

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 19TH JUNE 2014**

REPORT BY: **HOUSING AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY FACILITATOR**

SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LEISURE FINANCE TASK & FINISH GROUP**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01 To seek the Committee's approval for a recommendation from the Leisure Finance Task & Finish Group to be supported and recommended to Cabinet for approval.
- 1.02 To inform the Committee of the decision taken by the Leisure Finance Task & Finish Group, that it was inappropriate to continue to review Leisure Services further at this time.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 The Leisure Finance Task & Finish Group was set up in October 2013 in order to review and address the current level of overspend within the Leisure Service Budget.
- 2.02 The Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee had also considered setting up a Task & Finish Group to review the Leisure Service Budget. Therefore, the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 10 October, 2013, proposed that the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee be invited to sit on the Task & Finish Group and report back the work of the Group when necessary.
- 2.03 The Membership of the Task & Finish Group is as follows:-
- Cllr David Mackie (Chairman)
 - Cllr Marion Bateman
 - Cllr Stella Jones
 - Cllr Nancy Matthews
 - Cllr Tim Newhouse

2.04 Meetings of the Task & Finish Group are also attended by the following officers who provide specialist advice:-

- Lawrence Rawsthorne, Head of Culture & Leisure
- Mike Welch, Principal Leisure Services Officer
- Paul Jones, Business Improvement Manger
- Carl Jones, Accountant – Financial Services

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 During the last meeting of the Task & Finish Group held on the 19 May, 2014, the Group considered the objectives as set out within their terms of reference, attached at Appendix A of the report, and made the following comments:-

- **To consider how best to address the current level of overspend within the Leisure Service budget** – The Group commented that it was pleasing to note that the current Leisure Service budget for 2014/15 had been set in line with realistic customer receipts and had been increased to allow for a balanced budget. This action by the Council's Administration was seen to address the first of the Group's terms of reference.
- **To consider the opportunity available to encourage external funding** – The Group commented that the maintenance of receipts from customers depended on facilities being fit for purpose which depended on maintenance funds being made available. The responsibility from securing other external funding must rest with the Cabinet and Chief Officer Team and be an on-going responsibility.
- **To consider how best to prioritise spend within the Leisure Services budget** – The Group recommended that consideration should be given by Cabinet that the capital receipts received from the sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School be ring-fenced for maintenance works for Leisure Centres in Flintshire.

3.02 During discussion around customer numbers, the Group commented that to maintain and improve customer numbers, leisure facilities across Flintshire must be well maintained but raised concerns around the lack of budget for essential maintenance within the Council's Capital Programme. Previous investment has allowed Deeside Leisure Centre and Flint Leisure Centre to be improved, but their future on-going maintenance costs have not been funded. If a budget for maintenance is not allocated eventually income from customers is likely to diminish.

- 3.03 The Group were informed during the last meeting that the Council was currently conducting a review of assets across Flintshire, where the needs of Leisure Centre maintenance would be considered. Following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure, the Group felt it would be inappropriate to continue to review Leisure Services further at this time as this could result in duplication of effort.
- 3.04 In closing the last meeting, the Group recognised the professionalism of the officers who attended the meetings. The officers were able to answer most of the questions asked from the data they had provided and all requested information was presented to Members. Their initial presentation was a succinct evaluation of the situation and the Group wished to express their thanks for the support they had provided.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee agree to recommend to the Cabinet that:-
- Consideration be given to capital receipts received from the sale of land at Ysgol Perth y Terfyn Infants and Ysgol y Fron Junior School being ring-fenced for maintenance works for Leisure Centres in Flintshire.
- 4.02 That the Committee support the proposal of the Task & Finish Group that it was inappropriate to continue to review Leisure Services further at this time.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 None directly as a result of this report.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 None as a result of this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 None as a result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 None as a result of this report.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01 None as a result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 N/A

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Publication of this report constitutes consultation.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A – Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.

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