

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **9th December 2020**

Report Subject: **Outcome of the Leisure Review and Performance Monitoring for the Aneurin Leisure Trust**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Joanne Collins, Executive Member for Education**

Report Submitted by: **Corporate Director for Education, Lynn Phillips**

Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
√	√	24.11.20			03.11.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Executive Committee with an update on the outcome of the Leisure Trust Review, to clarify that the client function is now aligned within the Education Portfolio and is also an opportunity to consider the future performance monitoring arrangements of the Aneurin Leisure Trust.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 In April 2018, the Council commenced a review of the provision of Leisure and Culture Services. This review was in line with the finance and management agreement between the Council and the Aneurin Leisure Trust (ALT). The review included two phases and the second phase of the review concluded early 2020.
- 2.2 In parallel to the review, the Council developed the Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019-29 (Appendix 1) to provide strategic direction for the future of leisure services and identified key priorities for the next 10 years.
- 2.3 Due to the emergence of COVID-19 and subsequent national lockdown, the outcome of the review was not presented to Full Council until August 2020. However, at that meeting, Option 2 was agreed which stated:

‘Provide a time limited contract extension period of five years with a break/review point at year 3. Using the proposed new governance structure to formally review the performance of ALT’s delivery of the business plan against the new specification and revised financial and management arrangement. Use clear checkpoints to identify risks and take action to mitigate those in a timely manner. If ALT fully deliver to their business plan the Council will consider a further extension to the contract subject to a further review’.

2.4 In addition, along with the appointment of the Interim Director of Education, it was agreed in April 2020 to move the lead responsibility for Leisure and Culture from the Regeneration and Environment Directorate to the Education Directorate, undertaking the role of client for these services, and appointing an interim lead officer for this function.

2.5 Since April, the following areas have been prioritised:

- Establishing regular meetings and protocols between the Education link officer and senior managers in the ALT;
- Supporting the Trust through lockdown, phased reopening and understanding any financial impact;
- Identifying areas for development following the review, including the service specification, governance structure, Service Level Agreements, reporting framework; and,
- Handover from previous link officer including the Met Community Asset Transfer, Head 4 Arts etc.

2.6 **Response to COVID-19**

Throughout lockdown, many of the Trust's employees were initially redeployed to support the Council's response to the pandemic, including the community hubs and later providing summer activities for vulnerable children. However, the Trust also placed the majority of the workforce onto the Job Retention Scheme (furlough) in order to safeguard the business. A robust phased reopening plan was developed and gradually many of the Trust's services have moved to partial or full re-opening, working closely with Health and Safety colleagues to put the appropriate risk assessments in place.

2.7 The review recognised that key to the successful delivery of a sustainable Leisure and Culture offer is improved governance and contract management arrangements. Therefore, since April, developments have focussed on finalising the draft service specification which outlines exactly what services are being requested. The specification includes:

- i. Core services required including Sport and Leisure Centres; Sports and Physical Activity Development; Outdoor Activity Centres; Destination Venues; Libraries; and Adult Learning.
- ii. Strategic Outcome Performance Indicators (SOPIs)
- iii. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- iv. Service Level Agreements (Appendix 2)
- v. A new governance structure which includes Terms of Reference (Appendix 3) for a new Joint Strategic Partnership Group, which will meet twice a year with representation from the most senior representatives from the Local Authority and the Trust.
- vi. Performance management and monitoring processes

2.8 **Monitoring and Scrutinising Performance**

In order to monitor and scrutinise the progress and impact of the Trust, the intention is for a full progress report to be presented to the Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee twice a year, reporting against the agreed KPIs within the specification. The performance indicators are outlined in section 6.1. Other reports may be presented throughout the year by exception. These reports will also be presented to the Executive Committee and the Joint Strategic Partnership Group for comment.

