



COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE 2005/06 DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE PLAN (FOR THE PERIOD APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2005)

purpose of the report

1. To provide for Members' consideration a summary of intentions as set out in the departmental Service Plan, together with a brief report on the position after the first six months (April 2005 – September 2005) of the municipal year.

background

2. The attached review (Annex 1) is self explanatory and Members are able to judge progress against intentions on the basis of the reports set out for each area of activity. Broadly, it is reasonable to state that progress against the Service Plan intentions has been good with some outstanding progress and, of course, some areas of activity which require concentrated effort during the last six months of the year.

conclusion

3. The Community Services Department is achieving the great majority of its declared targets for the year and broadly is doing so within the overall budget of the department.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the contents of the six monthly review of the Community Services Department's Service Plan 2005/06.

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WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

SIX MONTH REVIEW OF THE 2005/06 SERVICE PLAN

**Summarising work undertaken during the period
April – September 2005**

SIX MONTH REVIEW

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.
Key Priority Task P1	Take over responsibilities re. licensing currently undertaken by local Magistrates and continue to implement existing licensing functions.
WORK TO DATE Carried out regular meetings with police, other local authorities and trade associations. Undertaken informal information sessions to advise businesses affected by the Licensing Act. Commenced discussions with relevant authorities on a joint enforcement policy.	

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.
Key Priority Task P2	Develop and implement proposals directed at complying with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
WORK TO DATE Proposals were developed in respect of leisure facilities, particularly in respect of changing and toilet facilities. These have been implemented.	

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.
Key Priority Task P3	Provide a programme of arts development-based activities for target groups in the District.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>The Big Picture small grants scheme was promoted in April 2005 and awards made to District based organisations in support of larger projects. Project evaluations will be required to release grants.</p> <p>Wear Valley District Council has maintained effective contact and communication with Arts Council of England, The Local Authority Forum and other regional and sub regional meetings to inform the strategic development of the District. Wear Valley District Council chaired meetings of the County Durham Strategic Arts Officer Group from April 2005 and has attracted and managed external funding for associated project work. Wear Valley District Council represents the County Durham Strategic Arts Officer Group regionally and is managing funding for the "arts with and for children and young people" priority.</p> <p>Wear Valley District Council supported events within the Elements and Highlights rural touring programmes with some venue development, e.g., Witton-le-Wear. Advice and support has been provided for local artists and organisations on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The NRF Vocoder Vision youth arts programme has delivered various activities including the Youth Music funded Resounding Technology project, which encouraged several course enrolments in further education. NRF funding for a District wide Performing Arts programme supported outdoor performances at Auckland Castle in August 2005 with preceding workshop activities. The Council has also supported local secondary schools and Bishop Auckland College through this award.</p> <p>Arts Development has co-ordinated and managed key events to market local towns and the District, including the Castles by the Castle/Teddy Bears' Picnic, Proms in the Park, Midsummer Nights Dream and Ramayana events in Bishop Auckland, the Crook Community Carnival and Crook Samba Carnival events.</p> <p>Work to develop cultural access and inclusion has included supporting the Helping Special Friends organisation to secure external funding to support arts activity and advising the group on management of said funding. An application to Northern Rock Foundation was made to support partnership work with County Durham Care clients resident in Wear Valley and Sedgfield Districts, however this was unsuccessful. Multi cultural provision included the Fusion Factory world music programme.</p>	

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.
Key Priority Task P4	Develop proposals directed at the better utilisation of community halls, centres and leisure facilities.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Work has progressed with the introduction of revised programmes (of activities on offer) at our leisure facilities. New marketing/promotional plans have been implemented to support the new programme.</p> <p>The "outreach" activities of the Council (CPACs, Positive Futures, Club Development) still continue to utilise community facilities for activity delivery. £130,000 of lottery funding has been obtained to develop "legacy" mini-Visions leisure facilities in initially three community facilities in the mid and upper dale to provide ongoing access post WOW project.</p>	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC1	Develop joint initiative with regional and national media partners where possible in order to promote the District and its attractions.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Key media partners are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northern Echo ▪ Tyne Tees Television ▪ Athletics Weekly ▪ Running Fitness Magazine ▪ Local radio <p>All of the above contribute to the promotion of one of, some of or all of our programme of special events and health promotion activities and thereby also contribute to corporate efforts to promote the District and its attractions. During the period April 2005 – September 2005 these partners actively worked with WVDC (Community Services Department) in order to promote interest in and report on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weardale Triathlon ▪ Great North Walk ▪ Proms in the Park ▪ Auckland Castle 10k Road Race <p>which "spread the word" of Wear Valley regionally and nationally.</p>	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC2	Contribute to tourism and visitor attraction initiatives through a programme of special events.
<p>WORK TO DATE See EC1</p> <p>In addition to the promotional support referred to at EC1, financial support was obtained from partners – particularly for the Great North Walk, Triathlon, Road Race and Proms in the Park all of which were staged very successfully during the April – September period.</p> <p>Plans were also put in place for WVDC to host the 100th staging of the North Eastern Counties Cross Country Championships which should attract positive media coverage in December 2006.</p> <p>Plans were also put in place for the annual fireworks spectacular which is scheduled for November 2005.</p>	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC3	Secure the future of the existing leisure facilities and continue to look at options for further provision.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Ensured that "the case" was made for adequate revenue/capital provision to sustain the existing level of leisure facility (indoor and outdoor) provision. Significant progress was made in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The transfer of managerial/financial responsibilities for Spectrum Leisure Complex to a community based enterprise. This has involved officers and members of the Council in protracted negotiations with the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) and the Charity Commission. ▪ The development of proposals for the future of indoor leisure facility provision in Bishop Auckland. These deliberations are ongoing with relevant potential development partners. 	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC4	Further develop/improve car park arrangements as contribution to stimulating shopping and tourism visits to the District.
WORK TO DATE Tenters Street car park has undergone a major refurbishment.	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC5	Further develop quality and viability of street markets within the District.
WORK TO DATE Consultations commenced with market traders on future market provision.	

