

Community Select Committee – Review of Sports and Leisure provision in Stevenage - Draft recommendations

Accessibility to sports & leisure opportunities linked to health benefits

1. Opportunities be offered on a subsidised basis - where residents could apply for a subsidy to take advantage of one of the services, for example sailing or the climbing wall.
2. The Healthy hub is recognised as an innovative strategy. There is an issue facing accessibility however. Patients referred to the hub for weight loss are required to pay for the service. As there is a strong connection between poor diet and poverty, the area needs to be considered. Members are aware of cases where residents have been referred to the hub for weight loss services but after attending an initial appointment and being made aware of the cost, have not returned. Officers in discussion with the Executive Portfolio Holder to consider the possibility of funding via a grant system (perhaps sponsored by local businesses – or social prescribing from public health funds).
3. The parking provision for the Aqua Park needs to be reviewed.
4. Aqua Park toilet/changing room provision needs to be improved.
5. Stevenage Golf Centre - That the offer to attract local women to play golf at Stevenage Golf Centre be looked at, including better changing facilities. In addition, offers to attract more young people also be considered.
6. Opportunities for apprenticeships could be extended further - as Saturday positions for young people for example at the sailing centre or swimming pool.

Marketing opportunities and use of the website

1. Officers should consider offering a plus one offer to encourage multiple uses of SLL sites
2. Links should be provided from the Council's website to local sporting clubs and activities in particular free events in order to promote various forms of physical activity and mental wellbeing.
3. The sailing centre operators to liaise with the SBC communications team regarding adding the cost of boat hire and courses on the SBC web site as well as video links with publicity material. In addition the Council should launch a campaign to raise the profile of activities at the Sailing Centre and to address the misconception that sailing was an elitist activity.
4. Marketing of the conference centre at the golf course amongst staff on the intranet should be pursued to make staff aware of the function rooms for

social occasions which could enhance the income that could be reinvested into the facilities and offer.

5. Advertising boards should be erected in prominent places around the Fairlands Valley Park and Sailing Centre
6. The cycle hub needs to provide clearer advertising of its services on the exterior of the building along with opening times.

Infrastructure improvements

1. At Fairlands Valley Park the high ropes could develop packages to attract family events by providing some facility for sitting down around the area to enjoy refreshments that could be included in the package in conjunction with the cafe.
2. There is a shortage of accessible 3G football pitches in Stevenage. Two potential sites at Chells Pavillion and at Ridlins Playing Fields were being considered as additional sites, the review supports the case for these sites to provide more community use of informal sports use including small sided football.
3. Following surveys and input from the Youth Council, young people have asked for more equipment/areas in parks for older children, as well as more activities in parks including local bands and youth clubs to go to with friends.
4. Basketball was promoted as an activity that is popular with young people and was accessible to many with only the need for a basketball once the infrastructure was in place. Officer to consider further sites in parks to provide these facilities and as well as funding via planning gain sources and parks maintenance, Members could be encouraged to work together using their LCBs funds for additional informal basketball hoops and hard standings around Stevenage.
5. If funding can be sourced, officers look at improving the tennis courts at King George V Playing Fields which are in a state of disrepair

Liaison between SBC and SLL

1. Cleaning and litter picking at Fairlands Valley Park including the lakes and the aqua splash park needs to improve as, at the time of the Member site visit, this was being cited as a problem “grey area” between SLL and SBC Environmental Services regarding who should do what and how often at peak times in the summer.
2. Officers discuss with the current Café operator at Fairlands Valley Park the introduction of some healthy food options on the menu to provide choice for those who would like to purchase a healthy option.

3. That SLL enhance their current booking systems to better capture demographics data to see where customers are coming from and how and where any future public health campaigns could target resources.