
LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Draft MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday 11 July 2018 at 7.30pm.

Councillors present:

Councillors Chris Lloyd (Lead Member for Leisure)	Alex Michaels (Lead Member Environmental Services)
Roger Seabourne (Lead Member Community Safety and Partnerships)	David Sansom
Matthew Bedford (Substitute for Kate Turner)	Alison Scarth
Rupert Barnes	Alison Wall
Donna Duncan	Phil Williams

Officers:

Ray Figg, Head of Community Services
Charlotte Gomes, Leisure Development Manager
Ryan Watson, Sports Development Manager
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager
Geof Muggeridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Sherrie Ralton, Committee Manager

Also in attendance:

Councillors Paula Hiscocks, Angela Killick, Alex Hayward, Reena Ranger, Diana Barber and Marilyn Butler

Councillor Chris Lloyd in the Chair

LEC 01/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Kate Turner (Councillor Matthew Bedford substitute).

LEC 02/18 MINUTES

The minutes of the General Public Services & Community Safety meeting held on Thursday 8 March 2018 and the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14 March 2018 were confirmed as correct records with the following amendment and signed by the chairman.

Minutes of Leisure, Wellbeing and Health 14 March 2018

LW24/17 Work Programme

Paragraph 3 amended to read 'The Chairman said that Cassiobridge play area represented a challenge as it had been due to be funded by MLX. Siting of equipment needed to take into account the possibility that it might have railway lines overhead and asked what could be done to ensure the equipment could be re-installed after any railway work'.

LEC 03/18 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Item 8 Public Health and Mental Health Update (Presentation) had been deferred until the next Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting taking place on Wednesday 22 August 2018.

A Member raised a concern that this item had been deferred to the August meeting. The Lead Member for Leisure advised that with the item on the Leisure Contract on the agenda tonight, he wanted to allow sufficient time for the presentation and any questions and had agreed to defer the item to the August meeting.

LEC 04/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were none

LEISURE

LEC 05/18 LEISURE CONTRACT

The Chairman advised that no decision on the item would be made. He read out the motion that would be debated at the Council Meeting taking place on Tuesday 17 July 2018 as follows:

Councillor Chris Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford to move under Notice duly given as follows:

Council notes:

- 1. The concerns expressed by some residents regarding the leisure facilities available at William Penn Leisure Centre (WPLC) under the new leisure contract.*
- 2. That the motions to accept the new contract were discussed and agreed through the Council's democratic decision-making structure, with no Councillor objecting to this part of the contract at any stage, nor to the final contract.*
- 3. Government imposed cuts of £4 million per annum to the Council's budget, together with underfunded new legal obligations, and a cap on Council Tax increases.*

Council resolves to:

- 1. Place a moratorium on changes to the existing sports hall at WPLC for a 12 month period.*
- 2. Re-examine the current and future user profile of WPLC, and other sports and leisure venues in the area.*

3. *Speak with a cross-section of residents across the District to discuss future leisure needs.*
4. *Look for further sources of income which could be used to increase spending on Council services.*
5. *Fund the additional spending during the 12 month moratorium period by releasing the sum from general reserves.*

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35(b) Louvaine Hunt spoke against the item.

The Chairman thanked the speaker and offered to attend the netball session to meet the players and answer any further questions.

A Member gave a brief outline as to how the Leisure Contract was structured. The day to day running was handled by a commercial organisation with the expertise and experience of running a leisure centre. In return they would pay a sum to the Local Authority which included the funding of the capital expenditure. It was structured to achieve the maximum best value for the local tax payers and best leisure service for the lowest possible price.

The Head of Community Services was introduced to the Committee and members of the public and responded to the questions as follows:

Q1. Why was the Leisure Committee on 6 September 2017 not told about the users (netball, walking football and badminton) who would not be offered viable alternative facilities?

