

RESIDUAL ISSUES – BEST VALUE REVIEW - LEISURE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report picks up those issues not specifically covered under the review of the leisure contract but which nonetheless have been identified as part of the Best Value Leisure Review. Those matters relating to the leisure contract were reported into full Council on 19th December, 2000, and are now being progressed under the action plan agreed. However, there remains a number of other matters identified under the Best Value process on which a Member view is now sought prior to any action being undertaken.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Both the internal officer group and PMP, the Council's leisure consultants, having worked closely together over the past 6 months, have identified a number of issues in the Best Value review of leisure provision which do not fall under the auspices of the leisure contract, either in its current form or likely future form. Nonetheless, these issues in themselves require consideration by the Council to determine how they should be dealt with.

3 ISSUES IDENTIFIED

School Facilities

- 3.1 Both PMP and the internal officer group identified issues around community access and usage of school facilities and the need for a more co-ordinated approach to the usage of school facilities.

Liaison/Communication with Sports Clubs

The consultation carried out by PMP has suggested that many sports organisations are unaware of the role and services/facilities provided by the Council.

Usage of Council Pavilions

- 3.3 This was linked in with 3.2 above. Many clubs using the Council's pavilions comment on a lack of investment and many felt that they should be given more opportunity to get involved in the management and operation of these facilities.

Potential for Tourism

- 3.4 The internal officer group considered that this was an area that was under-utilised at present and which had considerable potential for development, although the planning and environmental issues would need careful consideration.

Usage of Sports Pitches

- 3.5 From the usage information available, the internal officer group identified concerns around the availability and access to sports pitches, with usage heavily concentrated around specific periods.

Ability to Secure Sponsorship

- 3.6 The internal officer group considered that further opportunities should be investigated in an attempt to secure sponsorship for specific Council leisure activities, publications, etc.

Marketing of Council Facilities, Specifically Woodlands, which Lie Outside of the Council's Contract

- 3.7 The internal officer group considered that there was considerable potential for the Council to market its woodlands in a more positive fashion to promote appropriate leisure pursuits, healthy lifestyles, and the 'green' credentials of the Authority.

4 PROPOSED ACTIONS

- 4.1 In an attempt to take these matters forward the following actions are proposed for Members' consideration, comments and agreement.

School Facilities

- 4.2 Officers consider that initially this matter could best be addressed through the Youth Sports Development Group and the Rochford Arts Forum, both of which already exist and are attempting to do some work in this area. The aim would be to include schools facilities, access details, etc. in a facilities directory to be produced by December 2001. This directory would also be available in electronic form.

Liaison/Communication with Sports Clubs

- 4.3 It is proposed to invite sports clubs to a meeting in April to discuss the role and facilities provided by the Council, their concerns, etc. The outcome of that meeting can then be reported back into the Member arena in the new municipal year, with any suggestions raised and proposed actions, together with potential resource implications.

Usage of Council Pavilions

- 4.4 This is linked into 4.3 above. In addition, officers will be carrying out a further condition survey of the pavilions between April and July as part of the early work on the budget preparation process for 2002/2003 and the results of this can be linked in with the above.

Potential for Tourism

- 4.5 It is proposed that in the first instance this issue needs to be looked at by Planning Policy Sub Committee as part of the Local Plan Review. Matters identified by the internal officer group as meriting consideration include the lack of hotel and bed and breakfast accommodation in the District, the usage of buildings in the countryside, and the various physical characteristics of the District, e.g. rivers, woodlands, and whether these have potential to attract visitors into the District. Clearly, the land use and environmental implications need to be carefully considered and this can best be done via Planning Policy Sub Committee. It is proposed that this work is built into the current Local Plan Review work programme, which is scheduled to produce a revised plan in deposit form towards the end of this year/early 2002.

Usage of Sports Pitches

- 4.6.1 Officers intend to contact the various leagues operating in the District before May/June 2001 to discuss with them usage patterns and scheduling locally. Any proposals can then be discussed with the ground maintenance contractor with a view to implementation from the 2001/2002 season.

Ability to Secure Sponsorship

- 4.7 The Council is involved in the promotion of a number of leisure activities e.g. summer play schemes and produces a number of publications e.g. town trails, woodland trails, which would appear to have some potential for attracting sponsorship. Officers propose to investigate this matter further prior to reporting back to Members with any expressions of interest in June/July 2001.

Marketing of Woodland Areas

- 4.8 The proposal here is to prepare a marketing plan for the Council's woodland areas for consideration by committee in September/October 2001.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Many of the above could have a positive impact in terms of addressing various crime and disorder issues.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Many of the above could make a positive contribution to the environmental quality of the District.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The tasks outlined above will form part of the ongoing work programmes of existing staff. Any additional resource requirements will be the subject of specific reports back to committee. It is envisaged that further investigation into some matters e.g. sponsorship, may result in additional resources being secured for both existing and possible new initiatives.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 To undertake a review of services through the Best Value approach is a legal requirement for all Authorities.

9 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Nothing specific

9 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

That, subject to Members' consideration and comments, the list of actions outlined in the report be approved. (CEX)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

Background Papers:

None

For further information please contact Paul Warren on:-

Tel:- 01702 318199
E-Mail:- paul.warren@rochford.gov.uk