

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

27 January 2009

Report of the Chief Leisure Officer and the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth & Arts

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 LEISURE AND ARTS STRATEGY 2008-2013

Summary

This report seeks Member approval for the draft Leisure and Arts Strategy to be adopted and incorporated into the Council's budget and policy framework.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Following the May 2008 meeting of the Leisure and Arts Advisory Board, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts resolved (Decision D080086MEM) to approve the draft Leisure and Arts Strategy and that it be circulated for public consultation, with a final copy of the Strategy brought to the October 2008 meeting of the Leisure and Arts Advisory Board for approval prior to submission to this Committee.

1.1.2 At the October 2008 meeting of the Leisure and Arts Advisory Board the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts resolved (Decision D080173MEM) that the proposed amendments highlighted at Annex 1 within the report be confirmed, and the amended Leisure and Arts Strategy be referred to the Policy Overview Committee for consideration.

1.2 Leisure and Arts Strategy 2008-2013

1.2.1 The Leisure and Arts Strategy is based on a number of themes which act as a framework to focus on issues that concern the community. This approach strengthens the links across the Leisure Service areas, and assists the Service's integration and fit within the Council's corporate priorities. The ten themes are as follows: Healthy Living, Young People, Fair Access for All, Caring for the Environment, Tackling Climate Change, Working in Partnership, Public Access and Involvement, Quality and Excellence, Crime and Disorder Reduction and Risk Management.

1.2.2 The new Strategy is a more overarching policy framework document compared to the existing Borough Leisure Strategy, with less emphasis on detailed annual

programmes for each section of the Service. The growing importance of delivering leisure facilities/services which address key corporate priorities is also recognised, most notably young people, healthy living, reducing crime and disorder and delivering a better street scene and open space environment.

1.3 Draft Strategy

- 1.3.1 The draft Leisure and Arts Strategy, circulated separately with these papers, provides a framework for coordinated partnership activity between different sectors, ensuring the best use of resources at a time of growing pressures on the Council's budget. The final document will be in an A4 format, but has been condensed at this stage to save paper and reduce the cost of printing.
- 1.3.2 Members' attention is drawn in particular to pages 12-15 of the draft Strategy. These pages provide an overall policy statement describing the fundamental ideas underlying the direction of the Service, which will influence and determine future decision. Key policies identify what the Service has to do to achieve the overall policy, linked to the approved themes. Finally, key issues are identified which represent the priorities the Service will tackle in the next five years. These issues range from seeking solutions to address the identified deficiency within the Borough of full size floodlit all weather pitches with community access, to increasing participation in healthy leisure and arts activities by older people.
- 1.3.3 Within the final part of the draft Strategy (pages 18-29) details are provided on the three sections within the Service: Indoor Leisure, Outdoor Leisure and Leisure Development, including actions planned to address the identified key issues.
- 1.3.4 It is felt that the draft Strategy provides a good demonstration of the value of the organisational and management changes brought about in joining Leisure Services with Planning and Transportation and the links that have been made in many areas of policy and practical working.

1.4 Consultation

- 1.4.1 The draft Leisure and Arts Strategy was circulated/made available for comment from 13 June to 29 August 2008. Copies of the draft Strategy were sent to all key stakeholders identified in the document, including all Parish/Town Councils, Tonbridge Sports Association, Sport England, Arts Council, Tourism South East and Natural England. A copy of the draft Strategy was also made available to view on the Council's website.
- 1.4.2 All comments returned were carefully considered and presented to the October 2008 meeting of the Leisure and Arts Advisory Board and a number of amendments to the draft Leisure and Arts Strategy were made. In overview, the consultation highlighted no significant issues with the Strategy reflecting the level of consultation undertaken in the preparation of the draft.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Leisure and Arts Strategy is one of the Plans and Strategies which together comprise the Development Plan and, as a result, must be considered and, if appropriate, adopted in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of the Council's constitution.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Despite the extent of work involved in the review of the Leisure and Arts Strategy, the overall cost to the Council is in the region of £5,000. The cost of this work was funded from the Leisure reserve in the 2007/08 financial year.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 It is essential that the management and development of Leisure Services is undertaken within an approved policy framework. The new Strategy will assist in the identification of priority issues, will facilitate decision making for Members and Officers, assist with the effective use of resources, and enable performance to be measured on an objective basis.
- 1.7.2 The need for a Leisure and Arts Strategy is identified in the Leisure Service Risk Register.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Community, Crime & Disorder Reduction, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that the Council adopt the Leisure and Arts Strategy 2008-2013 as part of its budget and policy framework.

Background papers:

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