

Ref:

Called in

Yes/No

THE THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF CABINET

Cabinet Member

Councillor Reece Pugh

Relevant Portfolio:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development

Date of Decision:

22 September 2022

Subject:

Margate Winter Gardens update and decision

Key Decision

Yes

In Forward Plan

Yes

Brief summary of matter:

The Margate Winter Gardens is owned by Thanet District Council and has been a vital part of Margate's year round offer, providing space for concerts, events and community gatherings. It is a valuable asset to the Council and its communities, and the Council understands that it is much loved by the local community with a great deal of interest and passion about its future.

As an important asset, through the Margate Town Deal, £300,000 of revenue funding has been secured to carry out research to inform the Council on the next steps for the delivery of the Margate Winter Gardens.

Decision made:

1. It was noted that the Margate Winter Gardens was handed back to the Council on 14 August from Your Leisure Kent Ltd, and has subsequently temporarily suspended operations.
2. Cabinet noted that a Petition signed by over 2,000 signatories was submitted to the Council requesting a Public Meeting, in order that the public can show their support for the Winter Gardens and hear about the plans for the future.
 - It was recommended that once the Council had received further information, a public meeting would be held.
 - It was recommended through the review of the night time economy that engagement with Thanet's communities be undertaken to understand how they would use the Winter Gardens.
3. Cabinet agreed the next steps in delivering the Margate Town Deal Winter Gardens project, including, but is not limited to:
 - commissioning experts to complete a costed structural survey of the Winter Gardens;
 - commission a complete set of drawings for the site;
 - identify all legal requirements in relation to the Margate Winter Gardens;
 - commission a team of multi disciplinary consultants to review the night time economy in Margate and the Winter Gardens role in that - this will include

engagement with Thanet's communities to understand the audience potential for a venue.

4. Cabinet gave delegated authority to the Interim Director of Property in consultation with the Economic Development Portfolio Holder and the Director of Regeneration to market the leisure opportunity at the Margate Winter Gardens, in order to identify potential interest from operators and/or a commercial partner.

Reasons for decision:

To enable the delivery of the Margate Town Deal project for the Winter Gardens.

Alternatives considered and why rejected:

Options considered were:

The Council could take the Winter Gardens straight out to the market with a simple replacement of the lease arrangements, however significant investment is required for the building to continue to run as a venue, which the Council does not currently have.

The Council could return the Margate Town Deal funding and not deliver the project as set-out to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. However, this will leave the Council not being able to complete an appraisal of the building and to understand its future, before going out to the market.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by any executive Member who has been consulted and of any dispensation granted by the Standards Committee:

None

Author of Officer report:

Louise Askew, Director of Regeneration

Background papers

20220922 Winter Gardens Update and Decision - Google Docs

Statement if decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in:

None

Last date for call in: 6 October 2022