

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 7th January, 2015.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Gillian Corr, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Ray McCall, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Mick Womphrey

Officers: Peter Kelly (CESC), Reuben Kench(DNS), Judith Trainer, Rob Smithson (LD)

Also in attendance: Nicky Harrison - English Heritage, Bill Griffiths - Tyne & Wear Museums, Caroline Ryder Jones - TEVV HNS Foundation Trust

Apologies: Cllr Alan Lewis, Cllr Andrew Sherris

ALC 33/14 **Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation procedure was noted.

ALC 34/14 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Nigel Cooke declared an interest as he was a Member of Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEVV)

ALC 35/14 **Minutes for signature - 19 November 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record

ALC 36/14 **Scrutiny Review of the Effects of Arts, Leisure and Culture on Wellbeing**

Members received a presentation from Nicola Harrison and Bill Griffiths from English Heritage. The presentation highlighted the interrelationship between Heritage, Health and Wellbeing including:

- * The collation of data through 'Heritage Counts'.
- * Member organisations of the North East Environment Forum.
- * Key findings from Heritage Counts including the monetary value of heritage impact on well-being being estimated at £1,646
- * Heritage Volunteering
- * Heritage and Health
- * Heritage and Dementia Care
- * Heritage and Leisure
- * How Heritage Assets can support Local Policies
- * What more could be done with Heritage Assets in Stockton?

In response to Member's questions and discussion it was noted that:

- * Information on how the figure of £1646 was calculated would be circulated to Members. There was a Health and Wellbeing Evaluation basis for working out the financial value of the wellbeing factor. This was recognised by Central Government for funding purposes though it was acknowledged this figure was a proxy for what was trying to be achieved. The figure was based on regular and one off visits by people to museums and heritage sites.

* It was felt the factor that Heritage added to the wellbeing of people was the act of participation in a perceived useful activity. Heritage was an effective 'hook' to get people involved and interested in activities they may otherwise not get involved and could be targeted effectively at groups which needed to be engaged such as long term unemployed

* Volunteers included a range of people including dementia sufferers who enjoyed the experience of heritage work.

* In terms of the difference between Heritage work and other activities for improving health and wellbeing it was highlighted the working together in a group and the feeling of giving something back were important elements in improving wellbeing. Also the power of reminisce was effective in improving the wellbeing of the elderly and dementia Sufferers for example.

* It was noted that Heritage work would appeal to some people in terms of improving their wellbeing, whilst other activities would be more effective with different people. There was a need to provide a rich tapestry of activities to allow everyone to become engaged and for no-one to be isolated.

* There was an acknowledged difficulty in both measuring and defining Wellbeing.

* The Council had a role in ensuring there were activities in place and accessible to all of Stockton Citizens. For example ensuring activities took place at venues which had parking, bus links and toilet facilities. The Council could also its influence with other agencies to improve the accessibility and use of facilities.

* Consideration needed to be given to how the use and enjoyment of heritage facilities could continue under cost pressures facing the public sector at the moment. How, for example, should the ability of people to pay come under consideration? In considering the value of the experience offered by heritage assets in terms of wellbeing there was a need to consider how far there can be subsidy and protection against charges.

At this stage of the meeting Caroline Ryder Jones from TEWV HNS Foundation Trust gave the Committee on the work she had been carrying out with Dementia Sufferers in her role as an occupational therapist. Key points highlighted included:

* A more positive approach was to consider people as living with dementia rather than dementia sufferers.

* Inclusive activities allowing both dementia and non-dementia sufferers to partake had a positive impact for both. It helped improve the perception of people living with dementia. Mass Media focused on extreme examples of dementia causing people to unnecessarily feel uncomfortable around those living with Dementia. Inclusive activities helped break down these perceptions and also helped to encourage those at the early stages of dementia feel comfortable in take part in groups.

* Utilising existing assets and thinking outside the box would help maximise the resources and activities available for improving the wellbeing of those living with dementia. For example the nearby ASDA had a community room which was free of charge for users. The ASDA store also had good public transport links. Staff at Council venues such as libraries could be given training sessions so they could provide a dementia friendly service.

* A community singing group that had been set up was cited as an example of a self-sustaining group. Through the use of a bistro and people buying teas and coffees the activity no longer needed funding from elsewhere.

* A Photography groups and Book Groups had also been set up with the latter

being an example where there was a need to have a group dedicated solely to those living with dementia due to the differing requirements.

* Art sessions were an effective engagement tool for those living with dementia. It was an opportunity to share views but without need for memory. Preston Park was a heritage Asset which could be used effectively with the Art Collection there a source of engagement activity. Equal Arts was a potential resource for guidance and skills.

* Existing walk groups could be used and varied to improve accessibility via dementia friendly training for walk leaders and use of heritage trails.

* In terms of measuring the benefit of the activities on those living with dementia there was a Dementia Care Mapping Tool in place.

Following Member's discussion of the issues raised the following points were noted:

* There was an economic argument for providing and promoting activities which improved people's wellbeing as the alternative could be a mental decline resulting in more serious mental and physical complications. These would cost the person more in health terms and the NHS and other agencies in finance terms than a small investment in community activities earlier on.

* Inclusive activities should be more promoted to break down barriers and mistaken perceptions between different people.

* Transport links needed to be considered when deciding upon venues for activities as some were not easily accessible by public transport or had good car parks.

* A way to utilise school facilities would be ideal. Most communities were close to a school and these needed to be more accessible for community use during evenings, weekends and school holidays. Eggescliffe Comprehensive School was a positive example of a school providing use of its space to the wider community.

* There were opportunities out there expanding the activities for the community but this did require people with the energy and drive to seek these out. Also existing activities needed to be defended with the increasing financial pressures for local authorities.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their presentations.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**ALC
37/14**

Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted by the Committee

It was highlighted that the next two meetings would be used to draw the information from previous meetings together with a final report to be prepared for the Committee's approval on the 18th February.

The Chair also highlighted that before May one of the final meetings would be used to review items considered by the Committee over the last 4 years.

In terms of future topics a number of suggestions were made by the Committee including:

* Freedom Of Information requests

* Accident and Emergency Waiting times.

In regard to the latter it was agreed the recent review carried out by the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee would be circulated to the Member.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.