

At a meeting of the CULTURE AND LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 22nd APRIL, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J.B. Scott in the Chair

Councillors Bohill, Foster, G. Hall, L. Walton and Wares

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the Committee on behalf of Councillors Carthy, Errington, P. Gibson, T. Martin and Sleightholme.

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 18th March, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Cultural Programming and Activity

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an update regarding the Cultural Strategy that was launched in August 2003.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Zoe Channing, Assistant Head of Culture and Tourism Arts Creative Development, took Members through the report advising of the key priorities which had been identified through the work of the Culture Partnership and the action plan which focussed on the 10 areas of greatest significance.

Having fully considered the report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted for information.

Arts and Creative Development Activity – September to March 2008

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated Members on the Arts and Creative Development activity for the period September to March 2008.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Channing introduced the Committee to Ms. Jessica Bell, Arts Development Officer, Ms. Amanda Gould, Arts Education Officer and Ms. Pauline Haughey, Arts Centre Manager who gave a presentation to Members which outlined some of the projects and developments that had taken place.

The Officer advised the Committee that the Arts and Creative Development Team were currently working on the development of an Arts and Creative Development Strategy for Sunderland which would be submitted to a future meeting of the committee for consideration by Members.

Councillor Foster commented that he had attended a number of events, including the SHINE presentation which had been held and felt that they had not been advertised widely enough to inform others of them. Ms. Channing advised that this year they were hoping to incorporate the SHINE exhibition within the Winter Festival so that they were not seen as two separate events. An issue they had had this year was that the funding for the SHINE artwork had been so late in being awarded that a lot of the publications and marketing material had already been published. Now that the service were aware of this, they could plan better for marketing the event in future years.

Councillor Hall referred to the late decision of Culture 10 with regard to the funding and the effect it could have on events being planned. Ms. Channing advised that the team tried to plan events as far ahead as possible and have everything prepared for when the funding is agreed. This year for example they heard in August 2007 that they may be receiving the funding but it was not released until November 2007 so details could not be finalised until then.

In relation to the film made by the Washington Youth Theatre group, Councillor Wares asked if it could be shown in schools in the city as it could be inspirational to young people and be used by teachers to interest them in other subjects.

Councillor Wares also commended the Young Explorers Passport Scheme and felt it was a good initiative to get young people visiting places of interest.

Having fully considered the report and answered Members' questions, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and that the progress to date be noted and that Members are kept advised regarding progress relating to future Arts and Creative Development activity.

Performance Report 2007/2008 (3rd Quarter Position – April to December 2007)

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report and Deputy Chief Executive (copy circulated) providing Members with a position statement regarding key performance indicators and risk areas across the Council for the period April to December 2007 (Quarter 3).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Gillian Robinson, Corporate Performance Monitoring Manager presented the report advising that the report essentially focussed on libraries and museums as the majority of information relating to sport and leisure was only available on an annual basis.

In relation to libraries Ms. Robinson informed Members there were 19 performance indicators of which 14 were improving or maintaining performance levels.

Councillor Wares commented that he was disappointed to see that the Council were not on schedule to achieve the Library Standard Target of 6,000 visits to public libraries and was advised by Ms. Robinson that a sample of visitors was taken around city libraries four times a year and although the numbers were increasing they were not enough to reach the target.

In response to a query from Councillor Wares regarding the lower number of pupil visits to museums and galleries, Ms. Robinsons informed the Committee that there was a range of new educational learning provisions to be rolled out which would increase pupil visitor numbers late in 2008. The museums and galleries also looked back on the promotions they had offered over the past year and what had been successful before deciding upon activities to undertake and offer in the future programme of events.

Councillor Hall reiterated the comments made by Councillor Wares regarding pupil visits to museums, libraries and galleries and asked that further information be sought from the Children's Services Directorate to find out which schools were visiting the facilities and if there were any recurring reasons from those schools that were not such as insurance issues of external visits.

Councillor Bohill referred to the numbers of visitors to libraries and commented that some visitors would use the computers all day or issue a number of books but that it was only recorded as one visit so did not give a true picture. Ms. Robinson advised that new Performance Indicators would count the percentage of people who use the facilities rather than actual visits which may provide more useful information.

Having fully considered the report, the Chair proposed it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and the information be noted as part of the Council's quarterly monitoring arrangements.

Final Policy Review Report – 'Not Treading Water'

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced Members to the final policy review report 'Not Treading Water'.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Rhiannon Hood, Assistant City Solicitor, presented the report to Members advising that 16 recommendations had been made which the Community and Cultural Services Directorate would take forward following endorsement by Cabinet.

Having considered the report, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the final policy review report be submitted to Cabinet and quarterly updates on the progress made by the Community and Cultural Services Directorate be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

End of Year Report

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with a report to be submitted to Council on the operation of the Committee in 2007/08.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Bohill sought clarification on the membership of the Northern Tourist Board. Councillor Foster commented that he had been a member on the board and understood it was now part of One North East's remit. The Chairman asked Officers to send a memo to Members outlining the current situation.

Having considered the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the End of Year report be received and submitted to Council for consideration.

Action Plan for Scrutiny

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which updated the Committee on the current information, monitoring delivery of the Action Plan for Scrutiny 2007-08.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Hood presented the report and advised Members of the Scrutiny Day which had been planned for the 20th May, at the Stadium of Light, to which all Members had been invited.

Having considered the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the actions taken to date towards meeting the objectives of the Action Plan be received and noted.

Having thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting, the Chairman closed the meeting.

(Signed) J.B. SCOTT,
Chairman.