



## REPORT

**SUBJECT:                   INFORMING THE FUTURE OF KEY LOCAL SERVICES –  
LEISURE, EVENTS, OUTDOORS, CULTURE & YOUTH**

**MEETING:                Cabinet**  
**DATE:                    October 2015**  
**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

### **1.     PURPOSE:**

- 1.1    To propose the expansion of the review of Cultural Services to incorporate parallel and complementary services of Leisure, Events, Youth and Outdoor Learning. To develop one comprehensive framework that will provide a critical path to sustaining these important local services and creating the capacity for growth, development and increased local involvement and ownership. Additionally, to provide the capacity and dedicated resources to guide this complex and wide-ranging piece of work in readiness to meet the first of several challenging financial MTFP targets (c£400k in 16/17).

### **2.     RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1    To approve the need for one detailed and comprehensive appraisal of the options relating to providing a sustainable and viable future for Leisure, Events, Culture and Youth
- 2.2    To agree release of £60,000 worth of additional investment from the Invest to Redesign fund in order to finance the supplementary work now needed around Leisure, Events, Youth and Outdoor Learning and to create some of the capacity required internally to mobilise this significant piece of work.
- 2.3    To approve the finalization of this piece of work in readiness for commencement of the first wave of activity in 2016/17 in order to meet the c£400k budget target.

### **3.     KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1    In 2014, cabinet approved an initial investment of £30,000 to commission Amion Consulting, to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the future options for our Cultural services. The review is due to conclude shortly and the report which is due to soon be shared, will be presented to Economy and Development Select Committee on 30 Sept (slides appended for information). The purpose of this review is to identify future delivery options and

opportunities within the overall objective of improving, sustaining and developing local services in order that they become more self-reliant and resilient. This is in keeping with the Council's clear priority to maintain locally accessible services.

- 3.2 In carrying out the work on Cultural Services it has become apparent that because museums and cultural/ tourism attractions overlap and touch so many wider services and functions, it is difficult to consider them in isolation. In view of the links and inter-dependencies at a service-wide and local level, Cultural, Events, Leisure and Youth/ Outdoor/Recreation services, run as a family of services and rely upon one another for promotion, support and optimal operation. As a collective, they help position the county as a great place in which to live, work, play and visit. They also play a significant part in place-shaping, preventing demand that would normally end up requiring intervention by costly statutory services and all make a significant contribution to the social and economic health of the county. They all however, face the same challenge of being able to run, grow and develop – at a time when the public finances which subsidise them – are most constrained.
- 3.3 In addition to this, the experiences of other local authorities which have trodden similar paths must be considered. Examples of Councils that have undertaken options appraisals and resulted in developing new operating models such as trusts, council-owned companies, trading vehicles and community co-ops, demonstrate that critical mass, achieving economies of scale and developing ways to cross-subsidise and mutually support, are critical success factors. The recent WG 'expert review' of local museum provision in Wales (2015) on the future of museums and cultural services also reinforces this key point, stating Councils and other public bodies must identify opportunities for collaboration, partnership and innovation.
- 3.4 Amion's work on cultural service highlights just how small and unsustainable the service currently is. It suggests a stand-alone pure cultural services model is highly unlikely to be viable and if we are to maintain a professional museums' service, we need to understand the wider options for innovation and collaboration. It suggests that embedding Cultural Services within a wider grouping of complementary services, and potentially within a vehicle that provides new opportunities, incentives and flexibilities, offers the most practicable way forward. A further finding points to some of the commercial opportunity that exists and advocates investing in the capacity to trade in a whole-services sense, will be a key means of sustaining local delivery.
- 3.5 Our own work – especially over the last 12 months – supports these findings and proposals. The relentless nature of current and forward budget pressures begin to render some local services, potentially unviable. Senior colleagues in Leisure, a service which, by some distance has made one of the largest contributions to the council's income performance in recent years, report that the reach of the service cannot be extended further without significant capital investment in service infrastructure and development of the current offer. The pressures are evident right across these services – from income pressures in the Youth Service and Events to a general need to be more efficient and effective across all other areas.

