

TITLE	Leisure Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 27 October 2016
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Stuart Rowbotham, Director of Health and Wellbeing
LEAD MEMBER	Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Sustaining Wokingham Borough as a great place to live; an even better place to do business, through a corporate focus on improving health and sustaining the good wellbeing outcomes enjoyed by Borough residents by the provision of high quality leisure facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

That Executive agrees this draft strategy can proceed to go out to an eight week period of public consultation, and return for ratification by Executive in January 2017, taking account of the views expressed in the consultation.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The 21st Century Leisure Strategy seeks to fill a gap between the Council Vision and high-level strategies such as the Local Plan / MDD DPD; and the very much more detailed plans and strategies allowing effective delivery and service development, such as the Playing Pitches Strategy and Leisure Contract specifications. A previous Leisure Strategy which covered as broad an agenda but in more detail expired in April 2016.

Background

The Council's last overarching Sport, Leisure and Recreation Strategy (2006-2016) has expired, and a replacement is now overdue. The context has changed significantly since the last strategy was written – more than anything, the Council's budgetary pressures impacting upon available revenue and capital funds for leisure services and facilities has worsened significantly; whilst there is increasing momentum of population growth and housebuilding as the SDLs make progress.

This strategy should set out high-level objectives only as many other strategies and work programmes have set out the more detailed plans and priorities for individual projects or contributory and allied strategies. These include the Shaping Our New Communities (SONC) strategy; The playing pitches strategy; and the Managing Development Delivery Plan. At high level, the leisure strategy can provide the link between other high level strategies such as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Council Plan, allowing detail to be reserved for programmes which will follow, such as the commissioning plan for re-procuring the Council's leisure contract; and the options for the various building works at the leisure centres and swimming pools.

The strategy aims to set out the high-level vision for the council, to include:

- The need for the Leisure Strategy;
- What we want to achieve;
- The strategic context including national sport and public health guidelines;
- Health and wellbeing indicators;
- Individual, social and community development: the local sports landscape; and
- Economic development

The strategy will be a succinct document, written in plain English to encourage ownership amongst the wide range of stakeholders such as sports clubs and Parish Councils, and to be clear to residents on the council's leisure offer within the Borough.

Analysis of Issues

The new strategy will set a direction for the provision of 21st century leisure opportunities for borough residents and how the council proposes to facilitate their provision. In setting out this vision, it is appropriate to consult with the public, and it is proposed that the strategy be subject to an eight week period of consultation beginning on 28th October to 24th December 2016. Following this period of consultation, the strategy will then be amended accordingly and taken through Executive in January 2017.

The top level aims and principles of the strategy have been set out and are recommended by the Sports and Leisure Working Group following their meeting of 6th September 2016. Our Vision for the Borough is, "a great place to live, an even better place to do business." Having a strategy for sport and leisure will show how these can contribute to this vision.

This strategy sets the high level vision of the authority, and the detailed plans which meet the aims of this vision are contained within other strategies, business cases and work plans. In the current and future context, our new vision for leisure should be to:

- Be an Authority which promotes opportunities for all residents to be active and to participate in sporting and leisure activities to improve health and wellbeing, in high quality facilities or environments.
- Enable an increase in the proportion of the adult population achieving the CMOs physical activity guide levels from 66% to 70%; and to reduce those who are deemed inactive from 20.9% to 16% by 2021 (measured by Public Health Outcomes Framework).
- Support the aims of the Childhood Obesity Plan (HM Government, 2016) for children to engage in 60 minutes of physical activity each day, with half of this being delivered in schools.
- Maintain leisure centre provision through a model of community facilities (which include both wet and dry-side activities) in each of the Borough's main localities (Wokingham, Woodley, and Earley), with Arborfield & Ryeish Green facilities being added to the borough's leisure assets in the near future. The development of Grays Farm will provide an excellent new additional outdoor sporting hub.
- Enable the provision of other facilities across the Borough which offer multiple use and not exclusivity for one group or activity, and which make use of the Borough's open green spaces.
- Support the contribution made by voluntary organisations to grassroots sports clubs in promoting sporting excellence, attainment of sporting success inclusion and volunteering.
- Deliver services and facilities which cover their delivery and maintenance costs, providing a significant and maximised income for the Council, which provides value to the council tax payer and gains maximum return on investment and sets fair levels of charges for the population.

There is as yet no simple annually measured outcome for physical activity for children that we can apply to the Borough's population; however the very recent publication of the Government's Action Plan for Childhood Obesity, leads us to reflect this in our vision, in spite of the current lack of direct measurement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

The following figures represent the cost to the council of the majority of major leisure items covered by the strategy: namely the Sports Development Team; The Country Parks Service; and the Leisure Centres Operational Contract. Together they cover their costs and provide a contribution to the general fund. These figures are included here with the intention of giving a figure as to the scope of the council's leisure business streams. For year three (2018/19), we include the minimum additional income (£300,000) we should derive from the procurement of the Leisure Centres Operating Contract, showing the increase in contribution to the general fund.

	The estimate of leisure services expenditure	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1) 2016/17	£2,364K expenditure £2,992K income (£628K saving)	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2) 2017/18	£2,364K expenditure £2,992K income (£628K saving)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3) 2018/19	£2,364K expenditure £3,292K income (£928K saving)	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

The strategy does not commit the council to spend on any particular projects. Detailed business cases for projects which support the aims of the strategy will be presented separately, each with their own financial business case.

The strategy does state that the Council should “*Deliver services and facilities which cover their delivery and maintenance costs, providing a significant and maximised income for the Council, which provides value to the council tax payer and gains maximum return on investment and sets fair levels of charges for the population.*” This sets a clear approach for the detailed projects which will come about as a result of adopting this strategy.

Cross-Council Implications

This strategy aims to give all council departments the ability to link their work on leisure, or the needs of their service users to this strategy. Cross-council consultation is essential and will be carried out both prior to and during the public consultation period.

List of Background Papers

Draft 21st Century Leisure Strategy
Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-17
Wokingham Borough JSNA (online at: jsna.wokingham.gov.uk)

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