

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE

Key challenges expected in 2010/11

Portfolio Summary

The delivery of budget reductions will be a difficult and challenging process; this will be the key issue for 2010/11 and into 2011/12, particularly following the outcome of the government's comprehensive spend review due in October. This will be the item of focus in all areas of the portfolio, to deal with budget pressures in year, and deliver required savings in the following year.

1. Leisure / re:refresh reviews

- Reviews across both leisure services and re:refresh will be a key organisational delivery priority for CLS. The process will offer opportunities to show the contribution that leisure makes to the borough's key priorities, especially health and well being and will also identify future delivery options.

2. Difficult trading conditions for Entertainment & Catering facilities

- The national downturn in trade, particularly in bars, affected the trading surplus last year and is continuing into this year. Although significant action has been taken on reducing expenditure, this cannot compensate for a lack of business and a very quiet night time economy.
- Blakey's day time trade is doing better this year with a variety of promotions, although the facility is now in need of refurbishment. King George's Hall (KGH) lost 5 managers via early retirement at the start of 2010/11 and staff have worked well through the changes.
- Autumn and winter are the busiest times for the events programme at KGH. The programme is running currently at about 90% compared to last year, with several months still to go. The downturn in trade is expected to continue being a challenging issue for King Georges Hall.

3. Library Review

- The review is underway and will report back later in the year. The review is set against a background of decreasing resources and changing technology. The Library service has over 872,000 visits a year, over 600,000 virtual online contacts and issues over 785,000 books and other resources a year. The existing service is being assessed, but this is also an opportunity to look to the future Library and Information service:- what sort of service offer will local people need in the future and longer term? How best can this future service be delivered and what changes need to be made to get to that future Library and Information Service? Users, non-users and stakeholders are being consulted, to help define and test what the future service will offer.

4. Maintaining and delivering services for Young People

- The Young People's Service will continue to manage commissioning budget reductions, including the in-year reduction of the Area Based Grant (ABG). This will impact further on the continued provision of activities for young people.
- The Young People's Service is undergoing a fundamental review to respond to these budget challenges with a continued focus on front line services.

- Budget reductions will impact on holiday provision and on our ability to provide a good range of positive activities at a local level.
- Children and young people were still provided with an extensive summer holiday programme across the borough despite a reduced budget and this will continue to be the focus of the service
- The service is actively developing volunteer supported provision, aligned with the needs of children and young people, to improve service capacity and value for money.

5. Continuing challenges for Community Centre provision

- Following a review of service challenges and budget pressures, the Council were due to withdraw support from four community centres by October 2010 and further centres by March 2011.
- Following concern from the Executive Member about proposed timescales and the viability of the options presented there will now be a period of further consultation as well as discussion with those who have submitted expressions of interest.
- The savings expected from these proposals will not be realised in this financial year and therefore will place a pressure on the service and portfolio budgets.

Overview of activity: July-Sept 2010

- Royal visit by HRH Princess Anne to Darwen Leisure Centre (DLC) on 5th July 2010
- Expanding programme at DLC, with more on offer for juniors, increased healthy lifestyle classes and clinical sessions in partnership with NHS, increased usage of all areas of the centre and birthday party offer proving popular.
- re:refresh continues to improve the health of local people. Approximately 80% of all casual swimmers attend during re:refresh sessions. Sport England's national survey has shown that 22.9% of adults in Blackburn with Darwen are now participating in 90 minutes of activity on a weekly basis, up from 16.3%, moving Blackburn with Darwen from 3rd worst in the country to now achieving the national average.
- Health trainers have supported the 'free health check' in the community pilots, providing the opportunity to offer support to individuals around behaviour change before the client becomes 'at risk' of disease.
- The Children's (0-15 years) Public Libraries User Survey will take place in September. This will be used as part of national benchmarking for library services and for service development.
- Since re:refresh began in 2008 the number of beeZ cards has more than doubled and we now have over 113,000 beeZ card holders. By 2009-10 there were 28,000 active adult beeZ card holders, four and a half times the level in 2007-08.
- Increased member numbers at leisure centres with improved, co-ordinated promotion campaigns