Background

At the Leisure, Wellbeing and Health meeting on 6 September 2017, Members were presented with a full report containing the outcomes of the procurement process for the Leisure Facilities Management Contract, which took place during 2016 and 2017. Within the tender documentation, the shortlisted contractors were provided with an analysis of the existing Sports Hall Provision, which was collated by Hertsmere Leisure during December 2016. Tender submissions and scoring was therefore based on the information contained within the tender packs. This is the detail that was presented to Members as part of the report for the Leisure Facilities Management Contract.

Point 4.12 from the report on 6 September 2017 stated:

'4.12 Analysis of Sports Hall is shown in Appendix F. Hertsmere Leisure has confirmed that there 'would be limited impact' if the present four-court hall at William Penn was reduced by half 'as many of the bookings can be relocated or accommodated within 2 courts'. They have also confirmed that the present bookings with more than two courts, namely; both Active Life and Trampolining sessions can fit into 2 courts; Mill End Youth can be accommodated within 2 courts and squash courts; and the 3 football bookings of 1 hour each could be transferred to the upgraded Multi-Use Games Area'.

Appendix F provided a list of sports halls in Three Rivers, their location, facility markings, access arrangements, ownership, opening hours and prices (where available). It also provided a list of sports halls outside of Three Rivers with distances to William Penn Leisure Centre. It also included: 'The Reach Free School, which is due to be built in Mill End has included within its planning designs a new four-court sports hall that could be available for community use.'

Current Position

It is accepted that netball was not included in the December 2016 Sports Hall provision analysis that was presented to Members in September 2017.

Utilisation rates of Sports Hall 2017-18

From analysis undertaken by Hertsmere Leisure: in 2017 the sports hall was used 51.4% of the available hours; in 2018, to date, the sports hall has been used 50.6% of the available hours. This includes netball and all other current activities.

The current netball provision was read to the Committee.

Back to Netball and Walking Netball had been identified as programmes that could be delivered as part of the public health funding. A programme was launched in January 2017 including a Junior Netball programme. The public health funding covered all coaching hours/costs of the adult programmes (Back to and Walking Netball). Junior Netball coaching hours/costs was funded solely through TRDC Sports Development Budgets. The sports hall hire was covered through charges made to participants (Walking Netball £2, Back to Netball £3, Junior Netball £3) and retained by Hertsmere Leisure. Public health funding expired at the end of March 2018, at which point coaching costs for the adult programmes were absorbed by TRDC Sports Development Budgets. The sports hall hire agreement continued as before with Hertsmere Leisure retaining the income from attendances.

Present and Future Position

There are currently 3 netball sessions per week at William Penn; all have options to be transferred.

Back to Netball – This could be moved to the sports hall at Woodside Leisure Centre (Garston), albeit the day would change from a Monday at 1.15pm-2.45pm to Thursday at 12.30pm-1.30pm - provisionally booked.

Walking Netball - This could be moved to the sports hall at Woodside Leisure Centre (Garston), albeit the time would change from Tuesday at 12.30pm-1.45pm to Tuesday at 12.30pm-1.30pm - provisionally booked.

Junior Netball – This could be switched to YMCA Abbots Langley, on Wednesdays 4pm-6pm - provisionally booked.

The following should be noted:

- YMCA Abbots Langley offers Back to Netball sessions and Walking Netball sessions on their MUGA (outdoors), on Tuesdays (6.30pm – 7.30pm) and Thursdays (12.30pm – 1.30pm)
- TRDC Leisure offers Back to Netball sessions at Clement Danes School (Sports Hall) on Wednesdays (8.00pm – 9.00pm)
- TRDC offers Netball Now at Royal Masonic School on Tuesdays 8.30pm-9.30pm, May to July – outdoors and the remainder of the year in a Sports Hall
- Sessions could also be booked in the evening at the Reach Free School (information relating to the Community Use Agreement is detailed below), either on the MUGA (outdoors) or Sports Hall when it is available for bookings which is likely to be from September 2018

- There is also an option to retain the sessions at William Penn, albeit on a half-court, accepting that these sessions will be used for drills and skills sessions only.

