

## **Appendix 2**

### **Leisure Development Priority 4 and 5 Briefing Paper**

#### **Summary**

The last six months have increased inequalities around health and wellbeing, with many people more isolated and less active than ever in their life. The leisure development programme provides some of the most accessible and inclusive opportunities for people, of all abilities and backgrounds, to come together in Three Rivers. Disadvantaged communities have been hit the hardest and likely have the most challenging journeys ahead of them, and with every passing week, and with winter approaching, those challenges become greater.

#### **Sport and Physical Activity**

Government guidance issued (11 July 2020) permitted the return to sport and physical activity both indoors and outdoors in small groups. Updated government guidance (10 September 2020) listed that exceptions where groups can be larger than 6 people, included organised indoor and outdoor sports, physical activity and exercise classes that followed Covid-secure guidelines.

National Governing Bodies (NGBs) 'return to sport' guidance has also been developed (for example by England Netball) covering adaptations to training and match play to allow the safe resumption of team sports and activities.

The sport and physical activity programme includes sessions such as Learn to Run, Programme for Mums, Netball, Swimming for Stroke, Dance for Parkinson's, Get Set for adults with disabilities, Tai Chi and Yoga etc.

#### **Arts and Culture**

The Community Arts Development Programme delivers a variety of activities and opportunities for people of all ages within the district- spanning the Visual Arts, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Heritage.

These themes take the form of regular exhibitions and artist workshops at the Artistsmeet gallery, weekly creative classes for adults and photography walks for families. More targeted work is also delivered through Making It- Arts on Prescription for adults, Making It Mini for families, one-off project work with schools and Heritage based activity/events in Leavesden Country Park, as part of the HLF activity plan.

We have built up a trusted reputation locally, with activities being well attended and feedback being very positive.

Pre-lockdown, we had some exciting projects being delivered and planned and with restrictions now relaxing, the Government are recognising the important role community activities can play in getting people to return safely to 'normal', which will in turn benefit their physical and mental health- both of which can be enhanced through creative activity.

#### **Play**

The government recognise the important role out-of-school settings (OOSS) play in providing enriching activities, giving children the opportunity to socialise with others outside their household and promoting their wellbeing. Play also has many other benefits, supporting children's physical

health, mental and emotional wellbeing as well as supporting their cognitive and social development.

Play Rangers have been running since 2007 in parks and outdoor woodland spaces. It aims to encourage children to get more involved in outdoor play, to make more use of outdoor play spaces and to develop their risk taking skills within a controlled environment. There is a particular impact in areas of deprivation and for families who may not have outdoor space at home.

They are a familiar sight within our community and highly valued by our residents.

Updated government guidance (10 September 2020) listed that exceptions where groups can be larger than 6 people, included youth groups and activities as well as schools being able to use their judgement when deciding whether they can use additional providers to deliver a service.

The play service includes sessions such as Play Rangers (Community), Play Rangers (in Schools), Mill End Youthy, Play with Care (intergenerational project with schools and care homes) and All About Me (programme for children and young people with mental health issues).

### Survey Results

In order to assess the need for a return to the leisure development programme of activities, a survey was sent to all those on the leisure email mailing list.

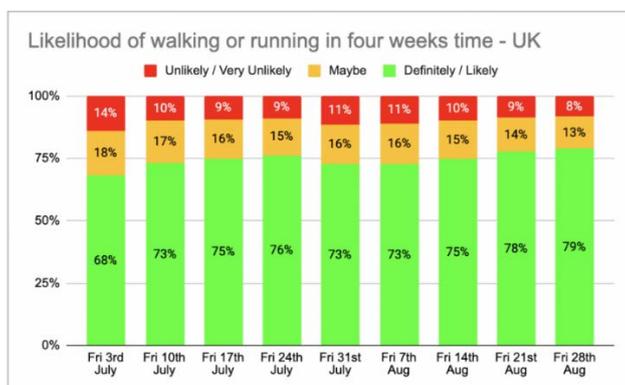
Around 300 responses have been made to the 'Return to Leisure' survey. The results show an overwhelmingly positive attitude to return to activity.

