

## **Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee**

A meeting of Adults, Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 10th January, 2007.

**Present:** Cllr J A Fletcher (Chairman), Cllr M Cherrett, Cllr M Frankland, Cllr Miss B Inman, Cllr T Laing, Cllr J M Lynch, Cllr M Perry, Cllr M E Womphrey; Mr Maxwell (Diocesan Representative)

**Officers:** J McCann (DNS), R Kench (CESC), G Birtle, Mrs T Harrison and Miss S Johnson (LD)

**Also in attendance:** No other persons were present

**Apologies:** Cllr K Dixon, Cllr K Faulks, Cllr Nelson, Cllr Mrs Norton, Cllr Rix, Cllr Smith

### **895 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Fletcher declared a personal/non prejudicial interest in relation to agenda item 4 Review of Major Festivals (SIRF & BIFF), due to being a member of the Friends of Billingham International Folklore Festival.

### **896 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2006**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2006.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2006 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded to the Council for consideration.

### **897 Review of Major Festivals (SIRF & BIFF)**

The Chair advised that Councillor Nelson was not able to attend owing to other commitments and advised that he would be invited to the next meeting.

Mr McCann (Head of Direct Services) provided oral evidence regarding Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) and Billingham International Folklore Festival (BIFF)

Members were advised that there had been cleansing problems with SIRF a number of years ago, however since that time there had been very few problems encountered as a result of SIRF.

Direct Services had experienced problems with BIFF relating to security, alcohol on site and volunteers being unable to carry out their duties owing to being inebriated.

Some groups from abroad brought rubbish with them and disposed of it in resident's bins upon leaving the coach.

Problems had been encountered due to the fact that some of the schools in Billingham would not house the dancers; however Billingham Campus seemed to be happy to continue to house the dancers during BIFF. The cleansing team had maintained, cleaned and repaired the building during and after BIFF; therefore the school were happy for the use to continue.

Mr McCann's service had installed washing and shower facilities for the dancers

during BIFF. Their service also included cleansing, road closures, barriers, security and matting as a result of BIFF.

Members enquired as to whether BIFF were charged for the service and were advised that in theory they were charged; however Direct Services allocated some of their budget for BIFF, especially when BIFF had been struggling as it was felt that helping to maintain the festival and its profile was of great importance to Billingham and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

Direct Services also assisted with training BIFF volunteers for which a charge was made.

Members requested full audit results of the cost of BIFF and SIRF to enable them to have a clear picture of the cost of the festivals.

Members were advised that a charge was not made to SIRF for their services as it was considered to be part of the general cleansing costs. For 2006 the cleansing costs were £7000 and the costs for 2005 had been £9000. A one off commitment of £10,000 had been made to BIFF from Direct Services whilst BIFF had been struggling; however, they had remained at arms' length so as not to interfere with the independence of the festival.

Members acknowledged that on the whole BIFF was a good festival, they wished to see clear parameters established and no longer wanted the Direct Services team brought in only when there were problems, but wanted Council experts to be involved from the planning stages to enable professional advice and avoid potential problems.

Mr Kench advised that efforts had begun for last years BIFF to formalise involvement from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Police and Fire Authority and it was his intention that this would become a permanent involvement.

It was acknowledged that accommodation was of greatest importance in relation to BIFF as it could not take place unless the dancers had accommodation, and therefore there was a need for cooperation from the schools and open discussions between the schools and BIFF organisers. Improvements were already apparent from a couple of years ago.

Mr McCann was thanked for his attendance and the information provided.

Members briefly discussed the written evidence provided by Mr Wardle (Property Manager).

Members queried why the Town Hall was used during SIRF and were advised that the North Side doors which lead to the back of the stage area were left open allowing performers to use the Town Hall as a changing, rest and eating area.

Mr Wardle's written evidence advised that the state of the Town Hall during and after SIRF had been poor.

Questions were raised regarding respect, maintenance and security of the Town Hall during SIRF.

Mr Kench advised that cleaning took place during and after SIRF but it could not be expected to be spotless whilst the festival was on.

Members stated that they expected the Town Hall to be kept to an acceptable level of cleanliness by the users of the Town Hall during SIRF and requested that security be improved.

Mr Kench advised that there needed to be clear signage so that people would know that the Town Hall was not being used in its usual capacity. Members were informed that the Town Hall would be given a different entry code for the duration of SIRF therefore maintaining the security of other Council buildings which could have shared the same code and would maintain the security of the Town Hall after SIRF.

CONCLUDED that:

1. Mr McCann be thanked for presenting evidence and Mr Wardle and Mr Trewick be thanked for providing evidence.
2. Councillor Nelson to be invited to the next meeting as he was unable to attend this meeting.
3. Full audits showing the full costings be provided to the Committee for SIRF and BIFF.
4. Security and cleansing matters related to the Town Hall be tightened up.

## **898 Future Work Programme**

The Chair informed Members that the Scrutiny Liaison Forum were meeting and had a list of all the recommendations for future Scrutiny Reviews. The Chair reminded Members of the recommendations for scrutiny reviews made by Adults Leisure and Culture Select Committee, which were:

- River Based Leisure Facilities
- Further review of Aids and Adaptations (requested by former Chair Councillor Mrs Cains who was now Cabinet Member for Adults Services and Health)
- Welfare Review
- Adult Education
- Disabled People into employment
- Services for Young People

Officers recommended:

- Theatre Subsidies
- Establishment of Tees Active

The Chair was of the opinion that it would be beneficial for the Committee to undertake a review relating to Adults, such as Disabled people into employment as the focus had been on Leisure and Culture.

The decision on which items to scrutinise could be altered by the membership of the Committee in place after the Election.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.