

## **Cultural Services – Portfolio Update (Sept 2015)**

### **Fit For the Future**

#### **FFF savings 2014/15 (Target £83,800)**

Cultural Services achieved its 2014/15 FFF target through the increase of income from health and fitness and swimming lessons at the leisure centres (total £50,000); the reduction in staffing costs (£30,000) ; and a small increase in rental income from the newly leased Aviary café.

#### **Service Plan Performance 2014/15**

**Options Appraisal** – In November 2015 the Executive approved a series of actions to progress the work on the strategic future of the sports & leisure service. As a result, a Programme of work was established which includes 6 work streams and which is overseen by a Programme Manager who was appointed in Feb 2015 for a period of 2 years.

Work is now well underway on the following which will feed into a report to the Executive in November 2015. This report will seek approval to progress the programme in respect of significant investment in a number of the Council's leisure centres, and regarding the future management arrangements for the service.

The work streams are:

- Development of a Service Specification
- Preparing for the tender process
- Facility investment
- Strategic projects impacting on the programme (incl. Europe Way; Kenilworth School; Castle Farm)
- Support Service costs

**Programme Review:** A detailed review of the activity programmes in the indoor facilities was undertaken in 2014 looking to match provision with customer needs and at the same time maximise usage and income generation. Consultation with leisure centre users took place May – Oct 2014 leading to the introduction of a revised programme in April 2015. In taking this approach, we have been able to 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 continue to benefit from working in the same building. Following the inaugural combined National Bowls Championships in August 2014, a detailed review of the event was undertaken leading to a report to the Executive in January 2015. The review highlighted the success of the event from an operational perspective, but also from an economic benefit point of view, with an estimate of £1.3 million being brought to the district by visitors and competitors from the event. The review also provided the opportunity for officers to identify lessons learned and ensure that these were included in the planning for the 2015 event.

**Major Events** The district continues to benefit from a full diary of events. The range of events remains varied, with the organisers of each event requiring differing levels of support and guidance

from our Event Management Officers. In the last 12 months, processes and procedures have been sharpened up, ensuring that we can be more confident that the events supported and managed by WDC are now more professional and that the Council is fulfilling its role in supporting good, appropriate and safe events. The Safety Advisory Group, managed by the Council but involving other statutory agencies including the Police and Fire Service, is now well established and has become a crucial element of event planning.

**Sky Blues in the Community (West Warwick)** The 2 year “Impact” project to increase participation in physical activities (sport and arts) amongst those sectors of the community, who otherwise may not engage in such activities, came to a conclusion in March 2015. During the 2 years, the project delivered 848 sessions, with 1,627 people of all ages taking part in over 15,000 hours of activities including keep fit, football, dance and children’s holiday activities. The project was recognised regionally winning the “Community Project of the Year” at the Coventry and Warwickshire Sports Awards in Nov 2014. Selected activities have continued beyond the end of the project and are well supported in the area.

**Asset review – future of RPR & LAG&M** – a report to Executive in March 2015 sought members approval of a Development Brief and the organisation of a Marketing Day where prospective developer partners could meet with the Council to discuss the opportunities offered by these and other facilities included in the scope of the “creative quarter” project.

**AG&M** - the Art Gallery and Museum continue to be a popular destination for local people and visitors alike with over 120,000 visitors in 2014/15. Highlights of the second half of the year included a collaborative project with St Peters Primary School, partially funded by Arts Council England, and which included a range of art forms inspired by the Old Master painting “*St Peter’s Penitence*” . A short film of the project was later shown in the Gallery along with a selection of the artworks. Planning was also underway for the major exhibitions and events for 2015/16, to include the Sir Terry Frost R.A exhibition (July – Oct 2015); Museums at Night: Post War Party (May 2015), and the annual Leamington Open Exhibition (May – July 2015).

**Marketing activities** Work has continued to streamline the marketing activities within Cultural Services. Of particular note has been the joined up work being undertaken between the Art Gallery and Museum and the Royal Spa Centre/Town Hall, maximising opportunities to reach new audiences for these services. Work in the Sports & Leisure team has focussed on the promotion of targeted “offers” to attract new customers, development of social media initiatives and the extension of on line booking for sports activities.

**Royal Spa Centre cinema** - the cinema continues to grow its audience and is now a viable offering which operates at no subsidy, and which offers a wide range of films and live screenings.

### **Risk Management**

The key service risks are currently considered to be:

**Plant Failure** – ageing plant which is nearing the end of its life. Failure of such plant could have a significant impact on services delivered from our key buildings. A schedule for replacement has been developed by Housing and Property Services.

**Golf Contract** – Economic pressures and a national decline in participation in golf pose challenges in delivering a successful and quality service. Officers are working with the contractor to identify solutions to the issues.

**Building risks at Royal Pump Rooms** – flood risk and roof leaks. Housing and Property Services are aware of the roof leaks and are developing a strategy that can be implemented once the long term future of the building has been confirmed. Flood risks are managed through the implementation of documented emergency procedures.

### **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. As noted earlier in this report, these opportunities will be identified in a report to the Executive in November 2015.

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. A key consideration in this work will be the direction identified in the revised Arts Strategy which is due to be available later this year.

In the meantime work is ongoing across the service to respond to the following key drivers:

#### **Income generation:**

The “Active Summer” promotion in leisure centres is designed to attract new gym members with a 6 week summer membership for £25; followed by a strategy to retain these members and convert into full members in September.

We are signed up to the national “This Girl Can” campaign to increase participation in sport amongst girls and women.

Plans are underway to extend the arrangements whereby the Royal Spa Centre/ Town Hall to act as “ticket agent” for local organisations.

#### **Savings:**

Revised rotas and working practices have been implemented to make savings on staffing budgets.

We continue to procure equipment and services through the most appropriate tender process.

**Service Improvement:**

Managers are working on the development of an improved “Customer service” culture in all our facilities, providing staff with the skills to improve the customer experience and make them more likely to return.

Clear performance targets for teams are being developed which will contribute to the overall quality of service delivery.