We can also make amendments to the current evening timetable to run additional classes at any of the following times which have also been provisionally reserved at the following schools:

- Tuesdays at St Michaels School from 6.00pm-9.00pm
- Tuesdays at St Clement Danes School from 7.30pm-9.30pm
- Thursdays at Rickmansworth School 6.00pm-8.00pm
- Thursdays at Clement Danes School from 7.30pm-9.30pm

Reach Free School Community Use Agreement

Revised draft community use agreement from the Reach Free School

The available areas of the School for hire are:

Four-court sports hall

Two sports pitches

Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

School Hall

Dance Studio

The indoor facilities will be available to hire at the following times during term time:

- Monday to Friday from 6.00pm to 10.00pm
- Saturday from 7.00am until 6.00pm
- Sunday and Bank Holidays from 8.00am until 4.00pm

The outdoor facilities will be available to hire at the following times during term time:

- Monday to Friday from 6.00pm to 10.00pm
- Saturday from 7.00am until 6.00pm
- Sunday and Bank Holidays from 8.00am until 4.00pm

During school holidays, the facilities will be available:

- Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 10.00pm
- Saturday from 7.00am until 6.00pm
- Sunday and Bank Holidays from 8.00am until 4.00pm

Within the agreement, priority booking would be given to sports clubs / organisations based in Three Rivers.

There are on-going discussions on pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-educational establishment users, management responsibilities and a mechanism for review, to secure the effective community use of the facility.

The School is looking to offer bookings to the community from September 2018.

Active Life

This is a protected booking in the service specification. They will continue to be offered the likes of short tennis, badminton, table tennis and swimming on Tuesday and Thursday from 8.30am to 12.30pm.

Active Life currently use 4 sports courts in term time and during all school holidays access for Active Life is reduced to 2 courts in order to accommodate William Penn's holiday playscheme.

Taekwondo

Two sessions: Tuesday between 5.00pm and 6.00pm – 2 courts (they also use 1 squash court from 4 - 5pm); Sunday between 5.30pm and 8.30pm – 4 courts. They have been offered space in the squash courts and / or studio free of charge as well as 2 courts in the sports hall, if the proposal goes ahead. They have confirmed their booking under the present arrangement only.

When Hertsmere Leisure put together the analysis for the sports hall development this was based on the 2 sports courts still providing over 6m² of activity space per person and therefore made this space a maximum occupancy of 50 people which would accommodate the Taekwondo booking which stated 50 participants on the booking form.

Skanska

Presently book 3 courts in the Sports Hall for Badminton on a Wednesday between 6.00pm and 7.00pm. They have not confirmed their booking going forward and potentially it could be relocated to the Free Reach School. They have confirmed their booking under the present arrangement only.

One off bookings such as Badminton

There are approximately 20 casual one-off badminton bookings per week. If the proposed sports hall development were to go ahead then 5 of these would not be able to be carried out at the present times. There are still a lot of slots available particularly during the day and at weekends.

The Reach Free School would be a potential venue for these casual bookings.

Walking Football - does not take place at William Penn

Future Provision

In addition to the upgraded multi-use games area, the proposed new facilities for William Penn Leisure Centre include a large soft play area, built over 3 levels for children, and a beginner-level clip and climb facility for all ages. These new features will encourage more children and young people to access the leisure centre and support the Council in achieving its aims of getting more children and young people physically active.

Within the Three Rivers Strategic Plan 2018-21, targets have been set to increase the number of attendances by young people at leisure venues and activities. It is anticipated that the new facilities and activities will increase the attendances of children and young people by 40,000 per annum from year 2 of the contract. In addition, children and young people remain a target across Hertfordshire:

Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020:

"We will....seek to enable children and young people to adopt healthy lifestyles (including developing an understanding of healthy and safe relationships, and

improving levels of physical activity), to reduce their risks of experiencing health problems in later life”

Hertfordshire Public Health Strategy 2017-2021:

Priority 5: Children and young people physical activity

Members raised the following issues:

- Why were the Council not listening to residents? The alternatives offered were not viable. It was important for people to feel they belong to a group for their social and emotional wellbeing. A noisy play area could make it impossible to play games in the sports hall.
- A Member reiterated that the success of the netball should have been taken into consideration when the decision was made. That was the reason the motion would be going to Full Council on 17 July, to understand all the implications and decide how to go forward.
- A Member commented that there was no mention of a soft play area in the Physical Activity Strategy at item 6. Also, in order to comply with Policy DM12 of the Local Plan the facility should be easily accessible.
- A Member explained that if the Council did save the hall they would be contractually obliged to find circa £1.5m over the next 20 years.

