

PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE

REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMUNITY 10 NOVEMBER 2009

HALF-YEAR UPDATE

Healthy and Active City

- Develop the exit/continuation strategy for the Free Play City project. Funding ends August 2010. Continue to deliver the play strategy. Hold a further 200 play ranger sessions.

A bid has been submitted to the Local Children's Trust for funding to extend the current play ranger service and to also extend play rangers working in the city's youth clubs during the holiday periods. This funding would sustain the service until March 2011

- Develop play in targeted areas including Kings Heath, Pinhoe, Wonford, Summerway. Support the use of playbuilder grant.

Successful play events were held in all of the targeted areas. From February 2010 two static Play Ranger sessions will occur in Wonford and St Thomas. A further two sessions will rove around the City to provide experience with as many children as possible in the City.

A bid has been submitted to Playbuilder to enhance play opportunities in the Riverside Valley Park. This was turned down and was re-submitted in October with additional consultation evidence. An additional bid for Wonford Playing Field will also be submitted.

The Wyvern Special is now in place and looking good. The other play equipment will hopefully be in place the early part of next year.

Consultations continue at Summerway and I will once again be meeting with the local Councillors to discuss the plans further.

The planning application for the Countess Wear MUGA should be submitted next week.

- Deliver a youth sports programme in target sports and achieve target number of sessions and attendance.

Youth sports sessions have been delivered over the spring and summer periods in the following: Football; Girls Football; Netball; Baseball; Running; Golf. Over 120 sessions have been delivered (Apr-Sep) with a total of over 4600 attendances.

- Work with Exeter Schools Sports Partnership to deliver Sports Unlimited and Skilled for Health Programmes. Deliver target number of sessions and activities.

Phase 2 of the Sports Unlimited programme is under way with delivery to schools of the following activities: Golf Xtreme; Futsal; Dance; Running; Cage Football. These activities are targeted to reach over 500 school children with delivery via the Exeter Schools Sports Partnership.

Skilled for Health is continuing to develop, but at this point in time there is limited scope for our sports development staff to be directly involved.

- Continue to explore options for future swimming provision in the City.

The Pool Working Party has continued to meet and intends to report to Scrutiny Community in January 2010.

Cultural and Fun Place to Be

- Continue to make progress with the scheme to improve and extend RAMM, closely monitoring the budget.

The building is now out of the ground and the unforeseen structural problems largely overcome. Both the senior Members Group and Scrutiny Resources continue to oversee the budget. A further grant has been obtained from the Wolfson Foundation and an externally funded fund raiser is working hard to obtain more contributions towards the project

- Plan and agree arrangements for the opening and exhibitions for the new RAMM.

Staff are working on a number of ideas and negotiations for opening events with impact and a report will be brought to Committee when more details are available. The new building will open relatively quietly as soon as everything is in place with a high profile formal event planned for later

- Let the new Leisure Management Contract.

This is progressing according to the timetable. The contract documentation has been developed with the support of external consultants and scrutinised by Resources Scrutiny Committee. 11 organisations expressed an interest in the contract, and some of these submitted pre-qualifying questionnaires, which are currently being evaluated. Tenderers have already been told that they will be invited to tender and the tender documents will go out at the end of the month.

- Engage fully with the new Renaissance management regimes to optimise benefit for Exeter and Devon.

This is a critical time for Renaissance as an independent report has recommended a completely new approach from 2011. We are trying to ensure that Exeter is well placed to benefit from any changes.

City of Strong Communities

- Develop a programme of targeted advice to help higher risk BME food businesses comply with regulations.

A programme has been developed with sole responsibility given to one environmental health officer in order to engender a consistent and targeted approach. Part of this work has involved designating more time to carry out face-to-face advice with BME non-compliant businesses. This approach will be evaluated during Quarter 4 of the year to establish its effectiveness, but initial indications are that the businesses welcome this changed approach.

