

REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 10 JULY 2019**PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITY****REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ASSETS & COMMERCIAL****SUBJECT: LEISURE & CULTURAL STRATEGY 2019-2024****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 To present and seek approval of the Leisure & Cultural Strategy 2019-2024, as set out in Appendix 1.

2 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT REFERENCE No: 8/19**3 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 In order to ensure clear strategic direction it is crucial that the Council's Leisure & Cultural Services section develops a clear strategy that sets out its priorities and aspirations and aligns with partner strategies and priorities.
- 3.2 The Leisure & Cultural Strategy 2019-2024, (the 'Strategy') will be supported by detailed delivery plans and reviewed periodically.
- 3.3 The Strategy seeks to be aspirational, ambitious and innovative, maximising opportunities and facilitating effective collaborative working.

4 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Strategy will provide direction for the Council's Leisure & Cultural Services Team.
- 4.2 It will support the coordination of partners at a local level to assist with the delivery of the stated priorities and action plans. Work streams will be aligned to the agreed priorities.
- 4.3 The identified vision within the Strategy is for *'a collaborative and aspirational approach to Leisure & Culture to support and enable people of all ages to lead an active and healthy lifestyle as well as discovering and celebrating the heritage of our District'*.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with both internal and external officers and partners through meetings, conversations and workshops. These have included Portfolio Holder for Community; Portfolio Holder for Enterprise; Active Rochford, the Community Activity Network for the District; Active Essex, the County Sports Partnership; Public Health; and Education partners. Views of those consulted have informed the priorities and actions to be carried out.

6 PRIORITIES

6.1 The work completed through the drafting of the Strategy has identified the strengths of the service area and the challenges it needs to overcome. This has resulted in four draft priorities for the service area: These are:-

- **Leisure Service Provision**
Resident/User Focus, Commercial Performance, Leisure & Wellbeing.
Public consultation will take place as part of future leisure service provision planning
- **Partnerships & Networks**
Build on and strengthen existing partnerships and identify new ones
- **Commercial**
Identify new and future income streams
- **Heritage, Events & Celebrations**
Promote and expand on existing cultural offer

6.2 The Strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure priorities and associated work streams within the action plans continue to reflect the Council's Business Plan priorities. Consultation with key partners and service users will take place as part of this process.

7 RISK IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Strategy reflects the scale of ambition that the Council has for Leisure & Cultural Services. An agreed Strategy needs to be in place to ensure a clear direction for future work, effective use of resources and delivery plans linked to the Council's business plan.

7.2 There is a low risk that partners might not join up to work with the Council to deliver the draft Strategy priorities. However, initial consultation has indicated that all partners support the approach taken and are willing to engage and work with the Council.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Strategy has been prepared using existing resources. Any financial implications arising from specific work streams/delivery plans associated with the Strategy will be costed in detail and agreed separately to this report.

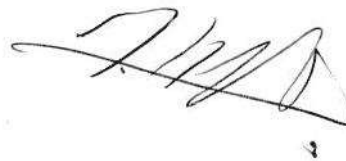
9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising out of this report.

10 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.



LT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Matt Harwood-White
Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial

Background Papers:-

None.

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DRAFT Leisure and Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2024



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Executive Summary

Rochford District Council's Leisure & Cultural Strategy outlines The Council's vision, priorities, current and future work streams and how we link with partner strategies across Leisure & Culture.

Linked to the Council's Business Plan, the strategy will assist in aligning and shaping the future of the service.

The strategy will be supported by detailed annual delivery plans and reviewed periodically; consultation with key partners and service users will take place as part of this process.

The strategy seeks to be aspirational, ambitious and innovative, maximising opportunities and facilitating effective collaborative working.

The strategy identifies future needs, the Council's strengths and challenges and how we will deliver against our priorities.

