

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Strategic Leisure Review Consultation 2023



Executive Summary

Introduction

Between 23 November 2023 and 7 January 2024 Cheshire East Council consulted on proposals to change the way Leisure Services are delivered in Cheshire East, in order to meet a minimum £479,000 savings target established as part of the council's budget setting for 2023-27

Consultation responses were invited from anyone who wished to respond – the consultation was not run as a referendum nor as a statistically robust sample survey.

In total there were 3,728 consultation engagements including 2,769 survey responses, 522 social media engagements, 403 email/letter responses and 34 event attendees.

About survey respondents

Postal town of respondents

Of those completing the survey:

- 84% provided a postcode which matched an address inside Cheshire East
- 5% provided a postcode which matched an address outside Cheshire East
- 11% did not provide a postcode which could be matched to an address

The postal towns which received more responses than expected when compared to the number of households in each town included:

- Poynton and Disley (received 6.7 times more responses than expected)
- Knutsford (received 5.5 times more responses than expected)
- Middlewich (received 1.1 times more responses than expected)

133 survey responses were received from people living outside Cheshire East. Most of these came from Stockport (46 responses) and Northwich (42 responses). Most of those survey respondents living outside the borough used either Poynton, Knutsford or Middlewich Leisure Centres.

Users of Everybody Health and Leisure (EHL) sites

79% of survey respondents used Everybody Health and Leisure (EHL) facilities, and of these 84% use a site at least once a week. Of survey respondents who use EHL sites, 37% use Poynton Leisure Centre and 36% use Knutsford Leisure Centre.

Community and sports club use of EHL sites

12% of survey respondents responded on behalf of a community or sports club who use EHL facilities. Of the clubs being responded for, 65% use sports hall facilities, 39% use swimming pools, while 27% used outdoor sports pitches.

Changes to the Options concessionary membership scheme

There was fairly strong support across all survey respondents for a reduction in the maximum Options concessionary scheme discount:

- 68% supported a reduction in the maximum Options concessionary scheme discount from 25% down to 20%, 18% opposed this
- 44% supported a reduction in the maximum Options concessionary scheme discount from 25% down to 15%, 38% opposed this

Furthermore, 49% of survey respondents supported the proposed new qualifying criteria and discounts for the Options concessionary scheme, 17% opposed them.

A large proportion of survey respondents, 80%, supported only offering the Options concessionary scheme to residents of Cheshire East, 10% opposed this.

Some respondents commented that the Options concessionary scheme is vital to those that rely on it, while others felt the scheme should only be available to those on benefits or who have low income – some felt that some retirees in Cheshire East are affluent enough to afford full membership for example.

On the issue of pricing, some felt that service users should pay more to keep sites open, though others were concerned that prices are not set too high, as that would put users off and reduce income.

In total 7% of survey respondents had an “Everybody Options Scheme” membership.

Changes to prices for out of borough leisure service users

A large proportion of survey respondents, 73%, supported a different pricing policy for leisure services users whose home address is outside the borough, 14% opposed this. Those who supported this proposal did so if it meant centres won't close, and highlighted that other councils do this.

Those opposed to this proposal felt that:

- People should be able to use any leisure centre they wish as long as they pay
- The council should be promoting leisure services and attracting more members
- Those living on the border would be unfairly affected
- Those working in the borough would be unfairly affected

A number of survey respondents were unsure about this proposal and felt more information was needed about it to make a decision. They wondered what the proposal would save overall, whether this is a significant issue, and how it would work exactly.

Alternative leisure service delivery options

Overall the most preferred option for generating income or making savings from Leisure Services was “implement a differential pricing policy for different grades of membership e.g. Gold / Silver / Bronze”, which had an average rank of 2.5 out of 7, where 1 is the most preferred option.

The second most preferred option was “increase prices across all activities and grades of membership”, with an average rank of 3.1 out of 7.

The third most preferred joint options were “transfer ownership of leisure sites to other third-party operators” and “reduce opening hours across all sites”, both with average ranks of 4.0 out of 7.

The least preferred options were “focus on providing leisure services in the areas of greatest health need, withdrawing funding from others”, with an average rank of 5.2 out of 7, and “focus on providing a smaller number of core larger leisure sites, withdrawing funding from others”, with an average rank of 5.6 out of 7.

When asked to provide other ideas for the funding of leisure sites in Cheshire East, survey respondents suggested:

- That the council should stop wasting money
- Increasing the leisure service and site efficiency
- Charging more for services
- Increasing usage of leisure centres
- Generating more income from sites and increasing their commerciality
- Increasing sponsorship and fundraising to support sites

Survey respondents also suggested a number of high-level funding ideas, including:

- Allocating more budget to leisure services and diverting budget from other areas e.g. diverting budget from Public Health
- Lobbying central government for more funding
- Increasing Council Tax
- Applying for more central government grants
- Levying developers and builders to contribute to local leisure infrastructure

Where to focus Leisure Service resources as a last resort

Survey respondents were divided on whether the council should focus its Leisure Service resources as a last resort “on the leisure centres where usage is highest” - 43% agreed with this while 42% disagreed.