Objective	Economy The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task EC6	Continue to support/develop Bishop Auckland Town Hall as a key contributor to the promotion of Bishop Auckland/Wear Valley.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Continued support has been provided to Bishop Auckland Town Hall in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance at meetings of the Joint Officer Working Party (JOWP) ▪ Attendance at meetings of the Joint Liaison Group <p>(Both of the above are attended by representatives of WVDC and DCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint promotion and delivery of performances, e.g., Tosca, which included a young people's education programme during the summer culminating in performances by young people at venues in Weardale and then at Bishop Auckland Town Hall. ▪ Liaising with BATH management regarding day to day repairs and maintenance issues. ▪ Liaise/co-ordinate work of WVDC arts team with that of BATH to widen promotion of BATH and its activities as a visitor destination. <p>Wear Valley District Council has worked with the Town Hall to support programming through promotion of outreach work (e.g., Silver Street workshops) and the Town Hall box office facility played a significant role in the success of the Proms in the Park 2005 concert.</p>	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
Key Priority Task H1	Deliver public protection arrangements in respect of food, noise, air quality, health and safety, animal welfare, caravan sites and pests in accordance with government guidance and best practice.
WORK TO DATE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statutory inspections, complaint investigations and appropriate enforcement action undertaken as required. ▪ Senior Environmental Health Officer appointed and consultant employed to undertake food inspection work. ▪ Air quality monitoring undertaken as an ongoing programme. ▪ Update training provided to all officers. ▪ Responded to government food hazard warnings and provided appropriate information to the trade and public. ▪ Food sampling taken in accordance with the programme. 	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task H2	Help prevent the spread of communicable diseases within the community.
WORK TO DATE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attended meetings of the Durham County Infection Control Committee. ▪ Investigated notified cases of infectious disease where appropriate. 	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task H3	Continue to expand, with health partners, Cardiac Rehabilitation, Exercise Referral and Walking the Way to Health programmes.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>External funding in place for core programme and for Healthy Living Centre project from the Big Lottery Fund until November 2006. Evaluation and quarterly returns continue to be completed and forwarded to the Healthy Living Centre Partnership and courses have been running as planned. Referral programme established with Wellness on Wheels which has been a great success in Wolsingham, Stanhope and other venues throughout Wear Valley, but particularly in the mid and upper Weardale area.</p> <p>Great North Walk successfully delivered at Wolsingham in July 2005 with almost 4,000 entries, the "flagship" event of a year-round Walking the Way to Health programme.</p> <p>The partnership with our Durham Dales PCT partners proposals are being developed to expand the remit of the New Opportunities (NOF lottery) funded element of the Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme to include recovering stroke patients. It is anticipated that this will be achieved soon after relevant physical safeguarding and protocols are in place to ensure safe exercise limits are not exceeded.</p>	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task H4	Deliver Wear Valley District Council contributions to the Durham Dales Health Living Centre Initiative.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Quarterly returns successfully completed and forwarded to Durham Dales Primary Care Trust. Attendance at Healthy Living Centre Steering Groups and Partnership Group meetings which are now looking at sustainability of the projects across the Healthy Living Centre Partnership when NOF funding finishes.</p>	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
Key Priority Task H5	Deliver healthy living elements of the SRB 5 programme.
WORK TO DATE The SRB5 element of funding (£8,000) for these programmes (exercise referral) ended March 2005. Work continues on the basis of ongoing funding provided by Durham Dales PCT and New Opportunities Fund (lottery) and WVDC's own ongoing revenue funding – principally the funding of the Community Fitness Officer post and the provision of facilities and equipment (in our facilities) to enable delivery of the programmes.	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task H6	With the Durham Dales PCT and the Northern Echo, further develop the "Chance to Live" initiative in order to promote health improvement messages/concepts.
WORK TO DATE The "Chance to Live" partnership was re-confirmed by all partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wear Valley District Council ▪ Northern Echo ▪ Durham Dales PCT ▪ Northumbrian Water <p>In terms of joint working the "flagship" event was the Great North Walk and related year round "Walking the Way to Health" activities in Wear Valley. The partnership also resulted in financial support (approximately £20,000) to WVDC towards the cost of our special events programme delivered during the April – September period.</p> <p>The involvement of the Northern Echo also ensured a steady flow of editorial stories throughout the period regarding various health promotion initiatives, e.g., the launch of the Wellness on Wheels (WOW) vehicle/project.</p>	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
Key Priority Task H7	Provide proven arts-based activities to alleviate symptoms of (mental) ill health.
WORK TO DATE The Good For The Soul arts and mental health project has continued to programme workshop activities and offer grant aid for projects involving adults suffering from or at risk of mild to moderate mental ill health in Wear Valley and Teesdale Districts. Sessions in Bishop Auckland and Crook have been staged in this reporting period. Good For The Soul works to an action plan required by Durham Dales NHS Primary Care Trust CHOICE programme and Wear Valley District Council has completed monitoring reports. A new programme Administrator began working for Wear Valley District Council in Autumn 2005, following the resignation of the Programme Co-ordinator. The project has been promoted through press, print, meetings and public displays (The Great North Walk, Wolsingham Show, etc). Wear Valley District Council has also supported external evaluation of the project, through a contract let by Teesdale District Council.	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task H8	Contribute to a partnership approach to the development of programmes which increase access to healthy food in areas which it is not easily available.
WORK TO DATE The Durham Dales PCT is the lead agency in developing a partnership approach to increasing awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and in the promotion of the concept of access to healthy food. First meetings of a Food and Health Strategy Group for Wear Valley and Teesdale have taken place. Wear Valley District Council had a significant contribution to make given its high profile health promotion activities. The principal purpose of the group is to persuade food retailers to "come on board" and actively stock and promote healthier food choices.	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task CS1	Continue to deliver, review, plan and prioritise the work of the Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators, Positive Futures programme and the Sports Club Development activities (re. SAZ related programmes).
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Continued funding for 2005/06 has been secured for Positive Futures and delivery has been continuing. Positive Futures referrals have been engaging in CPAC activity programmes across the district.</p> <p>The programme of the Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators continues to develop in line with the needs of the target groups. This has included providing spaces in Wellness on Wheels in Stanhope, Tow Law, Willington and Wolsingham. Further gymnastics has also been provided at Spectrum Leisure Complex for younger age groups.</p> <p>Funding has been secured for activity programmes and for holiday activities through COSPIP, PAYP and Children's Fund. Funding through Sport England's Community Investment Fund has been secured for the continuation of the CPAC programme, Sports Club Development Officer and Wear Walking for Health. The SAZ forward plan has been submitted to Sport England and is in the final stages of approval</p>	

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District.
Key Priority Task CS2	Contribution to development and implementation of Wear Valley Youth Forum.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Wear Valley District Council has been represented at meetings of the Wear Valley and Teesdale Children and Young People's Planning Group and meetings of the County Durham Children and Young People's Planning Group. Meetings have been held locally with the Wear Valley Children's Fund worker regarding mechanisms for consultation with young people. A formal Youth Forum has not been developed as other methods of consultation are being considered.</p>	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles
Key Priority Task CS3	Work with partners to expand availability of diversionary activities through the creation of three "sporting hubs" in Wolsingham, Willington and Bishop Auckland as part of a county-wide initiative.
WORK TO DATE Progress has been made with the construction of the new NOF funded sports halls at Wolsingham and Bishop Barrington Schools (officers of Wear Valley District Council and the Wear Valley Sport Action Zone Manager led on the preparation of the bids). These will form the basis of the development of sporting hubs in the town. Work continues with Parkside School, Willington as it pursues sport college status	