The priorities, developed in consultation with key stakeholders are:

- **Leisure Service Provision**
Resident / User Focus, Commercial Performance, Leisure & Wellbeing
- **Partnerships & Networks**
Build on and strengthen existing partnerships and identify new ones
- **Commercial**
Identify new and future income streams
- **Heritage, Events & Celebrations**
Promote and expand on existing cultural offer

The strategy and action plan will be delivered within an environment where resources need to be maximised and the requirement to be focused on achieving clearly identified outcomes is crucial.

Leisure & Culture has an ever-growing impact on wider outcomes in particular the contribution to health and wellbeing, developing individuals and communities and supporting the local economy.

Working with our partners we will take a partnership approach to increasing engagement and activity levels amongst underrepresented groups as well as enhancing our cultural offer.

Vision

A collaborative and aspirational approach to Leisure & Culture to support and enable people of all ages to lead an active and healthy lifestyle as well as discovering and celebrating the heritage of our district.

Leisure & Cultural Services

Leisure & Cultural Services sits within the Assets and Commercial Services Directorate.

The Rochford District Council Business Plan 2016-20 <https://www.rochford.gov.uk/business-plan-2016-20-0> sets out the high-level priorities that the Council will work towards. The Business Plan provides for strategic direction and informs the efficient use of Council resources to deliver priorities.

The Council's 4 priorities are as follows:

- Become financially self-sufficient
- Early intervention
- Maximise our assets
- Enable communities

As the Business Plan will imminently be reviewed, future iterations will be considered and reflected through the strategy reviews.

The main work streams of the Leisure & Cultural Services Team are as follows:

Leisure Contract

The Team is responsible for the monitoring of the leisure contract that the Council has with Fusion Lifestyle who manage our leisure sites. These sites are:

- Clements Hall Leisure Centre
<https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/clements-hall-leisure-centre/>
- Rayleigh Leisure Centre
<https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/rayleigh-leisure-centre/>
- Freight House
<https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/the-freight-house/>
- The Mill Arts & Events Centre
<https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/centres/the-mill-arts-events-centre/>
- Castle Hall

The current contract is for 20 years and ends on 31 March 2022.

Active Rochford

Lead partner on Active Rochford Community Activity Network, bringing key partners together who are involved in leisure, health and wellbeing across the District to secure funding and deliver projects. Partners include Active Essex, Castle Point & Rochford School Sports Partnership, Public Health, Fusion Lifestyle as well as local club and activity provider representation.

Projects that have been delivered by the Network include family sports projects, disability sports sessions, female only programmes, activities for older people, projects targeting inactive residents, establishment of Hockley Woods parkrun and Hawkwell junior parkrun and working with local businesses to get their employers more physically active.

Annual funding is currently drawn down from Active Essex for partners to deliver projects that meet the needs and objectives of partner strategies and priorities.

Wild Woods Day

This annual family fun day has been delivered in Hockley Woods since 2004 attracting 3-4,000 visitors at each event in recent years. The event consists of a marketplace of businesses and charities and a range of sports, arts and environmentally themed activities. It is supported through local sponsorship.

Rochford District Awards

Combined Sports Awards and Citizen of the Year Awards supported through local sponsorship. Rewarding and recognising local athletes, clubs, schools, volunteers and those making a difference in our local community.

Civil Ceremonies

Rochford District Council runs and manages two Civil Ceremony venues, Rayleigh Windmill and the Old House in Rochford. They are both small, intimate venues with Rayleigh Windmill a well-established and popular venue. The Old House has more recently been awarded a wedding licence.

Rayleigh Windmill has been sympathetically refurbished to offer a unique venue for Civil Weddings, Civil Partnerships, Naming Ceremonies or Renewal of Vows. With seating for up to 20 guests, Rayleigh Windmill is an intimate venue. Located next to the Windmill Garden and the historic Rayleigh Mount, it offers a perfect backdrop for photos.

The Old House is a romantic medieval venue located in the heart of historic Rochford. One of the oldest buildings in England, The Old House is the perfect location for intimate weddings and other special celebrations.

The Old House was extensively renovated in 1984 and is now a stunning wedding venue. The original features of this breathtaking building provide an elegant and historic backdrop for beautiful weddings.