However, survey respondents disagreed that the council should focus its Leisure Service resources “in the locations where the health of residents is poorest” (23% agree, 61% disagree), and disagreed it should focus its Leisure Service resources “where the actual cost to operate sites per user is lowest” (17% agree, 58% disagree).

Generally speaking, many survey respondents commented that service reduction should not be considered at all, and that if local leisure centres were to close, many would not be able to use another one.

When considering site closures, survey respondents suggested the council consider:

- The impact on health and social care services and wider society – closures would have an impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents, which in turn would have an impact on council services and on the local community
- How closures would fit in with council health and obesity strategies
- The ease of access and time to travel to alternative centres if any sites are closed, and the proximity of sites to each other
- Swimming pool provision – Learning to swim and swimming pools are essential
- Environmental impacts of closures if people have to travel further
- The impact on schools and school children that use the centres
- The impacts on the lives of youth and young people who attend leisure centres
- The impact on local sports clubs/teams and on local employment opportunities

Finally there were significant concerns raised about the quality of the data used to put together original consultation proposals, and concern about proposals being made primarily on the basis of health considerations.

Letters and emails

In total 403 emails and letters were received during the period of the consultation, with content of these summarised in the table below.

Summary of email / letter content:	No. of comments
Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre / Sports hall.	254
Opposition to the closure of Middlewich Leisure Centre / the Astro pitch at Middlewich LC.	91
Opposition to the closure of Knutsford Leisure Centre.	28

Formal responses from: Alsager Town Council; Cllr Mary Brooks; Cllr Sue Adams; Crewe Town Council; David Rutley MP; Disley Parish Council; Everybody Health and Leisure; Goostrey Parish Council; Holmes Chapel Parish Council; Knutsford Town Council; Middlewich Town FC; Poynton High School; Poynton Netball Club; Poynton Rotary Club; Poynton Town Council; Sandbach Town Council.	16
Suggested alternative ways of keeping leisure centres open.	15
In-depth critiques of the consultation material and data used to support it, including criticism of the benchmarking document.	9
States Holmes Chapel Parish Council were previously part of a Joint Management Agreement for Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre, and that consideration should be given to HCPC's view and wishes, and that examination of cost saving opportunities should occur alongside consideration of alternative methods of service delivery.	1

Conclusions

The level of consultation response

The level of response to the consultation was very high, indicating strong feeling within communities about leisure centres and the role they play.

The large volume of email and letters received, especially from some towns in particular, is unusual and indicates a high level of organised response from these communities. Large volumes of responses were received from consultees in Poynton, Knutsford and Middlewich, it is clear that these communities came together to oppose perceived threats to their leisure services.

Response bias

It is important to note therefore that results are biased towards respondents from these areas, but also towards leisure services users as opposed to non-users – were results presented that were representative of the whole borough, they may be quite different.

Pre-consultation material development

The consultation response highlights the importance of pre-consultation material development being conducted with care and consideration for the communities that proposals may impact.

Of the 421 separate comments made in the emails received during the consultation, 374 comments were directly opposed to proposals to close sites, which had not been put forward during the actual consultation. These proposals had been discussed during pre-consultation material development at Environment and Communities Committee on 9 November 2023.

It is clear that the original proposals discussed at Committee, which weren't consulted on, created a significant level of concern within communities.

Changes to the Options scheme

There are high levels of support for the proposed changes to the Options concessionary membership scheme from survey respondents, though this may be a case of a majority of respondents voting for proposals which do not affect them.

Those who will be affected by these proposals are some of the most vulnerable in our communities, and great care must be taken to ensure that if these changes are implemented, mitigations are put in place to ensure those who really need concessions still receive them.

Changes to prices for out of borough users

There are also high levels of support from survey respondents for proposed differential pricing policies for out of borough users, and again this may be a case of a majority of respondents voting for proposals which do not affect them.

That said, questions were raised in the feedback about how much money this proposal would save the council and whether it would be workable. Concern was also expressed about this proposal from some Members, particularly for the Wilmslow and Poynton areas of the borough. Careful consideration should be given to the implementation of this policy if it goes ahead.

Alternative leisure service delivery options

Respondents were quite clear throughout the consultation that reductions in service provision, and sites closures, were their least preferred options for the service. Increases in prices for services, differential pricing policies for different types of membership, and even a reduction in opening hours are preferred to site closures.

Respondents listed a number of alternative funding ideas listed within this report which should be explored, including increasing commerciality of sites, as well as perhaps diverting funding from other services such as Public Health services. A number of alternative delivery vehicles were also suggested in emails, including the transfer of sites over to parish councils through Joint Management Agreements or similar.

Where to focus Leisure Service resources as a last resort

None of the options as to where to focus funding as a last resort were popular, though as a last resort the most popular option seemed to be to focus funding on sites where usage is highest.

