
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

COUNCIL

CUSTOMER SERVICES

18 April 2019

LIVE ARGYLL - LEISURE AND LIBRARIES TRUST – MONITORING AND REPORTING

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with an update on the operating arrangements between Live Argyll (LA) and the Council as set out in the various agreements between the Council and the Trust.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1.2 Members note the contents of the report.

LIVE ARGYLL - LEISURE AND LIBRARIES TRUST – MONITORING AND REPORTING

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Council with an update on the operating arrangements between Live Argyll (LA) and the Council as set out in the various agreements between the Council and the Trust.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

3.1 Members note the contents of the report.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Council approved the implementation of the Leisure and Libraries Trust (LA) on 24 November 2016, following a recommendation by the Community Services Committee of 21 November 2016.

4.2 LA was constituted on 29 September 2017 and the Council entered into a Transfer Agreement, Service Agreement, Support Services Agreement and Facility Licence.

SERVICES AGREEMENT

BUSINESS PLAN

4.3 The Council in constituting LA was mindful of the code of guidance on funding external bodies and following the public pound. In exercising its business plan and delivering the services LA continues to adhere to those principles. The overarching business plan based on the financial operating model and services specification was previously agreed by the Council and covers the period from 29 September 2017 -29 September 2021. The Plan refers to 3 main themes set out below each of which is currently reporting a positive trend specifically:

- **Growth:** forecast revenues are anticipated to be positive with a projected increase on previous revenue estimates. This will be looked at in liaison with Strategic Finance to assess the outcome at year end;

- **Participation Levels:** these continue to show strong growth with increases within Leisure and Library Services and an overall composite increase of 23% year on year (April to January 17/18 v 18/19); and
- **Quality:** emphasis has been placed by LA on the quality of services, with a range of measures implemented to ensure a consistent quality of offering including – net promoter score, mystery shoppers and internal audit.

4.4 Additionally, LA has implemented what they term “Sector Plans” which support the over-arching Business Plan and set out proposals and priorities for change against which LA record action and progress. It is understood that good progress is being made and the plans are on track to deliver or contribute to their proposed outcomes. Examples of current work streams include but are not limited to:

Leisure

- **Pricing Review:** analysis and benchmarking over the period has identified significant scope to grow market share through affordable pricing of services and membership and a new pricing policy will be in place from 1 April 2019;
- **Opening Hours Review:** a review of opening hours resulted in a number of changes in line with customer expectations at zero additional cost; and
- **Facility Performance Targets:** individual facilities have been set a range of targets on membership, admission fees, sales, customer satisfaction, rates, quality ratings, cost per hour and staff absences.

Libraries

- **Self Service:** introduction of self-scanning for issues and returns to be trialled at Dunoon Library;
- **Library Development:** a programme of activities is in place to enhance the library experience for users including author visits, Books on Prescription and a home library service to be trialled in Dunoon; and
- **Improved School Liaison:** senior library staff are liaising with local schools to promote reading and the benefits of the library to young people.

THE SERVICES / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

4.5 LA is responsible for delivering all leisure and library services across Argyll and Bute. The Services Agreement includes a Services Specification which sets out the specific services LA have committed to deliver and they are required to ensure that they adhere to those commitments.

4.6 In order to establish if and to what extent they have complied in the provision of the services, the Services Agreement requires LA to provide operational performance information to the Council on a quarterly basis.

4.7 The performance information shows a positive overall position with the Trust fulfilling its service obligations and no areas of delivery showing any significant concern.

4.8 Leisure facilities usage is showing an overall 20% year on year increase equivalent to approximately 25,000 individual visits. Contained within these figures are some particularly strong areas of performance including:

- Gym usage up 38% or 10,500 individual visits;
- Fitness classes up 27% or 5526 individual visits;
- Swimming lesson enrolment up 47% or 486 individual visits; and
- Health Suite usage up 75% or 6800 individual visits.

Additionally, Active School and Sports Hubs continue to perform well.

4.9 Library performance continues to remain steady with the number of visits figures showing a slight growth which reflects well against the declining national position generally.