Q2. Why was there no consultation with the users? Why were they only told about the changes last week? (Letters (13/6/2018) have just mentioned the change of the direct debit).

The changes to the sports hall were advised to Councillors through the committee process and approved as part of the new Leisure Management Contract, from Council 19 March 2018 and Policy and Resources Committee Meeting on 19 March 2018.

Council Members will be aware that the Council's preferred bidder, Fusion, dropped out of the tender process in January 2018. It had been agreed with Policy & Resources Committee in September 2017 that, should this be the case, Officers would start a dialogue with the Council's reserve bidder SLM, based on their variant bid.

The contract with SLM was signed at the end of April 2018 for a contract start date of 1 July 2018. Until SLM were able to obtain the relevant membership data from Hertsmere Leisure, they were unable to make contact with members. Once they had this information, they contacted the users at the earliest opportunity in order to make them aware of the changes. Letters were sent on 25 May 2018 to all block bookers.

Under normal circumstances, Officers and the new contractor would have actively publicised the proposed development around the venue, including press releases to the wider community as part of the mobilisation plan which would have started on 1 July.

Given the interest shown by Councillors and users of the sports hall at William Penn, it was decided to wait on publicising any details of the proposed changes

until after tonight's Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting and following the outcome of the full Council meeting on 17 July.

The following issues were raised:

- The information provided to Councillors was that all the users identified would be accommodated within the new arrangements therefore there would be no need to consult. The Leisure and Wellbeing Committee had been advised incorrectly that block bookers would be offered appropriate alternatives.
- A Member said decisions could not be made until up to date information was provided and that there should be no compromises.
- A Member said they had no confidence that SLM would be able to provide accurate information. The Head of Community Services advised he would have no problem with a Member from each Group becoming involved in the analysis of the information.

Q3. Why have William Penn Members not been consulted or even told about the changes?

Same response as Q2

The following issues were raised:

- As the Council is contractually obliged to pay back £63,000 per year it would be irresponsible for the Council not to plan where this money would come from.
- The history of this tender is that we had a preferred bidder who pulled out. That left one bidder.
- The Head of Community Services gave a brief history of the tender process which had gone through Committee at each stage of the process:-

Following a Bidders' Day presentation in February 2016 there were 15 expressions of interest and 7 submissions were received at Pre-Qualification (PQQ) stage. All bidders were notified including the one unsuccessful bid. 2 shortlisted bidders dropped out of the process. That left 4 companies. They submitted bids at Invitation to Submit Detailed Solution (ISDS). The Council shortlisted down to 3 companies as one was unaffordable, Hertsmere Leisure, Sports & Leisure Management and Fusion were invited to Invitation to Submit Final Tender (ISFT). Hertsmere Leisure withdrew from the process due to other commitments, which left SLM and Fusion. SLM submitted 2 bids, 1 standard and 1 variant bid. Fusion submitted 1 standard bid. Members voted for Fusion as preferred provider with SLM variant bid as back up. Fusion then pulled out. So this went to Policy and Resources and then Full Council in March 2018 with a recommendation to accept the variant bid.

Q4. Why did TRDC issue a press release about this issue after the matter was raised by Councillors but the press release was not sent to Councillors or even Members of the Leisure Committee?

It was agreed to skip this question as it referred to a press release and there were remaining questions that would be of more interest to the members of the public in attendance.

Q5. Will high-sugar drinks be offered in the café and if so how does this comply with our intention to tackle both adult and childhood obesity?

