

**Committee:** COMMUNITY & LEISURE  
**Date:** 4 MARCH 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 9  
**Title:** STAFFING – COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICES  
**Author:** SARAH MCLAGAN (01799) 510560

### **Summary**

- 1 This report provides Members with information on current work within Community & Leisure Services. It recommends that Members confirm a new Strategy Statement for Leisure & Cultural Services, recognise the impact on Leisure Services of the loss of the Leisure Officer post and confirm the consequential arrangements for service delivery.

### **Background**

- 2 At the last meeting of this Committee the Best Value Final Report and Improvement Plan for Leisure & Cultural Services was agreed. One of the decisions was to examine the staffing structure of Community & Leisure Services, taking into account the principles outlined in the Final Report and the priorities and improvements identified for service delivery. A further decision required the staffing arrangements for monitoring of the PFI Leisure Contract to be considered.
- 3 At the same meeting the Committee confirmed its recommendations to Resources for its budget for 2003/04 which included staff savings as a result of the resignation of the Leisure Officer. It was agreed that the implications of not replacing the Leisure Officer would be reported to this meeting.

### **Existing Staffing Structure and Working Practices**

- 4 Appendix 1 provides details of the current staffing structure in terms of a “family tree”.
- 5 The Community Development and Leisure Managers and Museum Curator are professionals in their fields and bring a wealth of experience to the day to day management and delivery of their respective services and their associated development. They provide the Head of Community & Leisure with support and advice to facilitate the strategic and corporate development of the services in line with approved Council plans, including statutory functions and customer requirements. These are the Uttlesford Community Safety Strategy,

Emergency Planning policies/practices, Car Parking and Resident Parking Polices, the Uttlesford Road Safety Plan, Grants Scheme, the Uttlesford Museum Service and SW Museum Strategic Plan and the Uttlesford Leisure & Cultural Strategy.

- 6 In addition to specific activities identified in such plans, e.g. Holiday sports and arts programmes for young people, officers promote and initiate other activities e.g. Active Sport, Essex Youth Games, Book Festival, to encourage further community participation. There is also a degree of reactive work that has to be managed, often satisfied by attending at community/parish meetings or holding advisory meetings with voluntary groups from a community which is involved in developing a project or has a concern about an issue.
- 7 The reactive work can often become a significant factor for officers and it is necessary for the Managers/Curator to ensure that their colleagues are able to cope with these demands whilst maintaining their work on agreed priorities.

### **Priorities and Improvements Identified for Service Delivery**

- 8 The Best Value Review identified the fact that “there is no general strategy to define what is done and what the priorities ought to be” and recommended that “a Strategy Statement” be produced. The report suggested that the statement should take the following form:-

“The objective of the Council is to play its part in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the enjoyment of cultural and leisure activities by residents of Uttlesford through –

- The provision of leisure facilities of a high standard;
- Encouragement of voluntary clubs and organisations by way of assistance to them through grants and advice and the promotion of their activities;
- Work with young people to encourage in them an interest in, and enjoyment of, sporting leisure and cultural activities;
- The maintenance of Saffron Walden Museum as a first class museum, offering advice to voluntary museums and individuals in the District as well as conserving and displaying its collections;
- The promotion of tourism in Uttlesford, and the provision of information to enable both visitors and residents to enjoy the many things Uttlesford has to offer.”

- 9 The Strategy Statement updates the priorities of the existing Leisure and Cultural Strategy and, if accepted, it will be necessary to recast the Leisure and Cultural Strategy in line with these more focused priorities. Within these priorities there is scope for wide interpretation and a range of activities. However, the volume of activities under any one priority may vary. They do not, therefore, imply a fixed level of staff resource but do demand a range of expertise.

- 10 In addition, the BV Review has emphasised the need to ensure that the Council can effectively monitor the PFI Leisure Contract and recommends that the Community & Leisure and Resources Committee should consider and approve the Council's internal arrangements for monitoring the performance of the Leisure Contract.

