

Committee: Community and Leisure
Date: 24 February 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Thaxted Festival Grant Application
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510402

- 1 At the Scrutiny 1 – Community and Housing meeting on 21 January 2004 Members resolved that -

The decision on Thaxted Festival Grant Request be referred back to the Community and Leisure Committee with an indication of the Committee's disappointment that the Festival is not to take place, the suggestions of the Scrutiny Committee for reduction of the expense of the Festival and the offer of Councillors Harris, Jones, Row and Tealby-Watson to form a committee to assist with fundraising for the event.

- 2 This is not a formal referral. This Committee considered the matter carefully before taking its decision.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the concerns of the Scrutiny Committee

Background papers: Minutes of Scrutiny Committee dated 21 January, 2004

Committee: Community and Leisure
Date: 24 February 2004
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Museum Resource Centre Project
Author: Carolyn Wingfield (01799) 510333

Summary

- 1 This report provides Members with initial details of a project to provide a Museum Resource Centre. It recommends that a Project Task Group be

established to progress the project and report back to this Committee in the Autumn.

Background

- 2 The Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001-2004 identified an urgent need to replace the existing inadequate off-site store at Newport with a more substantial building to enable the following:
 - Better standard of care and access for reserve collections, encouraging their use and the quality and extent of the services offered
 - Capacity to house existing collections and the growing archaeological archives resulting from continuing developments in the district
 - Catalogue reserve collections on computer, and make information available via the internet for on-line research and education
 - Improve outreach work to local and other audiences, subject to resources.
- 3 If it is not possible to improve storage facilities it will mean that the Museum would not be able to fulfil its duty to collect, preserve and make available archaeology which has already been excavated, never mind any finds from now onwards. It will also mean that there will be no capacity for 20th Century local/social history or increases in natural history items that would keep the collections relevant. In addition, standards of care of access and use of collections will deteriorate and may not meet Registered Status.

The Resource Centre Project

- 4 Officers have explored a variety of options for siting the Resource Centre. However, the only viable and cost-effective option appears to be for a new purpose-built building on the Council's depot site at Newport, where the present Museum store is located. An initial financial appraisal of the project indicates that it would cost in the region of £1 million. The appraisal has identified that the development of the Centre can both enhance the depot environment and enable Contract Services to secure additional storage accommodation.
- 5 Funding towards the Centre may be available from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and there may be other funding bodies that can be approached. The HLF is currently reviewing its funding criteria, but it is anticipated that its contribution, if the bid were successful, could be up to 50%. In addition, the Museum Society has made a commitment to support the project and help secure funding and BAA is committed to making a financial contribution to an archaeological resource centre in the district. The Council will need to consider making a capital contribution to the project. Indeed, if a HLF bid is successful, it will expect the Council to contribute a minimum of 5% towards the capital cost of the project.
- 6 At this stage it is considered that there will not be any further significant revenue costs associated with the ongoing management and provision of the new Resource Centre - public access will be only allowed through

appointments and for research and project related work, e.g. by University Students, local history societies.

Resource Centre Project Task Group

- 7 To progress the project it is necessary to carry out a more robust appraisal of the depot site, ascertain the level of commitment required and available from the various interested parties, develop an Audience Development Plan and produce a fully costed business plan. To ensure that Members are fully engaged in this process it is suggested that a Museum Resource Centre Task Group is established.
- 8 It is suggested that three Members be appointed to the Task Group. The Task Group would recommend the way forward in a report to this Committee at its October meeting. The Museum Society has confirmed the availability of one of its members to attend at Task Group meetings.

RECOMMENDED that three Members be appointed to the Museum Resource Centre Project Task Group to consider the options for the development of a Museum Resource Centre and recommend the way forward in a report to this Committee at its October meeting.

Background Papers: Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001-2004

Committee: Community and Leisure
Date: 24 February 2004
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: PFI Leisure Contract – Member Information/Involvement
Author: Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of the various arrangements that have been considered with Leisure Connection to inform and involve Members in aspects of the PFI Leisure Contract. It recommends that Members note these arrangements and advise of their availability to attend at the scheduled Focus Group Meetings.