Objective	Population The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task CS4	Develop out of school hours creative provision for young people across the District through partnership work with Bishop Auckland College and other agencies.
WORK TO DATE Wear Valley District Council has worked with Bishop Auckland College to deliver the Resounding Technology Youth Music programme and out of school hours performing arts activity, including a multi-cultural arts day in August 2005. Partnership work with the Wear Valley Youth Engagement Service has supported the Fusion Factory Youth Music programme. NRF funding has supported the two Vocoder Vision Youth Arts Co-ordinator posts in delivering a wide variety of out of school hours provision, including co-ordinating a Wear Valley and Teesdale COSIP event in August 2005.	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
Key Priority Task CS5	Develop corporate approach to enforcement.
WORK TO DATE Begun work on a corporate enforcement policy. Anticipated completion date after submission to Members in April 2006.	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E1	Ensure streets are kept clear of abandoned vehicles, litter, fly tipping and dog fouling.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Working with the DVLA, police, fire brigade and other agencies we are continuing to reduce the number of abandoned and nuisance vehicles on the roads within the District.</p> <p>Working in partnership with the Environment Agency, County Council and several of the other Districts within County Durham, Wear Valley District Council co-funds the county-wide Fly Tipping Officer. Working alongside enforcement officers from Wear Valley District Council's Community Services Department, the officer has issued a number of cautions to offenders, however, as yet, has not succeeded in a full prosecution of any individual. However, at the time of writing, the Environment Agency advises that there is a distinct possibility of a high profile case reaching the courts in the very near future. The initial investigation with regard to this case was undertaken by officers of Wear Valley District Council.</p> <p>An enforcement plan relating to the issuing of fixed penalty notices for litter and dog fouling has been drafted and currently sits with the Head of Public Protection for scrutiny and approval.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E2	Implement proposals for improvements to cemeteries.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Investigations regarding the creation of a memorial garden at Bishop Auckland Cemetery are ongoing. The recently acquired extension has been flail cut by our grounds maintenance contractor to ensure the area is kept in a satisfactory condition prior to the commencement of grave digging in the extension. Investigations are also ongoing with regard to the layout of a memorial garden at Crook.</p> <p>Following the unsuccessful bid for a Cemeteries/Bereavement Officer, the Community Services Department has re-addressed this issue and an officer now undertakes all pegging out of graves and memorials prior to digging and erection respectively.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E3	Further develop and improve partnerships re. grounds maintenance service in order to improve service standard.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>The Community Services Department continues to work with partners, Sones Landscaping Limited, to ensure that improvements are ongoing within the District.</p> <p>Furthermore, discussions are ongoing with Groundwork West Durham regarding the provision of some grounds maintenance work undertaken by the Intermediate Labour Market.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E4	To modernise the refuse collection service taking into account the community's aspirations and statutory requirements.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>In April/May 2005 the wheeled bin refuse collection service was rolled out throughout the whole of the District. After several weeks requests/concerns relating the implementation abated. Feedback from residents, parish councils, etc., indicates that the wheeled bin implementation has been a success.</p> <p>At the same time of the implementation of a trial garden waste collection service to approximately 4,800 properties in the West Auckland, Bishop Auckland and Crook areas was introduced. This involved the delivery of a brown 240 litre wheeled bin which is serviced on a fortnightly basis. Once again the feedback from residents included within the trial area has been very positive and numerous requests have been received not currently within the trial area asking to be considered for future inclusion should the scheme be expanded.</p> <p>With the introduction of both of the above schemes our recycling percentage has risen from approximately 11½% to 15%. Further work needs to be carried out to ensure we hit the 18% target for the year 2005/06. However, by diverting refuse collection vehicles from landfill to Thornley Aerobic Digester in Easington, it is envisaged that this will be achieved.</p> <p>Officers from our Recycling and Waste Minimisation Section continue to work with the public and businesses around initiatives to encourage the recycling agenda.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E5	Develop educational programmes re. recycling and waste minimisation.
<p>WORK TO DATE Officers from our Recycling and Waste Minimisation Section have, in conjunction with our green box recycling scheme partners, continued to develop educational programmes surrounding the recycling and waste minimisation issues.</p> <p>Advice from officers is also given to businesses with regard to recycling and waste minimisation initiatives.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E6	Further develop, with partners, proposals to reduce/prevent flooding in the District.
<p>WORK TO DATE Wear Valley District Council continues to work with the Environment Agency on flood defence schemes. An example of this is the recently introduced flood defence barrier installed in West Auckland to stop the River Gaunless overflowing in the vicinity.</p> <p>All watercourses which are the responsibility of the District Council are subject to regular inspections, removing any debris, etc., deposited within them to alleviate any possible flooding.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E7	Implement "pride campaigns" re. litter, dog fouling and fly tipping.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Implement pride campaigns re. litter, dog fouling and fly tipping. Working in conjunction with Groundwork West Durham, the pride campaign has continued to flourish. From April 2005 to October 2005 the campaign organised district-wide litter picks, installed over 50 new dog and litter bins, interacted with schools in an intensive education programme, secured funding for a community mosaic project and works in conjunction with the Arts Section of the Community Services Department, delivering workshops for youth groups. The pride officer also carries out walkabouts with community groups, elected members, etc.</p> <p>Working in conjunction with the Town Centre Manager, Enforcement Officers from Wear Valley District Council have patrolled the Bishop Auckland town centre area issuing fixed penalty notices for the offences of littering and dog fouling. Furthermore, again working in partnership with the Town Centre Manager, area clean-ups have been undertaken by various third parties (e.g., probation service) with Wear Valley District Council providing equipment and method of disposal of waste collected. This work has been co-ordinated by the Pride Campaign Officer.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E8	Integration/rationalisation of street cleansing, refuse collection and grounds maintenance services.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Work is ongoing towards integration of services to provide a single "cleansing service" as opposed to the current silo orientated method of service delivery. Furthermore, another growth bid is to be forwarded for consideration with regard to the renewal of the existing street cleansing fleet as it is now nearing the end of its useful life.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E9	Continue to work with internal and external partners on environmental improvement schemes.
<p>WORK TO DATE Work is ongoing with regard to development of Bishop Auckland and Crook town centres.</p> <p>A major programme of refurbishment/replacement of all public conveniences throughout the District is to be implemented shortly. Work in progressing this project was delayed as a consequence of the need to ensure all interested parties could contribute to the development of the final plans.</p> <p>Officers are continuing to work with external partners on improving bus shelter provision throughout the District.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E10	Continue to develop recycling services and facilities throughout the District taking into account the community's aspirations and statutory requirements.
<p>WORK TO DATE Work is constantly ongoing with regard to the review/implementation and update of the Council's recycling plan as part of the waste strategy.</p> <p>Initiatives to encourage further participation in the green box recycling scheme continue to be developed. Officers are continuing to seek additional grant funding in relation to the introduction of new recycling initiatives. Officers are continuing to liaise with "bring site" facilitators to improve the appearance and facilities on offer.</p>	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E11	Implement the Waste Management Strategy.
WORK TO DATE Actions identified in the Waste Management Strategy are being undertaken.	

