

CULTURE, LEISURE & TOURISM PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

22 March 2011

The meeting commenced at 11.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Hilary Thompson (Culture, Leisure & Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Officers: John Mennear, Assistant Director (Community Services)
Chris Wenlock, Parks and Countryside Manager
Graham Jarritt, Libraries and Community Manager
Jeff Mason, Head of Support Services
Deborah Kershaw, Quality and Safety Officer
Sarah Harrison, Democratic Services Officer

20. Opening Time Proposals for Hartlepool's Maritime Experience Winter 2011 *(Assistant Director (Community Services))*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To request approval by the Portfolio Holder for the proposed opening times for Hartlepool's Maritime Experience effective from November 2011.

Issues for Consideration

The report outlined the existing and proposed peak and off peak seasons and opening hours. The Assistant Director summarised the proposed changes as being that during off peak season the Maritime Experience would be closing half an hour earlier. This had been proposed based on current user figures and the HMS Trincomalee Trust had agreed to trial the same opening times for one year.

The Portfolio Holder agreed that these opening times made sense and coincided loosely with the docks going forward/back. She asked whether there would be any staffing losses because of the reduced opening times and was informed that because annualised hours had been introduced, permanent staffing would work longer during the summer months and shorter hours during winter. This should safeguard permanent jobs and

lessen the need for casual staff.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the proposed opening times to be implemented in November 2011 and asked that effects on visitor numbers be monitored.

21. Christmas/New Year Opening – Library Services *(Libraries and Communities Manager)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Member of the experiences of the changed library Christmas/New Year opening hours 2010/11 agreed by the Portfolio Member on 21 September 2010 and to propose similar arrangements for 2011/12 and beyond.

Issues for Consideration

The report recapped the decision made on 21 September 2010 and the reasoning behind this. The Libraries and Communities Manager gave details of consultations on library closures over the Christmas and New Year period. Part of the Single Status Agreement was that staff should take holiday over this period although historically the libraries had remained open in the period between Christmas and New Year. There had been no negative public reaction to the closure of the libraries in over the 2010/11 Christmas and New Year period and therefore it was proposed that this becomes standard in the coming years, bringing library staff in line with other HBC staff.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the 2011/12 Christmas/New Year opening arrangements and for arrangements longer term although she asked that any adverse feedback be monitored.

22. Renaissance Operational Plan 2011 – 12 *(Assistant Director (Community Services))*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of Cultural Services recent success in securing an additional year's external funding from Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA) Renaissance scheme for museums and galleries and to outline the significant positive impact this scheme has for local people.

Issues for Consideration

The report detailed the background to the scheme which had provided funding for the Museums and Libraries over the past 9 years and how the scheme had impacted favourably on museum usage especially the increase in school visit usage. Funding of almost £390,000 had been secured for the next financial year but this would be the final year funding was available via this scheme. Details of how the Authority would spend this was outlined within the report.

Hartlepool was the lead Authority for the Tees Valley Renaissance funding with Tyne and Wear being the 'hub' in the North East. Alternative sources of funding would need to be sought although this would be challenging. Sixteen staff who worked across the Tees Valley were under threat from April 2012 as a result of the cessation of funding.

The Portfolio Holder paid tribute to the impact the scheme had had, especially the involvement of so many children and young people. It was imperative that further funding was found in order to continue with the excellent work already done.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder:-

- i) recognised the provision of formal and informal learning, the public engagement with culture, the contribution to the local economy through tourism and the successful regional partnerships funded through MLAs Renaissance scheme.
- ii) Endorsed Cultural Services intention to explore all alternative sources of funding before the current scheme ends in 2012.

23. Summerhill – Amendment to Charging Criteria and Pricing 2011 – 12 *(Assistant Director (Community Services))*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of some proposed amendments to the

charging criteria and pricing for activities at Summerhill for 2011/12.

Issues for Consideration

Further to the report to the Portfolio Holder on Fees and Charges Increases in 2011/12, some further review work had been completed in relation to the charges and charging criteria applicable to Summerhill.

The report highlighted some anomalies in comparison to those in other areas of Community Services and outlined proposed recommendations for some amendments to be made. Proposed charging criteria amendments for various individuals and groups to bring them in line with other council service areas were detailed in the report.

The Portfolio Holder queried whether these amendments would bring Summerhill in line with other community centres and was informed that this was so as well as with other community rooms in Borough buildings and others such as libraries.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder approved the revised charges and charging criteria for Summerhill applicable from 1 April 2011.

24. Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) *(Parks and Countryside Manager)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To update the Portfolio Holder of the changes to the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) and the implications this may have on the classification of bathing water quality along the shoreline at Seaton Carew.

