

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 16 JULY 2019

SUBJECT OF REPORT: WINTER GARDENS COMMUNITY BOARD UPDATE

TOWN OR PARISH: WESTON TOWN COUNCIL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: TANSIN BENN, CHAIRPERSON OF WINTER GARDENS COMMUNITY BOARD

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the panel considers and notes the achievements of the Community Board working with Weston College to enable and oversee the continued community usage of the Winter Gardens since the asset transfer from North Somerset Council to the College.
2. That the panel considers the recommendations detailed within the Community Board annual report published in the autumn of 2018 (appendix 1) and provides feedback as appropriate.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This covering report seeks to update elected members on the development of the Community Board which was established as a result of specific clauses in the Legal Transfer Agreement when the Winter Gardens was transferred by North Somerset Council to Weston College in early 2016.

1.2 The first annual report of the board was agreed in September 2018 and is attached for members consideration as appendix 1. The report will be presented to panel by Tansin Benn, a community representative and Chairperson of the Community Board.

2. POLICY

2.1 The existing Councils Corporate Plan 2016 – 2019 has several ambitions that apply to the transfer of the asset and the development and regeneration of the Winter Gardens. These are namely to:

- Ensure that all our Town Centres are thriving – deliver Weston town centre regeneration programme and enable young people to fulfil their potential with a university centre for North Somerset including a law and professional services academy at the Winter Gardens.
- Empower people to contribute to their community and communities to provide their own solutions

3. DETAILS

3.1 The Winter Gardens Pavilion was closed from December 2014 to autumn 2017 to facilitate the transfer from the Council to the College and enable the extensive pavilion refurbishment and the creation of Law and Professional Services Academy to be undertaken.

3.2 Additional Investment was gained from the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership to support the College to undertake the work. The transformation which brought this iconic seafront building back into full usage while expanding the scope of the property to benefit the town and its people for years to come was unveiled in September 2017.

3.3 As part of the legal transfer of the facility from the Council, the College was required to ensure that community access to the pavilion and the venue was secured. A Community Board which brings together elected members, community representatives, council and college officers was established to oversee this commitment.

3.4 The board has been meeting on a regular basis since the transfer to fulfil its obligation to “oversee and assist with the effective use of the property for community purposes”.

3.5 Between September 2017 and December 2018 at least 110 events were hosted – 32 College, 41 private and 37 open public events. Between September 2017 and May 2018 34,090 people attended events in the Pavilion, with the largest number – 17,890 for the open public events.

3.6 The first year’s annual report was produced in the autumn 2018 and considered by Weston College. An extract of that report was published in the Colleges own annual report for the same year. The board are also required to report to the Council on progress and outcomes and welcomes this opportunity to share the first year’s work programme and update on progress towards fulfilling the community access requirements set out by the Council.

3.7 There are challenges with balancing the need to secure the commercial viability of the building with enabling wide community access, but the board is confident that its work with the College and the events team is achieving this. A wide range of community events for all age groups are taking place, and the Pavilion has functioned successfully with significant public access, alongside College and private functions.

3.8 The Community Board looks forward to continuing to support the journey towards maximizing the full potential of this iconic space for all people to enjoy

3. CONSULTATION

The Community board brings together a range of stakeholders to oversee and improve community access to the Winter Gardens.

Consultation with voluntary and community groups about best practice methods to improve community access has been undertaken by board members.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

Costs

N/A

Funding

There are no funding implications for the Council.

The board is exploring best practice methods and funding options to ensure accessibility for a range of community groups to maximise use of the venue.

5. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

The board is required to balance commercial viability of the building with community access requirements

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No – the purpose of the board is to work with partners and community representatives to ensure equal opportunities to access the facilities.

8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

AUTHOR

Lorraine Bush
Policy and Partnerships Development Officer
Transformation and Policy Team
Corporate Services
North Somerset Council

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Winter Gardens Community Board Annual report 2018

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Decision of the Executive Member for Human Resources, Asset Management and Finance with advice from the Section 151 Officer of the Council

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/14-15-CSD-140.pdf>