- 2.9 The working relationship between the Council and Aneurin Leisure Trust has greatly improved during phase 2 of the review. This positive working relationship has continued to improve throughout lockdown and into the re-opening phase. This has been enhanced through establishing weekly structured meetings between the link officer and senior managers in the Trust.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report has been discussed by Education DMT, CLT and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to the Executive Committee. Members are asked to consider the following options:

3.2 Option 1: That the Executive Committee accept the report as presented.

3.3 Option 2: Members are requested to review the information detailed within the report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 **Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report supports the Council's Performance Management Framework and the work of the Aneurin Leisure Trust contributes to the Council Priority, Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities, the delivery of statutory responsibilities for providing library services and the core elements of the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing plan.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget**

This proposal in this report will ensure that the Council is getting the most out of the investment through the commissioned service. The proposed new reporting process will ensure that the investment is delivering the outcomes as articulated in the Leisure and Culture Strategy. The full impact of COVID-19 on the Trust's Business Plan is not yet fully realised, as the furlough scheme has provided much needed financial support. However, the Trust has a clear delivery plan and financial forecast which takes account of this uncertainty, and is being closely monitored

5.2 Risk

The risk of not monitoring progress against the agreed performance indicators could lead to the outcomes in the Leisure and Culture Strategy not being met, and the Trust not meeting the requirements set out in the service specification.

5.3 Legal

Monitoring performance in line with the agreed performance indicators is a requirement within the Service Specification, which is part of the Finance and Management Agreement. The Finance and Management Agreement represents all the legal and financial arrangements for the relationship between the Council and ALT.

5.4 Human Resources

There are no direct Human Resources implications associated with this report other than the allocation of time from the link officer.

6. Supporting Evidence

N/A

6.1 Performance Information and Data

The bi-annual reports will report progress against the following performance indicators. The 4 Strategic Outcome Performance Indicators are as follows:

1. Increasing Participation for All
2. Improving health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities
3. Providing Local Economic and Social Benefit building upon the leisure and culture offer
4. Developing effective collaboration with partners

The 7 Key Performance Indicators which will be used to monitor progress are based on the information below. Targets and/or actions are being set against each of these areas to provide clarity on what is expected for the Trust and also to ensure Members can make judgements on what is going well and what needs to improve:

1. Governance, Leadership and Advocacy
The operator is focussed on the key priorities and ensuring the Council, and strategic partners collaborate effectively to meet strategic outcomes.
2. Financial Sustainability
The operator has sound finances and is it able to provide the services to meet residents needs now and in the future. This will form part of the financial monitoring arrangements.
3. Use of the Services
Residents are accessing the services to support behavioural change.

4. **Operational Performance**
The service operations provided by the operator are efficient and effective.
5. **Customer & Staff Satisfaction**
To what extent are our customers/staff satisfied with the service / organisation?
6. **Library Services Standards**
To what extent do our library services comply with Welsh Public Library Standards?
7. **Environmental Sustainability**
The operator will reduce the environmental impact of its people, activities and operations to meet the Council's carbon reduction target.

6.2 Expected outcome for the public

The expected outcome for the public will be to achieve the aspirations in the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

6.3 Involvement

The updating of the service specification and performance indicators has been developed in collaboration between the Council and the Trust.

6.4 Thinking for the Long term

Blaenau Gwent's decision to commission the provision of Leisure and Culture Services from ALT is intended to secure the long term provision of Leisure and Culture provision in the County Borough. The monitoring and reporting process, in line with the finance and management agreement, seeks to strengthen the long term provision by ensuring that provision is in line with what is required.

6.5 Preventative focus

The impact of leisure and cultural provision on wellbeing has been recognised for a long time and is preventative in its approach.

6.6 Collaboration / partnership working

The new governance model within the service specification ensures that collaboration is at the heart of all decisions. The Joint Strategic Partnership Group will strengthen this approach and encourage greater partnership working.

6.7 Integration

The move of the client function to Education will only further enhance opportunities for integration between the Trust and across areas within the Council.

6.8 **EqIA**

There is no requirement for an EQIA assessment as all partners will have their own equality planning arrangements in place.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The proposed reporting arrangements, along with the new governance structure will ensure that the performance of the Trust is transparent and accountable. Reports will be presented to CLT, Scrutiny Committee, Executive, Council and the new Joint Strategic Partnership Group on a six monthly basis.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 - BG Leisure and Culture Strategy 2019 – 2029

Appendix 2 – Review of SLAs 2019/2020

Appendix 3 - Terms of Reference for Strategic Partnership Group