Objective	Environment The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
Key Priority Task E12	Take forward plans for further playground, recreation ground and open space provision.
WORK TO DATE Working in partnership with our grounds maintenance provider, maintenance of open spaces and play areas is being undertaken and revised continually, mindful of the Council's agreed limit of a maximum of 26 play areas in Wear Valley. Therefore, play area related development proposals are directed at improvements to existing equipment at the 26 sites.	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L1	Provide, over five years, at least 30 Foundation Modern Apprenticeship placements.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Successfully appointed eight Modern Apprentices to October 2005. One of these has been employed on the WOW programme but is included in all additional training available to the apprentices.</p> <p>One individual has also been appointed who did not meet the academic requirements for the MA programme. This situation is to be monitored.</p> <p>Seven of the modern apprentices rotate between the leisure centres including Visions and the CPACs programme.</p> <p>A revised timetable has been negotiated with Bishop Auckland College to better meet the needs of the individuals.</p>	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L2	Develop external partner arrangements in order to provide a range of job-related qualifications and experience.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Closer working arrangements have been maintained with Bishop Auckland College, New College Durham and the authority's in house trainers to provide training and appropriate qualifications to meet the demands, not only of the apprentices, but also the skill demands of the area.</p> <p>Funding has been sought from an external partner to offer courses both for our own staff and members of the public. This has given the authority more choice with regard to casual staff especially on poolside.</p>	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L3	Pursue a programme of accredited NVQ qualifications.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Bishop Auckland College continues to offer the Level 2 in Sport and Recreation and the Technical Certificate. This is supported by Wear Valley District Council's staff who are assessor qualified. Up to October 2005 there are two members of staff currently studying for the assessor award and internal verifier award. This will assist with the support the apprentices require during their programme.</p> <p>Previous modern apprentices are being encouraged to move forward with a NVQ level 3 qualification. At least two individuals have enrolled.</p> <p>Modern apprentices from 2004-2005 have enrolled on the Gym Instructor Course to continue their development, along with a number of casual staff from the leisure centres.</p> <p>All street cleansers and refuse collectors enrolled on Level 2 NVQ in Waste Management have almost completed their qualifications.</p>	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L4	Introduce a "mentor" programme into the department.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>The Modern Apprentices are placed for longer periods within their placement. This has been more successful as staff have been able to give more time to the welfare and development of the individuals.</p>	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L5	Further develop, with Bishop Auckland College, the NVQ-based Institute for Football and Sports Development – fourth student intake in September 2005.
WORK TO DATE The Events and Activities Officer continues to provide support to the college through the league and with coaching. There is a further link with the CPAC programme with all participants referred from the CPAC programme to the courses at the college.	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L6	Develop partnership work with Bishop Auckland College and Wear Valley LSP Education Sub-Group to progress strategic development of lifelong learning opportunities.
WORK TO DATE See P3 and CS4	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task L7	Develop proposals for a District-wide public arts strategy.
WORK TO DATE Wear Valley District Council has worked as part of the County Durham Strategic Arts Officer Group to review recommendations within the RKL report. No meetings have yet been held with Arts Council of England North East, to develop a District specific public arts strategy.	

Objective	Health The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
Key Priority Task O1	Utilise, wherever possible, IT in order to improve both standards of service delivery and efficiency of processes.
<p>WORK TO DATE</p> <p>Procurement of additional hardware and software for online bookings has been successful although a number of teething problems with databases and connectivities has been experienced. Online bookings were launched successfully in December 2005.</p> <p>Discussions concerning the implementation of the Customer Relations Model have continued throughout the period April to September 2005.</p> <p>Meetings have been held between representatives of the Community Service Department and Central Resources Department, with a view to implementing the next phase of the system by the end of December 2005, in line with Government requirements. These meetings have initiated a programme of 'work-shadowing', where CRM staff members have been shadowing members of the Community Services Department Administration Team, with a view to learning the processes of dealing with customer queries.</p> <p>In addition, a number of meetings have been held by the County E-Government Partnership throughout June and July, which have been attended by various members of the Community Services department working with the area of Environmental Services. These meetings have further facilitated the implementation of the CRM system.</p> <p>In June 2005, our Department, together with representatives from other departments, looked into the possibilities of implementing a new DIP/Workflow system at a corporate level. The system would alleviate the need for delivery of paper based post, by scanning incoming post and items of work on to a workflow system, that would then distribute items of work electronically to the relevant members of staff. This would lead to improved communication and efficiency savings. A visit was made to another Local Authority already using the system.</p> <p>All staff were encouraged to attend a Network Security Presentation held at a corporate level, to improve levels of security within our IT systems, and develop improved ways of working.</p> <p>Discussions began regarding introducing new electronic payment systems for the leisure complexes, with a view to these systems becoming operational in November 2005.</p>	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task O2	To ensure that service delivery takes account of Best Value Reviews and the outcome of CPA.
WORK TO DATE Co-ordinated by MSU corporate responses have been developed to Best Value Review and CPA recommendations. The Community Services Department has met all deadlines and requirements in this regard.	

Objective	Lifelong Learning The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
Key Priority Task O3	To work with employees to improve the management and organisation within the department.
WORK TO DATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk assessments carried out for new areas of working and appropriate controls established. ▪ Regular use has been made of Team Talk to inform/promote understanding of the work of the department. ▪ The Acting Director of Community Services attended the Communications Forum and outlined the departmental communication arrangements and how they contribute to the corporate arrangements. The department continues to have two representatives on the corporate Communications Forum. ▪ The issue of communication and staffing structures within the department will be addressed when the Chief Executive's restructuring proposals are approved/implemented. ▪ Where appropriate, protocols and procedures have been developed and implemented. 	

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
TRANSFER OF WASTE TO THORNLEY AEROBIC DIGESTER

purpose of the report

1. To advise Members of the deal brokered between Wear Valley District Council and Durham County Council with regard to waste being transferred to Thornley Aerobic Digester to meet statutory recycling targets.

background

2. Members will be aware that the government has stipulated statutory recycling targets for local authorities throughout the country. In this regard Wear Valley District Council's statutory recycling target for 2005/06 is 18%. To address this target Wear Valley District Council currently operates the green box recycling scheme, pilot green waste collection service and the transfer of waste to Thornley Aerobic Digester Plant near Easington. Currently the green box recycling scheme recycles approximately 12½%, the green waste collection service recycles a further 5% making a total of 17½%. However, Wear Valley District is allowed to deliver 7.8% of the total waste capacity of Thornley Aerobic Digester and should we do this, this will equate to a further 5% approximately, making a total of 22½% recycling achieved.
3. However, to transfer the waste from Wear Valley to Thornley results in considerable operational difficulties ("down time") as the return journey time can sometimes be as much as three hours depending upon traffic within the recycling facility. This in turn leads to overtime payments for members of staff to ensure collections of wheeled bins are made whilst ensuring waste is disposed of at Thornley. Furthermore, it has proved difficult for the Refuse Supervisor to obtain the services of the refuse drivers over and above the 37 hours for which they are paid.
4. Members will also be aware that in September of this year vehicular movement to Toddhills landfill site at Newfield was restricted by Durham County Council's Highways Officers. This resulted in only 20 vehicles per day from Wear Valley District Council being allowed on site. It was necessary therefore, for large numbers of the refuse fleet to be diverted to either Annfield Plain transfer station or Heighington transfer station.

5. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 stipulates that should a disposal authority direct a collection authority to a disposal facility more than five miles outside the borders of the District, then a remuneration package is available for the District. This package is to compensate for the additional costs to the District for transferring the waste out of its boundaries and to another facility. Upon calculation it was determined that £14,000 in additional costs would be owed to Wear Valley by Durham County Council as result of the redirection of the refuse and street cleansing fleet.

proposal

6. As a result of the above the Head of Service Contracts entered into negotiations with colleagues at Durham County Council to seek arrangements which would suit both parties. In this regard it has been agreed between officers of both agencies, that Durham County Council will arrange for the transfer of waste from Heighington to Thornley Aerobic Digester at their cost. The waste to be transferred will be the equivalent of the waste that Wear Valley would have transported to Thornley to meet the 7.8% target previously mentioned.
7. In return, Wear Valley District Council will no longer seek the compensation owed to them for delivering waste to Heighington as a result of the redirection from Toddhills landfill site. Furthermore, as a result of the agreement the operational difficulties of delivering waste to Thornley would be alleviated.

financial implications

8. It is estimated that the net cost to Wear Valley District Council of the proposed arrangements will be approximately £4,000. In return this Council will be credited with its portion of material recycled at the Thornley digester plant. Given the importance of meeting national recycling targets – and the probable costs of achieving 22½% by other means, Members are requested to approve the proposal, the net costs of which can be met from existing budgets.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the aforementioned proposed arrangements.

Officer responsible for the report
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Ext. 218

Author of the report
Brian Graham
Head of Service Contracts
Ext. 453

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
RECYCLING OF PLASTIC MATERIALS

purpose of the report

1. To provide for Members, information regarding the recycling of plastic materials and the preferred method of collection.

background

2. Members will be aware that the refuse/recycling service has for some time had a seven point strategy with regard to providing a modern, clean, safe method of collecting both refuse and recyclable materials. The seven point strategy is as follows:
 - (i) Implement the green box recycling scheme.
 - (ii) Return the refuse service to an in-house provision.
 - (iii) Re-configuring the refuse rounds to ensure maximum efficiency.
 - (iv) Implementation of a wheeled bin refuse collection service.
 - (v) Implementation of a pilot green waste collection service.
 - (vi) Possible expansion of green waste collection service.
 - (vii) Introduction of an alternate week collection – refuse/recycling service.
3. Members will be aware that the Community Services Department has achieved (i) to (v) above. However, the feasibility of recycling plastic materials remains a problematic issue. Reasons for plastic materials not previously been included in the green box recycling scheme are as follows:
 - (i) The cost of recycling plastic is significantly higher than for any other material. Additional transport costs of carrying such a light material and the additional sorting time (due to the numerous grades of plastic) made introducing a plastic recycling scheme prohibitive.
 - (ii) Plastic does not make up a large proportion of household waste. By weight, plastic only makes up 7% of our waste compared to 30% green waste.

- (iii) Limited plastic recycling facilities in the area mean that the environmental costs of recycling plastic must also be taken into account. Increased carbon dioxide emissions due to increased collection rounds mean that in our area the environmental costs outweigh the environmental benefits associated with plastic recycling. This statement is based on industry advice after studies into the environmental benefits/disadvantages of recycling plastics.
- (iv) In addition, due to the volume taken up on collection vehicles by plastic the existing small fleet of vehicles would not be suitable for the collection of plastics. Additional and/or larger vehicles would need to be purchased to collect plastics.
- (v) In County Durham only one local authority recycles plastic materials – Teesdale. As a result they are having problems with the levels of contamination experienced. Furthermore, they could only introduce the plastic element due to the small number of households they serve (11,000 compared to our 29,500).

possible solution

- 4. As stated above, the seventh point on the refuse/recycling strategy would be the introduction of an alternative week collection system. In this regard residents would be issued with a second wheeled bin (larger than their existing wheeled bin) and this would be utilised for the placement of the current five materials collected (paper, cardboard, glass, tins, textiles) to this would be added plastic materials. The current 180 litre wheeled bin will continue to be utilised for those wastes destined for landfill. By adopting this method of collection it will ensure that plastic materials are collected at minimal or no additional revenue cost whilst increasing the District's recycling rate.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the proposed collection method for the recycling of plastic materials and agree to receive a further report on the full implications of point (vii) of the strategy in due course.

<p>Officer responsible for the report Max Coleby Acting Director of Community Services Ext. 218</p>	<p>Author of the report Brian Graham Head of Service Contracts Ext. 453</p>
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
WEAR VALLEY SPORT ACTION ZONE 2005-2008

purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of funding towards the Wear Valley Sport Action Zone for 2005 to 2008, and to seek Members' approval to accept the funding and the associated terms and conditions of funding.

background

2. As Members will be aware, funding previously obtained through the Wear Valley Sport Action Zone Magnet Fund, together with match funding which included SRB, SRI and NRF, has enabled a comprehensive and successful programme of community-based physical activity initiatives over the period 2002 to 2005. These initiatives have included the employment of the Sport Action Zone Manager, four Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators and three Assistant Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators, together with contributions towards the Walking the Way to Health Initiative and Club Development Officer project.
3. The funding for this programme of activities was due to come to an end at various points within the last and current financial years, resulting in the potential termination of employment for ten members of staff and the cessation of these activities within the community.
4. Since the latter part of 2004, the Sport Action Zone Manager and officers of the District Council have worked with Sport England to develop proposals for the continuation of these initiatives. This has involved the development and submission of a new three year business plan for approval by Sport England to continue funding for these projects until March 2008.

sport england approval

5. The developed business plan sought the approval of £334,000 (in addition to £56,000 already approved) of Sport England funding, within a total package of funding of £777,140. This would enable the continued funding of the Sport Action Zone Manager, four Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators and two Assistants, the Walking for Health Co-ordinator and Club Development Officer, together with a small allocation for activity budgets for each post, until March 2008.