### **Examination of Current Work Loads**

- 11 Officers who will be most affected by the loss of the Leisure Officer post are those officers in the Leisure section together with the Community Development Officer and the Administrative/Grants Officer.
- 12 The main areas of work of the Leisure section are:-
- a. Services for Young People, e.g. Sports and Arts Holiday Programmes  
Working with schools
  - b. Funding Advice e.g. on Lottery applications, Council grant schemes
  - c. Liaison with local organisations/groups e.g. to provide advice on development of initiatives, use of facilities,
  - d. Managing, review, monitoring and promoting the Leisure services
  - e. Leisure Centres Contract monitoring
  - f. Liaison with and advice to Town and Parish Councils.
  - g. Support to other initiatives and activities of Community & Leisure e.g. Community Safety's Crucial Crew
- 13 In order to deliver these services effectively, officers with a specialism in a particular area take the lead but call on the support of other professionals within the section for specific guidance on particular issues. Officers contribute to the work of the section as a whole through the support that they give to each other. For example, when the Leisure Officer was invited to provide Funding advice on a community project he would call on the Sports or Arts Development Officer to provide technical advice on a sport or arts aspect of the project.
- 14 It is clear from the list of work set out in paragraph 12 that officers are working to the broad priorities set out in the Strategy Statement in paragraph 8. An examination of the work suggests that officers are at or near capacity and have very little scope to take on more/new work.
- 15 The Leisure Officer undertook or was involved in all the activities outlined in paragraph 12. The highest proportion of the post holder's time was spent monitoring the Leisure Contract (40%). This involved regular and ad hoc meetings with the Contractor, fee/invoice verification, providing technical support and historical information to the Leisure Contractor and School, reactive support and troubleshooting.
- 16 The Leisure Officer also spent a high proportion of his time providing funding advice to town & parish councils, community groups and organisations (24%), for example, the Manuden Community Project Lottery Bid and the Great Chesterford Community Hall and Play area.

- 17 He was also involved in the development and management of the GP Referral Scheme, projects associated with the Youth Initiatives Working Group (YIWG), Motorwise, the Youth Forum, the Young Musician of the Year project, Healthwise, visits to Town & Parish Councils on youth provision, the Millennium Challenge project, Greenways Play area, giving play advice and guidance to Parish Councils and Countryside Initiatives.

### **Revised Arrangements for Service Delivery and Impact**

- 18 Officers are working towards the Strategy Statement priorities identified in the BV Review. To accommodate the work of the Leisure Officer they will have to rearrange their working practices. It is necessary, therefore, to prioritise services and to allocate officers, as far as possible, to those services. Inevitably there will be service diminution as it will not be possible for officers to rearrange their work to take on all the Leisure Officer functions.

#### **(a) PFI Leisure Contract Monitoring Arrangements**

- 19 One of the most important priorities is that of monitoring the Leisure PFI Contract.
- 20 The Contract Monitoring arrangements for the new PFI Leisure Contract are different to those of the previous monitoring procedures that involved the Leisure Manager and Leisure Officer in detailed work, discussion and negotiation, in particular over technical issues and management practice, with the previous Leisure Contractor and School. Bearing in mind the new contractual arrangements which have been comprehensively developed, officers will apply the procedures described in Appendix 2, which were presented to and approved by the Leisure Board in January 2003.
- 21 The key roles for officers are
- The requirement to monitor the performance of the Leisure Contractor against approved plans. This will involve attending at any of the three Leisure Centres to check performance and investigate issues that arise
  - Attendance at and administrative support for monthly meetings with the Contractor to track progress against plans that are agreed annually
  - Administrative work associated with the Payment Mechanism which was not previously required.
- 22 Without a dedicated/specialist Leisure Officer, the Head of Community & Leisure and the Leisure Manager will have to take responsibility for these functions, given the need for a specialist, professional and senior approach to the work. The most significant impact will be on the time of the Leisure Manager. It is expected that the first 24 months of the Contract will be the most onerous.
- 23 This work will be supported by the Administrative/Grants Officer, e.g. minutes, agendas etc. for monthly meetings, as some capacity in this post is being

created by changes to the Grants Schemes, discussed previously on this agenda.

**(b) Other Leisure Officer functions which are priorities**

- 24 A number of the Leisure Officer functions are priority services which need to be accommodated where possible and practical. The table below describes these services and gives details of the proposed revised arrangements for management and delivery.