Issues for Consideration

The original Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC) had been introduced in 1976 to protect the public and environment from faecal pollution and currently applied to the beaches in Seaton Carew. Under the revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) there were to be four classifications, 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Sufficient' and 'Poor'. The water quality results would be taken over four years starting in 2011 and this would determine the standard of water quality for the bathing beaches in 2016. The revised Bathing Water Directive may have an effect on the future Blue Flag and Quality Coast Awards as the directive standards are more stringent than the previous Guideline standard. The revised Directive would place a strong emphasis on the Bathing Water Controller to provide information to the

public on the quality of bathing water to allow them to make an informed choice about where to bathe. From the beginning of the 2012 bathing season the Authority would be required to update the beach information signage provided in compliance with the revised directive. Some funding was available for Local Authorities to assist in the provision of the revised signage. The report detailed the timeline for implementation of the new directive.

The Portfolio Holder said that it would be a shame if Seaton Carew lost its Blue Flag status and asked whether the Authority needed to work closely with Northumbria Water to improve the quality of water. Northumbria Water met the mandatory standards in relation to treated sewerage and any upgrade would require considerable investment. The Portfolio Holder suggested that beaches at the Headland may be considered for classification also.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the contents of the report.

25. Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan Monitoring Report – April to December 2010 *(Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the progress made against the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan 2010/11 over the period April to December 2010.

Issues for Consideration

The progress against the key actions and performance indicators, along with the latest position with regard to risks contained in the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan 2010/11.

One action in relation to Bathing Water Quality had not achieved its targets of all specified beaches meeting relevant standards. Meetings were to take place to try and identify the issues.

The Portfolio Holder queried the outcome of the meetings in relation to bathing water quality and was informed that the previous report had outlined the results of the meetings.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the progress of key actions along with the latest position with regard to risks.

26. Chatterbooks *(Libraries and Communities Manager)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report.

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the success and progress of the Chatterbooks Programme.

Issues for Consideration

The Portfolio Holder was reminded that all libraries in Hartlepool ran reading groups for adults and the Chatterbooks Scheme aimed to provide a similar service for children. Sessions were also run with two schools per half term. The aims of the service which were highlighted as a priority were outlined in the report.

The Portfolio Holder supported wholeheartedly the 8 aims of Chatterbox which complemented the work of schools for the benefit of children and expressed support for the library service in the face of budget cuts.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted this example of the role of library services in encouraging and supporting young people's reading and literacy skills and their reading enjoyment.

27. Hartlepool's Olympic Legacy Programme *(Assistant Director (Community Services))*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the Sport and Recreation and Cultural Services Olympic Legacy programme in the build up to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Issues for Consideration

Part of the original concept of the Olympic games was the focus on culture as well as sport. The report outlined events in the build up to the 2012 games including a celebration on 24 July to mark one year to the start of the games. Four projects had gained the 'Inspire' mark namely, 'Ready Steady Walk', Volunteer Package, a Formal Photography Exhibition and Culture Shock. The last two projects were focussed on local young female sports persons.

The Portfolio Holder said that this was an ambitious programme of events which raised the profile of local sports clubs and was a great link with education. The Assistant Director clarified that it was felt that by focussing on female athletes this identified targeted areas for increased participation. A further report would be given at a future Portfolio meeting.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted the report.

28. Tees Archaeology *(Assistant Director (Community Services))*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the current situation in regard to Tees Archaeology, to report on Tees Archaeology activity in 2010/11 and to report on proposals for activity in 2011/12.

Issues for Consideration

The service which was shared by the four unitary authorities in the Tees Valley had undergone a significant amount of change following budget reductions as a result of a Service Delivery Options Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review. There was a staff reduction of 45.5% and budget reduction of 24.3%. The report detailed projects which had been undertaken some with public engagement. The service would be placing a greater emphasis on statutory requirements unless it was successful in gaining grants to expand its remit. This would include the provision of the Historic Environment Record for the area, provision of archaeological expertise in planning advice and provision of basic object identification. English Heritage had encouraged a bid to be put forward in conjunction with the North York Moors National Park to continue the project examining Mesolithic activity on the North York Moors.

The Portfolio Holder expressed sadness that the service had to be

downgraded because of budget constraints and noted that funding was to be sought.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder noted:-

- i) the significant staff and budget reduction changes that had taken place over the past year
- ii) the wide range of activity carried out by Tees Archaeology in 2010/11 and the high level of volunteer involvement and engagement
- iii) the focus of activity from April 2011 would be protection of the historic environment rather than public engagement with it
- iv) that the partner authorities wished to continue to review the provision of the archaeological services in the area
- v) the reduced level of activity for 2011/12 but that attempts would be made to identify external funding sources to continue volunteer based activities.

The meeting concluded at 11.53 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 28 March 2011