

**4 December 2017**

**Community Health and Housing 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 Council's Policy, Projects and Resources Committee in June 2017 that the Leisure Strategy work would be split into three phases. Phase 1 would include King George's Playing Fields and Warley Playing Fields. Phase 2 would include the Council's Play Areas and Phase 3 would include the Brentwood Centre and the longer term strategic view of the Council's Leisure facilities. It was also agreed that the Leisure Strategy Working Group would scrutinize the Leisure Strategy work and put forward any key findings and recommendations to the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee. At the 21 November 2017 Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee, the following recommendations were agreed by the Committee, and are in front of this committee for their consideration (subject to the Council's calling in period).

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 That officers note the report and agree the recommendations from the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 21 November 2017 which are set out as follows:**

- a) Officers facilitate a workshop with industry experts and Members to drive the outcomes and principles of the Council's Leisure Strategy**
- b) Following on from the workshop session, it is recommended that officers liaise with industry experts to develop the Leisure Strategy for Brentwood to enable the Council to deliver the outcomes, agree the short-term priorities and longer-term objectives.**
- c) That the officer and members explore the potential of commencing a procurement process in parallel with the development of the leisure strategy.**

### **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1.** In order to ascertain the true running costs of the Council's leisure facilities, the Council commissioned a Value for Money review and Options Appraisal of the its leisure facilities in 2016 which included the Brentwood Centre, the community halls, Hartswood Golf Course and the Council's play areas. 4Global were appointed to undertake this piece of work and this was completed in November 2016. The subsequent report and recommendations was circulated to all Members in June 2017.
- 3.2.** A soft market testing exercise was also undertaken in 2017 to further inform the discussion, particularly around any decisions to re-procure operational management for the Council's leisure facilities, which could potentially realize some capital investment into the Council's leisure facilities.
- 3.3.** It was agreed at the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 20 June 2017 (min. ref. 42) that the Leisure Strategy work will be split into three separate phases to allow officers and Members to go thoroughly explore the options available to them, and that a Leisure Strategy Working Group (LSWG) would be established to scrutinize any of the work and report back to the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee with recommendations and that these recommendations would be referred on to the Community Health and Housing Committee or other relevant committee as appropriate.
- 3.4.** Phase 1 would include King George's Playing Fields, Warley Playing Fields. Phase 2 would include the Council's Play areas and Phase 3 would include options for the Brentwood Centre and the longer term strategic view of the Council's Leisure facilities.
- 3.5.** A separate piece of work is currently being undertaken with 4Global which is looking at the play pitch provision across the Borough and this report is due to be finalised in early 2018.
- 3.6.** A number of Members attended two Leisure Development presentations in November 2017 which highlighted some of the advantages of working with a Leisure Development Partner when developing the Council's Leisure Strategy and future vision for its leisure facilities. A summary of their presentations is attached in Appendix A.
- 3.7.** At the Council's Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 21 November the LSWG report was presented recommendations as set out in 2.1a, 2.1b and 2.1c of this report and these were agreed by the Committee.

- 3.8. It was also recommended at the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on the 21 November 2017 that a slight revision to the Terms of Reference be implemented to remove 'phases and replace with workstreams' to enable greater flexibility. This will be taken back to the next LSWG meeting for ratification.
- 3.9. Further updates will be presented to the Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.
- 3.10. It is proposed that a workshop with industry experts and any interested Members and Officers will also help to assist and inform the framework of the Leisure Strategy within the parameters of the Council's current financial constraints. This will enable the Council to be clear about how it can deliver the desired outcomes from its Leisure Strategy. It will also need to agree the principles that will underpin the Leisure Strategy.
- 3.11. Once Members have agreed the desired outcomes, the Council also needs to be clear how the Leisure Strategy can be delivered. It is therefore recommended that officers work with industry experts to develop the Leisure Strategy as there is not the resources or expertise to do this in house. Future funding streams and the impact on the Council's financial capacity needs to be identified to deliver realistic improvements to the Council's leisure facilities.
- 3.12. After the Leisure Development presentations, it was noted that there could be advantage in running a parallel procurement process at the same time at the various stages of development of the leisure Strategy. This could allow officers and Members to have a clearer idea of how leisure improvements could be funded and inform the Council of any potential costs and income that would be generated by any enhanced or new leisure facility.
- 3.13. The Leisure Strategy and its development is intrinsically linked to the Council's Local Development Plan and the Asset Management Strategy objectives, so in the development of the Council's Leisure Strategy, Members will need to keep those strategies in mind.

#### **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. 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 LSWG identified that without a Leisure Strategy in place the Council has no clear path on how it will deliver its desired outcomes or identify the key principles that will support it.
- 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 the Council will be faced with future development pressures.
- 4.4.** The 4Global report has set out a number of possible options in respect of the Council's Leisure facilities and there are many factors that the Council need to consider in relation to the future provision of its leisure facilities which include:
- a) The current cost of the service to Brentwood Borough Council
  - b) The objective of the Council to achieve as a minimum a nil cost leisure service
  - c) Market test to see if an alternative operator could manage any of the leisure facilities
  - d) Identify any existing or future financial implications to the Council
  - e) Identify any external funding which could support any future development of leisure facilities
- 4.5.** A robust Leisure Strategy and action plan will set out a high-level timetable of where, when and how the Council or external partner organisation will deliver the desired outcomes of the strategy, and identify future capital and revenue implications to the Council.
- 4.6.** An indicative timetable is set out in Appendix B.

## **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 2014/15 also sets out the need to obtain 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 2014/15.

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Finance Services Manager and Deputy Section 151 Officer**

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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 ensure that they are affordable, sustainable and fit for purpose for the future requirements.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer**

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- 7.2 Any proposed procurement process must comply with the requirements of the Council's Constitution and the EU procurement regulations. Legal Services are available to advise going forward on any process requirements as they arise.

## **8. Background documents** *(include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)*

Local Development Plan

National Planning Policy framework

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

PLC report

4Global report

Sport England

Leisure Strategy summary report

## **9. Appendices to this report**

Appendix A – Summary of Leisure development presentations from Alliance Leisure and Pulse.

Appendix B – Indicative timetable

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