

REVIEW OF CULTURAL SERVICES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides Members with a summary of the reviews undertaken during 2006/07 and an update on the production of a Strategic Forward Plan for Cultural Services.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 During 2006/07 Members considered reports reviewing the five sections within Cultural Services. Each report provided a national context, details of the service such as budgets, staffing etc and key issues facing each service. These are summarised below:

2.1.1 Arts and Museums Service (September 2006)

- Shortfall in revenue funding leading to non-filling of posts, restrictions in marketing and reduced maintenance.
- Ageing and complex buildings require high levels of maintenance.
- Poor condition of the Floral Pavilion.

2.1.2 Sport and Recreation Services (September 2006)

- Rising energy costs.
- Not achieving income targets.
- Ensuring adequate staff training and low rates of pay for sessional staff.
- Requirement for facility improvements and modernising.
- Need for targeted marketing and promotion.

2.1.3 Wirral Library Service (October 2006)

- Large number of libraries requiring high levels of upkeep.
- Need to ensure staff are adequately trained and qualified.
- Need to promote the service and develop new readers.
- Need to replace obsolete IT equipment and increase the number of books purchased.

2.1.4 Parks and Countryside (February 2007)

- Improved security and standards of maintenance.
- Investment in buildings, footpaths, fences etc.
- Lack of facilities such as toilets, sports areas and cafes.

2.1.5 Community Services (April 2007)

- Need to review governance arrangements with Joint Management Committees.
- Buildings in poor state of repair with limited funding available.
- Need to review staffing structure.

2.2 Members considered additional reports from the Arts and Museums service with information on opening times and staffing (September 2006) and from Sport and Recreation on user profiles (October 2006). They requested a further report from the Library Service on the general condition of libraries and on the financial implications associated with Sunday opening and from the Parks and Countryside service on coastal management and linkages with the development of a new Wirral Coastal Brand and further involvement of parks. In respect of Community Services Members asked for a report on staffing within the section and the governance arrangements for community centres.

2.3 Members also considered a report on income generated by Cultural Services which was noted.

3.0 **CULTURAL SERVICES STRATEGIC FORWARD PLAN**

3.1 It was agreed by Cabinet at their meeting of 24 January 2007 to commission the preparation of a Strategic Forward Plan for Cultural Services to assist in:

- Identifying current levels of provision in the public and private sector.
- Consider the availability of finance over the next five years.
- Undertake an appraisal of the existing public sector building stock.
- Analysis of future leisure trends and a profile of Wirral customers
- A determination of the optimum locations for cultural services facilities in relation to access demand, usage and future potential capacity.

3.2 A brief has now been completed (copy attached as Appendix 1) and a consultant will be appointed by 11 June 2007. They will undertake an audit of facilities, existing policies and appraisal of opportunities during July and August and consult with key stakeholders in September. This will form the development of service specific plans which together will form the draft Strategic Forward Plan which will be available in November for further public consultation.

4.0 **FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 A budget of £100,000 was agreed by Cabinet to fund the preparation of the Strategic Forward Plan.

5.0 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6.0 **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

10.0 **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

12.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 Members are asked to consider what further reports they require as part of their future agenda and a continuation of the review of Cultural Services.

Alan Stennard
Director of Regeneration

This report was prepared by Jim Lester who can be contacted on 666-4725.

Project Brief
Cultural Services – Strategic Forward Plan

1.0 Aim

- 1.1 To provide a thorough and authoritative study with recommendations and priorities for the development of a Strategic Forward Plan for Cultural facilities and services across the borough over the period 2008-2013.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 It was agreed by Cabinet on 14 December 2006 that the people of Wirral place a very high value on the provision of leisure and cultural services. It also recognises that in Wirral, as elsewhere, for a combination of reasons, the income that has sustained these services is dropping and that short-term measures to combat the budget deficit are no longer sufficient to deal with the problem. Cabinet noted that competition from private leisure facilities, new schools facilities and increased demand from customers for facilities of a high quality, set against a pattern of a long-term lack of adequate investment, all make it difficult for the Council to operate on a purely commercial basis. (Cabinet also noted that free swimming for young people and for senior citizens have dramatically increased the take-up of services).

- 2.2 Cabinet recognised that Cultural and Leisure Services are now recognised by government to have:

- a wider economic value in attracting investment to a City or City region;
- a specific role in their Health agenda by tackling obesity and improving fitness;
- a specific role in their drive to increase the Knowledge economy by providing access to Information Technology and creating improved literacy and numeracy;
- a role in promoting social inclusion;
- a key role in improving sporting standards in the country;
- a role in tackling anti-social behaviour by providing diversionary activities;

- 2.3 Cabinet further recognised that the new, cross-partner Local Area Agreements specified in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill and the Local Government White Paper will include a greater role for cultural and leisure services and that regionally Sport England, the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Association are all looking to improve services.

- 2.4 Cabinet agreed that Wirral should examine what is necessary to bring its Cultural and Leisure facilities into the 21st century, to set them in the context of what is available in Wirral, and to use them, as a Local Authority, to deliver the economic, health and social objectives outlined above.

Cabinet asked the Director of Regeneration to:

- identify current levels of provision in the public and private sector;
- consider the availability of finance over the next five years;
- consult with the public and interested societies and groups;
- draw up for Cabinet a detailed five-year Cultural Facilities Development Plan that will take Wirral's Cultural Services into the 21st century;
- consult on this plan with the public to determine priorities for investment.