The magical Old Hall, dating from 1270, hosts twenty four ceremony guests. This charming space is unforgettable, with its stunning altar inspired fireplace and beautiful hammer beam ceiling.

Rayleigh Windmill

The Rayleigh Windmill is an award-winning tourist and educational attraction. It contains a museum, an exhibition space and information about Rayleigh Mount.

Visit England has accredited the 200-year-old Grade II listed building as a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction. Visit England is a national body that assesses visitor attractions throughout the country.

The Windmill hosts art exhibitions throughout the season.

The Old House

The Old House in Rochford was built in 1270, seated on South Street it's a real gem in the District's crown and a must see for everyone.

Rochford District Council bought the building in 1982 and using traditional methods managed to restore the house to its original glory using as much of the original materials as possible, there was even a cauldron of handmade limewash in the garden area which was used to paint the outside walls.

Rochford Town Team conduct regular guided tours of the building.

Health Walks

Two weekly health walks take place in Hullbridge and Hockley led by volunteer health walk leaders. They attract upwards of 40 walker each week and have a positive health and social impact for local residents.

Leisure & Cultural Services key achievements

- 650,000+ visits to Clements Hall and Rayleigh Leisure Centres in 2018-19
- Two Quest accredited Leisure Centres
- Lead partner on Active Rochford community activity network
- Active Rochford supported establishment of Hockley Woods parkrun
Events 218 / Runners 6,289 / Clubs 282
- Active Rochford supported establishment of Hawkwell junior parkrun
Events 64 / Runners 979 / Clubs 17
- Delivery of Rochford District Awards 2019
- 3-4,000 annual visitors at Wild Woods Day
- 2692 annual visitors to Rayleigh Windmill 2018-19
- 6-8 annual art exhibitions celebrating local artists
- Rayleigh Windmill VAQAS Accreditation
- 30+ volunteers at Rayleigh Windmill and leading health walks
- Management, promotion and development of two Civil Ceremony venues
- Rayleigh Windmill Essex Wedding Awards winner
- Tours of The Old House led by Rochford Town Team
- 3,000+ Family Theatre visits
- 3-3,500 individual health walks undertaken in 2018-19

Local Picture

In the 2011 Census the population of the Rochford District was 83,287. Within the 65 square miles of Rochford District there is plenty of character, miles of unspoilt coastline and attractive countryside. This includes the historic Hockley Woods, the island of Foulness, the Roach Valley Conservation Zone and Wallasea Island.

Rochford is on the train line to Southend and London (which is less than an hour away) and is part of the South East Thames Gateway which covers broadly the area east of the M25.

The district is home to around 3,320 businesses, with 95% employing fewer than 10 people. The area is generally an affluent and prosperous part of the country. This is reflected in reasonably low deprivation, excellent health conditions among our population (although some pockets of poorer health in the more urban areas are evident), and one of the lowest crime rates in the country.

The District has two Leisure Centres – Clements Hall Leisure Centre in Hawkwell and Rayleigh Leisure Centre.

The Leisure & Cultural Services Team also manage two key heritage attractions, which are also civil ceremony venues, Rayleigh Windmill and The Old House in Rochford.

Physical activity levels are low in the UK. In the Rochford District 15.9% of adults are doing enough physical activity to benefit their health. The national average is 17.6%.¹

The percentage of adults classed as overweight or obese in Rochford is 67.6%. This is worse than the England average.¹

Child Health – In Year 6 16% (146) of children are classified as obese, better than the average for England. ¹

¹ Castle Point & Rochford Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2019-21

Local, regional and national plans and strategies

The Leisure and Cultural Strategy takes into account new and emerging evidence and priorities published at local, regional and national level.

Relevant strategies from those organisations responsible for leisure and cultural provision are as follows:

Rochford District Council Business Plan

<https://www.rochford.gov.uk/business-plan-2016-20-0>

Rochford District Tourism Strategy – draft

The Council has identified the need to enhance the local economy through the promotion of tourism to maximise the contribution to the local economy, employment and quality of life, health and well-being for visitors and communities.

