

## HEALTH AND LEISURE & DIBDEN CONTRACT UPDATE

### 1.0 Freedom Leisure Contract Update

#### 1.1 Introduction

Walking into Applemore and Totton Health and Leisure Centres has a very different feel this winter as Freedom conclude their capital investment programmes at three of the five district leisure centres. The new look reception areas, complete with Costa Coffee offering, at Applemore and Totton will be open for customers to enjoy early in 2023. Likewise, the refurbished Group Fitness Studio and upgraded changing room areas at Totton and all new Soft Play and Café area at Ringwood will also be open early in 2023. The completion of these capital investment projects, ahead of what is traditionally the busiest time of the year for the leisure sector, provides Freedom Leisure with a fantastic, fresh and improved customer experience through which to promote to the districts residents to encourage them to participate in sport and physical activity.

Since the commencement of the second year of the contract in July 2022, Freedom have continually grown their membership base. Health and Fitness memberships have grown by 6.6% in total during the period of July 22 to December 22 with just under 2,000 people joining a health and fitness membership. Whilst this continued growth is positive, total membership levels continue to trail pre-covid performance by 6%. The learn to swim programme has grown by 6% during the same period, with just under 4,800 children learning to swim in the districts swimming pools. Numbers here are ahead of pre-pandemic levels, illustrating the popularity of swimming lessons to the local community.

The impact of the ongoing cost of living and utilities crisis to the leisure centres operations has led to Freedom Leisure implementing several mitigating actions. These have included the reduction of pool water temperatures, the seasonal close-down of the sauna and steam rooms and a review of pricing as measures to reduce energy consumption. The council continues to consult with Freedom Leisure regarding the impact of these actions and any future mitigations.

#### 1.2 Performance Update

- During the last period, Freedom Leisure have delivered several membership promotions to encourage residents to join their local Freedom leisure centre. These have coincided with Black Friday and Cyber Monday and continued into December 2022 with a 'rest of the 2022 for free' promotion.
- The impact of the promotional campaigns has seen Freedom deliver a 6.6% net growth in health and fitness memberships and reduce the pre-pandemic gap in memberships from 10% down to 6%.
- In addition to the above promotions on memberships, and alongside the launch of the refurbished group fitness studio at Totton, Freedom are offering 10 Group Fitness Classes for £35 with 400 passes sold to date. The promotion ends in January.
- Freedom's Learn to Swim programme continues to show positive momentum and is 3% ahead of pre-pandemic levels with just under 4,800 children learning to swim every week in the districts swimming pools. Freedom are working on recruiting and training more swimming teachers to cover instructor illness and holidays.
- Freedom's Active Lifestyles, GP Referral Programme has seen a 9% growth in the last 3-months with 328 residents currently on the scheme. There have been 181 referrals to the programme in the last 3-months with 1,169 attendees to GP Referral Fitness Classes.



### 1.3 Healthy Communities Update



Freedom's Healthy Communities Team will be launching a new Healthy Communities action plan for 2023 which will look to engage with new partnerships in the district to increase the number of people accessing the leisure centres to get active.

The councils Health and Wellbeing Officer will be working with Freedom to support them in delivering their plan. Early opportunities which are being explored include:

- Working with NHS physios to use the leisure centres to deliver services to patients.
- To deliver a 12-week pre-operation exercise programme in partnership with the NHS to help prepare patients for surgery.
- To create an informative leaflet to provide to partners in the district to illustrate what facilities and activities are on offer for residents and how they can get involved.

### 1.4 Capital Projects Update

- Freedom's £2.4million investment into improving the facilities at Applemore, Ringwood and Totton are commencing well. Totton and Applemore are due to be completed for the start of 2023 with Ringwood following at the end of January 2023.
- The venue improvements include new reception and café areas, upgraded changing rooms and new soft play facilities.
- Freedom are working on a launch event to promote the upgraded facilities in early 2023. The council will be fully involved in this.

## 2 Mytime Active, Dibden Golf Course Contract Update

### 2.1 Performance Update

- Despite the golf season entering the winter period and Dibden losing daylight hours, the popularity of golf has continued with participation averaging 3,500 golfers per month and the clubhouse hosting several festive functions and weddings during the winter months.
- Pay and play golf participation continues to be popular at Dibden with income here 3% ahead of the budget set by the golf club year to date.
- Food and beverage income has also shown a positive performance with club house occupancy high and income 6% ahead of the budget set year to date.
- One area Mytime are working on at Dibden is Golf Memberships and it expected that this area will show signs of improvement as we head into the Spring 2023.
- Mytime have made a number of improvements to the clubhouse and have proposals in place to re-open the Pro-Shop and install a new ball dispenser at the Driving Range for early in 2023.



## 3 Recommendations

Members, please note the updates within this report. Future updates will be provided at each panel meeting. The next update will be provided in March 2023.