The survey results show that 64% are very confident to returning to activity and that over 80% would do so within one month. When asked why they want to return the main reasons for doing so are their physical (78%) and mental health and wellbeing (77%). Over 70% would be prepared to pay more for additional health & safety measures to be implemented.

Some of the comments from the survey include:

- "Health and development of my child"
- "My kids love play Rangers and can't wait to go back"
- "For my children to attend Play Rangers"

Organisations such as parkrun have also conducted large scale regular surveys of the public in gauging their potential to return to activities. They asked; *If official government guidance changed to enable parkrun to return in four weeks' time how likely would you be to turn up and walk or run?*



Average number of weekly responses = 1,188

Their findings show confidence to UK parkrunners' intent to return in the near future as walkers, runners, or volunteers and this is positivity increasing over time. The findings match those seen in the 'Return to Leisure' survey.

In an effort to understand the evidence surrounding COVID-19 transmission in outdoor settings, parkrun UK also commissioned [a rapid review of the evidence](#) by Canterbury Christ Church University, led by Professor Mike Weed. The review concluded that, with appropriate evidence-based mitigations in place, it is possible to deliver outdoor events and activities across a range of sectors, and of varying sizes and formats, in a way that does not significantly increase risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Participants who attend the Art programme classes regularly (including a large proportion of older people) have also been enquiring about when sessions will start back again. Their feedback is that they've felt isolated for so long and need vital interaction with peers in their community.

Schools who contracted Play Rangers in to deliver services were consulted on a return of Play Rangers to their schools.

Of the 5 schools we are currently working with 3 have responded with:

- 1 is ready to resume the contract immediately
- 1 is happy to review and consider resuming the contract in January 2021.
- 1 school is keen to discuss adapting the current agreement in order to resume.
- We are waiting for 2 schools to respond

## **Benefits to the Community**

### **Sport and Physical Activity**

Chief Medical Officer Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75mins physical activity. Physical Activity can reduce the risk of major illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and cancer by up to 50% and lower the risk of early death by up to 30%. Research also shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a larger adverse impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of some groups than others. Young adults and women have been more likely to report worse physical and mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic than older adults and men (Sport England). This is similar to pre-pandemic patterns, but the differences have increased.

There are, however, opportunities to support people who feel like this by reopening sport and activity opportunities through simple and accessible ways to manage their anxiety as they restart. Sport and physical activity has the ability to increase people's activity levels, provide them with focus, structure, and the pride of achievement, but also the ability to move people out of indoor environments where the risk of infection is much greater. Being active, outdoors, and social, improving our health and happiness, and getting off the couch, has never been as important as it is right now.

The financial uncertainty as a result of coronavirus has had a profound impact, particularly among those already on low incomes, as well as young people, and we know that this has had a knock-on impact on their ability to be active. This means that activities that are free / low cost / provide good value for money are becoming more and more appealing.

Many people who were looking after children during lockdown were able to embrace being active as a family and this may be lost as this context changes once more. But there is an opportunity that an

increase in time (for some) may enable more time for physical activity. As restrictions ease, those in this group are also more likely to actively seek opportunities to be active – especially outdoors.

According to a study by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, Every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity in England generates £3.91 in return for the economy and society. Physical activity also plays an important role in easing the burden on the NHS by preventing a number of serious physical and mental health conditions. The study estimates that exercise provides savings of £5.2bn in healthcare and another £1.7bn in social care costs – including £450m being saved by preventing 30 million additional GP visits.

## **Arts and Culture**

Being creative has been proven to improve peoples' wellbeing in these ways:

- Helping to boost self-esteem and confidence
- Helping people to relax and give them something positive to focus on
- Helping people to feel included and valued within a group and the wider community

During lockdown, people in our district will have felt isolated, lonely and anxious- their mental health and wellbeing being affected. We are now in a position to actively help people to overcome some of these issues, by restarting our activities, engaging them and enabling them to make changes.