Rochford District Council Asset Strategy

<https://www.rochford.gov.uk/asset-strategy>

The Asset Strategy sets out The Council's priorities for its asset portfolio, taking into account the Council's strategic objectives and the financial challenges it faces. The Strategy provides a clear framework against which future decisions about the Council's assets can be assessed.

Rochford District Council Local Plan

<https://www.rochford.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/new-local-plan>

Once adopted the new Local Plan will set out the Council's strategic vision, policies and land allocations, where necessary, for meeting future needs (including housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development). It will also identify areas for protection, such as sites that are important for wildlife and open space.

Castle Point & Rochford Health & Wellbeing Strategy -

<https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing>

The priorities for Castle Point and Rochford are:

- Reducing levels of overweight and obesity
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Supporting people to lead independent lives to stay in their own homes for as long as possible

A number of key principles will assist in addressing the priorities, these include:

- On-going and effective partnership working
- Empowering residents to make positive behaviour changes
- Focusing on the prevention of ill health and early intervention
- Addressing existing health inequalities

Essex Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy

<https://www.rochford.gov.uk/community-and-people/health-and-wellbeing>

Every local area must have a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy setting out the priorities identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that local government, the NHS and other partners will deliver together through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Statutory guidance is clear that the purpose of the JHWS is to set out 'a small number of key strategic priorities for action that will make a real impact' and in developing the JHWS Essex have resisted the temptation to produce an all-inclusive 'wish list' of activity

Engagement with partners highlighted four areas of focus:

1. Improving mental health and wellbeing
2. Addressing obesity, improving diet and increasing physical activity
3. Influencing conditions and behaviours linked to health inequalities
4. Enabling and supporting people with long-term conditions and disabilities.

Live Well in Rochford

All Essex Local Authorities including Rochford and partners have come together to promote the livewell campaign. It is designed to engage communities, families and individuals with the aim of providing information about all that is on offer in Essex to improve health and wellbeing.

Rochford District Playing Pitch Strategy

The focus of the overarching strategy is to provide clear direction to all partners so that together they can plan and develop a more modern, efficient and sustainable range of community based outdoor sports facilities, as well as identifying cross-cutting themes that can be addressed across local authority boundaries.

Rochford District Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy

Rochford has an aspiration, and need, to consider its facilities planning particularly in the context of an ageing stock of leisure facilities; different management arrangements, future growth needs; and the changing economic and demographic profile of the District. This will ensure residents have the opportunity to be physically active and healthier and where appropriate develop their sporting ambitions within their local community.

Active Essex: Changing 1 million lives

<https://www.activeessex.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Active-Essex-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

Active Essex's strategic priorities are as follows:

- Drive and sustain participation
- Improve Health and Wellbeing
- Develop Individuals and organisations
- Strengthen localities, communities and networks

Sport England: Towards an Active Nation 2016-21

<https://www.sportengland.org/active-nation/our-strategy/>

The vision is that everyone, regardless of their age, background or level of ability, feels able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not. Everyone should feel welcome, to find something in sport and activity that meets their needs and for the sector to value them as customers.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-digital-culture-media-and-sport-single-departmental-plan/department-for-digital-culture-media-and-sport-single-departmental-plan-2018>

Single departmental plan objective:

Participation: maximise social action, and participation in culture, sport and physical activity.

Arts Council England

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-strategy-0>

Arts Council England's mission is great Art and Culture for everyone. To achieve their mission they have a 10-year strategy 2010-20. This was created in consultation with partners, including national and local government, arts organisations and artists. To help them deliver the strategy, they have five goals to guide what they do.