Background

- 2 In January, the Chairman and the Head of Community & Leisure Services held a meeting with the PFI Contract Manager for the three Leisure Centres in Uttlesford and his Area Manager. The notes of the meeting were circulated to all Members of Community & Leisure. It was agreed that it would be useful to

have such meetings on a regular basis. This would help to ensure a consistent approach to how matters are dealt with and enhance partnership arrangements between the parties. They would also enable dialogue about matters of interest or concern that had occurred at the leisure centres and events/promotions that were to take place in coming months.

Member Attendance at Focus Group Meetings

- 3 In addition, the two parties discussed various options for providing Council Members with opportunities to be kept informed about matters of interest or concern. The Contract Manager advised that Leisure Connection had now established a series of Focus Group meetings for users at each leisure centre. They suggested that a Council Member could attend at each of these meetings. It was agreed that a Member attending a meeting would observe the proceedings and provide any feedback direct to Leisure Connection staff after the meeting. In addition, they would feedback, as appropriate, to the Chairman and/or Head of Community & Leisure.
- 4 The Focus Group meetings are scheduled to be held 4 times a year at each leisure centre. A round of meetings was held in February. The meetings for the rest of the year are to be held in May, August and November. It is suggested that Members who are interested in attending should advise the Chairman and the Head of Community & Leisure in advance of the relevant month when a round of meetings is to be held so that arrangements can be made to ensure an even distribution of attendance.
- 5 For information, at the Lord Butler Fitness & Leisure Centre Focus Group meeting held on 3 February, 6 members of the public attended. They made complimentary comments about aspects of the service and also raised issues ranging from the cleanliness of the Wet Side Changing Rooms to reasons behind the changes to the programme in the Group Training Room. The Centre Manager provided a report on past and future events and activities e.g. building works, activities and courses.
- 6 The Centre Manager also gives details of and responses to customer comments that have been received at the Centre. Leisure Connection undertakes to provide a written response to the queries raised at the meeting and these are displayed in the Centre. In addition, minutes are sent to all attendees. Both Leisure Connection and the attendees concurred that the dialogue and suggestions/comments made at the meeting had been both constructive and informative and would enable the centre to improve the services to the customers.

Annual Presentation to Members

- 7 In November 2003, Leisure Connection attended at the Council Offices to give a presentation to Members. It was agreed that this was a useful means of informing Members of the performance of the Contractor and providing information about forthcoming events and activities planned at each leisure centre. Leisure Connection has undertaken to make an annual presentation

to Council Members prior to the meeting of the Community & Leisure Committee at its meeting each October. There would be an opportunity for Members to ask questions of the Contractor following the presentation. Leisure Connection will provide a written report in advance of the presentation.

Monitoring of Performance

- 8 Members will be aware that the performance of the Leisure Contractor is assessed by officers through a variety of monitoring arrangements – formal monthly meetings, formal monthly monitoring visits to each leisure centre, ad hoc visits to each leisure centre, correspondence and feedback from users etc. Six monthly reports on the performance of the Leisure Contractor are made to Scrutiny 1 – Community & Housing. The first report, since the new leisure centres opened in August 2003, will be presented to Scrutiny 1 in March.

Surveys of Leisure Centre Users and Non-Users

- 9 Officers are to carry out a survey of Leisure Centre Users and Non-Users during March 2004. Over 4,000 user surveys are to be posted to Leisure Centre members and made available at each leisure centre for casual attendees. 800 Non-User surveys will be posted out to residents. Before sending this survey out, details will be cross-referenced with the Leisure Centre databases to ensure that they are not being sent to Leisure Centre members.
- 10 This survey is being carried out with the full cooperation of Leisure Connection, which is providing a choice of three prizes - a months free membership or free swimming for a month or a beauty treatment. It is intended that the results of the survey will be reported to the next meeting of this Committee.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 Members note the arrangements to inform and involve Members in aspects of the PFI Leisure Contract
- 2 Members who are interested in attending at the Focus Group meetings to be held in May, August and November advise the Chairman and the Head of Community & Leisure in advance of the relevant month.

