

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE - 13TH SEPTEMBER 2006

LEISURE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY PROGRESS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on both the national and local Cultural Strategy and establish the future direction for both aspects of Cultural Strategy development.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cultural Commission, which was established by the Scottish Executive in 2004, published its findings in June 2005 in a report entitled "Our Next Major Enterprise". The role of the Commission was to establish a new approach to Culture and Cultural Service provision across Scotland.
- 2.2 The key recommendations of the Commission were reported to the Community Services Committee in September 2005, and a further progress report was presented to the same committee in February 2006.
- 2.3 It has now been confirmed that a draft Culture Bill will now be released for public consultation before the end of the calendar year with the intention of allowing Parliament to consider the Culture Bill before April 2007. In addition, it has also been confirmed that further guidance on Cultural Rights and Entitlements and Culture Planning will also be released for consultation at the same time as the draft Culture Bill. Both the Culture Bill and the guidance on Cultural Rights and Entitlements will have significant impact on the future planning of Local Authority Cultural Services and local Cultural Strategies, and therefore it has not been appropriate to complete and publish the draft Cultural Strategy for East Ayrshire for consultation.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 It is now likely that the Council's response to the draft Culture Bill and the Executive's draft guidance on Cultural Rights and Entitlements will be considered by Community Services Committee and the Education Committee in the first cycle of meetings in 2007, provided that the time available for consultation allows this to happen. The Culture Bill and guidance on Cultural Rights and Entitlements will then be formally agreed and published in April 2007.
- 3.2 The consultation documents will give significant direction to Local Authorities on what will be required in Local Cultural Strategies and it will be possible to utilise this information in the development of a new Leisure and Cultural Strategy. Provided that there are no major unexpected elements in the draft documents it should be possible to develop a consultation draft of the new Leisure and Cultural Strategy by May 2007. Aspects of the draft strategy will be developed in partnership with other Council departments and services and the strategy will require appraisal by relevant service committees in respect of their own service interests.

3.3 This further delay in the process of developing a new Leisure and Cultural Strategy is a pragmatic response to the national picture regarding cultural services, and it would be beneficial for the Council to produce a strategy meeting the new guidance rather than an old style document. The Council's Leisure and Cultural Services are currently underpinned by the existing Leisure Strategy, the Community Plan, the Best Value Service Review, various service specific business/service plans and committee priorities established in considering the capital programme and national guidance such as the Facilities Planning Model. There is adequate strategic direction for the services to continue until such time as the new Leisure and Cultural Strategy can be properly developed, consulted on and published.

4. PROVISIONAL FORMAT OF THE NEW LEISURE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

4.1 The new strategy will be titled as the Council's Leisure and Cultural Services as the word Culture tends to be interpreted as a narrow, arts-based, term. The provisional format will be as follows:-

- Introduction
- Leisure and Culture – definitions
- Brief description of Council Services
- Links to the East Ayrshire Community Plan
- Links to other Council plans/strategies
- National legislative/strategic context
- The Culture Bill
- Cultural Rights and Entitlements
- Overarching Aims / objectives / targets

4.2 The draft strategy will be supported by detailed service specific strategic plans for the Council's services. These plans will be released for consideration in phases throughout 2007/08 and will include:-

- Active East Ayrshire (Sports and Health Development)
- Arts and Museums
- Outdoor Access Strategy
- Sports Facility Plan (Indoor and Outdoor)
- Parks/Open Space Plan
- Play Development Plan
- Cemetery Development Plan
- Libraries, Registration and Information Plan

The content of these plans and the services they will cover will be reviewed with reference to national best practice and amended as necessary.

4.3 Production and approval of the Leisure and Cultural Strategy and the service specific strategic plans will also be accompanied by a revised performance monitoring regime which will streamline current procedures and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of performance monitoring across Leisure Services. The reinstated post of Leisure Policy Officer will have a key role in co-ordinating all aspects of this work and supporting the Leisure Management Team throughout the development of the new strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL AUTHORITY/IMPLICATION

6.1 Nil

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 It is important that the Council is ready to respond to the Culture Bill and the requirement to produce a local Cultural Strategy. This report highlights an appropriate way forward.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The work of the Cultural Commission has led to the development of a Culture Bill which, when approved, will have a significant impact on Local Authority Leisure and Cultural Services.

8.2 The work that has already been carried out in terms of service planning, the Best Value Service Review, and preparing elements of a new Leisure and Cultural Strategy can now be used to ensure that the requirements of the Culture Bill can be addressed in 2007.

8.3 By the end of 2007/08, a new Leisure and Cultural Strategy should be in place, supported by a series of service specific strategic plans and an improved performance monitoring system that measures the impact of Leisure and Cultural Services on national and local priorities.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

(i) note the contents of this report.

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JAG/TR

22nd June 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

Implementation Officer - john.griffiths@east-ayrshire.gov.uk