

HEALTH & LEISURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In March 2018, the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel agreed that a Health and Leisure Task and Finish group should be set up to consider the most efficient and effective way of managing and delivering the Health and Leisure provision.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to the provision of five Health and Leisure Centres located in New Milton, Lymington, Applemore, Totton and Ringwood. Each centre is located adjacent to a school or college or shares a campus, and in the case of Totton and Lymington, the centre is attached to the school/college. Centres offer pools, sports halls, studios, gyms and health suites, with the key business areas being gym membership, group exercise and swimming lessons.

2. TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 2.1 The Task and Finish Group is made up of 9 elected members, providing geographic representation of the district, and the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing. The group have been supported by the Executive Head of Resources, Service Manager (Community and Customer Engagement), Head of Finance and Service Manager (Health and Leisure).
- 2.2 The Task and Finish group consists of:
 - Cllr Steve Clarke (Chair) – New Milton
 - Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine – Ringwood South
 - Cllr Mark Steele – Bransgore & Burley
 - Cllr Christine Ward – Becton
 - Cllr Kate Crisell – Furzedown & Hardley
 - Cllr Sue Bennison - Marchwood
 - Cllr Alex Wade – Hythe West & Langdown
 - Cllr Alan Penson - Lymington
 - Cllr Derek Tipp – Ashurst, Copythorne South & Netley Marsh

and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing – Cllr James Binns.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The Task and Finish group were asked to consider alternative delivery models for future delivery of the service and make recommendations back to this panel.

The following Terms of Reference were agreed:

1. To achieve an outcome that will significantly reduce the cost of the Council's 5 Health and Leisure centres.
2. To objectively assess the management options, based upon an assessment of value, judged against a range of criteria of importance to this Council's objectives, to include an understanding of the risks associated with different operating models.

3. To make recommendations on future management options based upon the outcome of the assessment process.

4. CONSIDERATIONS AND KEY TASKS

- 4.1 In order to determine the best approach for future delivery of the service the group considered:

- The deliverability/viability of the authority's strategic vision under each option;
- The wider outcomes that the management option must deliver;
- Level of cost reduction and revenue savings required and in what timescales;
- The condition of the current facilities and the opportunities to invest;
- The impact on directly employed staff;
- Attitude to risk and the level of risk transfer being sought through the process;
- The amount of control that the council wishes to retain; and
- The sustainability for the service.

- 4.2 In support of these considerations the group undertook a number of key tasks including:

- Considering and articulating the vision and desired outcomes for the service based on an understanding of the community need and the local authority's wider outcomes;
- Visiting all of the 5 Health and Leisure centres;
- Agreeing key assessment criteria for delivery models based on Sport England guidance;
- Identified delivery model reference sites and, based on the key assessment criteria, established a key set of questions for these reference sites; and
- Made a number of visits/calls to the following reference sites:
 - Bournemouth Borough Council (Council Owned Trust)
 - Flintshire County Council (Public Sector Mutual)
 - Broxtowe Borough Council (Local Authority Trading Company)
 - Fareham Borough Council (Outsourced/Partnership)
 - Derbyshire Dales District Council (Outsourced/Partnership)

- 4.3 The vision for the service was agreed as being '*Working with partners to create active communities by providing quality, affordable, accessible leisure facilities, dedicated to improving physical and mental health and wellbeing and establishing a sustainable healthy lifestyle legacy for future generations*'.

Supported by the desired outcomes of:

- Reduced cost to the taxpayer
- Improved physical wellbeing
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Supporting individual and family development and learning
- Social and community benefits
- Economic benefits and sustainability of the service

5. EVALUATION OF DELIVERY OPTIONS

- 5.1 The group undertook an evaluation of each option against the key assessment criteria to provide an initial assessment of the options available and enabling an informed decision on the preferred solution to meet future needs. The evaluation adopted a traffic light system in order to rank the models in terms of greatest potential advantages from the authority's perspective.
- 5.2 On the basis that all sites are dual use, Asset Transfer was not seen as feasible option. Similarly, the Public Sector Mutual was ruled out on the basis that it does not offer a sustainable future solution.
- 5.3 The partnership option was evaluated as having the greatest potential benefits, followed by the local authority trading company both of which having the ability to deliver fiscal advantages in terms of VAT and business rates.
- 5.4 In order to further evaluate the partnership model as the preferred approach it was agreed that additional information would need to be obtained to ascertain the market interest in the Health and Leisure centres and a market engagement exercise would be supported to deliver this objective. This exercise would need the expertise of an external consultant and is estimated to take 2 months at a cost of around £10,000.
- 5.5 Market engagement would involve approaching a number of operators to gauge their views on the commercial viability of a partnership arrangement. It would include ascertaining the markets thoughts on the facilities, their size and condition; possible investment opportunities; demand and income opportunities; and the ability to deliver savings.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As set out above, it is proposed to engage consultants to progress the evaluation of the partnership model at an estimated cost of £10,000. This will be managed within existing budgets.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the partnership model is pursued as the preferred option, giving the greatest future benefits for the community and the delivery of the service. The market engagement exercise is undertaken and the findings are reported back to Panel in November.
- 8.2 That a consultant is commissioned to undertake the market engagement exercise.

For further information contact:
Cllr Steve Clarke
Chairman of Health and Leisure Task and
Finish group

Background Papers:
13 March 2018 (Community Overview
Scrutiny Panel report)
Proceedings of the Task and Finish Group
– Exempt Information

