

Cultural Services – Portfolio Update (Nov 2014)

Fit For the Future

FFF savings 2013/14 (Target £88,000)

The target was achieved in full. Contributing to this: over performance of income in Sport & Leisure, a small reduction in staffing costs at the Art Gallery & Museum, increased rent from Aviary and increased recharge to WCC for the Library in the Royal Pump Rooms.

FFF savings 2014/15 (Target £83,800)

Indications are Sports & Leisure income can be maintained in the current year, plus the increased Aviary rent, Together these will cover in full the target above. The increased recharge to WCC for the Library (£30,000) will not apply in 2014/15.

Service contributions to Fit for the Future:

Options Appraisal - The service continues its work on the strategic future of the sports & leisure service. Strategic Leisure Ltd was commissioned in Feb 2014 to undertake an appraisal of the opportunities that the Council could consider for future delivery and management of the sports & leisure service. Report received and member briefings took place in the summer, followed by reports to both Scrutiny committees in September and a report to Executive in November.

Both I and officers recognise that this is a complex piece of work and one which will require significant debate, but it represents an exciting opportunity to secure a quality sports and leisure service for the district with modern and appropriate facilities for years to come and at the same time make a significant contribution to the financial challenge facing the Council.

Programme Review A detailed review of the activity programmes in the indoor facilities has been looking to match provision with customer needs and at the same time maximise usage and income generation. Consultation took place over the summer. The feedback from these surveys has led to the production of a revised activity programme. It is our aim to introduce the new programme from January 2015. In taking this approach, we can demonstrate that this analysis of data, review, and implementation contributes to all three elements of FFF.

Bowls England Bowls England are now well established in Riverside House and both parties are benefitting from working in the same building. The pavilion improvements were completed in early April 2014. The National Championships took place from 2 – 30th August and whilst we are awaiting the results of the formal review of the event, initial feedback is that the event was a success from many perspectives. The new approach to the management of car parking in Victoria Park attracted many positive responses, including some from the local residents who are generally not in favour of this area being used for parking. A report is being taken to the Executive in January 2015 detailing the outcome of the review and identifying any lessons learned. This project has clearly highlighted the benefits of cross service working, from the role of the Chief Executive as project sponsor, through Culture who has led on the project and including officers from Neighbourhood, Development Services, Media, and the OD team.

Major Events The district has benefitted from a full diary of events throughout the last 12 months. Processes and procedures have been sharpened up, ensuring that we can be more confident that the events managed by WDC are now more professional and that the Council is fulfilling its role in supporting good, appropriate and safe events. This has not been without its challenges, most notably with the situation that arose with “Warwick Rocks” in the summer. Officers continue to work with this organisation and others to ensure that they understand their responsibilities in planning and managing events and the role that the Council plays in overseeing this.

Sky Blues in the Community (West Warwick) The project to increase participation in physical activities (sport and arts) amongst those sectors of the community, who otherwise may not engage in such activities and thus contributes to the service delivery element of FFF. To end of June it has seen 606 sessions and 11.556 hours of activities delivered. The project is funded until March 2015 and officers are working with SBiTC to develop an exit strategy.

The Art Gallery & Museum and Warwick 1100 As part of the celebrations to mark Warwick 1100 the Arts & Heritage team curated and installed a major new exhibition “Dark Age Warwick” in St Mary’s Church. The exhibition (now showing in the Art Gallery & Museum in the Royal Pump Rooms) and an associated book have proved very popular and made an important contribution to the visitor economy of the district.

Asset review – future of RPR & LAG&M – report being taken to Executive in December 2014 to feedback on the outcome of the soft market testing of options for the Royal Pump Rooms (Bill Hunt)

Marketing activities Cultural Services Marketing Group have implemented the following actions: marketing training for key officers, updated and interactive websites, commissioning of audience development support for the Arts and Entertainment venues, feasibility work to introduce plasma screens in trial venues, shared resources between Arts and Entertainment to undertake further marketing initiatives. Work in the Sports & Leisure team has included the rebranding of printed material and on site advertising boards, a combined holiday activity booklet including arts other cultural activities, and a refreshed website.

Royal Spa Centre cinema - relaunched in March with the installation of digital projection and sound, allowing a more cost effective approach to showing film. A Film Club has been established and a diverse programme of films, satellite broadcasts and other events emerging.

Risk Management

The key service risks are currently considered to be:

Plant Failure – impacting on services delivered from our key buildings

Catering contract – Economic pressures and competition pose challenges in delivering a successful and quality service. Officers are working with Kudos to identify where improvements need to be made.

Building risks at Royal Pump Rooms – flood risk and roof leaks

Looking ahead and Strategic Plans

There are 2 key areas that will have a significant impact on the future shape of this service.

The **Options Appraisal** for sports and leisure, could, depending on members desire to make some difficult decisions, look very different within 2 years. We have an exciting opportunity to improve our facilities, make them appropriate for the growing population of the district, and protect the provision of sports and leisure in the district for the next 30 years or so. We will need to invest significant sums to achieve this, but done in the right way, this could result in an increase in participation, improved health and well being of local people, and a reduction in the subsidy from the Council to continue to provide these services.

The second key area is the debate around the **future use of our assets**. The Royal Pump Rooms and Town Hall are challenging assets to maintain, and are therefore costly for the Council to retain. Decisions around their future use will have a significant impact on the delivery of our Arts and Heritage service, and to the role of the Town Hall.