3.0 Scope and Desired Outcomes

3.1 For the purpose of this project it is considered that the scope will comprise of the following facilities and services;

Indoor Sport and Leisure facilities, Swimming Pools, Libraries, Arts Facilities, Theatres, Community Centres, Sports Pitches, Tennis Courts, Allotments, Bowling Greens, Golf Courses, Recreation Grounds, play facilities, MUGAS/Artificial Pitches, School Sports Facilities, Museums, Parks and other accessible public open space.

3.2 The above list should include public, private, voluntary and community facilities. The list is not exhaustive and the inclusion of other facilities such as church and village halls should be considered if this has the potential to deliver positive outcomes.

3.3 The desired outcome is to design and write a Strategic Forward plan for the Borough that provides a framework for the next 5 years which is realistic, challenging and relevant to the Council's priorities and should include all of the items listed below for which separate method statements should be provided as indicated.

MS1 A complete and comprehensive electronic database of current provision in both the public and private sector.

MS2 An appraisal of the existing public sector building stock in the areas of – financial worth, investment requirement, refurbishment/expansion potential.

MS3 A systematic assessment of current levels of provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, for each category of facility.

MS4 An estimate and commentary of the impact of planned or forecast changes in the population structure and distribution and forecast or anticipated future leisure/cultural trends.

MS5 A robust scoring mechanism/formula for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of public facilities in terms of delivering the Council's priorities.

MS6 A determination of the optimum locations for, and scale of cultural facilities/services in relation to access, demand, usage and future potential capacity.

MS7 An assessment of the availability of funding for the next five years, required for the provision of accessible, high quality facilities/services that are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable.

MS8 Analysis of future leisure trends and a profile of Wirral consumers.

4.0 Instructions and Guidance

4.1 The audit, register and analysis of existing facilities should be sufficient to fully satisfy the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (ODPM, July 2002) and the accompanying guidance Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17 (ODPM, September 2002).

- 4.2 To achieve this through thorough consultation and involvement of relevant partners, organisations, agencies and stakeholders.
- 4.3 To create clear linkages with other key documents and plans vested either within the Council or its key partners and stakeholders. These will include:

Asset Management Plan
 Community Strategy
 Local Area Agreement
 Playing Pitch Strategy
 Physical Activity Strategy
 Youth Service Plan
 Local Development Framework
 Investment Strategy

Plans and strategies from government and other agencies, partners and stakeholders will also need to be considered.

5.0 Delivery Mechanism

5.1 A Lead Officer will be appointed by the Council who will be available for direct contact with the successful tenderer. The Lead Officer will be responsible for monitoring this project. Targets will be set for progress, costs will be monitored and regular progress meetings will be held.

5.2 We see the following key milestones to this project:

Milestone	Date
Appointment of Consultant.	11 June 2007
Agreement of final brief and action plan	22 June 2007
Audit of all cultural facilities in Wirral and appraisal of existing stock	10 August 2007
Audit of existing plans, policies, research and data	10 August 2007
Delivery of database and scoring mechanism	10 August 2007
Consultation with key stakeholders and development of policy framework	21 September 2007
Development of service specific plans	26 October 2007
Delivery and acceptance of final draft strategic forward plan	30 November 2007
Public consultation to determine priorities for investment	30 December 2007
Delivery of Strategic Forward Plan	31 January 2008

- 5.3 The Council will provide reasonable access to relevant plans, data and software systems at the request of the appointed Consultant.
- 5.4 The completed report must clearly show its recommendations and reasoning. It should contain appendices with all information gathered during the development process and an explanation of the methodology employed.
- 5.5 Your tender submission should include for and provide an Executive Summary to support the work.

The report in A4 format, clearly printed in plain English and bound strongly enough to sustain frequent use.

12 hard copies and 1 disk copy will be required of the draft and the final reports.

Electronic copies may be requested post tender.

6.0 Selection Process

6.1 The evaluation of tenders submissions will be carried out during the week ending 25 May 2007. The tenders will be evaluated on a 70% technical 30% financial basis incorporating the following technical assessment;

- Methodology for the project.
- Past relevant experience of the company for similar work.
- The qualifications, skill and past relevant experience of all persons associated with the project.
- Financial standing and compliance with the corporate policies of the Council.

7.0 Tenders - Requirements

7.1 Companies wishing to submit a tender should ensure that the following information is provided as separate method statements as indicated:

MS9 Your proposed methodology to undertake the work and deliver the aims and objectives of the project, including any additional tasks you may see as relevant.

MS10 Demonstrable evidence of having undertaken similar work.

MS11 An outline of the personnel who will engaged in this work including details of relevant experience.

MS12 Any additional innovative ideas or benefits to the service from undertaking these reviews.

7.2 All bidders must complete and return the Corporate Questionnaire incorporated in the I.T.T. in full. Failure to do so may result in a disqualification from the process.

Company accounts must only be submitted upon request.

7.3 From these submissions a shortlist will be compiled and successful applicants will be invited to a presentation and interview panel. It is envisaged the presentations will take place week commencing 4 June 2007. Tenderers should ensure that the key personnel who will form part of the project team are available to attend.

7.4 The successful Consultant will be appointed via the evaluation criteria, on the basis of providing the most economically advantageous tender for the project having regard to the aims and objectives contained within this brief.

8.0 Timetable

8.1 Tenderers are asked to provide a timetable for undertaking the study as part of their submission noting the report must be completed by January 2008.