

Report to the Council

Subject: Leisure & Cultural Strategy

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2014

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Kane
(Leisure & Community Services)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Leisure & Cultural Strategy be adopted.

Report:

1. The District Council currently provides a range of Leisure and Cultural Services, which includes Arts, Community Development, Sports/Health Development, and the District Museum Service. The most significant investment in Leisure is the provision of four Sports/Leisure Centres, managed under contract by Sports & Leisure Management Limited (SLM). This contract is due to expire in January 2016.

2. Consequently, the Council needed to consider the future level of service that it wished to provide and which options the Council would want to procure for the new contract. These considerations need to be addressed in a strategic fashion, and one of the Council's key objectives for 2014/15 was the development of a new Leisure & Cultural Strategy.

3. To develop the new Strategy, a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group was established, with representation from a wide cross section of Members from across the District. From the outset, the Group acknowledged that Leisure and Cultural activities produced considerable social and economic benefits to the community, as well as making a major contribution to the special character of the District, and the primary focus of the new Strategy should be the District Council's role.

4. The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group met on a number of occasions and received presentations on: the Council's Community and Cultural Services; the future provision and procurement options for the new Leisure Management Contract; and an insight into key demographic and health issues within the District. Site visits were also undertaken to the Council's four Leisure facilities.

5. The proposed Strategy was considered by the Cabinet at its last meeting on 3 November 2014, and the 20 key recommendations within the Strategy were agreed as the basis for the Council's future role and priorities for the provision of Leisure and Cultural opportunities. However, under article 4 of the Council's Constitution, the adoption of the Cultural Strategy is a matter reserved for the Council.

6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.