

Trading Board

Wednesday, 15 November 2017

Attendees: Councillor Lewis Barber, Councillor Chris Pearson, Councillor Rosalind Scott, Councillor Lesley Scott-Boutell
Substitutes: No substitutes were recorded at the meeting
Also Present: Also in attendance: Councillors Feltham and Smith

170 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

171 Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd Colchester Amphora Trading - Period 6

The Board considered a report from Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd Colchester Amphora Trading reporting on the activity within each of the trading services for the half year 2017/18. Graham Lewis, Senior Commercial Manager, presented the report to the Board.

In respect of the Sport and Leisure service, it was reported that the opening of the Activa Gym had improved the financial position and that it was anticipated that it would continue to improve through future periods 7 and 8. The launch of the Activa gym had seen a surge in Lifestyle memberships and these were now at their highest ever level. In addition, Christmas and New Year promotions were being heavily marketed and the service was pushing to increase the usage at Highwoods and Tiptree. A review of the activities across wetside and dryside at Leisure World was also underway, with a view to optimising usage.

Colchester Events Company was on course to meet its target outturn by year end. New Homes Bonus funding had been secured for improvements to Charter Hall which would make it a more attractive facility both for customers and agents and artists and help it secure more prestigious bookings. An Ice Slider has been booked and will be located in the Castle Bailey over the Christmas period. Over £10000 of tickets had already been sold. Feedback was provided on the Doomsday/Gloomday event. Whilst the former had been a success, there had been some issues with the quality of the delivery of the Gloomday event. Further consideration was being given as to what lessons needed to be learnt and whether or not the event should be run again next year. The Oktoberfest

event had been very well attended with over 5000 visitors and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. however, 15 complaints about noise and antisocial behaviour were received from residents neighbouring the park.

Helpline was currently struggling in terms of income and management of costs. A plan was now in place aimed at reducing costs whilst maintaining services. It was anticipated that following consultation with staff, a new rota system and management arrangements would be in place in early 2018. In respect of the Town Centre Digital, a six month break point meeting had been held and concerns had been expressed to County Broadband about the service delivered and options were being considered.

In discussion, members of the Boards queried whether the improvements to Charter Hall would include improvements to the hearing loop system. It was reported that a full evaluation of the hearing loop system had been undertaken and it worked as well it could. It worked better in certain areas of Charter Hall but it was not possible for it to cover all areas and seating for those with hearing impairments would need to be located in those areas which were covered.

In response to queries from members, it was explained that wedding packages had exceeded their income targets. The presence of the Community Wedding Room at the Town Hall had generated significantly more interest in Town Hall weddings more generally, and effectively acted as free advertising. There had been excellent feedback from a number of customers about the quality of the service, and the weddings element was growing quicker than other areas of the Events business. The castle was being promoted as a unique venue for weddings. Secondary spend was also increasing. Further statistical information about growth in the numbers of weddings would be forwarded to members of the Board.

Colchester Events also generated income through the hire of facilities for corporate events and receptions. A number of corporate Christmas parties were booked for the Town Hall through December. Some corporate events were held at the Castle but this was slightly more difficult to market in view of its size and the public opening hours.

Helpline's service was also commended by members of the Board. Whilst the issues with the financial performance of the service were noted, it was more important that the service continued to provide a vital service to vulnerable residents.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

172 Minutes (Part B)

The Board resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to

exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED that the not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

173 Colchester Commercial Holdings Ltd Period 6 2017-18

The Board resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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)).