

6 March 2017

Community, Health and Leisure Committee

Leisure Strategy

Report of: *Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager*

Wards Affected: *All Brentwood Borough Wards*

This report is: *Public report*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** It was agreed by Members at the 5 December 2016, Community, Health and Leisure Committee (min ref.207) that the Council commissioned report undertaken by 4Global to review the Value for Money options and appraisal of the Council leisure facilities would come back to Community Health and Leisure Committee to discuss the recommendations and next steps. The leisure facilities include the Brentwood Centre, six community halls, Hartswood Golf Course and the Council's play areas.
- 1.2.** As this is a large piece of work it is proposed that a cross party working group be established to go through the recommendations, explore the opportunities and report back to Committee. This will consist of the Chair of the Community, Health and Leisure Committee (Chair), 3 Members representing the administration, 2 Members representing the Liberal Democrats and 1 Member representing the Labour Party. Any members that are currently representatives on outside bodies that would be impacted by the Leisure Strategy work would need to be excluded from the cross party working group due to a conflict of interest.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** That Members note the summary report and the proposed actions
- 2.2** That a cross party working group be established to go through the proposed actions, explore the opportunities and report back to Committee with recommendations.
- 2.3** That the group leaders put forward their nominations for the cross party working group to the Chair of Community Health and Leisure Committee.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1.** In March 2015 the Council commissioned Ploszajski Lynch Consulting to assist in the development of a Leisure Strategy for the Borough. This was primarily to support the Local Development Plan. The initial draft was completed and became a “needs analysis” (Phase 1 of a complete leisure strategy) of leisure requirements and provided an evidence base of facilities in the Borough. A cross party Member Working Group was established in January 2016 to identify the key priorities and to develop a work programme to deliver the Leisure Strategy. A key priority identified by the working group was to establish income and expenditure on the Council’s current leisure facilities to inform the next stages of the strategy.
- 3.2.** Working in conjunction with the Local Development Plan the Leisure Strategy will identify the future provision required in Brentwood to meet the needs of the residents.
- 3.3.** The Brentwood Leisure Trust is the largest leisure provider in the Borough and currently manages six of the borough’s community halls through its subsidiary Brentwood Leisure Trading Limited. These include Hutton Poplars Hall, Hutton Poplars Lodge, the Nightingale Centre, Willowbrook Hall, Bishops Hall and Merrymeade House.
- 3.4.** The Grant and Service Level Agreement with Brentwood Leisure Trust and Brentwood Leisure Trading Limited to manage these halls expires in June 2017 together with the individual leases for each of the halls.
- 3.5.** In order to ascertain the true running costs of these leisure facilities the Council commissioned a value for money review and options appraisal of the its Leisure facilities which included Brentwood Leisure Trust, the six community halls, Hartswood Golf Course and the Council’s play areas.
- 3.6.** 4Global were appointed in 2016 to undertake this piece of work and this was completed in November 2016. Officers have challenged, asked for more information and provided their comments back to the consultants and a summary report with the proposed actions that need to be made is before Members tonight.
- 3.7.** A subsequent soft market testing exercise was also undertaken to further inform the discussion, particularly around any decisions to re-procure operational management, which could potentially realize some capital investment into the Council’s leisure facilities.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1.** The Leisure Strategy is one of the key strategies as set out in the Vision for Brentwood 2016-19 document. In order to deliver a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and officers need to have a complete picture of the cost of the current provision, how it measures in value for money terms, the future options available to them, together with any risk profiles associated with its leisure facilities.
- 4.2.** The draft report was received by officers in November and officers have analyzed and interrogated the recommendations within the report and their respective implications.
- 4.3.** The key decision for Brentwood Borough Council is how to best provide the level of leisure provision for both current and future Brentwood residents, bearing in mind that it has existing but ageing facilities and that there will be future development pressures.
- 4.4.** The consultant's report has set out a number of possible options in respect of the Brentwood Centre, the community halls, Hartswood Golf Course and the Council's play areas. It also set out other possible operational management and procurement options that could be available to the Council.
- 4.5.** The Council is the freehold and leasehold owner of the six community halls. There is current Grant and Service Level agreement in place dated 6 June 2011. The Council by various leases dated on 6 June 2011 and 16 February 2012 demised the Halls to the Trust for a term of 5 years or less. The Council on 4 July 2016 renewed the various Halls leases to the Trust, for a further term of 1 year. The current one year Grant and Service Level Agreement between Brentwood Borough Council, Brentwood Leisure Trust and Brentwood Leisure Trading Limited, together with the six leases for the community halls expires in June 2017.
- 4.6.** It is proposed that the existing lease arrangements between Brentwood Leisure Trust and Brentwood Leisure Trading Limited continue in relation to the Grant and Service Level agreement and the leases for the six community halls whilst officers explore other operational management options.

- 4.7.** Officers have provided a summary report for Members to inform them of the initial decisions that need to be made in order to progress any subsequent work for the Leisure Strategy.
- 4.8.** As this is a large and important piece of work it is proposed that a cross party working group be established to work through the proposed actions, develop the Leisure Strategy and an action plan that will progress the work. Recommendations from the cross party working group will subsequently be brought back to a future committee.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1** As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and officers need to have a complete picture of the current associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough's Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for income generation.
- 5.2** Comments received from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy is required that assesses Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council can continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council can provide services, but also how other partners can. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what will be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following this feasibility work, the Council will then be able to determine which projects will be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.
- 5.3** The Council's Asset Management Strategy also sets out the need to maximise income where possible from its asset portfolio.

6. References to Council Priorities

The Leisure Strategy sits under two main strands of the Vision for Brentwood 2016-19: Environment and Housing Management to develop a Leisure Strategy to provide strong and sustainable leisure facilities for residents and businesses; and Community and Health - to work with community and voluntary organisations to develop the priorities for community development. There are also strong links for the priorities of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017, the Local Development Plan, Active Brentwood/Essex and the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 7.1 One of the key drivers for the Leisure Strategy is to reduce the Council's current revenue and capital costs on its leisure facilities and provide strong and sustainable leisure facilities for the future.
- 7.2 Once the feasibility studies have been undertaken then the Council will have a clearer picture on the associated costs of the relevant options that Members would like to examine more.

Legal Implications

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- 8.1 As part of the Council's due diligence a full and thorough options analysis will inform Members of the options available to them in the development of the Leisure Strategy priorities.
- 8.2 Members that are trustees on outside bodies must declare a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest at Committee to highlight any potential conflict of interest.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Leisure Strategy Summary Report

Background documents:

Local Development Plan

National Planning Policy framework

Fields in Trust - Guidance for Outdoor sport Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard

PLC report

Sport England

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