed parks tennis, and queried the usage figures, after improvement works had been completed. Members were informed that officers had been working with the Lawn Tennis Association to improve usage. Also discussed was the opportunity to market facilities for those on waiting lists and queried the gender imbalance for sports programmes. Members discussed library data, including a new offer for online newspapers. Members also discussed the Williamson Art Gallery and improvements made, with spaces being opened up for events and conferences and a focus on weddings.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

23 COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

The Assistant Director for Neighbourhood Safety and Transport presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which provided Members with an update on key activity in relation to two of the ten thematic areas of Wirral Community Safety Strategy (2021-2026); Violent Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Members were informed that Violent crime has seen a reduction in 2023/4; this is primarily due to a reduction in domestic violence, which has reduced by 20%. Non-domestic abuse related offences have reduced by 3%. Non-domestic violence with injury has reduced by 5%, without injury by 0.5% and stalking & harassment has reduced by 0.5%.

It was noted that over the past two years, Wirral has seen escalating issues with organised crime related violence. In the last four months of 2022, there were five firearms discharges resulting in two fatalities.

In response to the escalation, Members were informed that Merseyside Police had drawn officers across the Force to support activity to prevent and tackle serious organised crime, through 'Operation Remove'. Regular co-ordination of activity took place with officers from Community Safety.

Members discussed the emergency help-points and breakdown of calls and were informed that this would be incorporated into a tracker. Capturing of data was also discussed, as well as community engagement in regards to anti-social behaviour and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) and diversion activities. Also discussed was the influence of social media, and access to negative information online. It was noted that this is being dealt with pro-actively by schools and youth services. Members queried how the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) was distributed and were informed that whilst the Council had no say on where this money is distributed, Wirral does get a fair allocation. Members also noted the hard work undertaken by the Community Safety team during the Open Golf held in Hoylake.

Resolved, that the report be noted.

24 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Legal Officer introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance.

Members discussed the inclusion of a report on leisure services marketing and a report Open Golf. Also queried were empty premises and the list of surplus assets and whether the Policy and Resources Committee could be requested to consider whether some could be appropriated for leisure services.

Resolved – that the report be noted and the above items be included within the work programme.

The Chair advised Members it was the Director of Neighbourhood's last Committee Meeting as she was leaving the Authority and wished it to be noted her thanks for her hard work and dedication over the years.

25 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved – That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of

Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

**26 TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
PERFORMANCE - EXEMPT APPENDIX**