<b>LEISURE OFFICER ROLE</b>	<b>REVISED ARRANGEMENTS</b>
<u>Monitoring of Leisure Contract</u>	Head of Community & Leisure and Leisure Manager to manage
<u>GP Referral Scheme</u> - Development and promotion	Leisure Manager will work in conjunction with UPCT & Leisure Contractor
<u>Youth Initiatives Working Group</u> – support to group and direct management of some initiatives	The work may or may not be redistributed amongst the representatives on the Working Group, depending on the capacity of the group members to carry it out  The Leisure Manager will have to provide support to the Working Group
<u>Motorwise</u> – support to project and direct management of some activities, including applications for funding (delivered and supported by a number of officers from C&L)	The work will be redistributed amongst project team  Other officers will be drawn into supporting the project
<u>The Young Musician of the Year</u> - support to project	Arts Development Officer to manage the project (refer to report on YMofY elsewhere on this Agenda)
<u>Healthwize</u> – Management and Development of the project (delivered and supported by Sports Development Officer and Administrative/Grants Officer)	Sports Development Officer to manage and develop the project; Administrative/Grants Officer to continue to deliver and support project, as appropriate
<u>Advice to Town &amp; Parish Councils</u> - on youth provision	Community Development Officer to incorporate visits into existing work where already scheduled to meet with Town & Parish Councils on Drug awareness/advice provision
<u>The Millennium Challenge project</u> – support to project	The Leisure Manager will work with the Essex Association of Boys Clubs, which has been instrumental in operating the project, to see the project through to a conclusion in August this year.

- 25 The consequence of officers accommodating these arrangements into their work schedule is that there will be a knock-on effect on the service available to the community in terms of :-

- Delays to /reduction in the time available/scope for involvement in projects with Town & Parish Councils, Community groups and organisations to help secure funding for projects with sports and/or Arts interests.
- A reduction in the time available to plan, manage, support, monitor and review all work,
- A potential deterioration in the standard of service provided as less qualitative time will be available to spend on all areas of work.

26 The actual impact on the community will not be truly apparent for several months. Equally, it is difficult to predict the impact on officers, particularly the Leisure Manager, who will be responsible for both managing and delivering a number of these tasks. It is proposed, therefore, that officers monitor the revised arrangements and, if necessary, report the details of the impact to a future meeting of this Committee.

**(c) Other Leisure Officer functions/services that will cease**

27 The table below describes the services that it is proposed to reduce/cease to provide due to lack of capacity and/or lack of expertise.

<b>SERVICE/FUNCTION TO REDUCE/CEASE</b>	<b>WHY CEASE?</b>	<b>IMPACT</b>
<u>Funding Advice</u> – To Town & Parish Councils, community groups and organisations on all types of community, sports and arts projects	No other expertise/spare capacity in section on general community funding opportunities  <i>Sports and Arts Development Officers will continue to provide advice on specific arts and sports projects during the application process</i>	Requests for assistance with non-sports and arts projects refused  Reduction in the scope and number of projects that can be assisted due to increase in workload through loss of Leisure Officer post
<u>Youth Forum</u> – support to ECC Youth Service and Young People attending on Forum	No spare capacity to deal  Youth Service function	No Council involvement in Youth Forum  Reduced opportunity to work with, influence and involve Youth Forum/Young People in contributing to local issues and the democratic process.
<u>Play Advice to Parish Councils</u>	No other expertise in section	No Council support to Parish Councils on Play area development & safety issues  Play areas left undeveloped/unsafe
<u>Demands for Countryside Initiatives</u>	No other expertise in section	No Council support to Countryside Initiatives
<u>Greenways</u> , Saffron Walden – Play Area (Section 106 Agreement)	No other expertise in section	Alternative arrangements will have to be made

