

**At a meeting of the CULTURE AND LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2009 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Errington in the Chair

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

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the Committee on behalf of Councillors Mordey, J.B. Scott and Symonds.

**Minutes of the last Meeting**

Councillor Howe noted that the minutes of the last meeting did not attribute Members' names to their comments and requested that future minutes include individual Members' comments.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to:
  - i) Councillor Howe being recorded as enquiring if Sunderland had ever been considered as a venue for the Public Library Authorities Conference; and
  - ii) Councillor P. Gibson being noted as raising concerns over the City Centre Library signage and shelving issues.

**Declarations of Interest**

Item 7 – Sport and Leisure Update

Councillor T. Martin declared a personal interest as a Member of the Raich Carter Sports Centre Management Board.

**A Place to Play – A Review of Music Venues in Sunderland**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an update on the progress in relation to the policy review on music venues in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

As proposed at an earlier meeting, a variety of music performers had been invited to share their experiences of performing in Sunderland.

Members of Sunderland University Big Band performed three songs for the Committee and were on hand to answer Members' queries.

After congratulating the band on their performance, Members asked the following questions:-

- Is there a jazz scene within Sunderland?

The Big Band informed Members that university bars, Bonded Warehouse and the Campus cater for jazz, but as far as Sunderland city centre, the only venue that put on jazz bands would be the White Room.

Newcastle has more of a jazz scene, with the jazz café for example, however, the Stadium of Light has hosted a Big Band Festival.

- Councillor P. Gibson recommended the Davey Lamp in Washington as a possible venue after the recent site visits.
- What type of audience figures does the Big Band attract?

The Big Band advised that audience figures are generally quite low at around 50-60 people.

- Is this due to lack of advertising?

The Big Band advised that their concerts are only advertised through the University, but they might attract bigger audiences with better advertising.

The Band also suggested that if the City of Sunderland had its own central website advertising jazz and so on, it would give people more choice as there are possible venues in Sunderland, just not the advertising of them.

- Councillor Wake noted that in the past there were underground newspapers informing of concerts.

The Big Band informed Members of the website [giglistings.co.uk](http://giglistings.co.uk) which can be used by buskers, for example to attract slightly bigger audiences.

- Councillor G. Hall advised that the Glass Centre had run Tapas and jazz nights in the past and that the casino in Sunderland sometimes have a jazz trio perform.

Councillor Hall also expressed his surprise that the Sunderland Echo does not advertise what is on.

Councillor T. Martin advised that there are ways of putting listings into the Sunderland Echo. Councillor Martin also suggested a system within the council's website where the public could search for concert listings in categories.

- Councillor Wake suggested that our website include a scrolling tickertape, advertising upcoming events.
- Members recommended the Washington Arts Centre, The Royalty and Blue Bell pubs as possible venues for jazz music.
- What are the student participation figures for the Band?

The Big Band advised that student participation is quite low, but that is due to internal university advertising. Not many students know of the Band.

- Do you publicise within the University?

The Band informed Members that they advertise on their website but this hasn't been updated.

- Councillor Wake suggested the Band contact SUN FM when they want to advertise their concerts.

Having thanked Sunderland University Big Band for their attendance, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report and Sunderland University Big Band's comments be noted and that the evidence gathered be used as part of the Committee's research for the policy review on Sunderland venues.

### **Members Request for Inclusion of an Item – Audit of Listed Buildings**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Review Committee Work Programme to look into a full audit of listed buildings, including the works required and the feasibility of accessing external funding for such works.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman invited Councillor Graham Hall to present his request for the Committee to consider an additional item.

Councillor Hall advised Members that there are many examples of neglected buildings within Sunderland and felt the heritage in the City was worth preserving.

Councillor Hall also advised that work was already underway with the Development and Regeneration Department and requested that a review be

taken, working alongside officers on how we could preserve our listed buildings.

Members commented that Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee are already looking into the subject and it might be helpful to see their report and findings.

The Chairman suggested the Committee see the report of Policy and Co-ordination and that lists of listed buildings be circulated to all Members, informing them of what buildings come under their Wards.

Councillor G. Hall advised that a list of Listed Buildings can be found online and clarified that the item request was specifically for Council owned listed buildings.

The Chairman enquired if Policy and Co-ordination report was specifically Council owned buildings.

Mike Lowe, Principal Planner, advised that Policy and Co-ordination's report would only include Council owned listed buildings.

Councillor T. Martin commented that concerns should not just be raised on Council owned buildings as many unused listed buildings are becoming susceptible to vandalism.

3. RESOLVED that a report on an audit of listed buildings, including the findings from Policy and Co-ordination Review Committee, be submitted to a future Review Committee meeting.

### **Members Request for Inclusion of an Item – Blue Flag Status – Roker and Seaburn**

The City Solicitor submitted a report (copy circulated) to consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Review Committee Work Programme to look into the Blue Flag criteria and water quality and invite Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss this.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Graham Hall advised the Committee that the Council had, through no fault of their own, received strong criticism over the Blue Flag water quality at Roker and Seaburn.

Councillor Hall requested that Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency be invited to appear before the Committee to identify the issues of why the water quality is being criticised.