6. Indicative approval of this funding was provided by Sport England, and in view of this, the employment of the above posts continued beyond March 2005 and into this financial year.
7. An offer letter has now been received from Sport England, agreeing to award the District Council a grant of £48,480 for 2005/2006, with “in principle” funding of £285,520 for the remaining two years, subject to compliance with the agreed terms and conditions of the award.
8. The following terms and conditions have been applied to the grant:
 - A comprehensive business plan, sports development plan and operational plan must be completed and agreed by Sport England.
 - Work must be undertaken on the further development of the scheme.
 - Key performance indicators and baseline data must be agreed.
 - Further information must be submitted on how the project will actually increase sports participation.
 - Further information must be submitted on how the project will retain people in sport.
 - Additional evidence must be submitted on the demand for the sports activities to be operated by the project.
 - An explanation must be provided of how any deficit in funding would be managed should one occur.
9. Acceptance of the offer of funding must be made by 22nd February 2006.

financial implications

10. At present the District Council is bearing the cost of the employment of the Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators and Assistants. If the Sport England funding is not accepted, an alternative means of funding these posts for this financial year will need to be sought or the employment of the posts in question will have to be discontinued.
11. All other match funding towards the business plan is now in place, with the exception of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, which will be applied for from the new NRF programme commencing in 2006.

legal implications

12. There are no legal implications to be considered, other than those of entering into the funding agreement with Sport England and thereby agreeing to fulfil the terms and conditions applied.

human resources implications

13. At present, the employment contracts of the Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators and Walking for Health Co-ordinator will terminate at the end of March 2006 and the contracts of the Assistant Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators, Sport Action Zone Manager and Club Development Officer have now terminated in December 2005.

conclusion

14. It is requested that Members give their approval to accepting the terms and conditions of the award of Sport England funding in order that financial security can be provided for the recovery of committed Council funds, and that employment security can be provided to those staff involved.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the terms and conditions of the Sport England funding and approve the acceptance of these conditions in order that the funding can be drawn down.

Officer responsible for the report
Max Coleby
Acting Director of Community Services
Ext. 218

Author of the report
Louise Allenby
Finance and Administration Officer
Ext. 213

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services **WELLNESS ON WHEELS LEGACY FUNDING**

purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of the award of legacy funding towards the Wellness on Wheels project until 2008, and to seek Members' approval to accept the funding and the associated terms and conditions of funding.

background

2. Members will be aware of the Wellness on Wheels project, which has involved the successful provision of a mobile fitness unit to be placed at various locations throughout the District, in order to encourage and facilitate community participation in physical activity.
3. The majority of the funding which enabled the project was secured via the Active England programme of New Opportunities Funding via Sport England. £641,000 of Active England funding was secured to enable the purchase and build of the mobile unit, and subsequent associated revenue costs.
4. Notification was received from Sport England that an underspend of approximately £200,000 had occurred within the Active England programme, and certain approved projects were approached and invited to submit applications to access this additional funding. The Wellness on Wheels project was approached and subsequently submitted an application for this "legacy" funding.

wellness on wheels legacy funding approval

5. The submitted bid sought funding towards the installation of fitness equipment at suitable fixed locations within the mid and upper dale (the "hard to reach" locations) that the mobile fitness unit would be visiting. This equipment would initially be maintained and managed by the District Council, but funding was also sought for the establishment, training and development of local community groups with a view to eventually passing responsibility for the equipment over to them. This would be a phased process over the three years of the project and advisory support from the District Council would continue throughout and beyond this process.

6. An offer letter has now been received from Sport England, agreeing to award the District Council a grant of £132,125 towards the Wellness on Wheels legacy project, subject to compliance with the agreed terms and conditions of the award. This award comprises £60,000 towards capital expenditure and £72,125 towards revenue costs.
7. The following terms and conditions have been applied to the grant:
 - Satisfactory annual audited certificates of income and expenditure must be submitted.
 - The satisfactory delivery against agreed outputs and outcomes must be agreed.
 - Work must be undertaken following the award on the further development of the scheme.
 - The sustainability of project activities through the three-year period and sports development after the initial revenue funding has ceased must be demonstrated.
 - The final development plan must be agreed prior to the release of any funding.
 - The sites of the WOW legacy project must be agreed with Sport England following submission of evidence of community consultation, community agreement to undertake management of the site and analysis of impact on similar facilities nearby.
 - The first four sites must be operational by 31st March 2006.
 - Sport England must approve the wording within the legal agreement to be adopted by the community groups.

financial implications

8. There will be no additional cost to the District Council.

conclusion

9. The additional legacy funding awarded to the Wellness on Wheels project will provide the means to continue the work within the communities that are visited by the Wellness on Wheels vehicle. In this way, continued community participation in healthy activity can be encouraged and facilitated even after the re-location of the mobile unit to another site.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the terms and conditions of the Wellness on Wheels legacy funding and approve the acceptance of these conditions in order that the funding can be drawn down.

Officer responsible for the report
 Max Coleby
 Acting Director of Community Services
 Ext. 218

Author of the report
 Louise Allenby
 Finance and Administration Officer
 Ext. 213

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services **PLAY PROVISION**

purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of new funding available for play provision and to seek authority to pursue a funding application to develop children's play within Wear Valley.

background

2. Members will recall a number of reports which have been passed by this Committee over recent years on children's play areas, where decisions have been taken to place a limit on the number of children's play areas the Council can afford to safely maintain.
3. In November 2005 the Big Lottery Fund announced details of a £155 million Children's Play Initiative to be launched in March 2006. Within this initiative each Council has been allocated a nominal amount which it can bid for. These allocations have been based on the numbers of children and young people within a local authority area and weighted by the levels of poverty in each district.
4. Wear Valley can bid for up to £200,000 of this Big Lottery money. The purpose of the allocations is to bring real improvements to communities and to the lives of those most in need. Four outcomes have been identified:
 - a. People having better chances in life
 - b. Stronger communities with more active citizens
 - c. Improved rural and urban environment
 - d. Healthier and more active communities
5. If this District Council wishes to access this funding it must be able to demonstrate that it can work towards these outcomes. The District Council's role would necessarily be as lead working with a number of partners/stakeholders in children's play.
6. The District Council will necessarily need to produce a valid and robust play strategy as part of its application, which develops a portfolio of projects that focus on the greatest need. Applications for funding can be up to three years against the overall allocation.

financial implications

7. Wear Valley has the opportunity to utilise this funding stream and, together with a proportion of commuted sums available within parts of the district, to focus on real development.
8. The allocation does not provide any increased revenue budget with which to maintain fixed children's play areas therefore it would not be envisaged that additional children's play areas would be installed, rather that this may lead to the enhancement, replacement/refurbishment of play spaces and looking at play provision in the broader sense.

human resource implications

9. Prior to this Committee, officers have been request to provide the Big Lottery Fund with an indicative date in which it would be likely to apply. Officers have indicated that this would likely be November 2006. A strategy would need to be written and at this stage it is not envisaged that extra capacity can be procured from elsewhere, therefore it will need to be planned as part of officers' workload over the forthcoming year.

RECOMMENDED that officers take a lead role in the production of a play strategy to develop children's play within Wear Valley and pursue an application of funding to the Big Lottery Fund.

