

Portfolio Holder Annual Report

Portfolio: Leisure and Tourism
Portfolio Holder, Councillor Luke Stephens

Year: 2012/13

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Please provide a summary of services /areas covered within the remit of the Portfolio.

2. Performance

2.1. Please detail areas of good performance over the past year.

Cultural Services

Palace Theatre

- Increased the management's capacity to concentrate more time on improvements to the customer service by implementing a central management system. This is a bespoke software script that automatically updates the show contracts to the technical, payment and booking system which were all done manually before.
- Improved partnership working with performers agents, to develop new areas of working, diversifying the performances at the Theatre and strengthening contracting arrangements?
- Revised the pricing structure to make it more flexible and responsive to customer needs thus allowing fledgling organisations access to a professional arena at an affordable cost. This increased the number of performances on site and the total number of hours the site was open.
- Improved marketing displays around the building and improved signage in the box office areas are assisting people finding their way around the building more efficiently and takes advantage of current markets of upcoming events.
- The team has increased the number of hirer performances which are contributing to financial savings that we have signed up to as part of the budget 2012/13 round.

Arts Development

- AVCC Public Art Project was completed and installed alongside the footpath of Arrow Valley.

Events

- There were a total of **32** Borough led events delivered across the town which supported international, and local agendas e.g. The Olympic Torch Relay and the Community Forum's Bandstand event. The events aimed to provide a series of free diversionary cultural experiences across the Borough. A total of 68,000 people attended the events programme.

Community Centres

- Increased bookings across all Community Centres. Working with Voluntary Groups to deliver key initiatives including:
 - Facilitation of the "Rethink" mental health project. The sessions provided 12 mental health sufferers with occupational therapy sessions.
 - Facilitated the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder Workshops which delivers specialist physiotherapy and management of the disease workshops.

Forge Mill Museum & Boardsley Abbey Visitor Centre

- The Museum has introduced a cover for the cloister area with sponsorship money from the Choose How You Move 2 initiative (**£6K**). The new cover enables the venue to provide evening performances and offers the venue greater flexibility by effectively increasing the venues visitor capacity
- Promotion as a wedding venue has been successfully undertaken with 2 weddings taking place this calendar year and further promotions planned it is hoped that there will be expansion of this area of operation.
- The restoration of the Boardsley Abbey ruins was completed through a **£148K** funding grant from Natural England. This has stabilised the scheduled ancient monument and significantly reduced the cost burden to the Council for the next 10 years.

Positive Activities

- RBC led a consortia funding application made up from third sector agencies to provide a series of Positive Activity Youth Session across the Borough to commence in January 2013 (**£120K** funding from WCC)

Sports Services

Sports Development and Physical Activity

- Delivered a successful Community Sports Day at the Abbey Stadium, attended by in excess of 2000 people and supporting clubs to attract more members.
- Worked in partnership with NEW College to develop an apprenticeship scheme, and support BRAVO volunteer development. Three apprentice roles will be employed in December.
- Introduced the Sports Makers scheme which will offer residents the opportunity to volunteer in sport, in return for work experience and coaching qualifications. This is supported by the County Sports Partnership coaching bursary scheme. Currently there are over 100 Sports Makers registered.
- Increased adult participation in Sport (NI8) in Redditch, through more targeted community programmes, effective partnership working and delivery of the Abbey Stadium project.
- Through short breaks funding delivered a successful six week project where a group of disabled young people took part in a variety of outdoor activities including bell boating, canoeing, archery, rock climbing and team building activities. After some positive feedback from parents we will look to make use of year 2 funding with a similar project
- Held the 2012 Sports Awards, a successful evening held at The Palace Theatre where approximately 250 people from a wide spectrum of sports clubs attended the event. Mettis Aerospace were the main sponsors of the event with some of the eventual winners being nominated for the County Sports Awards
- Delivered a range of targeted programmes focusing on health intervention and prevention. These relate to residents with health related illnesses and include activities such as falls prevention, mobility classes, sports and exercise to music classes.
- Submitted a joint proposal with Redditch Borough Council and Age UK to support older residents to become more independent and make lifestyles choices which will support them to become more fit and active as well as supporting mental health issues.