Outcomes and evidence discussed from a recent meeting between the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Art, Health and Wellbeing have showed that during Covid-19

- 9 out of 10 people have done something creative (mainly listening to music)
- The uptake of creative activities has been across the whole social spectrum, not just the usual profile
- Attendance at virtual museums has been 'off the scale'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNyx6GIUQoE>

This evidence shows people have turned to the creative arts during a time of need.

Three Rivers DC are also an active financial/delivering partner in the Hertfordshire Year of Culture (HYOC2020) campaign, with the Arts Development Officer named as a Local Champion. Although the campaign has taken a hit due to Covid-19, we are now in the position to safely start running and promoting events/activities again, whilst raising our profile within the county.

## **Play**

Children should be taking part in 60 minutes of physical activity every day – physical and active play supports children in achieving the recommended daily target. Along with this, play has a positive impact on emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

Many children will have suffered from social isolation during the lockdown period and despite now being in schools, the impact this has had on children is only now being seen. The sessions provided through the play service will support children in developing their confidence and self-esteem, develop social and physical skills and an opportunity to just be children.

## **Impact to the Community if services do not run**

As we continue to battle Covid-19, public health must be the top priority. By investing in physical and cultural activity, we can increase people's physical and mental resilience to Covid and reduce the burden of underlying health conditions on the NHS.

Many individuals are not able to actively participate in their regular individual or group sporting or physical activities outside of their homes. Despite gyms and leisure centres reopening, many other services individuals attend have not returned, limiting opportunities to keep active. Those with disabilities have found that there is reduced provision and activity in day centres and support groups have ceased.

Under such conditions, many tend to be less physically active, have longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns as well as worse diets, resulting in weight gain and loss of physical fitness. Low-income families are especially vulnerable to negative effects of stay at home rules as they tend to have sub-standard accommodations and more confined spaces, making it difficult to engage in physical exercise.

There are significant health benefits of being physically active and taking part in cultural sessions. It boosts our self-esteem and mood, increases sleep quality and energy, builds immunity, reduces the risk of developing many diseases, and promotes quality of life. All of these would be impacted if services continue not to run – particularly for our most disadvantaged communities.

Various studies have been released in the last few months stating that being obese or overweight puts you at greater risk of serious illness or death from Covid-19 (as well as from many other life-threatening diseases). The review of evidence by Public Health England found excess weight put people at greater risk of needing hospital admission or intensive care and the risk grew substantially as weight increased.

The government has acknowledged this in new measures to curb obesity. Losing weight can bring huge benefits for health - and may also help protect against the health risks of Covid-19.

If the play services do not run, it will have a detrimental effect on children and young people, when we know that in the current situation housing issues, domestic violence, financial issues/job losses and safeguarding concerns are set to escalate as a result.

## **Risks**

There is a reputational risk to the council in not running the service. Questions have been asked from residents over why services have not been restored as they have seen other areas of the council return to normal.

Some quotes from the leisure survey are below

- *the weekly class should be able to return but Three Rivers do not seem to be able to organise it.*
- *Why is it taking so long to start up our class, when I see plenty of other classes already up and running?*
- *They need to come back ASAP*

Not running services will also have an impact on the Corporate Framework, including:

- We will work towards reducing inequalities, prevent homelessness and encourage healthy lifestyles

- CP22 – Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities
- LL31 – Number of attendances by adults at leisure venues and activities
- LL33 – Number of attendances by young people at leisure venues and activities
- CP02 - Satisfaction with parks and open spaces

Should a booked on participant display symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, there will be a need to refund them/any members of their household or bubble, or transfer the booking to a later date where possible. If the coach/staff member/artist/practitioner were to display symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, there will be a need to postpone the activity/session and refund any participants booked on. The staff members associated with the session, may also need to be compensated for a loss of earnings.