Excellence in Public Services

- Set up the new Harbour Authority or re-activate municipal port activity as cost neutral and effective dependant on inspector's report.

We are still awaiting the Secretary of State's decision, along with the inspector's report. We agreed at the inquiry not to proceed further until the outcome of local government review was clear.

- Use benchmarking and unit cost information to critically review the parks and open space service and to deliver efficiencies.

Extensive work has been undertaken to populate the asset management database with unit costs and maintenance regimes moderated to meet current needs making it possible to model changes to optimise performance.

- Explore the remodelling of waste collection rounds from 5 day to 4 day working week.

Work is progressing on this in conjunction with a working party of Members and a series of public consultation events have been held. A report will be brought to Community Scrutiny Committee in the New Year.

A City Where the Environment is Cared For

- Manage the exit strategy for the Wild City Project to leave plans in place for continuation of constituent projects where possible.

A series of potential projects have been identified and early feasibility work carried out. The Devon Wildlife Trust's fundraising team are now seeking funding for these. The City Council's two year funding of this work ends in April 2010.

- Review the action plans of both the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme and the Climate Change Strategy in the light of budget and staffing reductions.

These were reviewed and reported through the last committee cycle.

- Improve our recycling rate beyond 37% and continue to reduce waste collected.

Our recycling rate is currently approximately 35%, which reflects a regional drop in recyclates due to the economic downturn. New initiatives such as one recently launched that focuses on removing glass bottles from the residual to the recycling waste stream, should assist in improving the recycling rate and reducing the residual waste collected. More substantial initiatives, such as moving more properties onto a bi-weekly collection, will be needed to sustain further improvements in the recycling rate.

- Develop a pilot initiative with the University to target student household rubbish problems in student areas.

A successful pilot scheme was launched in partnership with the University and University Guild of Student during the end of term period in early summer. The scheme, branded as 'Students on the Move' has been positively commented upon by residents in student areas; it was fully funded by the University. Over 16 tonnes of rubbish were collected from student areas as part of the scheme.

- Implement Tree & Woodland Strategy and in particular tree warden network to ensure partners protect and enhance the City's treescape in a sustainable way making allowance for the effects of global warming.

The Tree and Woodland Strategy was adopted by the Council in January this year. A report on the agenda of tonight's meeting outlines how we propose to deliver this. Inaugural meetings have been held with Tree Wardens and a programme of events including tree planting is planned for this autumn.

A Safe City

- Reduce the incidence of discarded needles in public conveniences by 20%.

At mid-term the incidence of needle finds in public conveniences has decreased by 10% compared to the same period last year. This issue is currently subject to a multi-agency approach with a range of partners, and as part of this EDP Alcohol and Drug Services (Exeter Drugs Project) has been conducting out-reach work in the city centre over the second quarter of the year. It is anticipated that this will have a gradual impact upon the incidence of discarded needles as their client group grows.

- Review the role and deployment of the Community Patrol to ensure service improvements.

The role of Community Patrol has expanded with the introduction of later night working to deal with noise nuisance. The effectiveness of this change has increased customer confidence and a corresponding increase in customer demand, and several service improvements have been introduced to cope with this increase, including stream-lining the processes, enhanced customer contact and better joined-up working between the different teams involved (Control Room, Business Support, Environmental Protection, Housing, Community Patrol and Legal). However, in order for the service to cope with this increasing demand effectively, a review of all functions is programmed for Quarter 4 of the year.

A Prosperous City

- Review the impact of regulatory functions on businesses and ensure that the benefits of regulation justify costs and are risk based.

Both the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2009/10 and the Health and Safety Enforcement Plan 2009/10 incorporate the tenets of better regulation, changing the emphasis of regulatory interventions to focus on high-risk, non-compliant businesses, and assisting other businesses in compliance. The approach of the Commercial Team has been re-organised to develop lead officers for health and safety regulation and non-compliant food businesses, and initiatives include the development of a Health & Safety Business Pack and improved working with BME businesses.