The Leisure Development Manager responded that there was a range of drinks available at the venues. This included high-sugar drinks, reduced/low-sugar drinks and no-sugar drinks. The procurement process did not state that high-sugar drinks were not to be available in Council owned facilities. Officers were also mindful that some members and users of the venues wanted or needed to have access to high-sugar products. The choice on purchase was with the members and users of the venue.

The following points were raised:

A Member said they did not see how that would comply with the public health targets. They felt water would be sufficient for people exercising unless they had a medical condition, when they would bring their own drinks. The café is being extended and with the introduction of the soft play area it looks as if the financial aspect is the main reason.

Another Member said there should be a choice; endurance athletes need sugary drinks.

Another Member had visited another Everyone Active venue and was reassured to find a healthy selection of food. People need a choice. The Leisure company running the facility need to make money and it would be unreasonable of the Council to state exactly how this should be done.

Q6. Where is the evidence to show that soft play areas reduce the risk of childhood obesity?

The Leisure Development Manager responded that it was worth noting that the principles and understanding on why the Council encourages and supports outdoor play is the same for indoor play. Children will develop gross motor skills from jumping, balancing etc. all of which are vital parts of physical development, as well as benefiting from social interaction opportunities. Children will also learn to manage risk in a safe environment, which again is key to developing into a healthy adult. Physical activity, particularly that which is unstructured (i.e. play), is a large part of reducing childhood obesity, increasing physical activity levels and potentially reducing a range of illnesses. Below are listed points from the Government's Guidance on childhood obesity that are relevant for soft play:

- Poor diet and a low levels of physical activity are the primary causal factors to excess weight;
- Low levels of physical activity and increased sedentary behaviours of children and young people exacerbate the problems of poor diet and nutrition. In England, only 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5 to 15 achieve recommended levels of physical activity. As children grow older, the decrease in activity levels is greater for girls than boys: 23% of girls aged 5 to 7 meet the recommended levels of activity, but by ages 13 to 15 only 8% still do;
- Local authorities adapting the built environment to make healthier choices around physical activity and food choices (promoting opportunities for active play is a really important aspect of this to support both physical

activity and social and emotional development of children in their early years);

- encourage parents to sign up for the Start4Life information service for parents from 0 to 5 years; the service provides evidence-based information for parents on pregnancy and child health development from 0 to 5 years, including important messages on breastfeeding initiation and continuation and improved nutrition.

The following points were raised:

- Where were the specific references that the Council should be installing soft play areas to reduce the risk of obesity?
- A Member pointed out that SLM were instigating the soft play area, not TRDC. Any solutions or recommendations on the sports hall should be considered as part of the review.
- A Member had put forward a motion but this had been refused by the Chief Executive

Q7. Research shows that we need to tackle the growing problem of obesity with pregnant women. A significant number of current users of the sports hall fall into this cohort. Pregnant, obese mothers are at greater risk of having obese children.

A Member was concerned that if the sports hall was halved to accommodate the soft play area, the people that would have been using it for the sports were likely to be the target group for reducing obesity. Many people do continue participating in their sport throughout their pregnancy.

Q8 I understand that if the sports hall at William Penn is kept as a whole and not split in half that we, TRDC, will be liable for £63,000 per annum for the length of the 20 year contract with Active Life.

Please can the Committee have a breakdown of how that figure was reached and will it still be £63,000 in 2039 or will the figure rise with inflation?

This is the difference between SLM variant and standard bid.

The additional average £63,000 per annum is made up of two elements.

SLM will pay an additional £102,000 per annum as a management fee and there is an additional £634,000 of capital to undertake the conversion of the sports hall at William Penn. The cost of this capital at the time of the report was £39,000 per annum thus the average net impact to the Council over the life of the contract is an additional £63,000 per annum (£102,000 less £39,000).

Since the report, the cost of capital has fallen and is now £32,000, thus the additional average benefit over the life of the contract is circa £70,000 per annum (£102,000 less £32,000).

The Management fee is subject to CPI.

Q9. I feel that a lot of misunderstanding surrounding the loss of the Sports Hall at William Penn could have been avoided if there had been a Users' Forum for interested parties. Can I ask that a Users' Forum is set up as soon as is possible?