Background Papers: Notes of Meeting with PFI Contractor held on 15 January 2004

Committee: Community and Leisure
Date: 24 February 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: Service Plans 2004 – 2005:
Community & Leisure Services
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510402
Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

Summary

- 1 This report provides Community and Leisure Committee with an overview of Service Planning for the authority as a whole and a summary of the specific Service Plan for Community & Leisure Services for 2004 – 2005.

Background

- 2 The Council is committed to improving services and performance. Service Plans are an integral part of the process. Through the production of Service Plans the Council is able to determine resource allocation and project manage a range of service priorities during a set time. Service Planning ensures that managers have clearly identified that the resources are in place to deliver the aspirations of Members, the community and any new legislation that may come on stream.
- 3 Service Planning cannot be considered in isolation and is now an integrated part of the Service & Financial Planning cycle within the authority that begins with political, managerial and community aspirations and legal requirements.
- 4 These aspirations and requirements form the basis of resource allocation and if funding is agreed the targets that underpin Service Plans are linked to the appraisal framework of staff. All staff are regularly appraised and part of the process involves setting targets linked to the delivery of service and corporate plans. These are particularly important in Uttlesford at present as the Council works towards becoming more of a performance and reward culture. A diagram outlining this process is shown at Appendix A.
- 5 Service Planning for 2004 – 2005 has been developed using a template for all services within the Council. Heads of Service have produced Service Plans for 2004/2005 that include:
 - Brief introduction to the Service
 - The contribution made by the Service to the Mission Statement of the Council
 - The five Strategic Themes from the Corporate Plan – How the Service will deliver sections of the Corporate Plan

- The aim of the Service
 - Situation Analysis involving the performance, strengths, weaknesses, partnerships and customer perspective of the service.
 - Key Aims and Objectives 2004 to 2007
 - Appendices which cover Staff Resources, Accommodation, Equality and Risk Management and provide a comprehensive Annual Work Programme.
- 6 The information aims to provide the existing strengths and weaknesses of the service, how its plans will be delivered and the contribution the department will make to the strategic and performance framework of the Council.

Community and Leisure Service Plan

- 7 The Service Plan for Community and Leisure (C & L) extends to 67 pages and provides a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities that face the service areas during the next one to three years. C&L is split into three distinct service sections: Community, Leisure and Museum and all service planning aims to coordinate these three strands together.
- 8 The Plan outlines challenges in 2004/05 such as Decriminalisation of Car Parking, Resource Centre for the Museum, new Community Safety Strategy, and managing projects from Uttlesford Futures (the Local Strategic Plan), promoting the Regional Tourism Strategy, Best Value Reviews of Youth and Services for the Elderly. C & L contributes to all five Strategic Themes during the first year of the Corporate Plan.
- 9 In addition to the Corporate Plan, C & L have identified the following areas for improvement during 2004/05:
- Day Centres – implementing the Improvement Plan resulting from the BV Review of the service
 - Grants – mini review to be completed by during 2004
 - Emergency Planning – provide a more holistic service
 - Community Safety – auditing the existing CS strategy and producing a new Strategy for 2005 - 2008
 - Car Parking – implications of decriminalisation
 - Tourism – disability access, electronic support
 - Museum Resource Centre – increasing and improving capacity for storage and care of the reserve collection
- 10 Within the Annual Work Programme for 2004/05 there are 119 actions with targets, lead officers and outcomes.

The following give some examples of the programme:

Community and Leisure Services Thematic Objectives

Ranging from establishing a Service Level Agreement with the Youth Service of Essex CC, encouraging the provision of night buses, support village shops cooperative, establishing health fairs to establishing a Countryside Forum

Leisure Facilities

Ranging from completing the Bridge End Gardens project to monitoring the activities of the PFI Leisure Contract

Voluntary Sector Support

Ranging from reviewing the Voluntary Sector Concordat to supporting the voluntary sector to develop capacity.

Work with Young People

Ranging from facilitating sports coaching activities in local schools to developing a Youth Forum linked to the Young Essex Assembly.

