

# **CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO**

## **DECISION RECORD**

11 November 2008

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

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

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Also present Councillor Stephen Akers-Belcher

### **11. Waverley Terrace Allotments – Proposal for further improvements** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

#### **Type of decision**

Non key.

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for Rift House East Residents Association to pursue the development of a community allotment at Waverley Terrace allotment site. The initiative by Rift House Residents Association will improve both the appearance and security of this land within the Rift House Ward and assist in bringing the spare allotment land back into use as allotments for the wider community.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The Director of Adult and Community Services advised that following consultation with Rift House residents two areas of land had been identified as being in a poor state and in need of improvements. The first had been included in Housing Hartlepool's regeneration programme. The second was the allotment site adjacent to Waverley Terrace. New allotments had been created and allocated on the west-end site adjacent to Waverley Terrace but the remaining allotment land was vacant and would require re-establishment at considerable cost to bring back into allotment use. The Residents Association had offered to help establish and administer a Waverley Terrace Allotments Association.

In addition the Residents Association wished to create a community

allotment for use by all residents within the area. This would take the form of a four-themed garden with one of the themes being based around a sensory garden for the disabled. Meetings of the Residents Association had shown sufficient resource within the community to maintain the garden and 'Pride in Hartlepool' funding of £5,000 had already been gained towards the perimeter fence and design costs. Further funding bids would be submitted to the lotteries 'open spaces' initiative.

Details of the legal and financial implication were provided within the report.

The Portfolio Holder had concerns that the Residents Association not take too much on and suggested that a smaller surface area than the maximum ten plots be utilised initially. Councillor Akers-Belcher, speaking on behalf of the Residents Association, acknowledged these concerns and advised that they would be happy to reduce the number of plots with the option to extend in the future. Consideration was also being given long term to the employment of a gardener as part of the Neighbourhood Action Plan. The Portfolio Holder agreed to delegate decision regarding the number of plots to the Assistant Director (Community Services) with the proviso that a clause be written into the contract specifying that should the improvements be unsuccessful ownership would revert back to the Council. Councillor Akers-Belcher was happy to agree to this, commenting that the Residents Association aimed to make the layout as user friendly as possible to aid all future developments.

The Portfolio Holder wished the Residents Association the best of luck with the venture which would bring the community together.

### **Decision**

That the principle of reinstatement of the Waverley Terrace allotments and the development of a community allotment led by the Rift House East Residents Association be approved.

## **12. Access to Nature Stage 2 Application** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

- I. To seek approval to proceed to Stage 2 application for the Access to Nature funding
- II. To seek approval to accept the grant if offered by Natural England.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Access to Nature is an open grants programme run by Natural England and supports projects that encourage more people to understand, appreciate and enjoy the outdoors. Parks and Countryside had successfully applied for Stage 1 application and recently been offered the chance to apply to Stage 2.

This application was based on partnership working between the Countryside Warden Team, Teesmouth Field Centre and the Environment Agency. It aimed to target schools and local communities, often in deprived areas, to access the Town's Local Nature Reserves and other green spaces. Two posts would be created to work with schools, volunteers and friends groups and to work to promote and build momentum of larger Greenspace projects at Burn Valley as well as with the Teesmouth National Nature Reserve.

The funding would specifically be spent on employing two members of staff. The first would work with the schools, volunteers and friends groups to achieve the objectives of the programme while the second would work specifically in the Burn Valley area to link local schools and community with the wildlife enhancement programme associated with the wider River Corridor Enhancement Project. Funding would also be used to provide a bursary scheme linked to objectives for those schools wishing to visit the Teesmouth Field Centre.

In order to proceed to Stage 2 officers would need to justify the requirement for the two separate staff posts and submit supplementary evidence in support of the research originally given in the stage 1 application. Match funding could be provided either from current resources and/or in kind services.

### **Decision**

That approval be given to proceed to the Stage 2 application for the Access to Nature Funding and that approval be given to accept the grant if offered by Natural England.

## **13. National Free Swimming Initiative – Further Update** (*Director of Adult and Community Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on further details of the National Free Swimming Initiative.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

In August 2008 the Portfolio Holder had been advised of the launch of the Government's national free swimming initiative. This involved providing free swimming to the under 16s and over 60s as well as the opportunity to apply for capital funding to improve pool facilities. More information had now been received from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and this was detailed within the report:

#### Free swimming for the over 60s

In August the Portfolio Holder had approved the acceptance of the Government's offer of £26,848 per year for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

#### Free swimming for the 16s

Funding available would be £48,170 per year for 2009/10 and 2010/11, substantially less than Council set income targets for this period and something which would lead to a budgetary shortfall. However officers felt there was significant value in making free swimming available given the obvious health benefits and the provision of a diversionary activity for young people. Participation in this initiative would also give eligibility to apply for both the Capital Reward Fund and Capital Challenge Fund as detailed below. Take up of this offer had to be confirmed to the DCMS by 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and this had duly been confirmed by officers.