<u>Advice to Town &amp; Parish Councils - on Youth provision</u>  (see entry on previous table)	No spare capacity to deal, unless Community Development Officer able to combine with scheduled visit	Requests for advice to Town & Parish Councils not scheduled a visit refused
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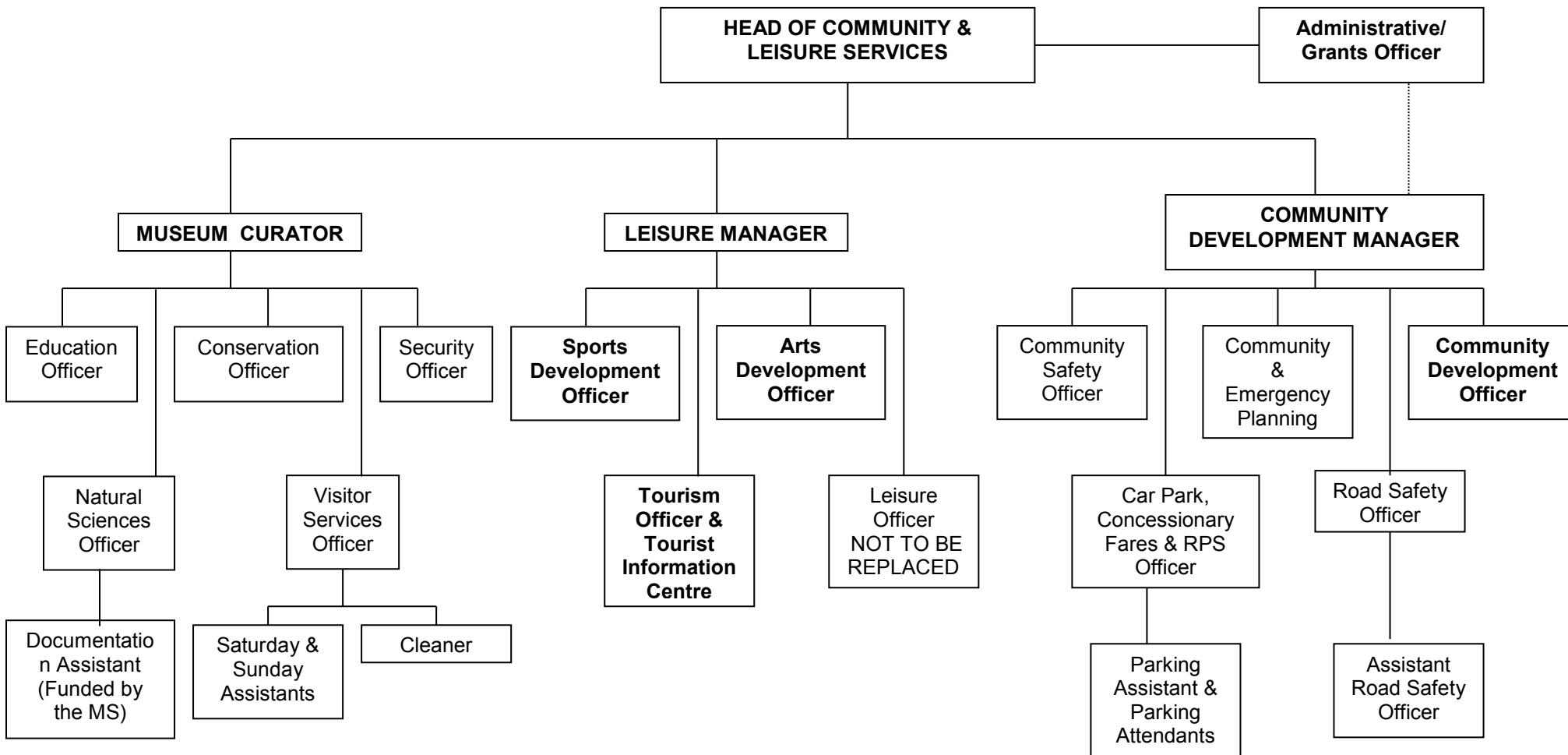
### Conclusions

- 28 Essentially officers are working towards the priorities in the proposed Strategy Statement. The Strategy Statement updates the priorities of the existing Leisure and Cultural Strategy and, provides the basis upon which the Leisure and Cultural Strategy can be recast in line with these more focused priorities.
- 29 The work of the Leisure Officer met the priorities of the Strategy Statement and these, therefore, need to be prioritised and allocated to officers, as far as possible. Some initiatives will have to cease due to this lack of capacity or expertise within the section. Where services are allocated to officers, the effect is likely to be that they will be trying to manage too many initiatives to be able to continue to provide them at the same quality.
- 30 The communities and residents of Uttlesford will be affected as they will experience delays, diminutions and, in some areas, the deletion of services. Officers will obviously seek to minimise the impact as far as practicable.

### RECOMMENDED that

- 1 The Council confirms the Strategy Statement set out in paragraph 8 above and the rearrangement of work to meet these and the consequential loss of service in other areas
- 2 Officers recast the Leisure & Cultural Strategy on the basis of the Strategy Statement's priorities
- 3 The arrangements for monitoring the PFI Leisure Contract set out in paragraphs 21 to 23 and Appendix 2 of this report be approved and forwarded to the Resources Committee.

