

**FOR: COUNCIL MEETING**  
**17<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2015**  
**AGENDA ITEM 8**  
**(YELLOW ENCLOSURE)**

**REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF, LEISURE, PARKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT  
(OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Mrs Tranter (Chairman), Mynott (Vice-Chairman), Tittley (Vice-Chairman), Awty, Bacon, Mrs Constable, Evans, Isaacs, Mosson, Pearce and Yeates.

**AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE** was received from Councillor Mrs Hancocks

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillors Eadie and A.F. Smith also attended the meeting)

**ALSO PRESENT:** James Leavesley – Chairman of the Lichfield Garrick Trust and Adrian Jackson – Chief Executive and Artistic Director Lichfield Garrick Trust

Councillors Wilcox and Pritchard also attended the meeting in their capacity as trustees of the Garrick Theatre.

At the meeting of the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 the following matters were considered:

<b>1. SUPPORTING LICHFIELD GARRICK TRUST</b>
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- 1.1 The Committee received a report on the relationship between the District Council and the Garrick Trust Messrs Leavesley and Jackson were in attendance to answer Members' questions and to talk about the Theatre and its work.
- 1.2 It was reported that previously the council's Garrick Panel reviewed matters relating to the theatre but this had been disbanded since the establishment of the Trust and so scrutiny of the Council's relationship with the Garrick was now part of the remit of this Committee.
- 1.3 It was noted that the Council had a number of responsibilities to the Garrick as a funder, landlord and service provider. It was then reported that the level of subsidy to the Garrick was to reduce significantly over the next few years.
- 1.4 It was then reported that the Trust had commissioned a socio-economic impact assessment from the Staffordshire University Business School to help understand the wider value of the theatre to the local community and economy. It was noted that the full report was not yet available however some initial findings had been included in the report. The Committee was disappointed that the full report was not available to consider but noted that as the Business School had conducted the assessment on a voluntary basis, it was not possible for the Trust to make big demands on deadlines. It was agreed that the Committee consider the assessment at the next meeting should it be available.

- 1.5 The matter of financial support to the Garrick was discussed. Mr Leavesley reported to the Committee that due to the design of the theatre that even at a 100% sell out capacity, there would still be a need for a subsidy. He reported that it was his role as Chairman to find sponsorship and external funding to bridge the gap. He also reported that he understood the Council's position and why funding was being reduced at the quick rate that it was. It was reported that it was hoped for the Garrick to become fully self-reliant however as it was revenue that needed to be replaced, this would take time to achieve.
- 1.6 Members then asked about the support services the Council provided for the Trust. It was reported that the Trust is free to source these services from wherever they choose but presently commission the Council to deliver the service at an agreed rate. This may change as the Trust develops and matures.
- 1.7 Mr Jackson outlined the community and educational work that the Trust undertakes. In particular he highlighted the relationship the Trust has with Staffordshire College which has created opportunities for people to study for a foundation degree at the theatre. It was hoped that a full degree course would soon also be available.
- 1.8 It was also reported that the Garrick were engaging with young people from across the district in its Youth Theatre, Youth Choir and its Saturday morning DeeGees. Theatre staff also with local schools and groups working with vulnerable adults to engage them in art and culture.
- 1.9 Members asked if a set of accounts could be made available to allow them to be able to see how the funding provided by the Council had been spent. It was noted that the Garrick publishes annual accounts in accordance with company law and that these could be made available in the future.
- 1.10 Mr Leavesley and Mr Jackson were thanked for their attendance and the following was agreed:
- (1) That the report be noted and the contributions made by the Chairman and Chief Executive & Artistic Director of the Garrick Trust; and
  - (2) That the socio-economic impact assessment be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

## **2. JOINT WASTE SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN**

- 2.1 Members received the Plan for Lichfield and Tamworth Joint Services for 2015-2016 which gave more detail to the service plan considered by the Committee in December 2014.
- 2.2 When asked it was reported that the working pattern for operatives was 9 ½ hours per day, 4 days a week with the option of overtime if available. It was noted that the operatives themselves chose this pattern. It was noted that agency was used to cover absenteeism and where trained the same as staff. It was also confirmed that the Council would look to use its own staff for cover before agency.
- 2.3 Members had concerns on the amount of accidents suffered in the service and it was reported that it may seem high but not when put in context with the amount of bin collections completed in that year. It was also noted that risk assessments were carried out on a regular rolling programme. Members asked if a phased return to work was offered to those who were sick or had an accident and it was reported that it was and were also tailored to the individuals needs. It was noted that there was not a high turnover of staff in the service and so operatives would become older and

potentially less capable to complete such manual work. The Committee requested that support be made available to help such staff find alternative work or gains other skills. The Cabinet Member agreed that this is something that could be investigated.

- 2.4 It was reported that the Council would remain the pressure on the County Council to not close disposal sites as it could cause a rise in fly tipping.
- 2.5 The business plan was noted.