Sports Centres

- Re-introduced Free Swimming for under 16's and over 60's. Over 2000 people had registered by the end of October.

- Invested £72k into Arrow Vale and £180k at Kingsley, opening the new Springs Value Gym at Arrow Vale and new Sports Hall Floor and refurbishment of the Gymnasium at Kingsley
- Achieved Quest accreditation at Abbey Stadium, a significant achievement in view of the centre only being open since February.
- Provided £40k Investment into Pitcheroak Golf Course which has improved standards and has resulted in a new caterer running the catering service.
- Provide four open days at Abbey Stadium to promote facilities. The events were attended by over 4,000 people in total. This has helped to support the achievement of the membership targets.
- 2200 regular gym memberships and over 800 children attending swimming lessons on a weekly basis
- Extended and enhanced the exercise to music programme, and now provide 65 classes for a variety of ages and abilities.
- Staff achieved leisure related NVQ's which has helped to support service delivery improvement

Parks and Green Spaces

The majority of the Parks and Green Spaces achievements for the year 2012/13 have formed part of the Environmental Services Portfolio Report.

The following achievements have a predominantly physical activity remit and support our leisure services in achieving wider targets.

Physical Activity

- The Parks and Green Spaces team developed a 'Park Run' event at Arrow Valley Country Park that has in excess of 120 participants.
Park Run is a national event, run every Saturday morning, participants run 5k in a park setting, each with their own barcode and personal time keeping and record targets.
The weekly event is supported by Parks officers with the support of a growing volunteer base.
- The Parks and Green Spaces team have made great progress with the formalising of external fitness classes within our parks and open spaces alongside developing a fees and charges framework. A notable success is in Morton Stanley Park with both fitness classes and charitable events supported by the team.

- The team have supported local sports clubs and organisations with the development of additional events and activities; these include cycling, cyclo cross and orienteering.

Events and Activities

- Support has been provided to the Events team with the many events that have happened this year; Olympics, Jubilee and sporting themes. Officers have also supported the booking and administration of external events within parks and green spaces.

Play

- The team have undertaken several play projects throughout the year and completed safety inspections to all sites. Two play areas in Marfields Park and Rowan Crescent have been resurfaced. The play area in Glover Street has seen both improvement to the landscape and redesign of the ball court to reduce neighbour conflict.

Business Development

Sponsorship

- The policy for Roundabout Sponsorship has been produced and agreed by elected Members and the officers have commenced work in this area. There are seven sites that have received advertising approval and that are available for sponsorship. Full details will be available soon on the RBC web site.

Website Development

- The Leisure and Cultural Services (L&CS) team were one of the first services to launch a new improved Leisure Website. After receiving customer's feedback regarding the webpages, Leisure commenced work with support from the website development team to create a brand new look website. This provided up-to-date information, pictures and links for a more interactive experience and brand new user friendly layout. It is still early days but a positive outcome has already been identified through a decrease in the number of 1 star ratings.

Room Bookings and Caretaking Provision

- Caretaking and Room Booking provision has been transferred, and now sits within the L&CS Business Development Team. A seamless experience has been met with all involved. Officers will review the service over the next 12 months.

2.2 Please detail any areas of concerning performance in the year.

Cultural Services

Palace Theatre

- The inconsistent performance of the online booking system has caused the team to instigate an improvement plan for the upcoming season.

Arts Development

- Due to the volume of the events catered for in an exceptional year and the learning curve for the new shared service Arts Development team was not as proactive as would have ideally been planned. The team will look to address this over the next financial year working in a strategic framework.

Events

- Due to the demand on the team in this exceptional year of events the team were only able to devote a limited time to the production of an events tool kit, published on the web-site to inform and educate the public on organising a public event.

Forge Mill Museum & Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

- The new catering provider was procured halfway through the season which affected the offer for April and May of this year, however since then the new service has been a complete success.

Parks and Green Spaces

- No real concerns have been identified. The year in general has been difficult with unseasonal weather throughout the summer months however a new team has achieved significant success and implemented many new systems that ensure continued service improvements.
- The volume of events combined with the unseasonal weather has caused some pressure.