Background Papers: BV Review of Leisure & Cultural Services, PFI Leisure Contract





## **Monitoring Arrangements for the PFI Leisure Contract    APPENDIX 2**

- 1     Details of the relationships between the parties involved in the delivery of the Leisure Contract and the Council are set out in the contract documentation. Using this, Officers have established procedures to monitor the delivery of the Leisure Contract and the requirements of the other parties to fulfil their obligations.
  
- 2     The Leisure Contract has been written on the basis that Lintium Leisure, the IPS, the Leisure Contractor - Leisure Connection and their sub-contracted parties take the risk in all but a few aspects of the delivery of the leisure services at the three Leisure Centres. The Payment Mechanism is based on the contractor delivering the services to the required standard and reporting to the Council when it fails to do so i.e. by exception. However, it is incumbent on, and expected of the Council to be satisfied that the service provided meets the specified standards. Failure to meet the required standards set out in the Payment Mechanism will result in deductions being made by the Council to the payment it makes to the Leisure Contractor.
  
- 3     Consequently, officers have devised a variety of means by which they will monitor the service and provide the Council with relevant information about the performance of the Leisure Contractor.

### **Monitoring Procedures - Construction Phase**

- 4     The development of the new facilities and refurbishment of the existing Lord Butler Fitness and Leisure Centre are being monitored by the Leisure PFI Project Manager in consultation with the Head of Community & Leisure. The Leisure PFI Project Manager attends all Site Meetings, provides information required by the Contractor and monitors the progress and quality of the building work. The statutory building control aspects of the project are being dealt with independently by the Council's Building Surveyors section.

### **Monitoring Procedures - Service Delivery**

- 5     Essentially, officers have put in place procedures to monitor the delivery of the Leisure Contract on four different levels -
  - (a)     Information provided by the Leisure Contractor about performance, which is checked for accuracy and also monitored by the IPS
  - (b)     Receipt of plans, which are checked to show that they have been implemented
  - (c)     Ad hoc/reactive measures to check performance
  - (d)     Receipt of complaints or suggestions.
  
- 6     The above are to be dealt with through a variety of practical processes, which involve officers of the Community & Leisure and Finance sections, and are set out on the table below.

- 7 Six Monthly reports will be made on the Leisure Contract to Scrutiny 1 – Community & Housing. In addition, if requests are received for fundamental alterations to the Leisure Contract, it will be necessary to report to the relevant policy committee for a decision.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Office Based Process</b>	<b>Practical Monitoring Process</b>	<b>Other indicators of Availability &amp; Performance</b>
<b>Information provided by the Leisure Contractor about performance which is checked for accuracy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive Monthly Report on Availability &amp; Performance</li> <li>• Process payment if no evidence of inaccuracy</li> <li>• Apply default procedure if evidence of non- performance/ non-availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy of Reports are checked by cross-referencing information retained at each Centre e.g. checking of facilities sheets, Cleaning Rota sheets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints received</li> <li>• Ad hoc feedback</li> <li>• Ad hoc visits to Centres</li> </ul>
<b>Receipt of plans which are checked to show that they have been implemented</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledgement of receipt of plans in Minutes of relevant meeting with the Leisure Contractor.</li> <li>• Recording of discussions/ decisions made at Meetings with the Leisure Contractor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly, Quarterly and Annual meetings with the Leisure Contractor to receive, discuss, review and confirm plans.</li> <li>• Implementation of plans are checked by cross-referencing information retained at each Centre e.g. checking of training records, marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints received</li> <li>• Ad hoc feedback</li> <li>• Ad hoc visits to Centres</li> </ul>
<b>Ad hoc/reactive measures to check performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following up where minutes of meetings with the Leisure Contractor show agreement to implement a particular service or procedure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc visits to Centres, particularly when following up a previously raised issue/concern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints received</li> <li>• Ad hoc feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Receipt of complaints/ suggestions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass to the Leisure Contractor for dealing with and ensure kept informed of progress</li> <li>• Review survey responses carried out by the Leisure Contractor and agree means of addressing areas of concern/issues raised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review file detailing complaints received/dealt with</li> <li>• Consider and address any ongoing issues at monthly meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out Best Value Review and obtain feedback on services provided (2005)</li> <li>• Ad hoc feedback</li> <li>• Ad hoc visits to Centres</li> </ul>