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Libraries and Heritage
Events and Business Support
Leisure and Sports Development
Arts Development
Learning and Skills
Customer Services

Scrutiny Review Overview 21 November 2016

Libraries and Heritage

What has been achieved

- Refurbishment of Yarm Library and incorporation of Newcastle Building Society Branch
- Library Review and public consultation
- Excellent attendances at Preston Hall
- Dice Players now on loan for period of 18 months on National Gallery tour

Challenges

- Reduction to library book/information resources fund
- Reduction in staff capacity in libraries
- New Preston Hall ticketing and membership schemes with associated software/hardware
- Museum re-accreditation preparations for Arts Council scheme

Emerging Issues

- Need for development of library learning offer with Adult Learning service
- Changes to Arts Council funding and implications for Museums as a potential National Portfolio Organisation
- Need to develop Preston Park as a more integrated visitor attraction whilst maintaining museum development.

Events and Business Support

What has been achieved

- Successful delivery of the 2016/17 Events Programme including specialist Markets Events.
- Continued working with Town Centre Partners to deliver unique and quality markets, partners include Drake's Bookshop and Who Ray.
- Continued support to community groups to help them deliver their own Events safely.
- Review of Events and Arts Development Review.

Challenges

- Continue external support for ISAG from Key Partners, Police, Ambulance, Fire & Rescue, due to the reduction in resources.
- Help develop skills and knowledge of community groups/external event organisers who want to run their own Events.

Emerging Issues

- Pressure for a large event space
- Risk of terrorist attacks at key locations
- Expectation to continue to provide more events with less resources
- Future of SIRF

Leisure and Sports Development

What has been achieved

- Successful delivery of the prestigious British Cycling National Road Race Championship attracting household names such as Mark Cavendish and around 26,000 people to the borough
- New operating models and services being rolled out, driving up participation and reducing costs to the Council, eg Funky Feet, Sisters-R-Doing-It and Sporting Steps
- key strategic documents eg Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2015) and the Built Leisure Facilities Strategy (BLFS) (2016) influential in attracting external funding.
- Billingham Rugby Club securing £750,000 for ATP
- Sport England conditional offer of £1.5m towards the Ingleby Barwick Leisure Facility.

Challenges

- Quasi commercial model for participation not always easy within Council protocols

Emerging Issues

- Growing the commercial models beyond the borough under the banner of SBC can trigger protective response from other Authorities

Arts Development

What has been achieved

- SIRF launch event presented in Preston Park. First time SIRF has staged a show in the park
- 1,211 participants and 49 groups participated in the SIRF Carnival
- Independent customer survey results: 92% satisfaction with SIRF; 96% thought SIRF a good use of Council resources
- The economic impact estimated at £793,166 (increase of £54,691 on 2015)

Challenges

- Application to Arts Council England for future four years funding for SIRF, 2018 - 2022

Emerging Issues

- Arts and Events service review
- Keeping SIRF in the premier league

Learning and Skills

What has been achieved

- Enrolment starts in 15/16 = 6151 enrolments on Education and Training provision
- High retention 93.8% and above national average pass rates 97.1% (+3% on national average)
- Very good progressions showing 91% into positive destinations
- 167 new apprenticeship starts
- 54 completers (14/15 starters)
- 73.2% best case overall framework achievement
- Based on a sample of 21 employers we have provided training for in 15-16, 86% of employers would recommend us and 94% agreed our training reflected up to date practices in industry/sector.
- Increased governance arrangements via a newly formed Governing Body for the Learning and Skills Service

Challenges

- new funding arrangements for the Adult Education Budget including reductions in funding for community based provision
- Increasing competition from other providers

Emerging Issues

- Next OFSTED inspection – due 2017
- Digitalisation of the service where appropriate

Customer Services

What has been achieved

- Answered 323,245 calls in the Contact Centre covering 20 Services in 2015/2016
- Answered 36,063 emails
- Answered 113,966 visitors to the 3 Centres
- Received 4,186 Online Services
- Achieved 98% Customer Satisfaction
- Gained Certification of Corporate Customer Service Excellence for a further 3 years with 9 Compliance-Plus elements

Challenges

- Budget pressures and continuing to provide excellent service and low wait times
- Providing support to back offices assisting streamlining their processes to minimise the impact on Customers

Emerging Issues

- Channel Shift where appropriate for our Customers