

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Leisure Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Tuesday, 18th September, 2007

Place: Waltham Abbey Sports Centre, Broomstickhall Road,
Waltham Abbey, EN9 1LF

Time: 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services
Officer:** Adrian Hendry, Tele.01992 564246
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Members:

Councillors Mrs H Harding (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, S Murray, Mrs P K Rush, P Turpin, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Haigh, Ms J Hedges, P House, G Pritchard, B Rolfe and H Ulkun

PLEASE NOTE:

- **THE NEW VENUE FOR THIS MEETING.**
- **THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND.**

TOUR OF THE WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE

At the Panel's Meeting in August, consideration was given to the proposed New Dual Use Agreement with the Governing Body of King Harold Secondary School. Whilst the Leisure Task and Finish Panel 2006/07 had previously visited the Sports Centre, a number of new Members of this year's Panel have not had this opportunity.

Mr Bill Ovens, the General Manager, will tour Members around the Sports Centre, to give an insight into the facilities on offer and answer Members' Questions.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 22)

To consider and agree the notes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9 August 2007.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 23 - 26)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) To note the attached updated Terms of Reference and associated Work Programme. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents

6. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS IN EPPING FOREST (Pages 27 - 32)

Background and Context:

Members of the Panel have previously been circulated a copy of the final report of the Leisure Task and Finish Panel 2006/07, which outlined the process of review undertaken in exploring the feasibility of third party involvement in the development of community arts in the District. The Panel reached the following conclusions.

- i) The Panel noted that the work currently undertaken by Epping Forest Arts, not only celebrates and contributes to the "Special Character" of the District but also helps to improve the quality of life of a diverse cross section of our local community.
- ii) Arts initiatives are being used successfully to target groups at risk of social exclusion as well as delivering Key Objectives within the Community, Council and Best Value Performance Plans.
- iii) Much of the work currently delivered by the Council's Arts Service is innovative and fairly unique, in local authority terms in the region, a fact that has been recognised by external funding support from the Arts Council East.
- iv) A key feature of the work of Epping Forest Arts is the strong and effective

network of Partnership work that they have developed, to promote opportunities and participation in the Arts for all ages and abilities.

- i) Epping Forest, unlike many other local authorities does not currently provide or manage any purpose-built arts facilities such as Theatres, Galleries or Studio/Workshop/Rehearsal space. Although some of these types of facilities do exist, on a more limited basis, in the voluntary and education sectors, local people generally have to travel outside of the District to attend performances or exhibitions.
- ii) Due to the lack of Council owned arts facilities, the vast majority of Arts Development Work undertaken by Epping Forest Arts is on an outreach basis, using other local facilities and the wealth of outdoor spaces across the District.
- iii) The wider development of Arts Activity in the District is limited by the current Human and Financial Resources available, in what is a Discretionary Service and by the constraints of working within a Local Authority framework.
- iv) A significant amount of Added value has been brought to the Arts programme by the successful procurement of external funding through Grants etc. However, there is a question mark as to how sustainable this approach will be for the future, as there could well be a reluctance for Charitable Grant making bodies to continue to fund public organisations and as we re-apply to existing funders, who may wish to distribute support to others in the Region.
- v) The District and adjacent areas host a number of other Arts Organisations who deliver arts opportunities to our residents, albeit there would appear to be considerable demand.
- vi) There has been a willingness expressed to explore the potential of some or indeed all of the Council's directly managed arts development work, to be in future delivered by third parties. There may be potential to increase the number of opportunities and participation in the arts by alleviating some of the current limitations on funding and flexibility. The Council would need to be absolutely clear as to what objectives it was seeking in this respect and how quality standards could be retained.

These 10 Key Conclusions of the Review ultimately led to the following Recommendations, which were subsequently endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and thereafter agreed by the Cabinet.

- (a) That whilst recognising the quality of the current Arts Development work undertaken by the Council's own Arts Team, the Council actively explore the feasibility of third party delivery from suitably qualified and experienced Arts Organisations, for part or all of the Services.
- (b) That the underlying objectives and outcomes of any alternative future delivery option, should be to increase access to and participation in the Arts, for people of all ages and abilities, within the Epping Forest Community.

Cabinet also requested that the feasibility of the alternative delivery of the Arts be undertaken by the Leisure Task and Finish Panel in the 2007/08 Municipal Year. Hence the background to why Members are considering the issue.

Matters for Consideration:

An overview of the current work of the Arts Service was presented to the Panel at the last meeting by Julie Chandler, Community and Cultural Services Manager (*Copies of the Presentation attached to the Minutes*).

With respect to any alternative method of delivering Arts in the district, it is important that a number of Key Objectives are determined at the outset, in order to evaluate any future options.

Drawing from the Review to date and the Council's current adopted Arts Policy i.e. "*The Council supports the Arts in recognition of the vital contribution that they make to the quality of life and to community identity; to the enhancement of the built and natural environment; to mental, physical and spiritual health and to the local economy*", the following Key Objectives are proposed for consideration.

Key Objectives, Review of Arts Development.

- i) To continue to promote and deliver the Council's adopted Arts Policy.
- ii) To increase access to and participation in the Arts, for people of all ages and abilities.
- iii) To ensure that the current strong and effective network of partnership working is retained.
- iv) To ensure that equality of access to the Arts is maintained and that targeted work is continued with groups at risk of social exclusion.
- v) To ensure that the Arts Service is delivered by the most cost effective means possible and that Value For Money is optimised.
- vi) To ensure that the District continues to benefit from investment in the Arts through the maximisation of External Funding opportunities.

Action - Members of the Panel are asked to agree the Key Objectives for the Review commenting or amending as they see fit.

Options for Future Delivery

Officers within Leisure Services, in consultation with the Local Authority Arts Association and other statutory Arts Bodies, have undertaken a review of how other Local Authorities, who have elected not to pursue traditional direct delivery methods, to provide Arts opportunities and undertake Arts Development.

The results of this research are attached. Officers will take Members through the findings in more detail. However, in Summary, there would appear to be a number of options available to the Council.

1. Outsource service to an external existing Arts organisation who may be either a Voluntary Sector or Commercial entity.
2. Transfer of Service to a new body specifically established to deliver arts development, which may take the form of a charitable entity, re Trust or Company Limited by Guarantee.
3. Explore the possibility of a “Shared Services” approach with another Neighbouring Authority or the County Council.
4. Reduce the level of direct delivery and enter into either a Service Level Agreement, or grant-assisting arrangement with another external Arts Organisation, whilst retaining a Strategic/Co-ordinating role.
5. With the likelihood of Community and Cultural Services (to include Arts) transferring under Top Management Review, to a more corporate position under the Deputy Chief Executive, investigate how the Arts Service could be re-focused across the wider work of the Authority in pursuit of Community/Council/BVPP Key Objectives.

Officers will expand on the service and practical implications of each option.

Action – Members are asked to recommend their preferred option to be reported to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October.

7. 2012 OLYMPIC LEGACY ACTION PLAN

Following on from the Panel’s consideration of the Essex Legacy Plan and the presentation on the options for the Council’s future involvement, the Deputy Chief Executive will give a verbal report on developments across the County, to include local developments in the District, over the last few months.

Members will also be asked to review the local Legacy Action Plan (to follow).

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note the dates of the next scheduled meetings:

- 31 October 2007 and
- 27 November 2007.