Museum Service

Ranging from implementing a new marketing strategy to ensuring that three temporary exhibitions are provided during the year.

Tourism

Ranging from developing a tourism strategy to producing a leaflet to promote the use of footpaths within Uttlesford.

Parking, Travel and Day Centres

Ranging from reviewing existing car park management contracts with partners to implementing BV Day Care Service Improvement Plan.

Diversions opportunities for disadvantaged Young People

Ranging from supporting the Prison No Way scheme to loaning a moped to 16 year olds to allow them to access training, education and employment

Community Safety

Ranging from appointing an ASB Officer to working with the police to reduce crime and improve the reporting of violent crime.

Emergency Planning

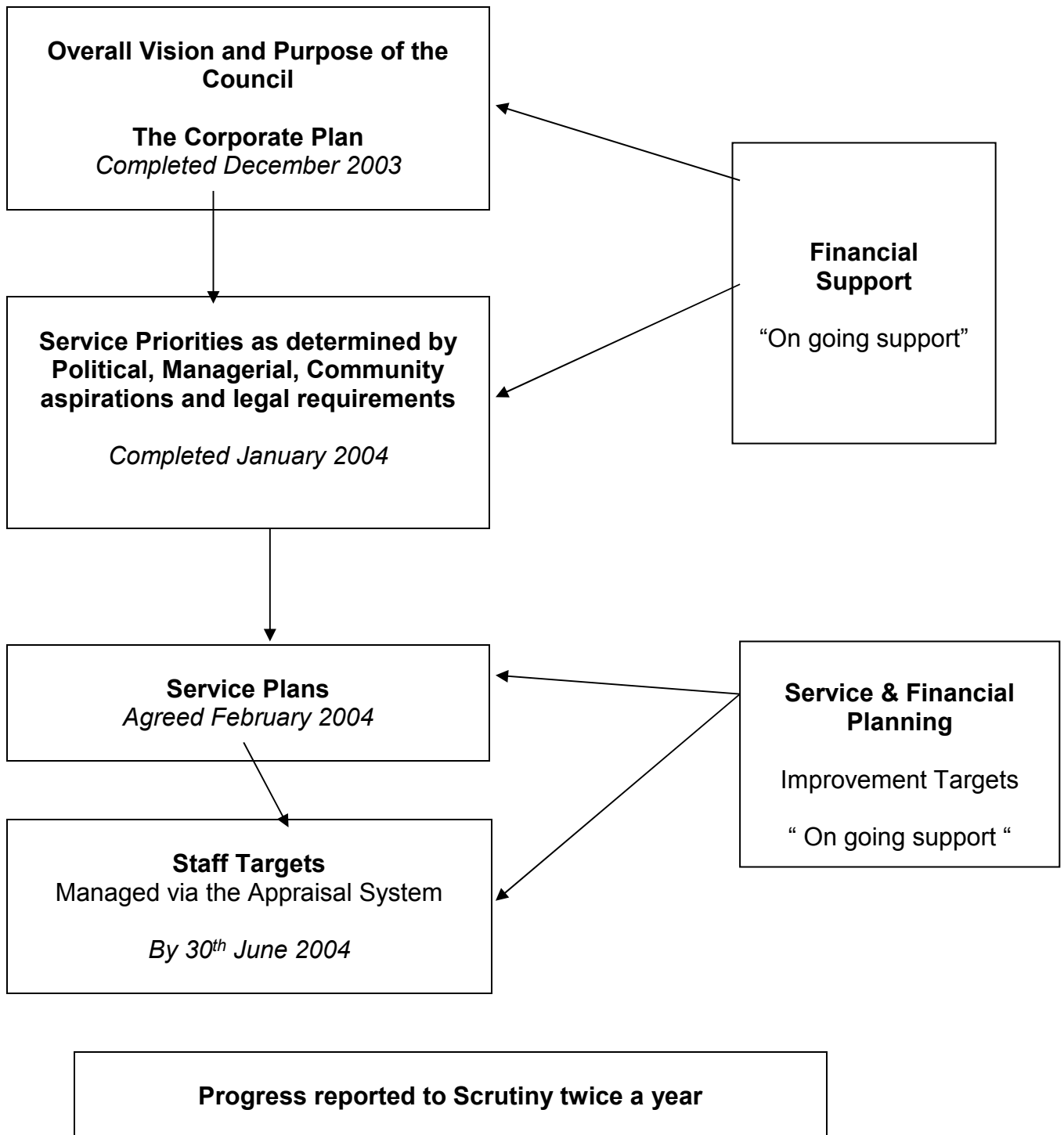
Ranging from a programme of training for staff, Members and volunteers to reviewing the existing emergency planning arrangements.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the Service Planning process and confirms the Service Plan for Community and Leisure Services for 2004 – 2005

