

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Leisure Facilities Cabinet Sub-Committee**  
held on Wednesday, 2nd June, 2010 at The Tatton Room - Town Hall,  
Macclesfield SK10 1DX

## **PRESENT**

### **Cabinet Sub-Committee Members:**

Councillor Andrew Knowles (Chairman)  
Councillor Roland Domleo  
Councillor Frank Keegan

### **Advisory Members:**

Councillor Ainsley Arnold  
Councillor Terry Beard  
Councillor John Hammond  
Councillor Ray Westwood

### **Officers:**

Mark Wheelton, Leisure and Green Spaces Manager  
Keith Pickton, Leisure Facilities Manager  
Paul Mountford, Legal and Democratic Services

### **Apologies:**

Councillor David Brown  
Councillor Paul Edwards  
Guy Kilminster, Head of Health and Wellbeing  
Rob Hyde, Service Development Manager

## **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

## **2 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

## **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be approved as a correct record.

## **4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE SERVICE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the strategic direction of the Health and Wellbeing Service.

The Sub-Committee had considered the final report by the Council's consultants, PMP Genesis Consulting, on the Cheshire East Leisure Management Options Appraisal at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

Since the consultants' report had been received, the overall context of the leisure service had been reconsidered, taking into account the potential Building Schools for the Future initiative, changes to how customer services were managed, the need to invest in facilities and rationalise the links to the transformation of Adult services and Children and Families, and the need for closer working with the PCT and other strategic developments in Cheshire East. There was also an interest in making connections between leisure services and other strategic interests of the Council, such as library services.

The Sub-Committee had therefore advised Cabinet not to proceed for now with any further work to progress a Trust as the delivery model, and to place the Consultants' recommendation on hold while further consideration was given to the wider strategic issues and opportunities identified. Cabinet had accepted the recommendation of the Sub-Committee and had also resolved that the Sub-Committee be retained but that its terms of reference be developed to encompass wider considerations and aspects of the Health and Wellbeing Service.

The merger in August of the Health and Wellbeing Service with the Adults Service would create a new Directorate known as the Adults, Community Health and Wellbeing Department. As a result, there was a need to review the strategic thinking about the Service and its components individually and as a whole.

Any discussion about the future direction and composition of the Health and Wellbeing Service needed to be framed within the Commissioner/Provider model and the universal-to-targeted continuum (looking to shift more resource towards targeted interventions).

The Service was now developing a leisure strategy that took into account the research from the Consultants' recent work, the outcomes of the Facilities Improvement Strategy and other opportunities identified. In this respect, it was noted that the Consultants' report had acknowledged that the Council ran its leisure facilities well, achieving a high level of satisfaction among users. For this reason it was felt that a Trust approach was no longer the most appropriate way of taking the Service forward.

Members received a welcome pack on the Council's leisure facilities, together with the performance monitoring report for March 2010. Members felt that the welcome pack managed successfully to harmonise the disparate range of services which the Council provided.

Members were invited to offer suggestions on the future direction of the Service and in doing so had regard to a proposed framework for

examining Leisure provision which drew upon the Facilities Improvement work, the outcomes of the Leisure Options Appraisal and the priorities of the draft Corporate Plan.

Members offered a variety of comments and suggestions about the future direction of leisure provision:

1. different parts of the Borough had their own unique circumstances and could therefore benefit from a bespoke approach to leisure provision;
2. at the same time, there was a need to avoid a 'piecemeal' approach by adopting an overall corporate strategy;
3. joint user arrangements should be encouraged involving, among others, schools and town and parish councils;
4. joint user arrangements with schools would require a careful approach as some schools appeared to have a narrow view of their responsibilities towards their wider communities; in particular, caution was urged regarding the transfer of swimming pools to school governors;
5. primary schools appeared to have closer links with their communities than secondary schools and therefore the Council should target them;
6. the 'leisure offer' was not to build new facilities but to maximise the use of existing facilities;
7. the condition of Crewe's swimming pool needed to be addressed as a priority;
8. whilst noting the positive attendance figures for under 16 and over 60 year-olds at swimming pools, and the need to target these user groups, it should be recognised that users falling between these two groups were the only ones providing a source of income and that therefore their continued use of swimming pools was essential, particularly in light of the current financial climate;
9. schools were focussing on the health of children, and so the Council needed to target other groups such as the elderly;
10. the Council needed to move away from the idea that leisure centres were the only places where leisure activities could take place and should look more towards the use of facilities such as village and community halls;
11. there was a need to consider first principles and in particular to identify which groups the Council was trying to help and what needed to be provided to meet their needs;

12. the Council needed to provide universality but within this needed to target certain priority groups such as the elderly, the disadvantaged and those with statistically lower levels of life expectancy; there was an abundance of usage and other data to inform this;
13. inaccessibility to leisure facilities was partly caused by the location of such facilities in suburbs rather than town centres;
14. some services were better delivered locally within communities while other services, such as swimming pools, were better delivered centrally;
15. the Service needed to think about how to encourage people to become involved in leisure activities from within their own lifestyles;
16. the Service also needed to look at what other local authorities were doing and to identify good models of provision;
17. given the resources available to the Council, there was a need to develop an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, approach to developing leisure provision;
18. there was a need to be aware of relying too heavily on external funding for key service provision and raising people's expectations in circumstances where funding could be withdrawn;
19. with regard to the 'universal to targeted' continuum, emphasis should be placed more on targeted than universal provision;
20. in this respect, the Council should move away from the traditional view of leisure facilities simply providing 'leisure' and should rebrand its services along the lines of 'promoting health and fitness'.

## **RESOLVED**

That the draft framework document for a leisure strategy as appended to the report be developed to take on board the views expressed by Members, and the matter be considered further at the next meeting.

## **5 NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held in about a month's time on a date to be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.30 am

Councillor A Knowles (Chairman)