Sports Services

Sports Development and Physical Activity

- Due to the difficulty in engaging with young people there have been a lower number of participants than expected on some of the Sportivate programmes, intended for young people aged 14-25 years. This has now been recognised for the latter part of the year and numbers booked onto forthcoming courses have improved due to improved engagement with clubs and NEW college and use of alternative marketing techniques.

Golf Course

- Due to one of the wettest years on record the usage of the course during spring has been lower than expected as the course has been closed and participants are inclined to stop using the course thus getting out of the habit of playing. This can impact on usage across other periods of the year such as summer and autumn. However, Officers are planning to carry out maintenance on the course to improve conditions for the forthcoming year as well as marketing the facility more effectively.

Abbey Stadium

- The team have experienced problems meeting customer demand and expectations due to the limited capacity of the telephone communication system. This is based on contractual problems between service providers.

Business Development

Marketing Schedules and Service promotions

- Aligning marketing schedules across the services has been difficult with the new teams merging in the first few months of this year and the diversity of the service. This has now much improved with stability and an understanding of new roles and responsibilities and the need to work the service as a whole.

Room Bookings

- Although taking on the room bookings has been a relatively seamless experience to the customer, there have been issues behind the scenes with the amount of people in the past that have been involved in its process. This has now been improved and simplified but there is still a need to review the process further.

3. The Year Ahead

3.1 Please detail the Portfolio Holder's main areas of focus in 2013/14

Cultural Services

Palace Theatre

- To sustain and embed the significant operation changes undertaken in 2012 and continue to grow the services audiences.
- To launch the improved web based "on-line" booking system and to build on the social marketing element to improve access to information and increase sales.

Palace Youth Theatre (PYT)

- Explore ways to implement the recommendations highlighted in the internal review of the service to widen the service appeal and increase through put.

Forge Mill Museum & Bordesley Abbey Visitor Centre

- The team will look to expand the learning and education offer at the site and re- launch the Abbey Ruins as the key historical heart for the Borough.

Positive Activities

- Deliver on the outcomes committed to in the funding application and the subsequent commissioned works.

Arts Development

- Springs Public Art Project that was developed with NEW College students has been completed and installed in the Church Green area.

Sports Services

Sports Centres

- **Free Swimming:** Continuation of the free swimming scheme including a review of performance against target. Monthly Project meetings will be continued to monitor performance and suggest corrective action should KPIs not been met. Where possible Officers will link free swimming into targeted health programmes to improve awareness and participation.
- **Health and Fitness:** Continue to increase and retain health and fitness Members at both sites to include improving access for all community groups. Implementation of a marketing plan and sales / retention plan. Where possible use the facilities as an entry and exit route for targeted health programmes to improve awareness of the facility and increase participation.

- **Quest Accreditation:** At Abbey Stadium using the report recommendations to identify areas for improvement to help support continuous improvement. Develop a Service Improvement Plan which is sourced from a variety of reports including Quest Assessments.
- **Abbey Stadium:** Review Abbey Stadium's first year of operation across a range of indicators including income, usage, satisfaction, energy usage etc. Develop an appropriate suite of KPI's which are underpinned by a range of monitoring measures. Ensure outstanding snags/ defects, particularly priority defects, are completed by the contractor prior to the 12 month defect period expiring. Action: Continue with defect reporting, monthly meetings and provide an annual review to establish progress and outstanding defects.
- **Dual Use:** Review of the Dual Use (DU) Agreements. Benchmark against other DU Agreements, draft report and implement consultation plan.
- **Dual Use:** Review activity programmes, establish new activity programmes to increase revenue, participation and supported targeted health programmes.

Sports Development and Physical Activity

- **Disability Sport:** Work in partnership to develop a range of opportunities to increase participation across disabled residents. This will be underpinned through grant funding submissions e.g - Sport England (if successful). This will include a mixture of physical improvements in buildings, training and awareness for staff but more importantly activity programmes for disabled groups. Establish a range of contacts and set up a disability network group to co-ordinate programmes/funding submissions.
- **Area of Highest Need:** Work with the Winyates Alliance to offer programmes to tackle known health and social issues in the Area of Highest Need. Set up a sub group to focus on a health and well being project in the locality with a strong emphasis on Sport and Physical Activity.
- **Volunteering:** Implement the Sports Makers and BRAVO schemes in services. BRAVO co-ordinator employed and with a targeted work programme. Sports Makers scheme promoted / implemented across the Town.
- **Strategy:** Complete the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy including consultation with members and key partners, and influenced through research.
- **Older People:** Develop a range of activities for Older People, tying in with the Ageing Well Strategy and Funding Stream. Submit a funding proposal through WCC with draft implementation plan.

