

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO

DECISION RECORD

19 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Avondale Centre, Dyke House School, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Victor Tumilty (Culture, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

19. Event at Summerhill as part of the National BMX race series *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of a proposed event at Summerhill which will be part of the national BMX race series on Saturday, 28 and Sunday 29 June 2008.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

A large BMX Course was completed at Summerhill in 2000 which has since been upgraded and improved.

In 2005 the Summerhill team was approached by a group of local cyclists interested in helping with developments at the Summerhill course. A local BMX club, North East BMX riders, was established which stages regular meetings. The club works to further improve the facility and ensure that it remains in a good state of repair. The intention was to develop a course suitable for competitions as well providing a local facility with free open access. The club also provides free coaching at the Summerhill BMX course for local riders and hosted its first major competition at Summerhill in March 2007. Two further competitions have been held at the Centre for the regional summer series resulting in the site being shortlisted for the

national event.

The 'nationals' are the top level of domestic racing in the UK BMX race calendar usually attract 300 – 500 riders who attend as part of a team or with families meaning that the event will attract a lot of people to Hartlepool over the entire weekend. This would be the first national BMX event in the North East since the 1990s.

Summerhill has been selected for this event because of the facilities already present at the site including good car parking and a purpose built Visitor Centre. Representatives from British Cycling would visit the site to advise on what would be required with regards to the course itself, associated facilities for riders and spectators, car parking and camping.

Competitors from around the UK usually pitch a tent or bring a caravan and the car park and amenity field to the northern end of the car park have been earmarked for this use and a charge would be made for this use to generate some income. The event would also provide an opportunity for local traders with sales stalls and some sort of social event on the Saturday evening would be organised.

A number of items including temporary fencing, a Public Announcement system, portable lavatories, flag poles a finish line tent, First Aid cover and a viewing stand been identified as being required with possible revenue financial implications.

Grant funding may also be available to the North East BMX Club to cover some of the costs but the event is a major coup for Hartlepool and will attract much positive publicity and put Hartlepool firmly on the map for BMX in the UK.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder supported the staging of this significant event for Hartlepool stating that it was excellent, not only for BMX enthusiasts but for the whole of the town. He said that Hartlepool would be recognised for events such as this to the North East and wished it every success and whole-heartedly supported it. He also thanked all concerned for their dedication and hard work in bringing this forward and approved the acceptance of the offer to stage the event in June 2008.

20. Fees and Charges – Exceptions Report *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To provide the Portfolio Holder with an update of the annual review of charges for services and identify those increases which are in excess of the inflationary increase of 3%.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Community Services Division of the Department is heavily reliant on earned income from a wide variety of fees and charges to maintain service levels and opportunities across the Borough. There are over 900 separate fees and charges which on balance have been increased by an average of 3%. Approval was sought to the identified exceptions which sought to redress specific areas where fees and charges have either been unable to keep pace of costs of provision or are significantly cheaper than regional or sub-regional comparisons.

A number of areas were highlighted for consideration which included the swimming lessons provided by the Mill House Leisure Centre where the proposed increases range from 5.48% to 14.58%. The Team Trailer is a new venture without previous local precedent, designed to be hired out to schools for class participation in new sports development with an introductory hire charge of £45. Proposed equipment hire increases range from 9.37% to 117.39% and relate to mountain bikes (complete with safety equipment), open canoes or kayaks which all suffer from regular wear, tear and damage leading to replacement. Activity charges at Summerhill for orienteering were also to be subject to proposed increases of between 16.4% and 108% to bring them in line with other outdoor activities offered at the Centre as many of the charges previously used would barely cover staff costs and would in many cases result in an actual net loss for the Centre.

Room hire charges across Community Services have been the subject of a review and it was proposed to place all Community Services premises with rooms to hire into 3 bands. Those premises whose primary purpose is to serve the community will be provided at a high subsidy. Those in band 2 were those whose primary purpose was a particular service provision with community room hire of secondary importance and the third category were those which provided high specification and commercially competitive venues. For a number of years Summerhill has offered rooms at a band 1 rate but as room space demand has increased this has taken up a larger proportion of staff time in setting up rooms, taking and administering bookings and this has placed pressure on the Summerhill Team. The proposed price increases of 68.7% and 75.4% bring the prices out of the Community Centre range.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the revised schedule of fees and charges increase for 2008/2009.

21. Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2007/2008 – 3rd Quarter Monitoring Report *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2007/2008 in the first three quarters of the year.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The progress against the key actions contained in the Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2007/08, and the third quarter outturns of key performance indicators that were included in the plan for this portfolio.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the achievements on the actions and indicators.

J A BROWN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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