

12 March 2018

Policy, Projects and Resources 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 in 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.
- 1.2. The draft Leisure Strategy was presented to Community, Health and Housing Committee on 5 March for approval with a recommendation to refer to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee due to the resources and budgets that need to be agreed by Members.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Members agree to the draft Leisure Strategy and action Plan and;**
- 2.2 **The draft Leisure Strategy is put out for consultation and the final strategy comes back to the relevant committee for approval.**
- 2.3 **Subject to approval at Policy, Projects Resources Committee 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 the 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 the golden thread that can support a healthy community, physically and mentally and economically.
- 3.3. Providing the right mix of activities 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 investments, how improvements to facilities can be funded and ensuring that the right operators are in place to deliver the right programme of activities to support 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 has commissioned a number of assessments and reports which have been used to inform the priorities of the Strategy.
- 3.8. It was agreed at the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 20 June (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 the 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.

- 3.9. Phase 1 would include King George's Playing and 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.
- 3.10. All Members were invited to attend two Leisure Developments 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.
- 3.11. At the Council's Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 21 November 2017, the LSWG recommendations (min. ref. 168) were agreed by the 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.
- 3.12. It was also recommended at the Council's Corporate Projects Scrutiny Committee on 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 developing the strategy (min. ref. 168).
- 3.13. Members were invited to attend two workshops with industry experts 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 of investment and identify any areas that could be rationalized to reduce Council expenditure.

- 3.14. 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.
- 3.15. The draft Leisure Strategy and action plan is before Members tonight for approval. Subject to approval, the draft strategy will be put on the Council's website for consultation with a deadline for comments and feedback before the start of Purdah (27 March 2018). These comments will be reviewed and fed into the final 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 Strategy, Members and Officers need to have a complete picture of the costs of the current provision, how it measures in terms of value for money, 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 the desired outcomes or identify the priorities that will support delivery.
- 4.3. The key decision for Brentwood Borough Council is how to provide the level of leisure provision for both the 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 was presented to the Community, Health and Housing Committee on 5 March 2018 for their consideration. As the contents of the strategy also deals with proposed improvements to Council assets and any future resources and budgets need to be identified and agreed, the strategy is before Members of the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee tonight for their consideration.

4.6. The draft Leisure Strategy and Action Plan is attached in Appendix A.

4.7. 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 plan for the planned improvements.

4.8. It is also recommended that subject to approval at Policy, Projects Resources Committee 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.

4.9. The completed business case will identify possible options, the amount of investment required, external funding options and the commercial viability that could attract private partners and provide an income to the Council. Any proposed development plans will be required to 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 for the Borough' Leisure facilities and identify opportunities for the 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 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 to the Leisure Strategy work from the Council's reserves subject to approval from Ordinary Council.

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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The Council must comply with procurement regulations and its Constitution Contract Standing Orders, when commissioning contractors and/or partnerships, as well as complying with its own policies and procedures in relation to service partnerships. Legal Services is available to advise and assist as matters progress.

8. Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Leisure Strategy and Action Plan

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

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