4.10 Overall Letting figures remain stable and in line with budget projection and there are plans in place to encourage further use.

4.11 It should be noted that LA have agreed to an additional service outwith their original service commitments and have agreed to be responsible for the custody and management of the Anderson and Museum and Library art collections and to curate and maintain an up to date inventory of both in addition to adding new items that are relevant. This has now been agreed and formalised as a variation to the services specification.

Deviations

4.12 While LA have fulfilled their service delivery obligations, there are a limited number of deviations, specifically:

Planned Deviation

- **Rothesay Leisure Centre:** work on the centre roof is now due to commence on or around April 2019 and expected to last for approximately 12 weeks during which the centre shall be closed to the public. Where possible, alternative arrangements have been made.

Unplanned Deviations

- **Islay Mobile Library:** vehicle continues to require maintenance and is nearing the end of its life cycle. Alternative delivery models are being explored including use of community hubs. Any alternative proposals will be discussed with the Council prior to implementation; and
- **Campbeltown Museum:** the museum has been operating restricted opening hours due to public access issues. Works are scheduled to take place to create a dedicated entrance and a museum curator has been

appointed on a part time basis. The Council has benefited from LA's provision of the sum of £50k in respect of the works granted to them by Museums and Galleries Scotland (MGS). This is a clear example of LA's operation bringing a capital benefit to the Council's properties.

SportScotland

- 4.13 The Council and LA have been in discussions with SportScotland in order to facilitate the renewal of the partnership agreement currently extant in regard to active schools and sports hubs. SportScotland have offered another 4 year partnership which will provide a strong platform for long term planning. It should be noted that a number of authorities have received 1 year funding offers and the 4 year offer reflects LA's strong program, past and current performance.

SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT

- 4.14 There is a Support Services Agreement in place between LA and the Council in respect of central support services delivered by the Council to LA. The support services have been reviewed by the Council and LA, and LA has advised that from their perspective arrangements continue to operate satisfactorily with effective working partnerships in place and being developed.
- 4.15 A number of minor revisions to the Strategic Finance and HR and OD specifications may require to be made to reflect actual working practice and promote efficiency. These will be discussed and agreed prior to any formal change request being made. It is not anticipated that there will be any financial implications arising from any revisions.

FINANCIAL POSITION

- 4.16 LA receives the grant funding from the Council over the course of the year in monthly tranches and all payments are up to date. LA has advised on its net cash position and it is expected that they will report a positive end of year position. This will be reviewed by Special Projects and Strategic Finance at the relevant time to confirm the final outturn.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.17 In addition to the monitoring and reporting requirements above LA advise that there are a number of additional developments coming forward in 2019 across all service areas including but not limited to:
- Working with Argyll College and Citizens advice in respect of them utilising library venues;
 - Looking at potential outreach options for strands of service activity making them more accessible;
 - Launching a revised pricing strategy as detailed above;
 - A continuing events programme in the Argyll and Bute Area; and

- A revised website including online booking and payment options.

4.18 LA will also continue to focus on their Maximising Charitable Status strategy. This work stream will look at a number of areas including donations, legacy funding, grants and sponsorship as well as inclusion, accessibility, literacy, social interaction and mental health initiatives.

FUTURE SCRUTINY

4.19 A regular update on the operating arrangements between Live Argyll (LA) and the Council as set out in the various agreements between the parties will be provided to the Community Services Committee with annual reporting to Council.

CONCLUSION

5.1 The current arrangements between the Council and LA are working well with no areas of service which are of particular concern. The specific reporting and monitoring requirements required by the various agreements in relation to the Trust generally demonstrate a positive position in relation to the delivery of the services and support services.

5.2. It is recommended that:

Members note the contents of the report.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The implications of the proposal are outlined in the table below.

Table 6.1: Implications	
Policy	In line with Council policy in relation to Leisure and Libraries Trust
Financial	None
Legal	In line with relevant contractual agreements between Council and Live Argyll
HR	None at present
Fairer Scotland Duty	None at present
Equalities	None at present
Socio Economic Duty	None at present
Islands	None at present
Risk	None
Customer Service	None

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