- 3.6 Furthermore, given some of the wider constraints and parameters governing the way we operate, the limits of income generation if not reached altogether, will soon be. Given the centrality of leisure centres, theatres, museums, local events, youth and outdoor activity and cultural attractions to defining local 'sense of place' – this is a risk we cannot afford to take and one which requires urgent and bold thinking to re-imagine the future of these services.
- 3.7 The cultural services work identifies that one such way of addressing the problem would be to establish a council-owned arms-length vehicle with parallel trading capacity. It recognizes that viability would be significantly improved and long-term prospects more certain, if other complementary local services – all of which face the same severe pressures - could be provided through the same model. Approvals are thus now sought, to broaden the scope of the review to consider the options of taking forward a new future for the collection of services outlined in this report – Cultural, Leisure, Events, Outdoor Learning and Youth – as a collective.
- 3.8 The quote to undertake this wider piece of work by Amion is £25-30k. Whilst an extension to the current contract could be sought and approved, in the interests of total transparency and openness, an exemption from Contract procedure Rules will be sought to maintain the relationship with Amion, since it is an effective one and it makes sense for business and continuity reasons, to retain their services.
- 3.8 The cost reflects that much of the raw data and evidence already exists in Leisure and Outdoor Education – albeit updating and putting in current context is required. The main focus will therefore be on pulling together all of the strands, providing an independent detailed analysis of options, devising clear recommendations and a critical time path for implementation. It is proposed that the remaining £30k is used to fund part-time secondments of the Heads of Tourism, Leisure and Culture, Economy and Enterprise and Youth for a six-month period in order to provide the dedicated time and space needed to lead this . This will provide the in-house resource required to steer the process and establish the preparation work needed to realise the first wave of financial benefits built into the MTFP starting in 16/17 with c£400k.

#### **4. REASONS**

- 4.1 The problem that needs addressing fundamentally, is that with increasingly constrained resources, new ways of working and operating have to be identified and developed to sustain important local services and functions. Work is nearing completion on the cultural services aspect of this, however it is now felt prudent that as demand for local services grows – new options and opportunities must be identified for the wider set of services.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The resource implication is £60,000 worth of investment to progress to the next stage of developing a wider review framework in which to position to the future of Leisure, Events, Culture, Outdoor Learning and Youth Services. In the first year, the ROI of this investment is the c£400k target set out on the 16/17 budget. This piece of work is fundamental in identifying the wider potential for efficiencies and effectiveness benefits in future years.
- 5.2 The wider resource implications concern the part-time secondments of 3 lead officers – the cost of which is included in the requested amount. As it is unclear at this stage how much officer time and resources will be required – any cost overruns will have to be met within the individual departmental budgets.

## **6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This work will inform the ability of the service to contribute to sustaining locally accessible services which are currently enjoyed by all cross-sections of our communities.

## **7. CORPORATE PARENTING/ SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The services included within this report, all make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of young people. Developing a path to sustain these services and their ability to make a difference to welfare and wellbeing is critical. The Youth Service in particular, has a direct relationship with young people and as such, developing the capacity to be able to positively impact the wellbeing of future generations goes sits at the very centre of this report.

## **8. CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet  
Leadership Team  
Enterprise DMT  
Heads of Tourism, Leisure and Culture, Economy and Enterprise & Youth Service  
Enterprise staff groups  
Stakeholder groups  
Economy and Development Select Committee

### **Results of Consultation**

Incorporated as read

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Future of Cultural Services Slides – Amion (exempt)

## **9. AUTHORS:**

**Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer Enterprise**

**10. CONTACT DETAILS:**

Tel: 01633 644041

Email: [kelliebeirne@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:kelliebeirne@monmouthshire.gov.uk)