

**Date 25 July 2018**

**Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

**Leisure Strategy Working Group Report**

<p><b>Working Group Members</b> Cllr Hossack Cllr Poppy Cllr Tierney Cllr Davies Cllr Barrett</p>
<p><b>Supporting Officers</b> Phil Ruck, Chief Executive Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager Stuart Anderson, Countryside and Open Space Supervisor</p>
<p><b>Scope</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review the approach to the delivery of the Leisure Strategy.</li><li>2. Review the outcome of the consultation with residents and visitors on options of new activities for King George's Playing Fields.</li></ol>
<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cross party working group meetings</li><li>• Consultants reports</li><li>• Presentations from leisure providers</li><li>• Consultations</li><li>• Local data analytics such as health profiles</li></ul>
<p><b>Meeting Dates</b> 9 July 2018 24 September 2018 November 2018 (tbc) w/c 13 February 2019 (tbc)</p> <p>Attached as Addendum 1 are the notes of the 9 July meeting</p>
<p><b>Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The Working Groups Terms of Reference are attached at Addendum 2.</p>

## **1. Report Recommendations**

The report recommendations of the working group are set out in full below.

**R.1** Officers benchmark any proposed car parking charges for King George's Playing Fields with similar parks across Essex and that these are fed into the wider Car Parking Strategy.

**R.2** Officers undertake an audit of the play areas as agreed at Community Health and Housing Committee which will identify the capital programme of investment required, the repair and maintenance costs, the current accessibility and proximity to alternative play areas and the current usage of the play areas.

**R.3** That the Officers undertake a market engagement exercise with five of the six community halls and review the present arrangements with Essex County Council in relation to Willowbrook Hall.

## **2. Introduction**

The Council needs to ensure that it has a clear vision in respect of the Leisure Strategy to ensure that it delivers value for money, is sustainable and fit for purpose for the future needs of the residents of Brentwood. It was agreed at Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 20 June 2017 that the Leisure Strategy work will be split in three separate phases to allow officers and members to thoroughly explore the options available to them. This approach was subsequently amended to 6 workstreams to allow for greater flexibility in the delivery of the Leisure Strategy.

The focus within this report is the progress of the sustainable business plan for King George's Playing Fields. The scope of the Play Areas strategy audit and any other identified works that identified emerging implications to the Council.

The Leisure Strategy Working Group noted the good progress being made on the sustainable business plan for King George's Playing Fields. The outcome of the face to face and online consultation further informed type of play desired and the indicative travel time and mode of transport to the park. Initial concept designs for the pavilion building, the indoor play and outdoor play were also looked at. Members queried the possible car parking charges for the park as they may well be additional pressure on the parking with the introduction of new and improved facilities.

Members agreed the direction of travel for the Play Area Strategy audit and for officers to ascertain the capital cost requirements in the development of 'destination' play areas, current repairs and maintenance costs, proximity to alternative play areas and the usage of the existing play areas. It was also agreed that officers develop an on-line survey for residents to complete to identify usage of the play areas.

Members were also updated on the current community halls arrangement with Brentwood Leisure Trust which is due to expire at the end of March 2019. It was recommended that officers undertake a market engagement exercise with five of the six community halls to ascertain if there is any interest for an alternative third-party provider to manage the halls on the Council's behalf. Willowbrook Hall was not included as it is owned by Essex County Council. It was therefore recommended that Officers liaise with Essex County Council about future arrangements.

Members were invited to the official opening of the Warley Play Area on 10 July 2018.

### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of the Leisure Strategy Working Group (LSWG) is to inform and assist the Community, Health and Housing Committee in agreeing recommendations on each of the three phases (now six workstreams).

The LSWG will review the report submitted by 4Global which undertook a Value for Money Review and Options Appraisal of the Council's Leisure and Cultural facilities together with other relevant information and reports provided by officers and the agree the workplan and next steps for officers for each of the workstreams and inform recommendations that will come back to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

Ensure that the Leisure Strategy delivers Value for Money, provides a sustainable and fit for purpose leisure provision for the residents of Brentwood by:

- Reduce revenue and capital expenditure to Brentwood Borough Council in its leisure facilities
- Increase capital investment in leisure facilities
- Explore alternative operational management opportunities
- Reduce the risk to the Council
- Increase sport and leisure participation in Brentwood

The focus in this report is the future development of King George's Playing Fields and Warley Playing Fields.

#### **4. Key Findings**

- The Council needs to develop a clear vision for King George's Playing Fields and Warley Playing Fields.
- Short and long-term priorities for both sites need to be agreed and any immediate actions for the play areas need to be undertaken
- Explore options of private/public partnerships and alternative operational management opportunities. Members needs to agree whether one partner or a hybrid approach is appropriate
- Agree requirements for any pavilion buildings on both sites
- Financial implications to the Council to be identified for any development
- That use is made of existing trails and paths to link the Council's leisure facilities
- Any development plans ensure that all facilities are accessible (including paths), sustainable/eco-friendly and sympathetic to its surroundings
- That Officers liaise with other authorities to identify opportunities and issues in respect of their own leisure facilities and explore external funding models.
- On completion of the refurbished play area in Warley Playing Fields, representatives are invited to the official opening.

#### **5. Explanation of Recommendations**

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
Officers benchmark any proposed car parking charges for King George's Playing Fields with similar parks across Essex and that these are fed into the wider Car Parking Strategy.
<b>Explanation</b>
With the planned improvement to the facilities in King George's Playing Fields the Council needs to ensure that the car parking charges for King George's Playing Fields with the planned improvement of facilities are in line with similar parks in the immediate vicinity but that any charges will be in line with the Council's Car Parking Strategy
<b>Recommendation 2</b>
Officers undertake an audit of the play areas as agreed at Community Health and Housing Committee on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2018, which will identify the capital programme of investment required, the repairs and maintenance costs, the current accessibility and proximity to alternative play areas and the current usage of the play areas.

**Explanation**

The Audit will identify those play areas that are in need of capital investment so that a capital investment programme is developed for the play areas. Current Repairs and maintenance costs are also identified. The Audit will also identify the proximity of sites and if there is rationalisation that there will be no more than a 15minute walk time to a play area. Officers as part of the audit will undertake a usage survey via social media and ask the following questions:

- a) Where do you live? (please provide postcode)
- b) What's your favourite park?
- c) Why is it your favourite park?
- d) How often do you visit (daily, weekly, monthly or less frequent)?
- e) How do you get there (car, cycle or walk)?
- f) What is the age of your child(ren)?

**Recommendation 3**

That the Officers undertake a market engagement exercise with five of the six community halls and review the present arrangements with Essex County Council in relation to Willowbrook Hall.

**Explanation**

The current halls management agreement is with Brentwood leisure Trust. It was recommended that officers undertake a market engagement exercise so that the Council can ascertain any there is any other external interest in the management of the Community Halls. Willowbrook Hall is not owned by Brentwood Borough Council and as it is within Willowbrook School and has a number of limitations for use during school times. It was recommended that officers liaise with Essex County Council to ascertain if they will manage the hall directly.