

LEISURE, CULTURE AND LIBRARIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

07 OCTOBER 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Mellins (Chairman), Claire Stretton (Vice-Chairman), Clive Bullock and Marion Mills.

Non-members: Councillor Mrs Dee Quick.

Officers Robert Cowan, Rutuja Kulkarni, Michael Llewelyn, Kevin Mist, Mark Taylor and Karen Williams.

PART I

21/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Lawless and John Penfold.

22/13 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

23/13 MINUTES

Councillor Claire Stretton stated that the first paragraph of page ii of the previous minutes lacked meaning. The solution, which was approved by the panel, was to delete the first sentence, "Councillor Evans asked if there were alternative methods being put forward and if artists had been pursued for this yet?".

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 7th August 2013 be confirmed, subject to the deletion of the following sentence on page ii: 'Councillor Evans asked if there were alternative methods being put forward and if artists had been pursued for this yet?'.

24/13 ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED: That the order of business, as detailed in the agenda, be amended.

25/13 OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE WITHIN THE HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Panel received a presentation by Rutuja Kulkarni, Head of Public Health. The officer outlined the work her team was doing seven months after the introduction of the public health requirements on Local Authorities of the Health and Social Care Act, and what the priorities were going forward.

Work in this area followed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) which drew from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Priority themes of 2013-14 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy were; supporting a healthy population, prevention and early intervention, and enabling residents to maximise their capabilities and life chances.

Members noted that this was funded by a ring-fenced public health grant of £3,191,000. This figure had been calculated using a formula which took into account both population size and population needs. The majority of this money had been committed to statutory duties such as sexual health, school nursing and smoking cessation. Grant spend was conditional and required reporting to Public Health England.

The indicative grant for 2014-15 was £3,511,000.

The work was governed by a Public Health Outcomes Framework which was split into four areas. First, Health Improvement, which aimed at enhancing outcomes around smoking, alcohol and drug misuse, obesity, physical activity, sexual health and mental health.

Second, Health Protection, which was preventative and reactive work aimed at reducing the harm caused by communicable diseases and environmental hazards such as chemicals or radiation. This included a MMR catch-up campaign which was run over the summer and was aimed at older children who had missed out on the full vaccination.

Councillor Stretton questioned how successful this campaign had been. Though the officer did not have any statistics regarding this, she was able to confirm that a national campaign was planned for the future.

Members were advised the third area of the Public Health Outcomes Framework was Healthcare and Premature Mortality. This involved RBWM working with NHS commissioners and providers to reduce mortality rates and adverse outcomes such as suicide, emergency readmissions and hip fractures.

Fourth, Wider Determinants of Health, the work aimed at improving health and well-being via determinant factors such as poverty, crime, school absence, unemployment and homelessness. It was this fourth area in which Local Authorities could come into their own as the previous three areas were primarily catered for within the NHS.

It was explained that there were a number of determinants of health. Age, sex and hereditary factors, then also individual lifestyle factors, and social and community networks. Additionally, there were general socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions such as agriculture and food production, education, work environment, unemployment, water and sanitation, health care services and housing.

The JHWS priority themes, in relation to Leisure, Culture and Libraries, were then discussed. RBWM was supporting a healthy population by supporting residents stop smoking, take up health checks and flu vaccinations, and gain access to leisure. The work of SMILE was highlighted, who organised activities

for children and adults aimed at mental health promotion, diet and obesity.

By providing prevention and early intervention, RBWM was reducing the number of people going into residential care homes, unplanned hospital admissions, children in hospital with pneumonia/bronchitis, and falls and injuries. Also, the Borough was helping people use technology to live more independently, helping children who were in poverty, helping people live at home safely, safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, reducing the impact of crime and domestic abuse and increasing the number of people using intermediate care and rehabilitation services.

The Borough was enabling residents to maximise their capabilities and life chances and helping people with long term conditions to manage their own health and wellbeing. This was done by providing a range of housing options for residents with different needs; supporting people with employment, to volunteer or to get work experience; improving the experience of residents of health and social care; and supporting carers and residents who were experiencing drug or alcohol dependency through treatment.

Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries, Arts and Heritage, continued the presentation, discussing how his team was realising the requirements of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The officer spoke of the need to use reading, which allowed individuals to both come to terms with and get away from issues, through fiction and non-fiction. The 'Books on Prescription' scheme was highlighted and pamphlets were circulated to the Panel. There was clinical evidence from the three years the scheme had been running that the scheme offered self-help and, along with CVT and talking therapies, was more beneficial than drugs for low level mental health issues. Anti-social activity and isolation were both tackled by the opportunity to attend a library. Knit and natter groups, which did not have to involve knitting, offered the opportunity to get out of the house and take part in discussions. Additionally, RBWM offered books to be taken to people who could not get out of their home in line with statutory requirements set out in the Public Libraries Act 1964. This was done by working closely with volunteers to deliver this service. This kept users reading, mentally alert and combatted the lower forms of dementia.

Visual and performing arts were supported by both providing information on these services, and also through grants to support them. The example of a craft group in Darship was highlighted, who received a small grant to bring in professional artists to assist their meetings. This was described as a trench of social capital which benefited the wider society.

Grants were also available to support homes and day centres in working with Alzheimer's, using familiar images and stories to help sufferers come to terms with their surroundings. In the early stages of the disease, sufferers could remember life when they were young and not so much from later. Preserving residents views of the Borough in days gone by therefore offers therapy.

Cllr Stretton raised awareness of painting and physical dance exercise which she believed could also be of benefit, and questioned whether such schemes were being used.

Mark Taylor confirmed that a bid to support such schemes was currently being explored.

Cllr Stretton suggested using links with local dance school businesses.

The Chairman mentioned the role of SMILE which organised activities for children and adults aimed at promoting mental and physical health.

Councillor Quick noted that she had recently seen a poster which stated that in any one year, one in four people suffer from a mental health issue. It was therefore a big and growing problem.

Rutuja Kulkarni stated that mental health was indeed a priority. Furthermore, research both internationally and in the UK was looking into what “wellbeing” actually meant. It was the general contention that it was something more than just being content, and this was where mental health came in. It was acknowledged that mental health did not discriminate on grounds of age, colour, gender or abilities.

Kevin Mist, Head of Leisure Services, continued the presentation. The officer stated that RBWM was already working with SMILE and the NHS and they were incorporating public health into this arrangement. Increased finance had allowed the community centre to be enriched. A second bowls mat had been acquired at Woodlands. There were also more cardiac classes and stroke victim cardiac classes. Working with Macmillan, work had also begun on cancer rehabilitation, an initial group of 12 had been set up and the results of this were being analysed.

Public health had broadened the scope of the work. Free walks in the park had been organised, as well as waltzes however these were self-funded. SMILE was going from strength to strength, organising coach trips to the Olympic Park. Furthermore, as well as continuing this work, leisure services was looking to work with children’s services to increase the scope of services offered.

Rutuja Kulkarni stated that her team were working with the leisure, culture and libraries team and were looking to work with children’s services in the future.

There were no further questions, however Councillor Mills complimented the books on prescription scheme, describing it as fantastic.

The Chairman stated that he was pleased at the greater use of the library as a multi-purpose centre for community activity. He believed that if it could also be used to keep people’s health up, then this was good too.

The Panel thanked Rutuja Kulkarni for her presentation.

26/13

FINANCE MONITORING

The report was noted.

It was requested that in the future, if items within the finance monitoring report were of relevance to the Panel, officers should highlight such sections so as to allow councillors to avoid reading large amounts of irrelevant text. This was agreed by Mark Taylor and Kevin Mist.

27/13

VISITOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Chairman Mellins gave a verbal update regarding the last Visitor Management Forum which was held in Maidenhead. The Chairman had hoped to promote business involvement and as such had written personally to local businesses kindly requesting their attendance. Attendance was very good and more people than expected attended.

A lot of things came out of the meeting however local businesses were most interested in obtaining assistance with marketing. Discussion directed itself to the problem that Maidenhead lacked its own identity. There was nothing unique about Maidenhead to focus on, compared to Windsor which had much more to work with, for example Windsor Castle.

The Chairman suggested the fact that Maidenhead had fifty-six heritage Edwardian buildings and that this was a header/topic which could be developed, as it was something the development could 'hang on'. Other possibilities included the waterways once this project was completed, York Road, and the Desborough Suite at the Town Hall. The discussion posed the question, where was Maidenhead going? After years of looking internally, Maidenhead should find its identity and break from being subordinate to Windsor.

Councillor Stretton highlighted concern from the Forum that Maidenhead's website was part of www.windsor.gov rather than having its own domain. There was concern that potential advertisers who did want to be considered part of Windsor may have not taken out advertisements because of this.

The Chairman confirmed that Julia White, Visitor Manager, and the web-designers were looking into this.

Councillor Mills asked if any businesses came forward with suggestions.

