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| <p><b>1. Executive Summary</b></p> <p>1.1. The Overview Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Woodville Halls. A Task Group consisting of five members of the Scrutiny Committee carried out the review.</p> <p>1.2 The terms of reference for the review were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the light of the proposed rationalisation of the entertainments programme at the Woodville Halls for budgetary purposes and the reported longer term 'considerable investment' required in the complex, to examine:</li> <li>• The impact on the current entertainments programme and the options available within the budget now set</li> <li>• The nature, scope and possible cost of the capital investment required in the buildings (and their fabric/equipment) and how this might be financed</li> <li>• The rationale for, and possible nature of, alternative uses for the complex</li> <li>• User and public views on the above (but excluding costing/finance)</li> <li>• The review to be informed by the experiences of other civic entertainment complexes in Kent/Medway districts/ boroughs</li> </ul> <p>1.3 The context in which this review was undertaken was the considerable investment in the Woodville Halls and the venue in the longer term.</p> <p>1.4 Two evidence gathering sessions were held with witnesses from Gravesham council's leisure department and Kent Thameside. Visits to the Winter Gardens – Margate, Princes Hall – Aldershot,</p> | <p>1.5 Recommendations to Cabinet are:-</p> <p>In the short term (to cover a five year period)</p> <p>1.5.1 The committee supports the move towards events that maximise income from the bar and catering such as the dinner/cabarets that were being trialled this Christmas and proved to be financially successful. This will entail a move away from theatre style events and it will be necessary to research the local market and competition for these types of events</p> <p>1.5.2 Exploratory talks should be held with Thanet Leisure Force to examine what advantages they could offer in running the Woodville Halls.</p> <p>1.5.3 In the light of the positive feedback from the Theatre manager of Princes Hall Aldershot investigate the practicability of establishing a venue managers' forum, in the surrounding area, to exchange information and best practice.</p> <p>1.5.4 No significant capital expenditure should be undertaken (other than that needed to comply with Health &amp; Safety and Disabled Access legislation), including that involved with the 'immediately suitable options for alternative uses' identified in the recent feasibility report, until the long term future of both the Woodville Halls and the Civic Centre have been determined.</p> <p>1.5.5 A separate costing exercise into the provision of up graded seating and air conditioning be undertaken to allow a judgement to be made as to whether</p> | <p>The Orchard Theatre – Dartford and a tour of the Woodville Halls were also included. All these visits included discussions with the venue's managers as part of the evidence gathering process. (Notes on these evidence gathering sessions are reproduced in Appendix 3)</p> |
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such short term investment could be justified.

For the long term (five years plus)

- 1.5.6 Consideration should be given to a 'whole site solution' involving the Centre/Woodville Halls/Cygnets House and potentially the current Police Headquarters whereby commercial redevelopment of such (primarily residential housing) could release funds to enable the provision of a purpose-designed/built Performing Arts Centre elsewhere in Gravesend/Northfleet and a new Civic Centre Building.