

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR SERVICES
3 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Present: Councillors Cartwright (in the Chair), Davies, Poole, Rogers, Waite and Webb (until 7.05pm, as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Turner)

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch, Chowney, Kramer, Scott and Westley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Forward, Turner and Wilson.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in the minutes.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May be approved as a true record.

3. QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Jane Hartnell, Head of Corporate Services, presented the Quarter One performance and Financial Monitoring Report.

The report advised Members of the performance against the 2012/13 targets and performance indicators in Part 2 of the Corporate Plan and provided a summary of financial information. It was noted that further financial information would be available later in the year as part of the budget setting process.

Discussion took place regarding the engagement of voluntary and community groups in the town, continued efforts to achieve a more cohesive and inclusive community, the rebranding of Hastings and arrangements for phase 2 of the Ore Valley redevelopment plans.

Members discussed a two day launch event which had taken place in May as part of the Answers in the Carbon Economy programme. The committee noted that this event had been well attended and the information shared between partners and stakeholders at the conference would help to inform the project going forward. Members acknowledged the contribution of the Regeneration team in enabling the Council to fulfil its role as lead partner in this project.

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The committee also considered the work with Local Space and other partners to implement new regeneration plans for Central St Leonards. The aim of this project was to deliver 20 units of HMO accommodation in 2012/13. Progress toward this had been made by the recent refurbishment works at 34 Kenilworth Road to deliver 5 units of affordable rented accommodation. The Compulsory Purchase of a property at 41-42 Carisbrooke Road was also at an advanced stage. After refurbishment, this property will provide a further 8 units of accommodation. However, it was acknowledged that it was unlikely that 2012/13 target would be achieved in full by year end. Delivery was partially dependant on the successful implantation of a financial model for a larger scheme to promote the long term improvement of housing stock in this area of the town. Subject to a robust business plan, the Council could continue to assist Local Space Housing association in securing funding for the delivery of a 100 unit scheme over the period 2011-2015.

The committee thanked the Marketing and Communications team for their efforts to organise and support the Olympic Torch relay and Pirate Day events. It was noted that these events had been extremely successful, both in attracting visitors to the town and gaining positive media coverage.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 the committee's comments on Quarter 1 performance be noted; and**
- 2 staff in the Regeneration and Environmental Services Directorates be thanked for their hard work and achievements in this quarter**

4. UPDATE ON THE MUSEUMS SERVICE

Virginia Gilbert, Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure, gave a spoken report on the Museums Service. This update had been requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Steering Group.

The report gave background information on the Museum Service and an overview of efforts to ensure its sustainability in the future. It was noted that some aspects of the operation of this service are governed by the Museum Association.

A number of scenarios had been examined to improve the sustainability of the Old Town Hall Museum and help meet the running costs. The formation of a Charitable Trust for the Old Town Hall Museum had been discounted as it would not be sustainable without a significant source of income. The cost savings realised by a trust would not be sufficient. Instead, a working group

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had been organised to suggest improvements to the Museum, these included; reorganising exhibits to improve visitor experience and flexibility of the venue, the introduction of a donation box and the development of the Museum shop. As a result of these initiatives visitor numbers to the Old Town Museum and revenue have increased.

Further proposals had also been put forward to work more closely with other local attractions, particularly the Jerwood Art gallery to increase visitor numbers. There was also scope to increase revenue by expanding the hire of Museum sites for outside events and functions, which had already proved successful at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery.

Alongside the development of the Old Town Hall Museum, the collections at the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery in Johns Place had also been reviewed. It was noted that there may be opportunities to rationalise and rotate the collections at both venues. Museum staff would continue to review the exhibitions, with the Education Officer, to plan a programme of events. The Committee also suggested linking exhibitions of local interest to family and social history

Members highlighted a number of areas for further consideration, including developing links with the local business community and the possible introduction of an admission charge at the Old Town Hall Museum. The potential impact of an admission charge on visitor numbers will require careful assessment.

Members thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that:

- 1 a written Update on the Museums Service, including a response to Members suggestions, be forwarded to the next Services Committee**

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR FINANCIAL ECONOMIES AND NEW SOURCES OF INCOME

Jane Hartnell, Head of Corporate Services, presented this item and sought Members comments.

6. FORWARD PLAN SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2012

Jane Hartnell, Head of Corporate Services, submitted the Forward Plan from September to December 2012. Members were invited to highlight any areas for detailed consideration.

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7. WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13 QUARTER ONE UPADATE

Jane Hartnell, Head of Corporate Services, delivered a report to update Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012-13 which had been agreed at the Annual Meeting on 18 June.

8. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual meeting held on 18 June be approved as a true record.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.35pm)