

Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4 March 2020

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the SOCIAL Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 4 March 2020 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors B.Fitzsimon (Chairman)
H.Bower (Vice-Chairman)

J.Caliskan, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman, J.Cragg,
S.Elam, R.Lass, D.Richardson, A.Rohale

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)
Head of Community and Housing Strategy (S.Chambers)
Head of Policy and Culture (P.Underwood)
Museum Manager (L.Dobbs)
Community Partnerships Manager (M.Rayner)
Museum Curator (E.Harper)
Engagement and Events Officer (R.Robinson)
Governance Services Officer (S.Keenlyside)

55. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

There were none.

56. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor L.Brandon and Executive Member, Councillor T.Mitchinson.

57. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58. ACTIONS UPDATE

The Committee noted the report of the Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) which gave an update on actions from the meeting held on 16 January 2020.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Councillor L.Chesterman declared a non-pecuniary interest in items on the Agenda by virtue of being a Member of Hertfordshire County Council.

60. TOWN CENTRES ANNUAL UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Director (Housing and Communities) and a presentation on the action taken by Officers within each town centre over the past year and the direction of future developments including how the team successfully worked in conjunction with Welwyn Garden City BID Partnership Board to help meet its aims and objectives. The team also worked with the Hatfield Town Centre businesses to establish the Hatfield Town Centre Forum.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- The Covid-19 outbreak was being heavily monitored and future events may need to be cancelled. Contingency plans were being discussed.
- Members enquired about the increased footfall at events and whether there was enough car parks in the borough. Officers advised that they had not received any negative feedback regarding car parking facilities and that people were encouraged to walk to events or use local buses.
- Members asked for statistics on increased footfall. Officers would feedback statistics from Elephant Wifi.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the Town Centres Annual Progress Report 2019-2020 and presentation.

61. MUSEUM SERVICE ANNUAL UPDATE

Members received the report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) and accompanying presentation on the work of the Council's Museum Service over the period April 2019 to March 2020.

The Museum Service prepared and delivered an annual report to the SOSC Committee at its last meeting in the municipal year. This enabled committee members to see how the Museum Service had contributed to local community life in the borough through its focus on arts, culture, education and heritage.

The following points were raised and discussed:

- Members enquired whether road signs could be put up to direct visitors to the Roman Baths. Officers explained that it would require a significant amount of work to get all the necessary information and measurements to Hertfordshire County Council in order to get road signs put up. This work would have to be undertaken by the museum team.

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- There had been 83 applications for the Front of House vacancy. Officers were currently shortlisting the applicants.
- Members enquired about the income generated from catering. Officers would feedback the information.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the content of the Museum Service Annual Report 2019-20 and presentation.

62. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019-2020 QUARTER 3

The Committee received the report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) which provided the Committee with performance indicator data collected for those services that fall within its remit for Quarter 3 along with comparative information where available.

The following point was raised and discussed:

- Members asked if the impact of reduced staffing levels at Campus West was being monitored. Members advised that from analysing data from the customer satisfaction survey emailed to holders of the Zebra card, there had not been any drop in customer satisfaction.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the SOSC Performance Indicator data from Quarter 3 2019-20.

63. SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the Safeguarding Annual Report.

The following point was raised and discussed:

- Members asked if they could have a safeguarding information crib sheet. Officers said that they would provide this.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the presentation on the Safeguarding Annual Report.

64. EQUALITIES ANNUAL UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the Equality Scheme Annual Report.

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The following points were raised and discussed:

- Members advised that the Crematorium Association had said that the public disabled toilets did not have a 'Not every disability is visible' sign on them. Would it be possible to have one? Officers suggested that the Crematorium Association were invited to the next Equality Scheme meeting where this could be discussed.
- Members asked for data on the gender divide for top management and Heads of Service. Officers would email the information to Members.

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the presentation on the Equality Scheme Annual Update.

Meeting ended 9.40pm
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