

(Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the sub-committee scheduled to be held on 2 October 2018.)

Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

31 July 2018

Present: Councillor D Drummond (Chair)
Councillors L Bell, J Cassidy, M Green, E Hodson, D McMeekan,
S Phillips, J O'Shea and A Waggott-Fairley.

CL01/07/18 Welcome and Introductions

In opening the Sub-committee's first meeting of the municipal year the Chair welcomed all new members and congratulated the former Chair, Councillor Sarah Day, on her recent appointment as Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure.

CL02/07/18 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors L Darke, C Davis, K Osborne and W Samuel.

CL03/07/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution, the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor C Davis.
Councillor M Green for Councillor K Osborne.

CL04/07/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

CL05/07/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 March 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CL06/07/18 Cultural and Leisure Services

The Sub-committee received a joint presentation from the senior manager of Cultural Services and senior manager of Sport and Leisure attended the meeting and presented Members with overview of the Cultural and Leisure Service provision. The presentation focused on the scope of these services, their financing and future development.

The Authority's cultural and leisure provision accounted for over 3 million visits by members of the public over the course of a year. This included visits to indoor and outdoor sports facility provision, involvement in the Active North Tyneside programme, engagement with libraries and Customer First Centres, visits to museums and St. Mary's Lighthouse and audience figures for Playhouse, Whitley Bay. In addition, the wide range of events across the Council's summer and winter programmes engaged both residents and visitors, helping to sustain the tourism economy, which supported local businesses and helped to generate jobs in the Borough.

The impact of these services, which were for many the frontline public face of the Authority, should not be underestimated. They helped shape the Borough's unique sense of place and made North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit.

Sport and Leisure - the team was responsible for managing a wide range of services including the Authority's 5 leisure centres and pools; indoor sports facilities. outdoor leisure facilities - sports pitches, bowling greens, welfare and recreation grounds, mini-golf/foot-golf; Sports Development – including clubs, cycling development, holiday activities, sports coaching, school sports and street games. The Active North Tyneside/Public Health Teams' provided programmes targeting inactivity, health and wellbeing, obesity and delivering preventive services focussing on better health outcomes for residents.

Policy priorities included maintaining commercial focus; delivering a policy steer on Public Health and Social Care, cycling; supporting the strategic approach to Borough wide investment; anti-social behaviour initiatives and increasing the Contours membership. It was also important to make sure that facilities were accessible for the whole community and to shape the service to meet demands and to encourage target group users e.g. over 60s free swim Friday's programme. A comprehensive sports development programme was in place with grants available to help deliver facilities/activities such as after schools clubs, holiday activities and to support anti-social behaviour initiatives.

Members were provided with service information in relation to staffing, leisure centre use, EASE cards, Contours membership and the financial breakdown of controllable expenditure, £7,677,299; controllable income, -£6,111,777; with a net controllable budget, of £1,565,522.

The vast majority of expenditure was down to the running costs of leisure centres but that the income generated kept cost down without detriment. There had been an increase in leisure centre users from 1 million 10 years ago, to 1.5 million now. Running costs had been reduced from £3.5 million, to £1.5 million, whereas income generation had increased from £3 million to £4.6 million. The increase was helped in part by growth in Contours membership which now stood at 9000, with an income generation of around £2.2 million.

Cultural Services - the team was responsible for managing the Authority's 4 Customer First Centres, branch libraries (14), community centres, tourism and events, museums (19), heritage and arts.

Members were provided with service information in relation to staffing, user visits, Active Library users, Visit North Tyneside unique visits and the financial breakdown of controllable expenditure, £8,386,730; controllable income -£2,897,619; with a net controllable budget of £5,489,111.

Policy priorities included culture, health and wellbeing; events sponsorship; tourism promotion; cultural investment – St Mary's Lighthouse, Segedunum, public art; and North of Tyne cultural offer.

Members were informed that much work was being done to enhance the borough's many cultural/heritage facilities and attractions to engage residents and visitors such as the biggest event 'The Mouth of Tyne' Festival, the popular summer and winter festivals, heritage open days and community centres/libraries through the borough.

Following the presentation, Members of the sub-committee asked a series of questions of officers. During questioning members examined areas including:-

