

Supplementary Agenda

Community Select Committee – 21 October 2020

Agenda item 5 – Sports & Leisure Scrutiny Review

Amended officer response to the review recommendations to replace paragraph 4 of the report at pages 23 to page 28 of the previously published agenda papers

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The aspirational recommendations below are within the context of 10 years of local government cuts and the consequential difficult financial position the Council finds itself in. This has recently been compounded by additional and significant financial pressures placed upon the Council by the pandemic which limits the Council's ability to action many of these recommendations at this time.

Original Recommendations	Officer Assessment of impact of Covid-19 on ability to deliver the recommendation
<u>Accessibility to sports & leisure opportunities linked to health benefits</u>	
4.1 Opportunities be offered on a subsidised basis – (i) Subsidised leisure activities could be linked to the Stevenage Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Co-ordinators where residents could apply for a subsidy to take advantage of one of the services (for example sailing or the climbing wall) and (ii) to consider the introduction of “cheap months” for certain activities to encourage those on limited means to take up leisure activities.	On hold due to Covid-19 and SLL’s critical financial position. The Sailing Centre is closed due to government restrictions and at this stage it is unclear when the facilities will re-open. The leisure management re-procurement process is due to commence in 2021 and integral part of this process will be a review of how services will be delivered from March 2023. The Sailing Centre is a specific area of focus as it does not fit naturally within the leisure contract environment.
4.2 Opportunities be offered on a subsidised basis – (i) Subsidised leisure activities could be linked to the Stevenage Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Co-ordinators where residents could apply for a subsidy to take advantage of one of the services (for example sailing or the climbing wall) and (ii) to consider the introduction of “cheap months” for certain activities to encourage those on limited means to take up leisure activities.	On hold due to Covid-19 and SLL’s critical financial position, plus the Sailing Centre is closed due to government restrictions and at this stage we do not know when it will be able to re-open or what services it will provide.
4.3 The Healthy hub is recognised as an innovative strategy. There is an issue	Due to the current restrictions in place and the vulnerability of customers the Healthy Hub is

<p>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).</p>	<p>closed at present. When it re-opens officers will discuss with SLL and the Portfolio Holder opportunities to tackle the affordability of support for those whose financial position presents a barrier to access facilities.</p>
<p>4.4 The parking provision for the Aqua Park needs to be reviewed and improved, owing to high demand in the summer months.</p>	<p>Due to the restrictions in place this year the Aqua Park has been closed throughout the season. The development of improved parking facilities are likely to be costly given the current financial position of the Council any new build for car parking spaces is likely not to be affordable, however officers will discuss with Stevenage Direct Services, the Asset team, Engineers and Planning the potential to improve the existing layout of the car park footprint with a view to increase the number of available parking bays.</p>
<p>4.5 Aqua Park toilet/changing room provision needs to be improved.</p>	<p>The existing building is designed within a small footprint to house the plant room, kiosk and toilets, the development of new toilets will increase the footprint of the building significantly and will be at a high capital cost, given the Council's financial position it is unlikely that such an improvement is affordable.</p>
<p>4.6 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.</p>	<p>Since the visit by the committee the washroom facilities within the centre have benefited from a major refurbishment. During the Covid-19 crisis golf has seen an upsurge in usage. Officers will work with SLL to improve the opportunities for women, girls and young people to make use of the golf facilities.</p>
<p>4.7 Opportunities for apprenticeships for young people could be extended further – (i) for Apprenticeships, the leisure and sports offer should be highlighted at Schools and Colleges as an employment route for young</p>	<p>As members may be aware SBC have had an apprenticeship scheme for a number of years. In terms of SBC Leisure Services we employed two apprentices since 2013 both of whom have gained significant experience and qualifications</p>