The Head of Community Services confirmed that a users' forum would be set up.

Further comments raised

- A 12-month moratorium was not good enough.
- If the Administration want this to work they can make it happen.
- The proposals are the responsibility of the Council as it was voted for by all members of the Committee.
- The Council are giving themselves a year in order to ensure they get an appropriate solution working together.
- The Council are putting money before health and it is Tax Payers' money not Council money.
- People using the facility are mothers and fathers who can only use it during the day, therefore the alternatives are not suitable either timewise or location.
- The Physical Activity and Strategy Action Plan promotes Active People, Active Places and Active Together. Soft play would not fit any of these categories.
- A plan was required of where the money should come from.
- If the Sports Hall was retained we would be saving money on Mental Health. The new Mental Health Champion will be Councillor Roger Seabourne. This Committee had donated money to Mind and other Mental Health organisations.
- The Chairman advised that he had received 142 emails to date, 2 in favour of a Soft Play, 140 against (comprising 50 netball players, 11 badminton, 27 Badminton 21 Active Life, and 42 did not identify a sport).

LEC 06/18 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

This report was to provide Members with an updated Physical Activity Strategy to replace the 2015-18 document.

The Sports Development Officer presented the report to the Committee.

Councillor Alex Michaels moved, seconded by Councillor David Sansom, that the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee adopt the Physical Activity Strategy and Action Plan.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee adopt the Physical Activity Strategy and Action Plan.

LEC 07/18 FUTURE SMALL LEISURE CAPITAL FACILITIES PROGRAMME

This report was to provide Members with proposals for the future priority order for upgrading and refurbishing small leisure capital facilities in the District.

The Leisure Development Manager presented the report to the Committee.

Members made the following comments:

- Maintenance of the Chorleywood Wonder Wood at site 15A would be the responsibility of TRDC. If the play trail option were to be approved,

then management and maintenance of this responsibility would need to be investigated.

- Disappointment that Oxhey Playing Fields was put back again. Assurance was requested to ensure it would not be put back further.
- CIL money could be used for Play Areas. Officers confirmed that money from Section 106 Agreements could be used but CIL money was not specifically for Play Areas as it was more likely to be used for more strategic bids and for work delivered by the County Council.
- Was there any possibility of a new Play Area in Rickmansworth Park? This was not in the current programme.
- Primrose Hill was in need of attention and was the only play area in that part of the Ward. The Leisure Development Manager confirmed there was Section 106 money available for this but that the play area was managed by Abbots Langley Parish Council and therefore discussions would need to take place with them. *POST MEETING NOTE: The Leisure Development Manager will make contact with Abbots Langley Parish Council to ascertain if the Parish was going to commit any work to the play area. She will report back to the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee in October, as part of her report on Cassiobridge play area.*
- On bringing forward the refurbishment of Leavesden Country Park, this would mean the play areas at the Swillet and Denham Way would be pushed back by 2 years. The cost of each of these upgrades had been estimated at £100,000 so there would be no budget implications.
- Officers had estimated the spend on the Leavesden Country Park to be £131,510. The Capital Budget available was £100,000 with £31,510 from Section 106 monies.

Councillor Chris Lloyd proposed, seconded by Councillor Alex Michaels that the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee agree the proposals for the 2019-2024 Leisure Capital Facilities Programme as detailed at point 2.2 and that a further report on Cassiobridge Play Area be brought to the 10 October Leisure, Environment and Community Committee

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee agree the proposals for the 2019 – 2024 Small Leisure Capital Facilities Programme as detailed at point 2.2; and

That a further report on Cassiobridge Play Area be brought to the 10 October Leisure, Environment and Community Committee.

LEC 08/18 PUBLIC HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE (Presentation)

Item Deferred to August 2018 meeting.

LEC 09/18 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed their work programme. The following amendments/additions were made:

The presentation on Public Health report and Mental Health update to be added to the August 2018 meeting agenda.

Possibility of a play area for Rickmansworth Park to be added.

RESOLVED:

That subject to the changes above the work programme be agreed.

CHAIRMAN