### **Practicalities (Managing COVID-19)**

Venue and activity risk assessments are completed in advance for all leisure development activities. A COVID-19 specific risk assessment will be completed to supplement this. This will cover both mitigations and changes in the venue/activity required to deliver this safely and in line with government guidance.

This will include things such as (but not be limited to):

- Regular hand washing (on arrival / leaving) where possible. Where this is not possible hand sanitiser is to be provided.
- All equipment used will be cleaned with antibacterial wipes before and after use. Where high contact or touch points (for example a netball) are common. Separate 'clean balls' will be available.
- Participant attendance at the session will be logged on Upshot Monitor and evaluation system to ensure accurate reporting of those who have booked and attended or no shows at the session.
- All participants will have a 3m by 3m space in which to exercise as per government guidance.
- No activities will take place in carpeted venues as per government guidance.
- Artistic equipment will not be shared
- Play equipment to be cleaned regularly and rotated, so that it is not touched for 48 hours
- Limiting numbers where applicable e.g. indoor spaces, Play Rangers session and Mill End Youthy
- Adhering to venue regulations

All activities will follow current Government guidelines on social distancing and NGB guidance in their 'Return to Sport' plans approved by central government.

All participants are required to register in advance of attending and complete a PAR-Q form on booking when necessary. All bookings would be run online (to remove cash handling) and to ensure we have contact details for Track & Trace purposes.

Participants will be reminded not to attend if they or their household bubble have symptoms or if they have recently been contacted by the NHS and asked to self-isolate for 10 days.

To plan for the future it is proposed to introduce of a traffic light or number system by which we can coordinate activity based on changes in government guidance. This can also be communicated to members of the public so they are aware of what leisure programmes are running, when and how.

The system would work in the following way:

Level 1	Activities run as normal with no restrictions. No Covid transmission in community.
Level 2	Full outdoor activities resume. Indoor activities resume but with social distancing measures in place
Level 3	Small group activities allowed to resume, outdoors only, with social distancing measures in place
Level 4	National or local lockdown enforced. All activities are stopped. Online programmes run where possible.

### **Recommendation**

To deliver the priority 4 activities from October 2020 and the priority 5 activities from January 2021:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Priority 4 or 5?</b>
Play Rangers in the Community	4
All About Me – Relax Kids (Mental Health project for children and young people)	4
Be Creative	4
Artistsmeet	4
Back to Netball William Penn	4
Walking Netball William Penn	4
Junior Netball Clement Danes	4
Back to Netball Clement Danes	4
Netball Now Reach Free	4
Moving Mums Stroller Fitness	4
Moving Mums Boxing Fit	4
Moving Mums Baby Yoga	4
Moving Mums Boxing Fit	4
Moving Mums Baby Yoga	4
Learn to Run Croxley	4
Learn to Run Aquadrome	4
Learn to Run South Oxhey	4
Junior parkrun (Hire of Grounds)	4
South Oxhey parkrun (Hire of Grounds)	4
Rickmansworth parkrun (Hire of Grounds)	4
Mill End Youthy	4
Active Development programme	4
Swimming for Stroke	4
Dance for Parkinson's	4
Photography Walks	4
Get Set Programme (for adults with a disability)	4
Denham Way play area and funding application	4
Wider work on Eastbury Recreation Ground	5
Sk8 Camps	5
Supervised Skate Sessions	5
Play Rangers in Schools	5
Making It Mini	5
Schools art projects (Magical Minds, Reach Free Film on youth crime)	5
Active Parks	5
Sheltered Housing Scheme Project	5

Nature Programme across the district (which is not part of the HLF project)	5
Play with Care (intergenerational project working with schools and care homes)	5
Eastbury Tennis	5
Maple Cross Tennis	5
South Oxhey Tennis	5
Review of Outdoor Gym Equipment	5