<p>people, and (ii) Saturday positions for young people for example at the sailing centre or swimming pool should be explored.</p> <p><u>Marketing opportunities and use of the website</u></p>	<p>and have been employed full time by the Council. SLL do currently employ a number of apprentices. Workforce planning is however being impacted by the current SLL financial position due to Covid-19.</p>
<p>4.8 Officers should consider offering a two for one offer to encourage multiple uses of SLL sites</p>	<p>On hold due to Covid-19, limited availability of facilities and services restricts numbers of users in leisure buildings and due to SLL's critical financial position the introduction of special promotions at this time is not feasible.</p>
<p>4.9 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.</p>	<p>The new SBC website has now been launched. This will provide the opportunity to create links to external organisations and services available to public. Social media activity can further be enhanced to promote health and wellbeing activity.</p>
<p>4.10 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 to promote the range of activities at the Sailing Centre to maximise the use of the facility. 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.</p>	<p>On hold until Sailing Centre can re-open, however this presents an opportunity to re-think the range and availability of activities at the sailing centre and new ways of marketing and promoting these.</p>
<p>4.11 Marketing of the conference centre at the golf course to support maximising the use of the Golf Course facilities 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.</p>	<p>This is on hold as the conferencing and events service is closed at Stevenage Golf & Conference Centre due to Government restrictions.</p>
<p>4.12 Advertising boards should be erected in prominent places around the Fairlands Valley Park and Sailing Centre.</p>	<p>Officers will work with colleagues in Stevenage Direct Services and SLL to look at opportunities to improve or update signage in key areas of the park.</p>
<p>4.13 The cycle hub needs to provide clearer advertising of its services on the exterior of the building along with opening times.</p>	<p>The Cycle Hub is closed and we are hoping to re-launch and re-open soon, subject to Government restrictions. However we have now agreed a new operator for the Cycle Hub which is a locally</p>

	based Community Interest Company, we believe the new operating model will provide a much improved level of service and this will provide an opportunity to create better signage and publicity as recommended.
4.14	Consideration be given to the establishment of a standardised corporate brand for Sport Stevenage/Active Stevenage/Healthy Stevenage.
4.15	A process be developed to ensure that Community Development Officers and Community Wardens be regularly briefed on the sporting/leisure activities on offer in their respective neighbourhood areas.
4.16	Consideration be given, possibly through the Stevenage Sports Partnership or Sporting Futures, to encouraging local schools to display advertising material relating to sports and leisure activities.
<u>Infrastructure improvements</u>	
4.17	At Fairlands Valley Park the high ropes area could be developed by providing a seating area under a canopy to attract family events such as children's birthday parties with refreshments that could be included in the package in conjunction with the cafe.
4.18	There is a shortage of accessible 3G football pitches in Stevenage. Two potential sites at Chells Pavilion 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.
4.19	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

<p>in parks including local bands and youth clubs to go to with friends.</p>	<p>in 2020 and has therefore had to be cancelled, although SBC did provide pop up play and fitness classes in our parks throughout the summer holidays. Officers will work on developing this and other programmes for 2021. In addition the procurement process will give us significant opportunities to potentially improve the outreach work within the community.</p>
<p>4.20 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.</p>	<p>During July/August 2020 SBC signed up for 'project swish'. This project from Basketball England gave us free nets to add to our current hoops in Stevenage Parks. We installed nets in 8 parks across Stevenage and have requested more nets from Basketball England.</p> <p>We are also having initial discussions with Basketball England, Herts Basketball association and SBC parks for basketball development. Unused tennis courts at KGV highlighted as a potential location for development.</p>
<p>4.21 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, subject to funding, consideration be given to the possibility of adapting the tennis courts at King George V Playing Fields into use for other physical activities should their continued use for tennis prove unviable.</p>	<p>Due to Covid-19, funding streams for such improvements from bodies like Sport England have been frozen. If further capital programmes are announced this will be considered.</p>
<p>4.22 Clarity be provided regarding the future viability of Ridlins Athletics Track and associated facilities, linked into the forthcoming locality reviews.</p>	<p>The future opportunities for Ridlins Athletic Stadium will be considered through the locality review process and as an integral part of the procurement process.</p>
<p><u>Liaison between SBC and SLL</u></p>	
<p>4.23 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</p>	<p>Prior to the re-opening of the Sailing Centre and the Aqua Park officers will discuss with Stevenage Direct Services and SLL opportunities for improved litter picking at the park</p>

<p>and how often at peak times in the summer.</p>	
<p>4.24 Officers discuss with the current Café operator at Fairlands Valley Park the possible introduction of some healthy food options on the menu to provide choice for those who would like to purchase a healthy option and should also include alternative dietary requirements (such as vegetarian and vegan options).</p>	<p>The Café is currently closed due to the Covid-19 crisis, a limited kiosk and patio service is available. SBC will however discuss with SLL and its franchised Café operator the potential for extending the healthy options menu at the site.</p>
<p>4.25 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. Implications</p>	<p>We will work closely with SLL to try to improve data capture at the leisure facilities and use the data to target specific areas and demographics within the town.</p>