

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

---

meeting date: TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024  
title: GENERAL REPORT  
submitted by: ADAM ALLEN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, WINSTON ROBINSON, ADAM ALLEN, COLIN WINTERBOTTOM

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update committee on a variety of developments across Community Services.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Helping to make people's lives healthier and safer
- To ensure a well-managed Council

## 2 CASTLE KEEP

The Photogrammetry survey has now been completed on the Castle Keep. This has enabled our heritage consultants to design temporary support structures which guarantee the structural integrity of the Keep and allow it to be re-opened to the public. There remains some fencing on one side of the Keep, but all other areas are open. This includes access to inside the Keep itself. The photogrammetry survey now allows the heritage experts to develop the longer term works for the castle and to establish estimated project costs.

## 3 EDISFORD BRIDGE – BATHING WATER SITE DESIGNATION

The area of the Ribble River near Edisford Bridge is set to be designated as a bathing water site which will improve the water quality at this very popular site. This will mean regular monitoring of water quality by the Environment Agency during bathing season which runs from 15<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> September. If water quality is seen to deteriorate, the Environment Agency will work with water companies, local businesses, and farmers to identify and correct issues. The designation is subject to a two-week consultation which closed on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

## 4. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

Although not within the remit of this committee, the UK Shared prosperity Fund is being used to improve many of the open spaces managed by Community Services. Quotations have now been received for a new pump track at Kester Lane in Longridge. This will be a high-quality local facility that can be used by beginners and more advance riders. Construction will take place this summer.

5. CASTLE MUSEUM

The current management contract for the museum with Lancashire County Council ends this month. LCC provided options for continuing the museum, either with reduced opening hours or at increased cost. At January Committee, members agreed to request that Policy and Finance consider providing an additional £88k annual funding to retain the existing opening hours. It was agreed at Policy and Finance to include a one-off amount of £88k in the budget to provide 12 months to review the museums operation and broader aspects of the Castle Grounds in totality.

6. LITTER ON THE HIGHWAY

A number of residents and Members have raised concerns regarding litter on the A59 and other rural roads. We do wish to remove the litter, but unfortunately these roads are often national speed limit roads which we cannot litter pick without suitable traffic management. We are working with the County Council who provide this function, however a plan to pick on Pendle Road was cancelled due to the County Council not having the resources to support us with the requisite traffic management. The County Council and ourselves have no statutory duty to remove this litter, however we will continue to pressure County Council to support us in this and do what we can in the meantime.

7. CAR PARKING PASS REMINDERS

Issues have been raised with officers regarding annual car park pass reminder letters which are no longer issued. Our general practice is to put a reminder on the windscreen the first time we come across an out-of-date pass. Following this we would issue fines if the pass is not renewed. It has been highlighted that in some cases the passes are not renewed, resulting in a loss of revenue. We are looking at two options to address this. The preferred option would be to establish recurring direct debits, so passes are renewed automatically. If this is not possible then email reminders will be sent in future.

8. PLATFORM GALLERY AND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Platform Gallery is open every week from Monday to Friday (10am to 5.00pm) and Saturday (10am to 4.30pm). Additionally, during December, the facility has also opened on Sundays in the run up to Christmas, as this is traditionally a busy period and customer sales have supported Sunday opening over previous years.

Sunday opening over the summer was first introduced in 2015, when it was available to the public between May and August. Normal operating procedures require two members of staff for this on a rota basis, with at least one being a permanent employee and having key holding responsibility. Monitoring of usage and income generation has been undertaken on a periodic basis.

The number of attendances and income generation on Sundays when opened over the summer period has been comparatively lower than the rest of the week. Income generation over the most recent period during 2023 was again low; - gross income generated over the 12 occasions the Gallery opened on Sundays between 10.00am to

4pm during 2023 was £1,553.77 and the net income to the Council with the artist share and VAT deducted was £711.49. Whilst expenditure on staffing on these Sundays was £2,053.23 (excluding oncosts such as employer's NICs and pension costs). The operational costs such as heating, lighting should also be considered.

There has been little change since introducing Sunday opening due to a minimal retail offer to attract people to the town centre. Whilst there are cafes and bars, very few shops are open in Clitheroe and there a very limited 'things to do' offer within the town itself.

However, there is an operational reason for opening on occasional Sundays when linked to Art and Craft Fairs which hire space in the Gallery (mix area), or there is a scheduled event such 'Art Walk', or if increased footfall over the weekend is anticipated. It is proposed to arrange a programme of activities including craft workshops, artist talks and family orientated craft activity in the Mix area to stimulate visits to the Gallery over the six weeks of the school holiday period during 2024.

The most recent exhibition, Perfect Perfection running from 22nd January to 13th April 2024, has been well attended and received very good feedback from those visiting. Encouraged by the positive reception of this themed exhibition; the feasibility of programming an appropriate touring show, which lends itself to the Gallery venue is being considered. This will be scheduled at the quietest time in terms of sales, which is the summer period between June-August.

## 9 RIBBLESDALE POOL

Th Council recently applied to Sport England for a share of the energy support fund. We received notification recently that our bid for a new main pool cover was successful, the award of £25k will enable a thicker and electrically assisted cover to be installed. This will contribute to the other energy saving measures which have been recently introduced at the pool. Those followed another Sport England grant award to carry out an energy study last year.

ADAM ALLEN  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

MARK BEVERIDGE  
HEAD OF SERVICE, CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

WINSTON ROBINSON  
HEAD OF SERVICE, ENGINEERING

COLIN WINTERBOTTOM  
CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES MANAGER