Officer responsible for the report
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Ext. 218

Author of the report
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
EVERYDAY SWIMMING

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members' approval to work with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) around increasing participation in swimming pools.

background

2. The national picture of swimming is that it is in decline. Many reasons have been stated for this including a crumbling stock of swimming pools, the increase in other types of recreation provision, e.g., gyms/leisure clubs and sports halls, the competition from other leisure centres and a more sedentary population. The ASA (and officers of Wear Valley District Council) are concerned at this and have sought to redress the trend.
3. The ASA has been successful in obtaining funding from Sport England and the Big Lottery nationally to be used within the nine English regions of Sport England with the objective of increasing participation in swimming. No specific figures have been confirmed regarding the size of the funding – but it is anticipated to be substantial.
4. Earlier this year Wear Valley District Council was invited to forward statistical information on attendances to demonstrate the drop off in participation. These figures were put forward as part of the bid's operating plans. Attendances at Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex for the swimming pool for example, have declined as follows:

2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
91,289	82,597	78,248

5. The national trend of reduced use of swimming pools as referred to above has been exacerbated by reductions in opening hours of Wear Valley District Council's swimming pools as part of cost reduction efforts over the years which has led to reduced availability of pool time.
6. This pilot will enable further work with Durham Dales PCT for schemes such as exercise referral, weight management and smoking cessation and linking in with the Working for Health initiative.

financial implications

7. Financial implications will need to be considered at a later stage. However, this should be seen as external funding to deliver positive outcomes including health and income generation.

human resource implications

8. This project will be delivered within the current structures of the department. When the scheme is developed, some of the anticipated external funding may be allocated to the employment of a development worker for the duration of the project.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that officers are given authority to work with the Amateur Swimming Association on this pilot scheme which seeks to increase the use of swimming pools.
- (ii) that further reports be submitted to Members in respect of the utilisation of the external funding if obtained.

Officer responsible for the report
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Ext. 218

Author of the report
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
ALTERNATIVE INSPECTION STRATEGY FOR FOOD PREMISES

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members' approval to adopt an alternative inspection strategy for food premises.

background

2. From 1st January 2006 new legislation came into force which requires food businesses to adopt greater controls for food safety. At the Community Services Committee of 21st September 2005 Members agreed in principle to adopting an alternative inspection programme for low risk premises to reflect these changes and the relevant Codes of Practice from the Food Standards Agency, subject to a further report on more detailed proposals.

proposal

3. It is proposed that low risk premises categories D and E as defined by the Food Standard Agency Code of Practice will not be subject to routine inspections by Environmental Health Officers. The alternative strategy for these premises will be as follows:
 - (i) All premises will be sent a self assessment questionnaire to determine their current level of compliance and ability to adopt the new requirements.
 - (ii) The questionnaire will be assessed and those premises which appear unlikely to comply will be inspected by a suitable officer.
 - (iii) A random selection of premises which appear likely to comply will be inspected by a suitable officer to verify the accuracy of their answers.
 - (iv) Continuing use of this system to be reassessed in the light of the standards that are found upon inspection.
4. Adopting this strategy will allow officers to concentrate on their efforts on ensuring that those premises which pose the greatest risk to health understand and comply with the necessary standards.

5. As the new legislation requires food businesses to adopt new practices and procedures, including additional training, it is also proposed to provide advice and assistance on how to achieve the required standard. This will be by the use of workshops, one to one discussions with owners and food hygiene training to all staff appropriate to their duties.
6. Members will recall the delay in recruiting a suitable Environmental Health Officer led to the use of an outside consultant. A suitable officer has been recruited and started work on 3rd January 2006. However, the officer will only be working a 26 hour week.
7. The consultant currently employed has made a valuable contribution to the team and food safety enforcement. Before working for us his role was providing advice and training to food businesses. It is therefore proposed that his services be retained during the financial year 2006/07 utilising the balance of the salary cost arising from the Environmental Health Officer working part time. His expertise, together with that of existing staff, will be used to provide the necessary advice and training to existing businesses on the requirements of the new legislation and appropriate methods of compliance.
8. If approved by Members these proposals will be reflected in the Service Plan for 2006/07.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that Members approve the alternative inspection strategy for category D and E food premises.
- (ii) that Members approve the employment of a Food Consultant within the existing salary costs.
- (iii) that Members approve the provision of advice and training to food businesses.

Officer responsible for the report
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 Ext. 218

Author of the report
 Tom Carver
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 Ext. 377

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members' approval to adopt an alternative enforcement strategy for those premises where the Council has responsibility for enforcing health and safety legislation.

background

2. Members are aware of changes in emphasis in relation to food safety enforcement. The Health and Safety Commission has adopted a similar approach to health and safety enforcement.
3. Local Authority Guidance note LAC67(i) has introduced a new priority rating system which has downgraded many premises in terms of the perceived risk to safety and health. It has encouraged Councils to concentrate efforts in three ways:
 - Carry out full inspections only in the higher risk premises where there is a perceived risk to health.
 - Carry out topic based inspections in the majority of premises, i.e., look in detail at areas where statistics demonstrate a greater incidence of injury or ill health. Current topics include slips, trips and falls and traffic management. Next year's topics are falls from a height and back injuries.
 - Carry out project working in a particular sector, currently care homes. The Health and Safety Executive will provide national publicity to raise awareness prior to inspections taking place. They will also carry out seminars/roadshows, etc., for those involved in the sector. The Health and Safety Executive expects local authorities to participate in these events.
4. It is hoped that such targeted intervention will make a significant impact on the health, safety and welfare of many workers and targets are likely to be set to demonstrate reductions in numbers of accidents, days lost through work related accidents or ill health, and work related deaths. The Health and Safety Commission has asked local authorities to sign up to a partnership agreement committing them to these principles. In particular, we are asked to commit a minimum of 30% full time equivalent staff time to partnership projects. We currently employ one full time health and safety enforcement officer and, therefore, our commitment would be approximately 60 days to these projects.

5. In order to further increase the impact of such partnerships the Heads of Public Protection at all the county districts have agreed that a co-ordinated approach by all authorities would be appropriate. To this end the districts will work together through the Durham Districts Health and Safety Liaison Group which will also act as the link with the Health and Safety Executive. In addition to working together on projects it will also ensure that all businesses are treated in the same way wherever they are located within the county.

human resource implications

6. The Council is currently undertaking health and safety enforcement. Signing up to the partnership does not increase our commitment but rather focuses on those areas at greatest risk.

financial implications

7. The Health and Safety Commission will provide the funding for national publicity including materials for local authority use. They will also provide the funding for any events/roadshows/seminars, etc. There are, therefore, no additional costs to the Council.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that Members agree to carrying out health and safety enforcement in accordance with LAC 67(i)
- (ii) that Members agree to sign up to a partnership agreement with the Health and Safety Executive and other Durham districts.
- (iii) that Members agree to the Durham District Health and Safety Liaison Group co-ordinating the efforts of Wear Valley and other Durham districts.

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Ext. 218

Author of the report
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services

INTRODUCTION OF NO SMOKING ARRANGEMENTS AT BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN HALL

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members' support for the introduction of a no smoking policy within all areas of Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

background

2. Members are aware that Bishop Auckland Town Hall is owned by this authority but operated (managed) by Durham County Council on the basis of a long term lease of which more than 80 years remain. The revenue costs of managing the building are shared equally between Wear Valley District Council and Durham County Council with the exception of the library service costs which are borne by Durham County Council.
3. As part of its managerial responsibilities Durham County Council, advised by the staff who manage the building, wish to introduce a no smoking policy to all parts of the building. A trial period was introduced with effect from 1st January 2006 and will be assessed in due course.

human resource implications

4. The restriction will apply to all staff employed by Durham County Council at Bishop Auckland Town Hall and to staff of Wear Valley District Council who regularly work within the premises.

conclusion

5. Wear Valley District Council has a no smoking policy within the buildings for which it is responsible. This proposal would meet the aspirations of Durham County Council in this regard.

