

At a meeting of the CULTURE AND LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2006 at 5.30 p.m.

Present:-

Councillor Ambrose in the Chair

Councillors Bohill, Foster, P. Gibson, Grey, P. Walker, L. Walton, Wares and B. Williams

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Mann and J.B. Scott.

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 18th July, 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillor Bohill declared a personal interest in Items 5 'Study into Use of Public Libraries Annual Library Plan 2006 and Update on Progress Towards Achieving National Public Library Standards' and 6 'Study into Use of Public Libraries – Feedback from Committee Visit', as seller of glass items in the City Library gift shop.

Councillors Gibson, Grey, Walker and Wares declared a personal interest in Item 8 'Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2005-2010) : Update Report', as Members on Boards of Sunderland Housing Group.

Councillor Foster declared a personal interest in Item 8 'Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2005-2010)', as Chairman of the Safer Sunderland Partnership.

Planning for 2012 – Progress Report

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which gave the Committee background information on the progress made with regard to preparing for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Tanya Gray, Sports Advisor at ONE NorthEast, gave a presentation to Members detailing the region's approach to the London 2012 Games and its implications for the City of Sunderland.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes)

Ms. Gray advised the Committee of ongoing developments progressing in London and the North East and informed Members of the potential regional benefits and the key messages which were being given as guidance.

Councillor Foster asked if there was any indication as to whether the 50m pool in Sunderland would be used as a training facility during the 2012 Games and was informed by Ms. Gray that although ONE NorthEast had wanted to submit a regional offer for facilities, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had decided to allow single applications from any area to be submitted through their web site. She advised that Sunderland had until the end of January to submit an application and that the application should not only meet the technical specifications required but also have the environment surrounding the facilities, i.e. transport infrastructure, hotels, etc.

Councillor Williams asked what other sports facilities would have been included in a regional application and was told that it would have been based on the Gateshead Stadium, Tees Barrage, the 50m pool and a number of gymnastic coaches and services. She advised Members that smaller amenities would also have been included, such as university campus' which could have been held training for boxing, rowing, fencing, hockey, etc. and areas in Northumberland for the equestrian provision, which would now need to submit their own applications to be considered.

Councillor Williams enquired how the proposed Stadium would be reduced from a capacity of 80,000 to 35,000 and asked if following the Games it would be used as a football venue. Ms. Gray advised that until the land remediation on site had been completed and the area prepared, the exact details of the Stadium and its future uses could be determined.

Councillor Foster asked if lottery fund applications from other agencies would be affected due to the 2012 Games being awarded £1.5 billion from the National Lottery toward funding. He was informed that the English Heritage Group were the only agency who received lottery funding who had had their resources cut back, no other agencies had raised concerns as they had been informed by the National Lottery that they would not be affected in any way with regard to future awards.

Councillor Wares advised of a sailing event that had come from the Isle of Wight and had been in the region and enjoyed the facilities available and asked if the area had been considered for similar events for the 2012 Games. Ms. Gray informed the Committee that it was proposed that all sailing events would take place in Weymouth and Portland and that for this reason, most training facilities would be located in neighbouring sites in the South of England.

The Chair thanked Ms. Gray for her thorough and informative presentation and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the presentation and report be received and noted.

Study Into Use of Public Libraries Annual Library Plan 2006 and Update on Progress Towards Achieving National Public Library Standards

The Director of Community and Cultural Services and the City Solicitor submitted a joint report (copy circulated) which set out the baseline position for the Committee's study into improving the usage of public libraries within the City.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Jane Hall, Assistant Head of Culture and Tourism, gave a presentation on the production of the Annual Library Plan for 2006 and the position of Sunderland's Public Library Service in relation to achieving the National Public Library Standards.

Ms. Hall introduced Allison Clarke, Staff Training and Development Officer, Valerie Craggs, City Librarian and Event Co-ordinator and Julie McCann, Principal Librarian E-Resources and Information Services, from the City Library and advised they were on hand to answer any questions Members may have.

(For copy presentation – see original minutes)

Councillor Bohill queried if there was a general reading topic trend or if data was recorded on this and was informed that fiction was most popular but that there was no further detail collected other than that.

Councillor Williams asked if the Local Studies Centre was cross cutting over other authorities and was advised by Ms. Hall that anyone from any area could use the facility. As for the content, she informed Members that information was only kept up until a certain age and then if a user required something older than was stored they would be directed toward the Tyne and Wear Archives. She also made the Committee aware of the fact that a number of enquiries were consistently received both nationally and from overseas requesting information.

In response to a query from the Chair concerning the importance of stock procurement, Ms. Hall advised that stock was purchased through a consortium of 10 of the region's 12 Local Authorities and NEPO, which simplified the tendering process, whilst still remaining competitive.

Ms. Hall informed the Committee that at present a team of staff were involved in choosing the stock but a new report suggests asking the supplier to provide stock based on a community profiling system.

The Chair sought clarification on what would happen if someone requested a book which the library did not stock and was told by Ms. Hall that after checking the book was not available at any neighbouring Local Authority Library, a decision would be made on whether or not a copy should be ordered from the supplier.

Councillor Gibson stated that he had been unaware, until the recent tour of libraries, that books in good condition could be donated to a library to use. Councillor Bohill remarked that he also donated specialist magazines for library use.

The Chair commended the work of the library service and having thanked Ms. Hall for her presentation, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the presentation and report be noted.

Study Into Use of Public Libraries – Feedback from Committee Visit

The City Solicitor provided a report (copy circulated) which gave Members the opportunity to provide feedback on their visit to a range of public libraries in the City on 8th September, 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Jim Diamond, Review Co-ordinator, took Members through the range of issues which had been raised during the visit, some of which were general observations and others that were more specific to individual libraries.

Councillor Gibson had attended the visit and informed the Committee how they had been of varying levels and ages of facilities. Councillor Bohill raised how friendly and helpful library staff had been in them all.

Ms. Hall agreed to take back all the positive comments to the staff and expressed that she felt they were one of the library services' greatest assets.

Following discussion of the feedback and issues, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

National Glass Centre - Update

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update regarding the announcement of free admission to the National Glass Centre that had been introduced in August 2006.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Jane Hall, Assistant Head of Culture and Tourism advised Members that daily attendance figures were averaging in excess of 540 visitors, which represents a 43% increase over a similar period a year ago. The Committee were also informed that by working with key partners the Council had helped secure a new way forward for the natural cultural venue.

Councillor Foster informed the Committee that he had attended an International Glass Conference where experts had been complimentary of the Centre and its outstanding facilities.

The Chair agreed the Centre was a venue for Sunderland to be proud of and following discussion of the report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2005-2010)

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which presented Members with an update with regard to Sunderland's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

John Rostron, Sports Services Manager, took Members through the strategy highlighting key areas, focussing on the infrastructure and delivery of the services.

With regard to paragraph 4.4 of the report, Councillor Foster queried the changing of current facilities and if this would be addressed. Mr. Rostron advised that the weaknesses in facility provision had been identified last year and it had been acknowledged that there were limited resources available, he explained that in January 2007 it would be more appropriate to investigate further and then look at the implications it uncovered.

Councillor Bohill asked if the work to be undertaken would help in the support of both Looked After Children and young residents who could not afford certain facilities and was informed that there was a new funding 'pot' available for youths to bid to, to help cover the costs of activities. He advised that there

was a number of funding allocations available for youth teams and groups but that they needed to be better informed that it was available and how they could get it. Mr. Rostron also told Members that Looked After Children were given an Active 8 card which allowed access to Leisure Centres in the City.

The Chair was pleased to see Sunderland Football Club more involved and was advised that they would be a key partner in a number of future schemes and events the Council were planning.

5. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

(Signed) M. AMBROSE,
Chairman.