Playing Pitches

- **Delivery Plan:** Complete the delivery plan to support the Playing Pitch Strategy and to provide evidence to support funding applications.
- Complete draft strategy, consult with key stakeholders, and meet with FA to support stakeholders.
- **Pitch Sizes:** Review pitch capacity against demands for the 2013/14 season related to new FA pitch size guidelines. Consult with clubs and leagues and gain support from the governing body to achieve the desired outcomes.
- **Maintenance:** Work with leagues / clubs to ensure a suitable post/pre-season maintenance programme is carried out on pitches. This should improve carrying capacity as well as helping to improve the long term sustainability of the pitch stock.
- **Funding:** Investigate external funding opportunities to invest into changing facilities, pitch drainage and ancillary facilities. These will support the recommendations from the Playing Pitch delivery plan.
- **Participation:** Work with FA (NGB) and Sports Development team to look at introducing programmes to improve participation and reduce drop off rates. These programmes should provide sustainable exit and entry routes into and out of existing programmes.

Contracts Monitoring - Golf Course / BMX

- **Performance:** Develop a robust contracts monitoring system to include meetings, KPIs and corrective action plans agreed by partners.
- **Development:** Support partners to complete new development plans to achieve club mark, improve participation, club membership and enhance quality standards of provision.
- **Landscape Plan:** Review existing golf course maintenance programme including ad hoc works requirements and course enhancements.

Parks and Green Spaces

The majority of the Parks and Green Spaces main areas of focus features within the report to the Environmental Services portfolio. In addition the team will focus on:

- **Physical Activity:** Further develop opportunities for both formal and informal recreation within parks and open spaces, with a focus on 'Park Run', Orienteering and Play/Sport opportunities.

- **Play Opportunities:** Progress evaluation of play provision within the Borough, seeking opportunities for investment to improve the quality of local facilities.

Business Development

- **Sponsorship:** With a budget target set for Leisure and Cultural services we are looking to gain sponsorship for seven roundabouts which have been approved. 'Advertise Here' signs will be installed and companies who have shown interest will be approached. Once prices have been agreed Officers will roll the Sponsorship scheme out in November/December. A webpage linked to Leisure and Cultural Services or Business pages will be produced to help with the marketing and promotion. Officers will monitor the success and progress of the scheme and if successful expand with another selection of roundabouts in the Borough.
- **Website:** Now with regular meetings in place we hope to develop and enhance the website still further. The service web group will identify best practice and work on continuous improvements to ensure the site does not fall back into decline. This will be done by internal service page reviews and critiques. As part of the group we will also review social media, such as Twitter and Facebook and work with the Communications Team to promote our services to develop future activities and events.
- **Room Bookings and Caretaking Provision:** Service reviews will be carried out on Room Bookings and Caretaking provision as mentioned above to identify service improvements and potential additional income. Promoting the Civic Suite as an external venue for hire is part of the promotional plans Officers will be looking at.
- **Performance Reports:** L&CS are currently looking into potential performance measures to use at a service level in addition to those already reported corporately. These indicators will assist the Head of Service with robust service reports and information.
- **Contract Management Systems:** The Business Development team is currently working on the production of a L&CS management contract system working with the Procurement team to deliver this. These will contain the important details of our business relationships with partners, suppliers, customers, and employees, such as prices, service levels, terms and conditions and supplier relationships. A contract management system will also provide the framework for how Officers work with people and organisations and provide the rules and guidelines for obligations so that everyone is clear of what is expected of them from the start. When managed properly, contracts will help to reduce costs and improve profitability, as well, of course, as mitigating risk.

- **Christmas Lights Procurement** –The Christmas Lights procurement in Redditch is in its final year, therefore a review and new specification needs to be written in line with new service budgets over the coming years. Officers have been working to set up the infrastructure in advance so Christmas lights can be more sustainable over the next 2/3 years.