- 1 Excellence
- 2 For Everyone
- 3 Resilience and Sustainability
- 4 Diversity and Skills
- 5 Children and Young People

District Strengths and Challenges

District strengths

- **Strong partnerships and networks**
- **Health of people in the District better than the national average**
- **Strong volunteering infrastructure**
- **Quality and historic Open Spaces**
- **Dual purposes historic assets: heritage sites and civil ceremony venues**

District challenges

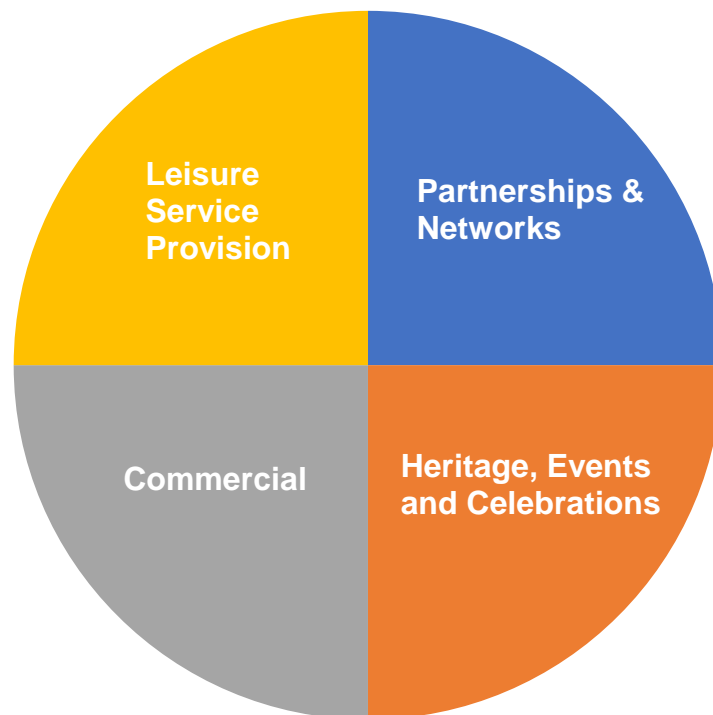
- **Ageing leisure sites**
- **Physical activity participation rates**
- **High levels of obesity in children and adults**
- **An ageing population**
- **Rural nature of part of the District**

Leisure & Cultural Services Priorities

We need to continue to build on our strengths, and work to overcome the challenges we face, through identifying what our priorities are and through working in partnership with key partners.

Consultation has taken place with both internal and external officers and partners. These have included Portfolio Holder for Community; Portfolio Holder for Enterprise; Active Rochford, the Community Activity Network for the District; Active Essex, the County Sports Partnership; Public Health; and Education partners.

This has resulted in four priorities being identified and developed as set out in the diagram below.



Priority 1 - Leisure service provision

Resident (User) Focus

- Implement clear benefits for Rochford District residents
- Provide opportunities and benefits for identified groups
- Provide innovative pay and play provision for non-members
- Innovative use of technology to improve the Customer experience and responding to new industry trends
- Effective community and partner consultation

Commercial Performance

- Provide significant capital investment in each of the leisure sites
- Removal of the unitary charge currently paid to the Contractor
- Links to the Council's Asset Strategy

Leisure & Wellbeing

- Reduce levels of obesity in children and adults by increasing participation in sport and physical activity
- Increase participation in underrepresented groups
- Improve mental health and wellbeing

Priority 2 - Partnerships and Networks

- Build on and strengthen the Active Rochford Community Activity Network
- Widen the network of partners to include non-traditional organisations and groups
- Share insight and good practice
- Identify and work with partners to secure external funding to deliver projects
- Work with external partners to bring new events to the District
- Take lead role in Active Rochford Network to commission partners to deliver projects
- Increase participation rates in sport and physical activity
- Utilise and promote the Live Well brand

Priority 3 – Commercial

- Identify new and future revenue streams
- Maximise our assets
- Secure capital investment

Priority 4 - Heritage, Events and Celebrations

- Promote and build on the civil ceremony offer at Rayleigh Windmill and The Old House
- Develop Rayleigh Windmill as a visitor attraction
- Develop The Old House in Rochford as a heritage attraction working in partnership with the Rochford Town Team
- Training and continued professional development of Rayleigh Windmill Volunteers
- Work with external partners to facilitate provision of new events within the Rochford District utilising our open spaces