

Committee(s): Community and Health Committee	Date: 28 June 2021
Subject: Leisure Strategy refresh	Wards Affected:
Report of: Kim Anderson	Public
Report Author/s: Name: Kim Anderson Telephone: 01277 312634 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	For Decision

Summary

The Leisure Strategy 2018-28 is one of the key strategies as set out in in Corporate Strategy 2025. Due to changes as a result of COVID, new strategic documents from Sport England and Public Health England, Officers felt that a refresh of the existing strategy was timely. It is key that our leisure facilities provide the right facilities that will ensure that our residents and visitors remain health and active. The workstreams remain the same to enable the Council to deliver the objective and an annual action plan will be presented to Members so that they can note the progress on the delivery of the Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

R1. Agree to the refreshed Leisure Strategy 2020-28 and that an annual action plan is presented to the Community and Health Committee to update on progress.

Main Report

Introduction and Background

1. The refreshed Leisure Strategy provides a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges to the Council's leisure development programme. Several assessments have already been undertaken and have been used to inform the priorities for this Strategy. They include feasibility documents, local profiles for Brentwood, priorities and expected outcomes from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Public Health England, Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport, together with Active Essex, Brentwood Health and Wellbeing Board and the Brentwood and Basildon Clinical Commissioning Group.

2. The Strategy will also look at how it can support residents with the on-going effects of the Covid pandemic, such as long Covid, increases in mental ill health and to promote the importance of residents maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle.
3. One of the key challenges for the Council is its current financial situation together with a portfolio of ageing facilities which are not sustainable. This has been exacerbated by the insolvency of the Brentwood Leisure Trust and the Brentwood Centre now coming under direct management of the Council. The Covid pandemic and the resulting lockdowns has had a massive financial effect on leisure facilities nationally. This has also meant that leisure agreements with local authorities are being re-negotiated as a result. The District Council Network is also currently campaigning to DCMS for further support packages to help its leisure facilities.
4. The Leisure Strategy also set out how the promotion of facilities and open spaces can help to increase participation and activity levels, that will support a healthy community, physically, mentally and economically. Therefore, providing the right mix of facilities and evidenced based programming is key to delivering the priorities and outcomes for the Leisure Strategy. This will ensure that there is support for residents and visitors from the cradle to the grave.
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 programmes of activities to support the needs of the residents.
6. The Council may have to make some tough decisions on some facilities that may need to be consolidated and identify those that could benefit from investment and improvement.
7. Officers felt that the existing 6 workstreams will remain in place to enable greater flexibility on the implementation of the strategy.
8. The old strategy looked at phasing the built facilities with Phase 1 focussing on 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.
9. Works are progressing well on the new developments in King George's Playing Fields including the new pavilion, splash pad and outdoor adventure play. The implementation of the play area strategy is in progress with Warley Playing Fields, Toddler & Junior Play area in King George's, River Road refurbished. Works commence on Hutton Recreation on 21 June which is due to be completed in August and the consultation for the North Road Play area will commence this Summer with works due to be completed January/February 2022.

10. The insolvency of Brentwood Leisure Trust has resulted in the Brentwood Centre coming under the direct management of the Council which results in an increased financial pressure on the Council.
11. It is also important that the Leisure Strategy aligns with the new priorities for Sport England and National Governing Bodies for Sport (NGBs) which can provide external funding contributions to reduce the impact on the Council's financial capacity to deliver realistic improvements to its leisure facilities.
12. Sport England have revised their 10year Strategy (2021-31) – Uniting the Movement, to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. There are five big issues that they see, offering the greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity:
 - a) Recover and Reinvent
 - b) Connecting Communities
 - c) Positive experiences for children and young people
 - d) Connecting with Health and Wellbeing
 - e) Active environments
13. Public Health England Strategy 2020-25 sets out its vision for 2025
 - a) Promote a healthier nation
 - lower smoking rates, less sugar, calories and salt in food everyday
 - Less pollution in the air we breath
 - Promote good mental health and contribute to the prevention of mental illness
 - b) Work towards a fairer society
 - Work to improve the health of babies, children, and their families to provide the best start in life and foundations of good health into adulthood.
 - c) Keep the public safe 24/7
 - Lower rates of drug resistant infections
 - Reduced use of antibiotics to prevent further antimicrobial resistance
 - A refreshed plan for handling an influenza pandemic
 - Strengthen health protection system at national and local level capable of handling all major threats to health
 - d) Strengthen the public health system
 - Utilise technology to develop targeted advice and interventions and support public health and care at scale
 - Improve data capability and strengthen our approach to disease surveillance using new tools and techniques
14. Active Essex continues to promote getting 1million people active across Essex as part of its current Strategy.
15. The Leisure Strategy and its implementation 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.

16. The revised strategy sets out the key priorities for the Council and an annual plan will report back to the Community and Health Committee on the progress on the implementation of the strategy across the six workstreams.

Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

17. The Leisure Strategy is one of the key strategies as set out in Corporate Strategy 2025. 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.
18. The cross-party Leisure Strategy Working Group was established to work with officers to analyze options and support the delivery of the desired outcomes. 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.
19. The Leisure Strategy sets out:
 - a) The overall vision;
 - b) What the Council needs to achieve;
 - c) Workstreams and priorities;
 - d) Action plan which set out the priority areas and actions to achieve the desired outcomes.
20. The refreshed Leisure Strategy and Action Plan is attached in Appendix **A** for Member consideration.
21. As the content of the strategy also deals with proposed improvements to Council assets, future resources and budgets will need to be identified and agreed as progress is made in the delivery of the strategy. It is recommended that a full business case is submitted to the Policy Resources and Economic Development Committee at the appropriate time for members consideration.

Reasons for Recommendation

22. As Sport England and Public Health England have refreshed their 10year strategies, and in light of the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic, it is essential that the Council's Leisure Strategy is aligned with these strategies and supports the needs of its residents. It is a key strategy document under the Corporate Strategy and is also aligned to the Local Development Plan and Asset Management Strategy.

Consultation

23. Consultation as part of the assessment work that has already been undertaken. New development proposals will also require consultation with the relevant stakeholders such as local football clubs for the Football Hub Development. Statutory consultation will also be required with any planning submission.

References to Corporate Plan

24. The Leisure Strategy sits under four key priority areas of the Corporate Plan – Growing our economy; Protecting our environment; Developing our communities and delivering an effective and efficient Council.

Implications

Financial Implications

Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and S151 Officer

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25. 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.
26. 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.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer

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27. There are no direct implications from the Leisure Strategy, the action plan which includes procurement and contractual arrangements to be in place will be subject to legal scrutiny to ensure compliance and to mitigate risks of challenge.

Economic Implications

Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning & Economy)

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28. Improving the health and wellbeing of those living, working and visiting the borough can benefit the local economy in a multitude of ways.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Partnerships, Leisure & Funding Manager

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29. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

30. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

31. The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

Health & Wellbeing Implications

Name/Title: Jo Cory, Corporate Health & Wellbeing Officer

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32. The Leisure Strategy and its implementation encourages increased participation and encourages active and healthy lifestyles.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

33. None.

Background Papers

- Play Pitch Strategy
- Local Football Facilities Plan
- Built Facilities Strategy
- Value For Money Options Appraisal

Appendices to this report

- Appendix A: Leisure Strategy 2021-28