### **3. FIT FOR THE FUTURE SERVICE REVIEW UPDATE: PARKS, GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND COUNTRYSIDE**

- 3.1 The Committee received a report updating them on progress made in implementing and reviewing the council's Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Countryside services. It was reported that the service had been charged to find £200k savings per annum and savings of £379k had been identified for the period up to 2017/18.
- 3.2 It was then reported that the Review was now focusing on whether there were opportunities to change maintenance specifications including reducing the grass mowing regime and removing dog waste litter bins. The Committee's views were sought as to the options identified.
- 3.3 The Committee had concerns with the suggestion of reducing the grass cutting regime and felt it could be a backward step and not make the district look as welcoming to visitors. Members cited the issues that had arisen when the cutting of roadside verges had been reduced and suggested that the council may wish to speak to parish councils to see if they would pay a contribution to a higher specification.
- 3.4 Members had concerns with the suggestion of removing dog waste litter bins as it could have a health and safety implication and cause more dog fouling offences. They were also keen to see the maintenance of sports facilities, the provision of litter bins and litter collection remain a priority.
- 3.5 Members asked why Beacon Park had a higher standard of maintenance to other parks and it was reported that as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund received to enhance the park, there was money given for maintenance which would last for a further seven years. Members asked for a full breakdown of the budget for Beacon Park and this was agreed to be sent to them.
- 3.6 Members were concerned that the transfer of the Bowling Green in Chasetown could mean the loss of the public toilet which was being used by the public, especially the elderly. The Cabinet Member noted this.
- 3.7 On other matters relating to the Review, Members endorsed the proposal to seek the transfer of land at Albutts Lane as it was outside the district and provided no benefit to district residents.
- 3.8 Members were notified that the Council was currently considering whether to give exclusive angling rights for Stowe Pool to an, as yet unidentified, angling club but more work needed to be done to confirm the advantages and disadvantages of such an action.
- 3.9 Members requested a summary of all transfers so they could consider the situation as a whole and this was agreed.

- 3.10 Overall the Committee agreed that proposals to reduce maintenance specifications numbered 1-5 in the report would have consequences that far outweighed the savings that could be made so it was recommended to the Cabinet Member that these proposals not be pursued. The Committee did however endorse the principle that difficult areas to maintain could be remodelled/replanted to make them easier to look after.
- 3.11 The following was agreed
- (1) That the report be noted; and
  - (2) That the views of the Committee on emerging suggestions regarding potential amendments to the maintenance specification be noted.

#### **4. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AT BURNTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE**

- 4.1 Members received a report updating the Committee on levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) experienced at Burntwood Leisure Centre since June 2014. It was reported that a joint task Group was created with the Community, Housing and Health (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee with a view of meeting with the local Police Inspector to discuss all matter of concern regarding ASB. It was noted that after many attempts, that meeting had yet to take place. Members still felt that meeting was imperative as it was important to understand what her approach would be to the new Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and how the Police and Council would work together. The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that he would express the need for the meeting to the Inspector.
- 4.2 It was then reported that between June and December 2014 there had been 16 reports of ASB and other crime at the Centre. Members requested information on age ranges of the offenders along with any outcomes and this was agreed by the Cabinet Member.
- 4.3 The report was noted.

#### **5. MID YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT – ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN 14/15 FOR LEISURE & PARKS DIRECTORATE**

- 5.1 The Committee received a report on progress against the activities and projects set out in the Directorate's One Year Action Plan for 14/15. It was noted that key performance indicators relating to activity during the first six months of the year was also included in the report.
- 5.2 Members asked for more detail regarding the action to increase the number of residents who are regularly active as it was felt that it was vague and not clear if the target was being met naturally or a direct result of steps taken by the Council. It was reported that the data was collated by Sport England. It was noted that it was encouraging that the figure was so high in a district with a known older population.
- 5.3 Clarification was sought as to how cost had been reduced with public toilet cleaning and it was reported that efficiencies had come from merging teams and working smarter. It was asked how well the changing places facility at Friary Outer was being used and it was noted that it is used but signage was poor due as the building were not owned by the Council and so it was limited as to where signs could be housed.
- 5.4 The report was noted.

## **6. DIRECTORATE TOP 10 – 15/16**

- 6.1 The Committee received a report on the top 10 issues which are facing the Leisure and Parks Directorate in 2015/16 along with the proposed activity. Performance indicators will be reported to the Committee in March 2015.
- 6.2 It was noted that top 10 were not the only priorities for the Directorate but the most critical.
- 6.3 Members asked if the synthetic pitch at Burntwood Leisure Centre would last up to March 2016 as many complaints had been received about its condition. It was reported that funding had been sought from Sport England to replace it but the bid had not been successful. However other funding streams were being looked into.
- 6.4 Members asked if the synthetic pitch at Burntwood Leisure Centre would last up to March 2016 as many complaints had been received about its condition. It was reported that funding had been sought from Sport England to replace it but the bid had not been successful. However other funding streams were being looked into.
- 6.5 It was requested that historic plans and data be included to help the Committee compare and investigate any capacity issues arising. It was noted that performance indicators for 2015 had not been confirmed and would be reported at the March meeting

## **7. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**

- 7.1 Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme and Council's Forward Plan. It was that it had been agreed earlier in the meeting to bring back a report on the Garrick Trust and specifically the socio-economic impact assessment. It was also noted that Bromford Housing would be invited to the next meeting to discuss grass cutting on their land.

Mrs H. Tranter  
Chairman  
Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee