

At a meeting of the CULTURE AND LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 16th SEPTEMBER, 2008 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor J.B. Scott in the Chair

Councillors Ellis, Errington, Foster, P. Gibson, G. Hall, Howe, T. Martin, Mordey, Wake and Wares

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the Committee on behalf of Councillor Symonds

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 15th July, 2008 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Item 6 – 2012 Olympic Preparations

Councillor G. Hall declared a personal interest in the item as Treasurer of the University of Sunderland Cricket Club.

Item 7 - Wellness Centre Pricing Framework

Councillor G. Hall declared a personal interest in the item as a user of the Seaburn Centre.

Developing Music in Sunderland

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with information relating to the development of Music in Sunderland through a proposed 5 year strategy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms. Zoe Channing, Assistant Head of Culture and Tourism Arts and Creative Development presented the report and highlighted the key points of the strategy which included the expansion of membership of the music forum to provide a network and support for the development of rock and popular music in Sunderland and a series of pilot festivals to determine future models.

Members raised the following issues:-

- Were there any plans for a particular multi purpose iconic venue as a focus for the Strategy?

Ms. Channing advised that currently an audit was being carried out of existing venues to establish whether they could be viable. Examples included Holy Trinity Church, Royalty Theatre and Washington Arts Centre as well as a number of youth and community facilities. Audit findings may conclude that there was the need for such a venue.

- Sunderland Empire's contract with Live Nation tended to focus on community dancing events rather than music.

Ms. Channing advised that the audit would take the situation into consideration and would determine where the steer needed to be.

- Sunderland appeared to be lacking the large concert venues of other cities for holding more structured music events. There were a number of established regional competitors for audience, funding and profile which should be explored further.
- If people were to be encouraged to travel to the City for music events, consideration needed to be given to building more hotels etc.

Ms. Channing advised that consultations had taken place with Development and Regeneration and a paper was out for consideration to all Directorates on the implications for the City.

- What was the current position regarding contribution to music in schools?

Ms. Channing advised that the provision of music tuition had improved significantly. Key to this success was the enthusiasm and dedication of the young people.

- How successful was the festival pilot?

Ms. Channing advised that the pilots had been very successful and it was hoped that the achievement could be built on next year.

- In some ways the report made for depressing reading as Sunderland trailed well behind other cities. The decision to remove peripatetic teaching from the City 15 years ago had great effect. There was a lot

of love for music in Sunderland and people should be able to take advantage

Ms. Channing advised that funding was fixed from national government, but the Council were looking at other funding streams to enhance provision.

Having thanked the Officer for her report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that Members comments on the finding in the Consultants report and the proposed 5 year strategy for music development in Sunderland be noted for the purpose of the Committee's Policy Review.

Management of Allotments

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to advise Members of progress made in relation to the allotments review.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Peter High, Head of Environmental Services, presented the report and outlined progress made to improve the service.

Members raised the following issues:-

- Why Sunderland's charges were lower than other areas in the region?

Mr. High advised that there was no particular reason why Sunderland's charges were lower other than for historical reasons which had been an attempt to encourage people to use allotments.
- What percentage of allotments were unused?

Mr. High advised that Environmental Services were in the process of identifying unused sites to better gauge which sites were in demand. There was a recognised need for funding to clear plots that had been inappropriately used by people without tenancy agreements.

Having considered the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted and a further progress report be submitted in due course.

2012 Olympic Preparations

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an overview regarding preparations leading up to the 2012 London Olympic Games.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Alison O'Neil presented the report and outlined the main drivers at a local level to create a lasting legacy from the Games with a focus on encouraging participation in physical activity, promoting Sunderland as a place to visit, supporting talented athletes and increasing opportunities for volunteering in sport.

Members made the following comments:-

- Beijing had been a highly successful Games for Britain's Olympic and Paralympic athletes and had acted as a good launch pad for even greater success in 2012. Sunderland's athletes were to be congratulated for their contribution, however, there had been some concerning remarks in the press regarding the lack of support for medal winning boxer Tom Jeffries from the City – this was not true and should not go unchallenged.
- What was the criteria for the Council to fly the 2012 British Olympic flag during the hand-over from the Beijing Olympics to London?

Ms. O'Neil advised that the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) imposes strict guidelines on when the flag could be flown.

- Members requested that a report be brought back to the Committee detailing how the Council could contribute to the enhancement of financial and vocational support for local elite athletes. It was unclear whether there would be an allocation of additional resources to priority sports (such as boxing) to enhance development potential. Further, Members urged more school-level nurturing of athletes. Councillor Errington requested information on the existing competitive leagues in schools in Sunderland.

Ms. O'Neil advised that in conjunction with the Youth Sport Trust, there was an aim of delivering high quality PE and sport to all young people, regardless of ability, whereby the development of Specialist Sports Colleges and School Sport Partnerships were supported.

- What facilities would be available for training camps and how would security issues be dealt with?

Ms. O'Neil advised that for those places hoping to become a training camp a number of major priorities had to be fulfilled, including that of

security. At this stage Sunderland had lodged an interest in hosting a training camp.

Having considered the report it was:-

4. RESOLVED that:-

- i) A future update report is brought back to the Committee detailing how the Council could contribute to supporting elite athletes, and regular reports are submitted on preparation for the 2012 Olympic Games; and
- ii) The contents of the report be received and noted.

Wellness Centre Pricing Framework

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with a brief update on progress in relation to the proposed study into the wellness pricing structure.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Alison O'Neil was present to address any questions.

Members welcomed the report.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Government's free swimming initiative for the over 60s and under 16 year olds, Ms. O'Neil advised that Sunderland had to confirm its participation in the over 60s element to receive a grant for future years. The Authority had also submitted an expression of interest to extend the free swimming initiative to those aged 16 or under. A grant would be awarded to those local authorities that take up both schemes.

Accordingly it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- i) a full report is brought to the November 2008 meeting to provide Members with an in-depth examination of the wellness pricing structure, including comparisons with other local authorities;
- ii) arrangements are made for Members to visit sports facilities in the City

Performance Report and Value for Money Assessment 2007/08

The Chief Executive (Acting), City Treasurer and Director of Cultural and Community Services submitted a report to provide Members with an individual service overview of the Value for Money Self Assessment 2008 submitted to the Audit Commission in accordance with the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Use of Resources requirements.

Ms. Gillian Robinson, Corporate Performance Monitoring Manager, was in attendance and provided a summary of the Assessment for Cultural Services.

Members raised the following issues:-

- What were the outcomes of the consultation on sports facilities?

Ms. Robinson agreed to find out.

- Satisfaction with children's playgrounds remained low. Was there an investment plan for these?

Ms. Robinson advised that the statistics formed part of a larger piece of work on improving play provision. Sunderland has been successful in obtaining £750,000 funding from the BIG Lottery fund to deliver 6 new play areas in 2008. The service has also secured a government award of £2.15 million from the Government's Play Pathfinder Programme, one of only 20 Councils in the Country to achieve this. The money will go towards 28 new or extensively refurbished play areas across Sunderland by 2010 and there were plans for a City Adventure Centre. However, she accepted that at the time of consultation satisfaction levels were not good.

- 90% of young people receive 2 hours quality PE per week. This meant some children were not getting 2 hours of PE. Who was responsible for measuring this?

Ms. Robinson advised that activities were controlled locally by schools and monitored on a yearly basis by the Schools Service. Ms. O'Neil advised that funding was directed by the Partnership Development Managers supported by the Youth Sport Trust.

- It was concerning that funding for the library service in Sunderland was less than neighbouring authorities.
- Satisfaction levels in relation to the beach were down. A safety review needed to take into account the need for emergency equipment and lifelines and that the central access point to the beach had been welded up.

Mr. Chris Alexander, Head of Culture and Tourism, advised that regular safety checks and inspections were carried out and recommendations for action taken forward.

- The loss of the blue flag status at Roker and Seaburn beaches was extremely disappointing and it was suggested that the Environmental and Planning Review Committee may want to take up the issue with Northumbrian Water.
- Visits to Sunderland Leisure Centres were down.

Ms. Robinson agreed to provide exact figures for the downward trend. Ms. O'Neil advised that the downturn in attendees in 2007/08 could be linked to the transition period as people migrate from Crowtree to the Aquatic Centre.

- The greatest participation sport was angling, yet this was actively discouraged in the South Dock and Roker Area with the imposition of barriers.
- Members expressed dissatisfaction with play facilities, particularly with regard to the East of Sunderland where a substantial amount of funding had already been lost, and future funding would be lost if not committed.

Ms. O'Neil advised that the Play and Urban Games Strategy had identified levels of quality and had consolidated where investments should be directed. This included play sites on school grounds and supervised sites. It was important that current play facilities were accessible and that they fit with the strategic picture. Extensive consultation had taken place with Hendon residents who had indicated they were happy with the direction of travel.

Having considered the report, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that Members receive the report and Members comments be noted.

Sport and Leisure Annual Report

The City Solicitor submitted a report to provide Members of the Committee with proposals for a sport and leisure annual report that will provide information on previous policy review progress, current strategies and how policy reviews and the work of the Committee has made an impact on sport and leisure strategies.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Review Co-ordinator, took Members through the report.

7. RESOLVED that the Committee receive an annual sport and leisure report to be presented at the February 2009 review committee meeting and that this be included in the work programme for 2008/09.

Request to Attend Conference

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to invite the Committee to consider sending delegates to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals Conference entitled Culture Connects.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Review Co-ordinator, took Members through the report.

8. RESOLVED that consideration be given as to which Members would like to attend the Conference.

Policy Development and Review 2008/2009 : Scope

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek agreement from Members in relation to the final terms of reference for this year's Policy Review 'A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland'.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Review Co-ordinator, took Members through the report.

9. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the title of the Review 'A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland' be agreed;
- ii) the aims and objectives of the review be agreed;
- iii) Members give consideration to witnesses to be used for consultation and evidence gathering purposes during the review.

Work Programme 2008/09

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide for Members' information the current work programme for the Committees' work during the 2008/09 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

10. RESOLVED that the contents of the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) J.B. SCOTT,
Chairman.