Background Papers: Service Plans 2003/4/05

Appendix A

Service Planning Process 2004- 2005



Committee: Community and Leisure
Date: 24 February 2004
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: Beacon Council Bid for Promoting Sustainable Tourism
Author: Ian Orton (01799) 510 402

Summary

- 1 This report provides Community and Leisure Committee with details of the bid submitted by the Council for Beacon Council status in Promoting Sustainable Tourism.

Background

- 2 In August 2003 it was agreed that the Council should submit a bid for Beacon Council status in Promoting Sustainable Tourism. The Beacon Council Scheme is an example of central and local government working in partnership to develop and promote high quality local services for everyone. Beacon Councils were introduced in 2000/01 and have covered 58 service areas ranging from Social Inclusion to Rethinking Construction.
- 3 The Council agreed that a bid should be submitted, as it would assist with the pre CPA development tasks. It would also send out signals to staff and the outside world that Uttlesford had services of which it could be proud and this expertise could be shared. Sustainable Tourism was selected because this is an area where the Council has an established framework in place that could be used to promote the bid. The project was developed during August and submitted on 10 September 2003. The gathering of the information was a useful exercise as part of the pre CPA work.
- 4 The bid got through the first round but was rejected at the final round. The Council received feedback from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the bid. The feedback was based on the bid itself, comments from the District Auditor, the user satisfaction survey, a basket of Best Value Performance Indicators and comments from the Best Value Inspectorate and the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate. The findings were assessed in three categories:
 - Theme Assessment of the Sustainable Tourism Bid
 - Best Value Performance Indicators for the Council
 - General Performance of the Council

Theme Assessment of the bid

- 5 The ODPM identified the strengths of the authority as Vision & Strategy and Consultation. The authority is adequate at partnerships with measurable outcomes. However the Council scored poorly on User and Community Satisfaction. It was felt that the Council could not demonstrate how it had used the data from a variety of surveys to establish the views of users and the community. The ODPM basically asked what changes were implemented as a result of the findings and were these successfully implemented. They asked about use of the 2001 Census data and although use had been made of such information there was not sufficient written evidence to demonstrate successful outcomes. In this section Uttlesford was deemed to be **Fair**

Best Value Performance Indicators for the Council

- 6 This section examined the basket of Best Value Performance Indicators for the Council for 2001/02. The authority had a mixed performance for that year; top quartile in a range of housing and waste management measures and bottom quartile on some cultural services and the processing of planning applications. Overall the Council had 13% of Best Value Performance Indicators in the top quartile. In this section Uttlesford was deemed to be **Very Good**

General Performance of the Council

- 7 This section was probably the most useful as it confirmed strengths of the Council in areas like our vision for tourism, staff development and developing inspection policies. However the areas of weaknesses such as not using Best Value properly and improving performance were identified as issues of concern. In this section Uttlesford was deemed to be **Good**.
- 8 Although the Council did not achieve Beacon Status the exercise was very useful in terms of data gathering and the feedback from the ODPM. The Council through the appointment of additional staff and the introduction of new data gathering systems has now addressed virtually all of the critical comments.
- 9 The next time the Council applies for Beacon Status this exercise will prove to have been invaluable.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the comments received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister re the Beacon Council Status bid in Promoting Sustainable Tourism.

Background Papers: Beacon Council Status 2003/04b