

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 1 APRIL 2009

LEISURE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet on the consultation process associated with the Council's draft Leisure and Cultural Strategy and to seek approval to adopt the finalised strategy and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy has been produced in order to illustrate the range and scope of Leisure Services within the area and demonstrate how these services will improve the quality of life for residents. It has been developed to deliver on the Council's Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government and in line with East Ayrshire's Community Plan.
- 2.2 The first part of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy provides an accessible overview of the Council's policy stance with regards to leisure and cultural activities. It shows why they are important, what drives the services, where leisure can demonstrate partnership working and work towards meeting targets, such as improving health and lowering crime statistics and lastly sets out the key aims for leisure and cultural services over the next three years.
- 2.3 The second part contains the detailed action plans which are all SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound). Additionally, they detail key delivery partners and show strategic links with the community plan and other linked plans.
- 2.4 It was recommended by Cabinet on the 17th September 2008 that the draft Leisure and Cultural Strategy should be subject to consultation with stakeholders. This took place over 12 weeks, between 1st October and 12th November 2008.

3. LEISURE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION AND OUTCOMES

- 3.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy consultation used a number of methods to obtain views from a wide variety of individuals and groups. Focus groups were used to obtain a deeper understanding of residents' needs and their perception of our services. These sessions also helped capture the views of those who do not currently use our services. Online methods helped minimise costs and maximise coverage. Drop in sessions in Kilmarnock and Cumnock allowed informal feedback direct to senior managers. Additionally, a hard copy of the strategy and consultation questionnaire was distributed amongst the membership of East Ayrshire's Resident's Panel. All Councillors received a copy of the consultations and were invited to comment and to attend the drop-in sessions and focus groups.

3.2 The process generated 194 responses. These can be broken down as follows:

- Completed Handwritten Questionnaires from the Residents Panel (123)
- Online Questionnaires (21)
- Drop-in Sessions (33)
- Focus Group (11)
- Email Responses (5)
- Written Responses (1)

3.3 One of the key objectives of using the Residents Panel (as opposed to using a databank from within Leisure to send out the questionnaire) was to get the views of both users and non-users. From the questionnaires, analysis of the responses shows that 31% of comments were from non-users, this was a particularly useful aspect of the consultation process.

3.4 Alongside the Leisure and Cultural Strategy consultation, was the statutory requirement of consultation on the associated Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Statutory consultation authorities commented on this and provided comments which were largely positive.

3.5 All comments received as part of the consultation were reviewed by the owners of each individual action plan. A considerable number of comments related specifically to awareness of services, whilst many others reflected a more implicit need for improved promotion via suggestions for initiatives and activities which are already being provided. There were also a significant number of comments in relation to single issues which had occurred in the past and been dealt with or are currently being addressed.

3.6 Following the completion of the process there have been a small number of amendments, including:

- updated links to the revised themes of the community plan;
- addition of play-related actions in response to the Scottish Government's new Early Years Framework;
- addition of sports-related actions specific to Kilmarnock FC as a result of public consultation;
- addition of specific targets relating to Allotments following recent discussions;
- various minor changes to partner names and references following consultation.

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy provides targets for the transparent measurement of performance. The indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) and replicate the actions in the corporate service plan. The indicators can also be used in the new performance management system.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy has been produced following extensive consultation, this will help to ensure that the services meet community needs and expectations, minimising the risk of dissatisfaction with services. Where there are statutory requirements to deliver services these are also covered by the strategy to ensure that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no additional financial implications. The Leisure and Cultural Strategy establishes priorities for the work of Leisure Services and these will inform the budget setting process.

7. LEGAL AUTHORITY / IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy itself demonstrates where Leisure Services meet the obligations and legal duties placed upon them from national strategies and legislation.
- 7.2 The corresponding Strategic Environmental Assessment has been consulted on at the same time as the Leisure and Cultural Strategy, and ensures that statutory requirements are met.

8. POLICY / COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The first part of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy has been reviewed by the Community Planning Partnership Unit during its development to ensure clear and coherent links to the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement. The second part of the document contains individual action plans that are clearly referenced and demonstrate the ways in which Leisure Services in East Ayrshire will deliver on the key community planning themes.
- 8.2 An Integrated Impact assessment will also be carried out to address systematically, the implications of implementing the strategy upon various groups within the community. This will be carried out when available. However, the document in its development was consulted on by the Access Panel and Equalities forum, and has been reviewed in development by the Equality and Diversity Officer.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The Leisure and Cultural Strategy provides comprehensive and strategic direction for the future delivery of East Ayrshire Council's Leisure Services. The publication of the strategy will allow further strategic development of Leisure Services in line with the action plans, and with community expectations.
- 9.2 The Corporate Management Team has considered and approved this report for submission to Cabinet.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:-

- (i) approve the final version of the draft Leisure and Cultural Strategy for adoption;
- (ii) approve the Strategic Environmental Assessment Post Adoption Statement; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG

25th March 2009

LIST OF PAPERS ON MEMBERS' PORTAL

1. Draft Leisure and Cultural Strategy

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Strategic Environmental Assessment
2. Outcomes from Consultation Report
3. Data from Consultation.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 578178 and ask for John Griffiths.

GLOSSARY

SEA: is an acronym for Strategic Environmental Assessment. This is required to be carried out on all qualifying Plans, Policies and Strategies.

SMART: is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound and is generally accepted as a good method of setting robust targets.

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