

# Trading Board

Wednesday, 25 January 2017

**Attendees:** Councillor Lewis Barber, Councillor Kevin Bentley, Councillor Robert Davidson, Councillor Lesley Scott-Boutell, Councillor Martyn Warnes  
**Substitutes:** Councillor Chris Pearson (for Councillor Rosalind Scott)  
Also in attendance: Councillors Cory and Smith

## 146 Minutes

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

## 147 Commercial Business Development - Operational Businesses

**Councillor Bentley (in respect of his membership of Essex County Council) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Board received a report from the Commercial Manager, Commercial Transition Manager and Operations Manager – Events providing an update on the operational businesses. Graham Lewis, Commercial Manager, and Rob Hill, Commercial Transition Manager, presented the report and provided an update on the services.

In terms of Helpline, members requested sight of the Options paper that was being prepared for the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Protection in respect of the review of Sheltered Housing Helpline services, and explored how the Helpline encouraged channel shift. The Commercial Transition Manager explained that referrals could be made online, and the possibility of setting up a social media account had been explored, but this was currently on hold. All Helpline literature contained details of the website and an e-mail address, but given its customer base tended to be older, there was still a reliance on more traditional forms of communication. However, further information as to how Channel Shift was being addressed would be submitted to the next meeting.

In respect of the Events Service, it was reported that the arrangement with the Mercury Theatre to provide advice on the management of Charter Hall was coming to an end and that a full time Events Manager for ticketed Events would be recruited to work across all the Council's venues. Members of the Board asked whether there would be benefit in exploring an ongoing joint venture with the Mercury Theatre rather than recruiting a full

time member of staff. The Commercial Manager explained that the Events Service would continue to work together with the Mercury Theatre on ticketing and marketing, and to develop a joint marketing and customer database. They would also look at joint scheduling with other venues across Colchester, to ensure that they did not schedule events in direct competition with each other. However, it was felt that in addition to this joint working, there was still a role for a dedicated manager for ticketed events for the Events Service. It was stressed that the focus of the Events Service was to generate revenue from the Council's venues, rather than to promote or generate tourism in the wider sense, although clearly a successful Events Service would help stimulate tourism in the borough.

Members of the Board felt that would be some merit in the Board exploring further how the Events Service worked with other venues across the borough, looking at how events were scheduled, marketed and ticketed. It could also look at how the Events Service could link into tourism in the borough, such as through discounted packages across venues. The Board requested that a report addressing these issues be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

In addition members of the Board suggested that it would be helpful if all members were provided with details of forthcoming events in advance, and also that events could be marketed through the terminals at the Community Hub. The Commercial Transition Manager explained that this was being looked into. He also explained that the flyer for events in open spaces was issued twice a year and was still an effective marketing tool.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The contents of the report and the current position on the operational services be noted.
- (b) That further information as to how Channel Shift was being addressed in the Helpline Service be provided to the next meeting of the Board,
- (c) A report looking at how the Events Service linked into tourism in the borough and how it worked with other venues across the borough be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

## **148 Trading Board Annual Report 2017-18**

The Board received a report setting out the initial draft of the Annual Report 2016-17.

In discussion, members of the Board welcomed the initial draft, particularly the visual nature of the report. In discussion members of the Board made the following points:-

- There needed to be more consideration of the target audience. Ian Vipond, Strategic Director explained that the aim was to produce a document akin to a company report. The potential audience was other Councillors, residents and those interested in undertaking joint ventures with the Council. It could be used as a marketing document and also to raise media interest in the work of the Trading Board.
- Summary information about each of the services should be included.
- The report also needed to address the quality of services provided, as well as statistical and financial performance information.
- A list of the Board members needed to be included.
- Some of the graphics were a little dated and there needed to be more pictures. There were a number of attractive venues linked to the Commercial Services, such as the chapel at the cemetery, which could be included.
- The report should also give an indication of future priorities.

Graham Lewis, Commercial Manager, thanked the Board for their comments. A revised final draft taking into account the Board's comments would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

*RESOLVED* that the Board's comments on the initial draft of the Annual Report be noted and that a revised final draft Annual Report 2016/17 be submitted to the next meeting.

## **149 Work Programme 2016-17**

The Board received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive setting out the work programme for the 2016-17 municipal year.

In response to queries from the Board about the likely timing of the item on the Commercial Opportunities arising the Essex Waste Partnership, Ian Vipond, Strategic Director, Commercial and Place, explained that in view of the ongoing work on changes to the Council's waste collection arrangements, it was unlikely that resources would be available to report on this until these changes had been implemented.

It was suggested that it would be useful for the Board to receive a report on the Council's approach to commercialism. The need for the Council to take an innovative approach was stressed, although it was important that as it moved towards a commercial approach it did not disadvantage any residents.

The Board also asked that the work programme be presented as rolling programme in future. It should look forward to future meetings across municipal years, rather than being restricted to the current municipal year.

*RESOLVED* that:-

- (a) The Work Programme 2016/17 be noted.
- (b) An item on the Council's Approach to Commercialism be added to the Work Programme.
- (c) In future the Work Programme be presented as a rolling programme.

**150 Minutes (Part B)**

**Councillor Bentley (in respect of his membership of the East of England Local Government Association) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information.)

**151 Commercial Business Development - Operational Business Performance and Income Report**

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information.)