

Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio Holder Statement 2017-2018 Councillor Jane March

1. My Responsibilities:

I lead on non-regeneration led economic development, tourism, overseeing local facilities such as the Crematorium, Assembly Hall Theatre, the Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery, Parks and our Sports centres. I am responsible for the Farmers' Market and for our frontline services such as those provided by the Tunbridge Wells Gateway and Weald Information Centre in Cranbrook and the Tourist Information Centre.

2. Functions and Services:

I am responsible for all services relating to the areas below covering a 2017/18 revenue expenditure of £7.2 million.

- Tourism
- Economic Development non-regeneration
- Farmers Market
- Customer Access & Gateway
- Assembly Hall Theatre
- Tunbridge Wells in Bloom
- Museum and Art Gallery
- Events
- Public Art
- Grants
- Leisure
- Cemeteries & Crematorium
- Parks, Sports Centres

3. Key Plans and Strategies:

I am also the Lead Cabinet Member on the following partnerships:

- West Kent Partnership
- LEADER Programme
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Together
- Public Art Board
- Heritage Lottery Funding Project Board for Grosvenor and Hilbert Recreation Ground
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Cultural and Learning Hub Board
- Mid Kent Services representative
- Lead member WW1 commemorative events

4. Achievements in 2016/17:

- Royal Tunbridge Wells Together delivered year 1 of its action plan including of a number of events and delivery of a Christmas package.
- The House, a creative Workspace in Monson Road, opened in October 2016 and is now almost 70 percent full.
- A Jobs & Training Fair and a West Kent Skillsfest with West Kent Partners and Jobcentreplus were successfully held in the Assembly Hall Theatre.
- An architect was appointed to the Cultural and Learning Hub project in October 2016.
- The Civic Development, including proposals for new theatre, progressed to RIBA stage 3.
- In June 2016, a Sports and Active recreation Strategy was approved the Cabinet – providing a framework for the development of sport activities, facilities and services in the borough.
- Working with the Friends group, further funding streams, including HLF programmes for the Calverley Grounds were explored.
- In October 2016, the contract for the Tunbridge Wells Borough Lottery was awarded to an external company - enabling voluntary and community organisations within the borough to develop new fund raising capability.
- Work on an Economic Needs Strategy for the borough was undertaken.
- Capital works for the bereavement service were undertaken including a memorial wall and new cloister garden.

5. Priorities for 2017/18:

- Production of an Economic Development Plan for the borough.
- Submission of a Stage 2 HLF and Arts Council bid and planning application for the Cultural & Learning Hub.
- Continuation of the development of a new theatre fit for the future and to work on a scheme to provide viable economic use for the civic complex.
- Delivering the initiatives detailed in the Council's Sports and Active Recreation Strategy.
- Placing public art in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.
- Developing Assembly Hall Theatre audiences through production and delivery of an operational plan.
- Exploring the feasibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre.

6. Contact: Councillor Mrs Jane March, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 1RS, Email: jane.march@tunbridgewells.gov.uk