

**5 March 2018**

**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.** The Leisure Strategy is one of the key strategies as set out in the Vision for Brentwood 2016-19 document. The Council has ageing facilities and needs to ensure that its leisure facilities are not only fit for purpose now but for the future. The Strategy and action plan sets out the vision, what the Council needs to achieve, the challenges it faces and how the priorities and outcomes have been identified. The Leisure Strategy is a large piece of work, so it has been split into workstreams to enable its delivery. The Strategy will cover a period of 10 years, but the supporting action plan will be a live document which will be reviewed and updated regularly to note the progress on the delivery of the Strategy.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That Members agree to the draft Leisure Strategy and action plan and;**
- 2.2 That Members refer the draft Leisure Strategy to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 12 March 2018 for their approval.**
- 2.3 Subject to approval at Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 12 March 2018 and the required resources and budgets being agreed that delegation is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Community Health and Housing Committee to appoint a Leisure Development Partner to develop a business case for the improvements to King George's Playing Fields.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1.** The Leisure Strategy provides a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges to the Council's leisure development and operational partners. A number of assessments have been undertaken which have been used to identify the priorities in relation to the Council's leisure facilities including key assessment documents, local profiles for Brentwood and the priorities and

expected outcomes from Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Department of Health, Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport, together with Active Essex, Brentwood Health and Wellbeing Board and the Brentwood and Basildon Clinical Commissioning Group.

- 3.2.** The national context is seeing increased activity levels as a golden thread that can support a healthy community, physically and mentally and economically.
- 3.3.** Providing the right mix of facilities and evidenced based programming is key to delivering the priorities and outcomes for the Leisure Strategy so that there is support for residents and visitors from the cradle to the grave.
- 3.4.** One of the key challenges for the Council is its current financial situation together with a portfolio of ageing facilities which is not sustainable.
- 3.5.** The Council needs to decide where it needs to prioritise its investment, how improvement to facilities can be funded and ensuring that the right operators are in place to deliver the right programme of activities to support the needs of the residents.
- 3.6.** The Council may have to make some tough decisions on some of its facilities that may need to be consolidated and identify those that could benefit from investment and improvement.
- 3.7.** 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. The subsequent report and recommendations was circulated to **all** Members in June 2017.
- 3.8.** The Council also commissioned an assessment of its Play Pitches and non-Play Pitches provision which is due to be finalized in March 2018.
- 3.9.** 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 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.
- 3.10.** 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.

- 3.11.** A separate piece of work has been undertaken with 4Global which looked at the play pitch and non-play pitch provision across the Borough and this report is due to be finalised in March 2018.
- 3.12.** 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 the future vision for its leisure facilities.
- 3.13.** At the Council's Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 21 November the Leisure Strategy Working Group recommendations (min ref 168) were agreed by Committee and submitted to Community, Health and Housing Committee on 4 December 2017 for their consideration. The recommendations were for officers to facilitate a workshop with industry experts and Members to drive the outcomes and principles of the Council's Leisure Strategy. Following on from the workshop session, it was 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. That officers and Members explore the potential of a parallel procurement process when developing the Leisure Strategy subject to the Council's procurement procedures.
- 3.14.** 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 when delivering the strategy (min ref 168).
- 3.15.** Workshops with industry experts, Members and Officers took place in January 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, prioritise areas for investment and identify any areas that could be rationalized to reduce Council expenditure.
- 3.16.** It is important that the Leisure Strategy aligns with the priorities for Sport England and National Governing Bodies for Sport (NGBs) which could realise significant external funding contributions which will have an impact on the Council's financial capacity to deliver realistic improvements to the Council's leisure facilities.
- 3.17.** The draft Leisure Strategy and action plan is before Members tonight for approval.

- 3.18.** The draft action plan is a live document which will be regularly reviewed and updated to note the progress against the outcomes. It was agreed in principle at the workshops with Members that the priority area of focus will be King George's Playing Fields. Subject to agreement of the draft Leisure Strategy at Community Health and Housing Committee and the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee in March, and that the agreed budgets and resources are made available, it is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and the Chair of Community Health and Housing Committee to appoint a Leisure Development Partner to develop a business case for King George's Playing Fields.
- 3.19.** 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 delivery of the Council's Leisure Strategy, Members will need to keep those strategies in mind.
- 3.20.** A link to the draft strategy will be put onto the Council's website for consultation with a deadline before the start of Purdah (27 March tbc) for residents to comment. These comments will be fed into the final version of the Strategy which will come back to the relevant committee for approval.

#### **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 costs 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 priorities that will support delivery.
- 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 also be faced with ongoing budgetary and development growth pressures.
- 4.4.** The draft Leisure Strategy sets out:
- a) The overall vision;
  - b) What the Council needs to achieve;
  - c) How the Council has identified the priorities;
  - d) The existing provision;

- e) The key issues facing the Council;
- f) How the Council will deliver the strategy;
- g) Workstreams and priorities
- h) Who can deliver the strategy, and;
- i) Action plan which set out the priority areas and actions to achieve the desired outcomes

- 4.5.** The draft Leisure Strategy and Action Plan is attached in Appendix A.
- 4.6.** It is proposed that the draft strategy will available on the Council's website for comments and feedback until March 27 (before the start of Purdah) and that the final Strategy will come back to the relevant committee for their agreement.
- 4.7.** As the content of the strategy also deals with proposed improvements to Council assets and any future resources and budgets need to be identified and agreed, it also recommended to be referred to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 12 March 2018 for their approval.
- 4.8.** It is recommended that to progress improvements in King George's Playing Fields, and subject to the resources and budgets being agreed that a Leisure Development Partner is appointed to develop a business case for the planned improvements.
- 4.9.** It is also recommended that subject to approval at Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 12 March 2018 and the required resources and budgets being agreed that delegation is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Community Health and Housing Committee to appoint a Leisure Development Partner to develop a business case for the improvements to King George's Playing Fields.
- 4.10.** The completed business case will identify possible options, the amount of investment required, external funding options and the commercial viability that could provide an income to the Council. Any proposed development plans will come back to the relevant committee for consideration.

## **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**

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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 to meet future requirements.

The Council needs to ensure that all costs and income are identified and agreed at all stages of the delivery of the Leisure Strategy and that the appropriate procurement processes are adhered to.

There will be associated costs for the development of the business plan for King George's Playing Fields which will be allocated from the Council's reserves subject to Member approval at Policy, Projects and Resources Committee.

The Council's Partial Exemption (VAT) calculation which the Council has to complete annually, and any future VAT claims will need to be considered alongside decisions made with regards to the Council's Leisure strategy, so the Council keeps its VAT costs to a minimum.

### **Legal Implications**

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- 7.2 The Council needs to ensure that all due diligence is undertaken as part of any partner or contractual arrangements in regard to the Leisure Strategy.

### **8. Background documents**

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**

Appendix A - Leisure Strategy and Action Plan

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