RECOMMENDED that Members support the introduction by Durham County Council of a no smoking policy at Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

Officer responsible for the report
Max Coleby
Acting Director of Community Services
Ext. 218

Author of the report
Max Coleby
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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services
SELF MANAGEMENT OF ALLOTMENTS

purpose of the report

1. To seek approval to enter into a long term lease with Foundry Fields Allotment Association in order for them to self manage Foundry Fields Allotments and for subsequent allotment associations to use the same lease agreement.

background

2. Members will recall that requests for self management of both Foundry Fields and Victoria and Rosedale Allotments were brought to this Committee on 1st June 2005. Officers were subsequently instructed to enter into negotiations with the allotment associations to reach agreement on self management. In order for an association to self manage the Council needs to be sure that the organisation has the capacity, legal structure (i.e., the association is properly constituted and members of the National Association of Allotment Gardeners), and financially capable of self management.
3. On 6th November 2005 Foundry Fields Allotment Association Committee passed a resolution to self manage the site. In order to take on the additional liabilities, minimum insurance cover of £5m was required. The agreement attached at Annex 2 sets out leasing arrangements and responsibilities of the allotment association and tenants obligations.

financial implications

4. With a lease of seven years or less there is no requirement to refer to the District Valuer as alluded to in previous reports. The agreement will be at a peppercorn rent of £1.00 per annum. Income received last year from Foundry Fields Allotments totalled £757, naturally this will be foregone in future years along with maintenance liabilities for paths and fencing and water rates.

legal implications

5. The allotments will be let for a seven year period which will hand control to the association. If the association is no longer able to manage the site the allotment site would necessarily come back to the District Council as the allotment authority as set out in the agreement.

conclusion

6. Officers have been working with Committee members from Foundry Fields Allotment Association and have negotiated an agreement for self management as attached. Rosedale and Victoria Allotment Association will follow shortly and wish to also commence on 1st April 2006.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that Members approve the use of the specimen agreement attached at Annex 2 to transfer management responsibility to Foundry Fields Allotment Association to commence on 1st April 2006 for seven years.
- (ii) that the specimen agreement, detailed at Annex 2 be approved for use for future similar applications from allotment associations and that the Acting Director of Community Services be granted delegated authority to approve such.

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COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

25TH JANUARY 2006

Report of the Acting Director of Community Services

DURHAM SPORT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND CO-OPERATION

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members' approval in principle to confirming Wear Valley District Council's continued commitment to the Durham Sport Partnership.

background

2. Durham Sport is a partnership between Chester-le-Street District Council, Derwentside District Council, Durham City Council, Durham County Council, the District of Easington, Sedgefield Borough Council, Teesdale District Council, Wear Valley District Council, Durham University, Governing Bodies of Sport, Sports Coach UK, The Youth Sport Trust, English Federation for Disability Sport and Sport England. Its purpose is, on a partnership basis, to raise the profile of sport and physical activity within County Durham and deliver a co-ordinated strategic approach to developing sport and physical activity in the county.
3. Wear Valley District Council, as a result of the efforts of the former Director of Community Services working specifically with his colleagues at Durham City Council and Durham University, was instrumental in establishing the partnership and Wear Valley has always been a strong supporter of and contributor to the objectives of the Durham Sport Partnership. Durham Sport was the first County Sports Partnership to be set up in response to a Sport England initiative in the mid 1990s. For example, the now Acting Director of Community Services and the Events and Activities Officer were principal organisers of the Durham Sport Youth Games in its early years. Also, Wear Valley District Council strongly supported the creation and adoption of a county-wide Child Protection Policy by Durham Sport and contributed to its drafting.
4. The activities of Durham Sport are financed principally by Sport England which on an England-wide basis has set up similar County Sports Partnerships throughout the country. For example, within the north there are:
 - Durham Sport
 - Teesside Sport
 - Tyne & Wear Sport
 - Northumberland Sport
 - Cumbria Sport

5. Each of the partners to Durham Sport make more modest contributions to the running costs of Durham Sport. For example, the District Councils in County Durham contribute £4,000 to Durham Sport, with the exception of Teesdale which contributes a slightly smaller amount.
6. The main benefit of the partnership is that joint working leads to a pooling of resources in many areas of activity thereby contributing to:
 - (i) **Development of agreed standards of good practice.** The previously mentioned county-wide Child Protection Policy means that any coach employed by any of the partners or Durham Sport will deal with any child protection issues in exactly the same manner whether they are working in Wear Valley, Easington, Chester-le-Street, etc.
 - (ii) **Costs of delivering certain services can be reduced.** For example, rather than Wear Valley employing a specialist to deliver a coach education course to (say) six potential coaches, and other districts doing the same in their areas – Durham Sport can employ the specialist to deliver the course to a larger county-wide group of potential coaches. Again, this also has the benefits of a standardised approach to the issues in question.

proposed memorandum of understanding and co-operation

7. The initial (current) agreement with Durham Sport was signed by us in 1998. There is a need to update the agreement after almost ten years in the light of changes to the roles of Sport England, local authorities, governing bodies and Durham Sport itself.
8. The attached draft Memorandum of Agreement will, when agreed, require approval by Wear Valley District Council and our continued membership of the partnership will require signature where indicated by a member of Wear Valley District Council. In general terms, Members are recommended to agree in principle to re-committing to membership of the Durham Sport Partnership but, before doing so, Members are asked to note particularly the provision of paragraphs 5.3, 5.4.1, 9.4 and 9.5 of the attached draft.
9. At some point in the near future all partners will be requested to sign a final version of the document. However, officers of Wear Valley District Council have indicated to Durham Sport that they wish to allow the relevant Committee of this Council to peruse the draft document as it stands as part of the process of Wear Valley District Council contributing to the final draft.
10. The views of the Council's Legal Section have been sought regarding paragraphs 5.3, 5.4.1, 9.4 and 9.5. This consultation confirmed the views of the officers of the Community Services Department which are that the provision of paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4.1 particularly are too "open ended" and have the potential to leave Wear Valley District Council, as a funding partner, open to requests for (potentially) significant additional financial contributions.

11. Members' views are therefore requested in respect of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Co-operation in its entirety and paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4.1 particularly.

conclusion

12. Officers are seeking Members' approval in principle to confirming Wear Valley District Council's commitment to the Durham Sport Partnership and its objectives – but that officers should be tasked with consulting further with the partnership regarding the paragraphs in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Co-operation referred to in this report before Members sign on behalf of Wear Valley District Council.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve in principle, continued membership of the Durham Sport Partnership but that the provisions of paragraphs 5.3, 5.4.1, 9.4 and 9.5 of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and Co-operation be the subject of further consultation and clarification before Members sign the Memorandum on behalf of Wear Valley District Council.

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