#### Modernising Pool Provision – Capital Reward Fund

One-off capital funding was being made available to Local Authorities participating in both free swimming initiatives to go towards improvement of modernising pool provision during the current financial year. The amount available to Hartlepool would be £20,738.

#### Modernising Pool Provision – Capital Challenge Fund

This was capital available on a competitive bid process for either 2009/10 or 2010/11 to modernise pool provision, again only available to Local Authorities participating in both free swimming initiatives. This capital was specifically for the development of capital infrastructure to contribute toward the costs of new build, modernisation and enhancement of buildings and major fixed equipment. There was an expectation on Local Authorities to provide partnership funding and that the facility would remain open and in use during any modernisation or alteration works. The deadline for stage 1 applications was 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and officers had submitted a scheme to improve the poolside changing room facilities at Mill House Leisure Centre. Should stage 1 be successful a more detailed stage 2 bid would need to be submitted in November 2008. Officers had also approached the Corporate Capital Asset Management Programme for match funding.

It was also intended to link the initiative to the Active Card scheme currently in use. Participants would have to have an Active Card in order to be able to swim free of charge. The implications of this were being assessed and if any alterations to the current scheme were required an update report would be submitted.

### **Decision**

- I. That the further details available in relation to the Government's Free Swimming Scheme be noted
- II. That participation in the Under 16s free swimming initiative for the period 2009/10 and 2010/11 and acceptance of the funding offer of £48,170 from DCMS be noted and the budgetary pressure that this may bring.
- III. That following a full assessment regarding linking the participation initiative to the Active Card scheme, delegated power to officers to amend the scheme should any alterations be required be approved.
- IV. That the availability of £20,783 capital funding from DCMS to be utilised during 2008/09 be noted
- V. That the Stage 1 capital application to DCMS that had also been made to improve the changing room facilities at Mill House Leisure Centre be noted.

## **14. Purchase of collection of works by Frank Henry Mason** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to the purchase of a collection of works – 41 sketchbooks, 245 loose pencil sketches, 3 coloured crayon sketches and 1 watercolour painting – by the artist Frank Henry Mason, using the museums purchase fund. An application will also be made to the Victoria and Albert purchase fund.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Frank Henry Mason was born in Seaton Carew in 1876 and is one of the most significant artists represented in Hartlepool's fine art collection. The acquisition of this collection would therefore strengthen the fine art

collection even more. Hilary Gerrish had originally purchased the works at an auction and was offering them for sale through Edward Yardley at a cost of £2,800 to Hartlepool Museums Service. The collection was in fair to good condition but some cataloguing work would be required to establish the numbers and types of items and an independent valuation prior to purchase. Half the cost would be sought from the Victoria and Albert purchase fund but it was felt that success in this should be a prerequisite of purchase as there were adequate funds to cover the whole cost in the Acquisition fund budget reserve.

The Portfolio Holder asked that these acquisitions be put on public display as quickly as possible.

### **Decision**

That the request to pursue purchase be approved.

## **15. Purchase of painting 'Beach Huts' by Margaret Green** *(Director of Adult and Community Services)*

### **Type of decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval to the purchase of the painting 'Beach Huts' by Margaret Green using the museums purchase fund supported by application to the Victoria and Albert purchase fund.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Margaret Green was born in Hartlepool in 1925 and died in 2003. Her painting 'Seaton Carew Beach' was already part of the fine art collection. The painting 'Beach Huts' was being offered for sale by the artist's agents for a negotiated discounted price of £6,500. The Victoria and Albert Purchase Fund had been approached and were happy for the Council to pursue an application for 50% funding from themselves. The painting itself was in excellent condition.

The Portfolio Holder asked if consideration had ever been given to the installation of blue plaques denoting where prominent Hartlepudlians had been born. The Assistant Director (Community Services) confirmed that this had been considered but budgetary pressures had proved problematic. The Portfolio Holder requested that this be explored further.

### **Decision**

That the request to seek match funding for the purchase of the painting be

approved and purchase pursued accordingly.

**16. Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2008/2009 – 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2008/09 in the first two quarters of the year.

**Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report detailed the progress against the actions contained in the Adult and Community Services Departmental Plan 2008/09 and the second quarter outturns of key performance indicators. There were a total of 23 actions and 40 performance indicators, progress of which was summarised in Table 1 of the report. All actions and performance indicators were expected to achieve their target.

The Portfolio Holder asked that his thanks be passed on to all staff involved.

**Decision**

That achievement of key actions and second quarter outturns of performance indicators be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10:35am

**PETER DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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