Councillor T. Martin expressed his support of the request for the additional item as he had received several complaints over the water quality, especially in the Hendon area.

Councillor Martin also expressed concerns over the safety of Hendon Beach and informed the Committee he had requested a meeting with the Resorts Manager.

Councillor Howe informed Members that the Beach Resorts Office kept a log of complaints relating to raw sewage coming to shore and that these should be presented to Northumbrian Water when they attend.

Councillor Howe also advised that recent attempts to obtain copies of the log have been denied due to Data Protection issues, as the log contains complainant names and addresses.

Julie Elliott, Assistant Head of Culture and Tourism, advised that when an instance of pollution is reported, it is logged and she would investigate the matter further.

Elaine Waugh, Senior Assistant City Solicitor, advised that it may be possible to provide the log of complaints if it were 'anonymised'.

The Chairman requested that letters of invitation be sent out to both Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

4. RESOLVED that:

- i) a report on Blue Flag criteria and water quality at Roker and Seaburn be submitted to a future Review Committee meeting; and
- ii) letters of invitation be sent to Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

### **Sport and Leisure Update**

The Director of Community and Cultural Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview for Members regarding the work of the Sport and Leisure Service, highlighting both revenue and capital projects that have recently been completed or are in the planning and delivery process.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Julie D. Gray, Head of Community Services, Alison O'Neill, Assistant Head of Community Services (Sport and Leisure), Victoria French, Wellness Manager and Julie Russell, Sport and Leisure Partnership Manager, each presented sections of the report and were on hand to answer Members' queries.

Members raised the following issues:-

- What is the status in relation to the 2012 Olympics and would Sunderland be used as a training camp?

Ms. O'Neill advised that the directorate were in discussions with Sport England and One North East over the possibility of Sunderland being used as a training base. The smaller countries might not decide on their training base until ten weeks before the games, whereas the bigger countries might make a decision earlier.

- If Sunderland were to be selected as a training base, what facilities would be used to house the squad?

Ms. O'Neill informed the Committee that if Sunderland were to attract a swimming squad, for example, each could have 3-50+ members, the accommodation requirements would be fulfilled by the Sunderland University, the details of which have been included in the supporting documentation of the application.

- If Sunderland were to host pre-games training, this would give more publicity to the region, would it also increase the risk of terrorism?

Ms. O'Neill advised that terrorism was one of a number of issues being discussed with One North East and Sport England.

Decisions on terrorism would be made, depending on which Country/Squad was due to train in the area, and the Council would work closely with the Police.

Councillor P. Gibson advised that the National Committee, which includes Police, Ambulance and Fire Authority, are looking at the issue.

- Councillor G. Hall welcomed the addition of swimming pools at Hetton and Silksworth but had received complaints over the lack of sauna provisions.

Ms. Russell advised that budget constraints and small demand had resulted in cutting the sauna provision.

Councillor G. Hall commented on complaints and criticism in the press relating to the parking facilities and people not being able to use the 50m pool at the Aquatic Centre and felt that with the amount of investment, these should not have been issues.

Councillor G. Hall also stated that he would like to see a separate detailed report on the Aquatic Centre.

Ms. O'Neill advised that the directorate do address and respond to all complaints raised and are working with Ward Councillors in how to deal with such issues.

Issues that cannot be addressed at present, parking on match days for instance, could possibly be addressed in Stage 2 of the Stadium Park development.

Councillor G. Hall commented that the Stadium Park and facilities that would be available do not look like progressing any time soon and he does not want to have three years of complaints.

Ms. Gray proposed that a full report on the Aquatic Centre be presented to the Committee upon the Centre's one year anniversary. Ms. Gray also suggested the Aquatic Centre be the venue of that Committee meeting.

- In relation to the Lifestyle, Activity and Food (LAF) Programme, how many children had taken part?

Ms. French advised that 100 children and families were taking part in the programme which includes meeting with a dietician and a community wellness coach after school.

- Could the programme be implemented during school hours?

Ms. French informed Members that the programme was family orientated, so the after school hours could accommodate the parents and the programme also requires specialist care.

The schools work within the programme is to identify overweight and obese children.

- How is the LAF programme offered to families?

Ms. French advised there is a National Measuring Programme that weighs children in Reception and then in Year 6.

The information is issued to families, voicing concerns over their child's weight. The child can also be referred to the programme by Consultants, GPs and school nurses.

- So the programme is not compulsory?

Ms. French advised that information of the programme is given to the families and it is for them to decide if they want to partake.

- Have you had any feedback on the programme?

Ms. French informed Members that there has been significant success in the programme and when participation figures increase, the directorate can compile a detailed report.

- Councillor Wake expressed his dissatisfaction that the Pharmacy at the Bunny Hill Centre was closed on Saturdays.

Ms. Gray advised that the Pharmacy is not operated by the Council so it cannot stipulate what hours they open. Enquiries of complaints can be taken at the front reception desk which will then be passed onto the partners.

- Councillor Wares congratulated the directorate on their Wellness Programme, Sit and be Fit, and thanked officers for their efforts.

In relation to the Pricing Framework, Ms. O'Neill advised that the economic downturn was having an effect on the number of memberships being cancelled.

