

Executive Annual Report 2014/15

Councillor Ron Sands

Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Tourism

Executive Membership

- Cabinet

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

- Morecambe Bay Partnership
- Museums Advisory Panel

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Council Services Objectives: Leisure, Culture and Tourism

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures:

Outcomes	Success Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved• Communities are brought together and the major issues affecting the district are addressed through working in partnership• The attractiveness and offer of the district, as a place to visit or invest in, will be improved• Lancaster and Morecambe Bay will be recognised as important visitor destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of people participating in sports and leisure activities• Maximise opportunities for access to innovative leisure activities by working collaboratively with public and private sector parties• Maintain working arrangements with voluntary, community, faith, arts and culture groups in support of key service delivery• Cultural, retail and tourism offer will be improved• Economic impact of the arts in the district will be measured with the Council moving towards an ensuring role to support a range of delivery partners• Destination brands for Lancaster and the Lune Valley and Morecambe Bay will be developed with partners to establish these areas as important visitor destinations• Visitor numbers and spend will be increased

Introduction

The Cabinet portfolio that embraces Culture, Leisure and Tourism contains many so-called “discretionary” activities compared with other portfolios. I use the term “so-called” advisedly, because as well as being “discretionary” they are also absolutely essential if we are to live up to the impressive priorities of our Corporate Plan. So if I were to sum up the nature of my portfolio in a few words, they would be: “Discretionary, but absolutely vital to the health and well-being of all our citizens”.

Next year’s Executive Annual Report will be composed by a new City Council Cabinet as a result of the Council Elections in May 2015. I should like to wish the new council every success, coupled with the hope that, whatever their political complexion, they will embrace enthusiastically the emerging challenge to be an ensuring council, characterised by municipal entrepreneurialism.

I should also like to acknowledge the immense debt the council owes to our dedicated and hard-working staff, at all levels.

❖ LEISURE

Active Health Team

Based at Salt Ayre Sports Centre in Lancaster, the “Active Health Programme” was designed to take patients who were at risk from coronary heart disease, and support them initially through a 12 week course of exercise on prescription. However many referrals also had other contributory medical conditions such as overweight / obesity, depression and smoking as well as a number of long term health conditions such as diabetes type 1 & 2, mobility problems, hypertension, post heart surgery & asthma.

The scheme is funded externally and is now commissioned by Lancashire County Council. A new agreement for 2015/16 has been signed with a value in the region of £100k which will enable the scheme to continue serving every GP surgery in the district with over 1300 people making use of the opportunity to improve their health each year.

Salt Ayre Sports Centre

Following the recent restructure the integration of the new team is having a positive effect. Some changes to the programme include:

Public Open Day – range of free activities for families and people of all abilities to try and was attended by in excess of 400 people.

Indoor Ice Skating – new offer in the sports hall over the Christmas period which included additional activities such as a Santa’s Grotto. The sessions were planned to enable attendance by various specific groups from schools including those working with young people of varying abilities. It was an ideal opportunity to provide a new and unique offer and attracted new people to the venue.

Disability Gala – Salt Ayre once again hosted the disability gala for Lancashire with representation from schools across the region. An event which was commercially sponsored by Spar.

Holiday Activity Programme – this year saw the introduction of a new approach following the integration of the sports development team in to the sports centre. A varied and unique offer was provided for young people with more than double people attending compared to last year. Emphasis on the benefits for integrating the sports development team will continue.

Roller Skating – held in the sports hall these sessions on a weekend every couple of months prove popular with over 500 young people attending popular sessions and utilising space which would otherwise be difficult to fill.

Revenue Generation – largely as a result of improved staff integration and introducing clarity of roles and responsibilities, with the addition of improved motivation and creative programming the budget revenue target for the sports centre will be exceeded with overall income comfortably surpassing the £1m figure.

Community Swimming Pools

All three swimming pools will return revenue figures in excess of budget requirements. Swimming lessons at Heysham continue to increase and are currently in excess of 220 with overall performance across Hornby and Carnforth similarly improving on last year.

University of Cumbria

The partnership with the University continues to flourish, whereby the Council receives a circa £50k in return for providing use of all swimming pools, gym and exercise classes for students and staff. The beneficial arrangements are currently being negotiated for a further twelve months and have been entered to APSE for best public partnership agreement in the country.

Development partner

Cabinet approved in principle to seek a development partner to improve the facilities at Salt Ayre. This exciting opportunity is underway and should enable an improved offer for our communities, increased opportunities for those currently not participating in physical activity and importantly reduce the subsidy.

❖ **CULTURE AND TOURISM**

Following the restructuring of council services in 2013/14 the incorporation of the arts and visitor economy as mainstream economic development activities has strengthened their profile. Arts Council England has acknowledged that the two sit firmly together as economic drivers in the district and the region and fully welcomes that approach. It will strongly influence their approach in allocating funds in forthcoming years.

The Storey Institute continues to improve its financial position under the council's management with a raft of new tenants taking space in the building, including the University of Lancaster. The new management team has settled in and the Platform has run a wide range of performances and hosted events during the year.

The two major events which the council said it would support in 2014/15 were a major success. The full Vintage by the Sea festival took place over a whole weekend and coincided with a flypast over Morecambe by the world's only Avro Lancasters still flying today. In the autumn the Light up Lancaster festival and the annual fireworks event the following day demonstrated how new ground was being broken by this form of performing arts. The success of both event has led to organisers wanting to re run them in 2015/16.

This year saw the launch of both the Lancaster and Morecambe Bay visitor brands. Both enjoyed considerable consensus from stakeholders and were highly informed by seeking views from people outside the district who could bring a degree of unconnected objectivity which we so often forget to ask for. A great asset of the brands is their symbiotic nature. They can be used individually or together depending on the business or organisation using them.

The council helped by Visit Lancashire has facilitated training for a wide range of private sector organisations in the use of the two brand tool kits associated with them. BBC Autumnwatch visited RSPB Leighton Moss for a second time, presenting a second opportunity for national coverage to promote the Morecambe Bay brand in particular.

The council continues to work with the County Council to refine the Museums offer in the district and link it more effectively with the districts visitor economy.