- a) The resources available locally, regionally and nationally to help promote the area and attract more visitors; also how events, activities and places of interest in North Tyneside were being promoted in collaboration in partnership including town centres and coastal attractions, also providing a visitor itinerary for places to visit and stay in Borough.
- b) The use of social media e.g. Facebook, twitter and www.visitnorthtyneside.com Website etc., to advertise and promote events and visitor activities.
- c) Ideas for including and promoting the Authority's digital offer on the www.portoftyne.co.uk website, as a means of attracting international visitors to events in North Tyneside.
- d) The Authority's Ease Card delivery opportunities to all residents, programming and promotions, target groups, non-users, the multi-use application forms in relation to use by relatives.
- e) The introduction of the Authority's Cycling Strategy delivered in part by the Leisure team and Capita to schools which was proving to be successful in Riverside and Chirton with future roll-out being considered to other parts of the Borough; also the possible procurement of exercise bikes similar to the Mobike scheme recently introduced by Newcastle City Council.
- f) Social isolation and the work being done to increase cultural engagement to improve health and wellbeing in North Tyneside currently being addressed through the Health and Wellbeing Board's work plan.
- g) Energy and lighting efficiency in the Authority's buildings and the awards received for the reduction in carbon emissions.
- h) Exploitation opportunities for Arts & Crafts e.g. in Whitley Bay subject to individuals/organisers coming forward with an offer to provide the service which could be open for consideration.

Members recognised the achievements of the cultural and sport & leisure teams' and welcomed the work being done to promote and develop the Authority's cultural and leisure services within the borough and beyond.

The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting and providing the report and presentation.

It was **agreed** to note the report and presentation on the Cultural and Leisure Services provision.

CL07/07/18 Swim Local Project

A report was received which provided the context for a presentation on the Swim Local Project. The Operation Manager Sport and Leisure attended the meeting and presented Members with the outcome of the Local Swim Pilot. The presentation focused on the key research findings of the project and the framework for growing swimming.

During summer 2016, the Sport and Leisure service was approached by Sport England to be one of twelve Local Authorities to take part in a pilot of the Swim Local Project.

The pilot project was introduced following national evidence that there was a decline in people swimming. The purpose of the pilot was to carry out research at a local level to see what was behind this decline and look at interventions to try to reverse the trend.

The Authority was initially given £25,000 by Sport England to carry out research. Subsequently it was given another £198,000 to deal with issues highlighted from the research.

The sub-committee was presented with the outcomes of the initial research carried out, the interventions subsequently introduced and the impact this has had.

A short video was also presented showing a range of facilities across the borough e.g. schools, and in connection with the promotion of free activities which would be available during November.

Members were informed that the 4 pools in North Tyneside were all performing well in terms of delivering good quality and clean facilities, the infrastructure itself did not pose a barrier to swimming and that pools and their facilities were well rated.

A short video was received showing a range of pools facilities across the borough in connection with the outcome of the Swim England pilot e.g. Schools, families, clubs and the promotion of Free swim Friday's for all over 60s starting in September in connection with the Swim England pilot.

Members welcomed the work done by the Authority's leisure teams' in effectively managing the borough's pools and the positive outcome by the Authority in relation to the Swim Local Project.

Following the presentation, Members of the sub-committee asked a series of questions of officers. During questioning members examined areas including:-

- a) Evidence of schools not using swimming pools and confirming that all schools in the borough were offered a free session as part of the curriculum.
- b) GP patient referrals which were offered as part of the Healthy Heart scheme (Northumbria Health Care) particularly for those people with pulmonary conditions.
- c) Private pools use and packages which were not part of the measured participation during the swim pilot on the basis the Authority did not own any private pools.
- d) Ease card marketing opportunities for activities in leisure centres across the borough e.g. classes, swimming, gym visits and Contours memberships.
- e) The strategies in place for competitive swimming and the systems used to deliver swimming for youngsters.
- f) The work being done with emergency services in respect of water which involved the use of Waves for training by the RNLI in the summer and delivery of water safety sessions for children.

The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting and providing the report and presentation.

It was **agreed** to note the report and presentation on the outcome of the Swim Local Project.

CL08/07/18 Work Programme 2018-19

The sub-committee gave consideration to a range of suggested topics for inclusion in its work programme for 2018/19. The suggested topics had been received from a variety of sources and discussed with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the sub-committee when they had been categorised as being suitable for in-depth investigation (to be undertaken by a sub-group) or as monitoring reports that could be dealt with during committee meetings.

The proposed work plan was set out in Appendix A to the report.

In determining which topics should be prioritised for in-depth investigation, the sub-committee was advised to consider the following factors:

- Was it timely?
- Would it duplicate any other work ongoing within the Council or the NECA scrutiny work programme?
- Would it add value/contribute to policy development?

The sub-committee was advised that the current operating agreement with SMG Europe to run the Playhouse, Whitley Bay, would expire on 31December 2024. There was a break point by either party giving nine months' notice to expire, on 31December 2019. This would mean a decision in writing to break the contract, should either party choose to do so, would be required by 31 March 2019. It was suggested that this could be considered as a suitable topic for in-depth investigation.

Members were also invited to submit any additional ideas within the sub-committee's remit for inclusion in the work programme to the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer.

It was **agreed** (1) to approve the proposed work programme for the 2018-19; and (2) to establish a sub group to review the current operating agreement with SMG Europe to operate the Playhouse, Whitley Bay, prior to any decision to break the contract.