Ms. O'Neill also advised that membership prices would not increase during 2009-2010.

Members welcomed this proposal and suggested it be advertised to the public.

Ms. O'Neill informed the Committee that the free swimming programme would only include casual, not instructor, led classes.

Councillor T. Martin welcomed the free swimming programme and would like to see it rolled out across the City.

Councillor G. Hall also welcomed the programme but raised concerns on what happens once the two year funding ends.

- In relation to the Playing Pitch Strategy, Councillor P. Gibson raised concerns over the vandalism of Silksworth Playing Field and the need to look at other issues as well as the condition of the pitch.

Ms. Russell advised that security measures are to be considered within the consultation of the Football Investment Strategy.

- Councillor Howe raised concerns over the poor drainage of the Fulwell football pitch, resulting in flooding, leaving young people with no facilities to use.

Ms. Russell recognised Members' concerns with the Football Investment Strategy, the directorate need to determine what is best way forward getting the balance right for a real pathway between a general 'kickabout' to competitive games.



- Councillor Wake also raised concerns over the drainage at Rickleton football pitches.

Ms. Russell informed the Committee that the directorate had written to Ward Councillors for their views and the process will take into account all of these issues.

- Councillor G. Hall expressed concern at the lack of a playing field at St. Peter's, and also that the land at the University had been identified for housing in the Regional Spatial Strategy, and is disturbed we are losing pitches instead of gaining.

Ms. Gray advised that the directorate would be coming back to Councillors for input on finalising the Strategy and their needs.

- Councillor Ellis commented on the difficulties Houghton Colliery Cricket Club were having in getting planning permissions for batting nets. Councillor Ellis felt that it was a shame that funding could be missed out on due to delays with planning.

Ms. Russell advised that it was unfortunate but there are rules and guidelines that need to be followed.

- In relation to the Play Pathfinder, Ms. Russell advised that the directorate were looking for Members' views on local issues and to identify possible areas.

Councillor Howe raised concerns that attempts to get Lambton Worm Park regenerated had been turned down due to lack of funding and that young people within the Seaburn and Fulwell areas have been neglected.

Councillor Howe also commented on how the Fulwell Skate Park has been vandalised and is not used.

Ms. Russell advised that young people were consulted in the development of the Skate Park and it is well used. There is also Pirate Park which is well used and Lambton Worm Park has been catered for more than some areas.

Councillor Howe commented that Pirate Park was declining due to vandalism, older youths are congregating there. There are also people who have been chased from the Skate Park causing problems in the streets.

Ms. Russell advised that if there are problems with anti social behaviour or nuisance, these should be escalated to LMAPS.

Ms. Russell also advised that the feedback received from young people has been good, but she accepts Councillor Howe's comments.

- Councillor G. Hall commented that the Skate Park should have been more visual, rather than hidden away and there are issues in the area according to Police Officers in the South Area.

Councillor P. Gibson commented that many children from the Fulwell Ward attended a previous meeting of the Committee requesting the Skate Park.

Councillor Gibson also advised that Silksworth was the first area to receive a skate park and has had no problems.

- Councillor T. Martin commented that the Skate Park in Hendon has had no problems but agreed that if the park was more visual it might attract more users, add to the experience, if they had an audience.
- Councillor G. Hall raised concerns over the limited timescales given to Members on consultation, and used the Skate Park in Washington as an example.

Councillor Hall also made reference to amendments being made to Roker Park plans and work starting a week earlier than proposed without consultation and felt Members should not be in this position.

Ms. Russell informed Members that the Play Pathfinder Programme has involved 12 projects in nine months with another 16 due in following years, which all have strict deadlines to meet.

In relation to Roker Park, the consultation process was one of the longest over the nine months and the amendments made were minor changes to the design due to budget issues, but Ms. Russell acknowledged that Members could have been consulted.

In relation to consultation process for the wheeled Sports Park in Washington, Ms. Russell acknowledged that it had been ill timed and the speed of the programmes had caught many out. This has been rectified now as the directorate is working with Ward Councillors so everyone is clear on where we are going.

Ms. Russell advised that the directorate carry out the best consultation possible.

Councillor G. Hall commented that if Members are not consulted, they cannot represent what the directorate are trying to achieve.

- Councillor Wake informed the Committee that he had received many complaints over the Skate Park in Washington and was fully behind the scheme but not where it is to be situated.

Councillor Wake felt that Princess Anne Park was the best site for the project and asked that the directorate consider the proposal.

- Ms. Gray advised that the Directorate are embarking on the process, sending out newsletters, which Washington Councillors would see beforehand.

The Directorate would also be undertaking technical assessments of sites and would be going back to the Washington Area Committee.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Work Programme 2008-09**

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

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor T. Martin enquired if the fishing facilities item which had been requested at an earlier meeting of the Committee would be included for this year's programme or next.

Nigel Cummings, Review Co-ordinator, advised that he hoped to get the item on the Work Programme as soon as possible and will speak to officers.

Councillor G. Hall commented that two new items had also been identified in this meeting.

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

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

(Signed) D. ERRINGTON,  
Chairman