Chairman Mellins advised that this was not the case as most of the people who had attended had never attended such a meeting before. Therefore two thirds of the meeting involved briefing those in attendance on what was happening.

Councillor Stretton confirmed that despite this people had found the meeting useful.

The Chairman stated that in future such meetings should take place in alternating locations (Windsor and Maidenhead).

Councillor Mills stated that people should be encouraged to be more active in the meetings.

28/13 ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BOARDS

It was acknowledged that as this issue spanned across different departments in the council, the matter should be deferred to allow officers time to bring the item together.

Councillor Stretton requested that the departments work together to avoid repetition of work. Further, that before any work was really done on this regard, could the matter be brought before Councillors to discuss what the boards would actually do. This could allow for multipurpose boards which displayed advertisements for arts and culture, as well as practical information regarding, for example, available parking spaces.

Councillor Mills stated that it would be preferable to have multipurpose boards rather than one board dealing with one thing, and another board dealing with something else. Furthermore, if the two could link this would be better, for example if there was an event the board could advertise the event, and also state how many car parking spaces were available for that event.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the agenda item be deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

29/13 VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN WINDSOR

The Chairman gave a verbal presentation on the visitor experience in Windsor. The major issue for the visitor experience was parking. There were not enough parking spaces available over the summer, especially for coaches which cluttered up the road as the coach park was not large enough. Also, Windsor Castle had queue waiting times of one and a half hours at some points over the summer. This had raised concerns as people typically travelled to the castle from London for the morning and once travelling time was taken into account, visitors were left with only one and a half hours to look around the castle.

One suggestion to improve the situation would be to inspire those who organised these trips to make future slot bookings with guaranteed Castle entry. This however had been an unpopular option when suggested in the past.

Another suggestion would be to have a drop off/pick up point for coaches in the town, the current drop off point was the coach park.

Work to improve the coach access in Windsor would require expanding the drop off point and laybys.

Councillor Stretton asked whether the Crown Estates should be contacted in this regard.

The Chairman stated that officers were in the process of communicating with the Crown Estates.

Councillor Stretton also questioned the effectiveness of future booking when the castle was at capacity; how could pre-booked visitors be allowed to enter.

Chairman Mellins agreed with this logic and confirmed that Windsor Castle came very close to maximum capacity this summer.

Councillor Stretton asked if there was anywhere else where such an initiative had already been put in place.

The Chairman stated that he believed Stonehenge had such an arrangement.

Councillor Mills suggested that, if contact was being made regarding enlarging the coach park, Windsor Farm Shop should be contacted as land there could be used for overflow.

Councillor Stretton highlighted the problems faced at LEGOLAND this summer.

The Chairman stated that if visitors used different roads to get to LEGOLAND, this would ease congestion as people tended to use only one route.

30/13

MAGNA CARTA 800TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

It was confirmed that funding had become available to enable celebrations to mark the 800th Anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta. It was the intention of RBWM to make a bid.

It was also remarked upon that the Deputy Mayoress was already holding informal meetings regarding the projects however it was the Chairman's conviction that the Borough's role should be strengthened. Full Council had previously resolved to make appropriate preparations to set up celebrations.

The Chairman stated that he would like to see cooperation with other areas which were involved in the celebrations. It was noted that though the Magna Carta was not actually signed in the Borough, the fact it was so close meant it would be a waste of an opportunity not to have the Borough involved and aware of what was going on.

The Panel hoped that RBWM could be involved but in ways that played to the Borough's strengths. The Borough should draw out the celebrations group's ideas that were best suited and work with them on those ideas.

Councillor Mills suggested that the open-top bus used in the Borough could be used to help with transportation through the duration of the celebrations.

The Chairman stated that river boats were being considered to take people to Runnymede.

He stated that he would work with Mark Taylor to pick out ideas from the celebrations group's report and see what the Borough could involve itself in.

31/13 WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted the work programme as detailed in the agenda. It was confirmed that Electronic Message Boards would be added to the agenda for the next scheduled meeting. The Chairman stated he was keen to include a presentation on Advantage Cards.

It was agreed that Publication of Items and Schemes, as well as the Installation of Fun would be added to the January 2014 agenda.

The Desborough Suite task and finish group currently had nothing to report, however it was stated that by the time the Panel met again, it would be possible to receive an update.

The Chairman requested that a different date be arranged for the next panel meeting. The Chairman stated that he was unable to attend the date currently scheduled, however it had to be before Cabinet met on 28 November 2013.

32/13 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 6.30pm, ended at 7.50pm.