

SCRUTINY PANEL A

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Tuesday, 26th July, 2016 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Amanda Brown in the Chair;

Councillors Rachel Bissett, Tony Brewer,
Paul Roberts and Helen Smith.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Ben Bradley, Helen Hollis and
Lauren Mitchell.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Carol Cooper-Smith, Joy Elmer and
Mike Joy.

In Attendance: Councillor Jim Aspinall.

SA.1 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SA.2 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 15th March, 2016, be received and approved.

SA.3 Scrutiny Consideration of the Leisure Review - Transformation Programme

The Chairman introduced the item and explained that the report had been submitted to the Panel to update Members on key projects within the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-2019). These included the Leisure Review outcomes and the feasibility for a replacement for the Festival Hall Leisure Centre (which would be informed by the final outcome of the Leisure Review and its accompanying consultation process).

The intention was for Members to consider the report and provide them with an opportunity to comment and discuss with officers the Leisure Review findings, the Leisure Review consultation process, the Targeted Wellbeing Activities Programme and the Sport England Pilot on Commissioning. Any feedback/responses would be taken back by the Service Director and the Portfolio Holder to feed into the overall consultation process. Once the evaluation was completed, a report would be submitted to Cabinet for final consideration and approval.

At this point the Chairman introduced the Council's Interim Service Director for Planning and Economic Development, Carol Cooper-Smith, the Leisure Performance Officer, Joy Elmer and the current Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jim Aspinall.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing addressed the Panel and explained that the Leisure Review had been driven by the Council's desire to continue to improve the health and wellbeing of Ashfield residents. It had been recognised that the health of people in Ashfield was generally worse than the England average, with a related reduction in life expectancies for both men and women. A number of diseases were also currently on the increase and affecting people at an earlier age including cancer, diabetes, obesity, hypertension and depression.

The review has focussed mainly on the leisure centres and had received assistance from Sport England and the Chief Leisure Officers' Association (CLOA) who lent support to local Councils in relation to developing and building better relationships with commissioners and ensuring sport becomes a strategic partner that contributes to local commissioning priorities.

Specialist leisure consultants, FMG Consulting Limited, were commissioned to assist with the review of the Council's leisure facilities. In summary the outcomes from the review had revealed that three of the leisure centres were performing well and/or adequately (Lammas/Hucknall/Festival Hall) with the remaining three falling short of their performance targets (Huthwaite/Edgewood/Selston).

For each leisure centre, high level analysis of income, expenditure and performance had been benchmarked against key performance indicators taking into account local competition, operational philosophy, age, quality and design of facilities, any programming restrictions such as joint use agreements, geographical differences and demographics. Following this exercise, it had been acknowledged that the four worst performing centres (Huthwaite/Edgewood/Selston/Festival Hall) were most probably struggling due to the age, quality and condition of their buildings as compared to the more modern facilities.

The Portfolio Holder proceeded to take Members through the findings for each of the leisure centres and outlined the costs per visit (by dividing the management fee by the number of attendances) as follows:-

- Edgewood LC - £1.72
- Festival Hall LC - £2.03
- Hucknall LC - 0.27p
- Huthwaite LC - £5.23
- Lammas LC - 0.20p
- Selston LC - £1.53.

Officers had not yet finalised their recommendations from the review and were awaiting the outcome of the public consultation process prior to submitting any final proposals regarding the future delivery of the Council's leisure facilities to Cabinet for consideration.

The Interim Service Director for Planning and Economic Development reiterated that any views/responses from Panel Members in relation to the consultation were important and would be taken into account as part of the review process.

A press release to mark the start of the public consultation was due to be sent out on the 27th July and the online questionnaire would be available for completion and submission until the end of August. Three drop-in roadshows at the main leisure centres had been arranged and promotions would be taking place through social media, club forums and the Council's Citizen's Panel.

Members debated the issues and considered, amongst other things:-

- whether local people use their local leisure centres or travel further afield within the District to access the newer, improved leisure facilities;
- the importance of the consultation questionnaire reaching residents and capturing data from a range of demographics;
- the importance of the questions contained in the questionnaire being straightforward and not leading in any way;
- the potential sites for a new leisure centre in Kirkby and the legal processes to be undertaken to secure land from third parties;
- the concept of 'community asset transfer' and the potential for any local community groups to take over the leisure centre at Huthwaite;
- the importance of ensuring that the Council exhaust all avenues open to them prior to closing any leisure centres in the future;
- concerns regarding the accessibility of the main leisure centres to residents from Skegby, Stanton Hill, Huthwaite and the rural areas should the smaller leisure centres be eventually closed;
- the wealth of data that can be captured from the Access Ashfield card registration scheme including age, gender, locality and preferred sporting activities;
- the timeline for processing the data (once the consultation process has been completed), finalising the report/recommendations and submitting to Cabinet for final approval;
- Sport England's Commissioning Project and its shift in focus towards investing in local grassroots facilities and opportunities (for 5 to 13 year olds) rather than the traditional commitment towards the more professional (and elite) athletes and clubs;
- the decline in popularity of playing bowls and potential uses for the indoor bowling green at the Lammas Leisure Centre during the quiet summer months.

On conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked the Interim Service Director for Planning and Economic Development, the Leisure Performance Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing for their attendance at the meeting and contribution towards the ensuing discussion.

RESOLVED that

- a) the key projects within the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-2019) including the Leisure Review outcomes, the feasibility for a replacement for the Festival Hall Leisure Centre and the targeted activities, as outlined in the report, be received and noted;
- b) the timetable for the Leisure Review public consultation process be received and noted;
- c) the Interim Service Director for Planning and Economic Development and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing be requested to include the Panel's views/comments, as discussed at the meeting, within the overall consultation process and any additional views to be submitted by individual Members through the agreed consultation mechanisms.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Chairman.