There was significant opposition to the idea of focusing resources and selecting sites for closure based on health analysis, which is perhaps not surprising given most survey respondents, and most leisure centre users, are in good health.

Respondents also listed a long list of things that should be considered in any future site assessment, over and above just site usage and local health considerations.

Finally, respondents urged the council to take a long term and holistic view regarding leisure provision in Cheshire East, stating that any reductions in leisure provision in the borough could have long term consequences on council health and social care services, and on the wider community.

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Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

As part of its budget setting process for 2023 to 2025, Cheshire East Council conducted a 2-stage review of its Leisure Services.

Stage 1 of this review was to make £1.3 million of savings from the service in 2023/24. This stage was delivered during 2023.

Stage 2 of the review was conducted to secure a further minimum £479,000 of savings against current commissioned leisure services. The purpose of this consultation was to determine how Stage 2 of this review might best be delivered.

As part of this consultation the council put forward a number of proposals to change the way Leisure Services are delivered in Cheshire East – the full consultation material is included in Appendix 6.

The council consulted on these stage 2 proposals between 23 November 2023 and 7 January 2024.

Pre-consultation material development

Prior to the stage 2 consultation starting, [at Environment and Communities Committee on 9 November 2023](#), Committee Members considered and debated the material that would be consulted on.

The initial draft of the material that was debated proposed the removal of funding for 4 Leisure Centres in Cheshire East, in order to meet the required savings. These sites were put forward based on number of key health and usage factors.

As an outcome of this Committee, the material to be consulted on was altered significantly, with proposals to remove funding for 4 sites being removed.

Consultation methodology

Responses on the revised consultation material were invited from anyone who wished to respond – the consultation was not run as a referendum nor as a statistically robust random sample survey. Results should therefore be interpreted within the context in which they were gathered.

The consultation was promoted to a wide range of stakeholders including:

- All local Members of Parliament
- All Cheshire East Council Ward Members (Councillors)
- All local Town and Parish Councils

- All local joint-use school headteachers
- All members of a council communications subscriber list (approximately 3,500 people)
- All council employees
- All users of Cheshire East Council funded leisure centres
- All users of Cheshire East Council funded libraries

Furthermore, Everybody Health and Leisure (the Charitable Trust which currently delivers leisure services on behalf of the council) conducted their own promotion campaign within its leisure centres.

The consultation was promoted through the following mediums:

- [Media releases](#)
- [The council's Consultation Portal](#)
- [Social media](#)
- Paper consultation packs and posters distributed in all leisure centres and libraries in the borough
- The Town and Parish Council network
- Council Members Briefings
- Through 1 to 1 emails and conversations with key stakeholders including local Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, Everybody Health and Leisure and local schools

Number of consultation responses

In total there were 3,728 consultation engagements, including:

- 2,758 online survey responses
- 522 social media engagements
- 392 email responses
- 34 event attendees
- 11 letter responses
- 11 paper survey responses (from 205 distributed in total)

Reading this report

The main sections of this report contain an analysis of the survey responses received during the consultation.

Feedback received via email, letter, social media, and through events is summarised in the appendices.

About survey respondents

Postal town of respondents

Of those completing the survey:

- 84% provided a postcode which matched an address inside Cheshire East
- 5% provided a postcode which matched an address outside Cheshire East
- 11% did not provide a postcode which could be matched to an address

Survey responses from within Cheshire East

Analysis of survey responses from within Cheshire East shows that more responses than expected were received from some postal towns than others, when compared by the total number of households in each area.

The table below includes data for all Cheshire East postal towns which received 20 or more survey responses. It shows how many responses were received in each of these postal towns, as compared to the number of households in each area.

The postal towns which received more responses than expected when compared to the number of households in each town included:

- Stockport, including Poynton and Disley (received 6.7 times more responses than expected)
- Knutsford (received 5.5 times more responses than expected)
- Middlewich (received 1.1 times more responses than expected)

Post Town (inside CE only)	No. CE addresses	No. survey responses	Survey response over / under representation
Stockport (including Poynton and Disley)	8,889	726	6.7 times as many as expected
Knutsford	10,452	707	5.5 times as many as expected
Middlewich	6,816	89	1.1 times as many as expected
Wilmslow	15,998	147	0.7 times as many as expected
Alderley Edge	2,906	25	0.7 times as many as expected
Sandbach	13,041	74	0.5 times as many as expected
Macclesfield	37,571	191	0.4 times as many as expected
Crewe	47,579	215	0.4 times as many as expected
Nantwich	16,219	64	0.3 times as many as expected
Stoke On Trent (including Alsager)	10,596	30	0.2 times as many as expected
Congleton	16,232	44	0.2 times as many as expected

Survey responses from outside Cheshire East

133 survey responses were received from people living outside Cheshire East. Most of these came from Stockport (46 responses) and Northwich (42 responses). Most of those survey respondents living outside the borough used either Poynton, Knutsford or Middlewich Leisure Centres.

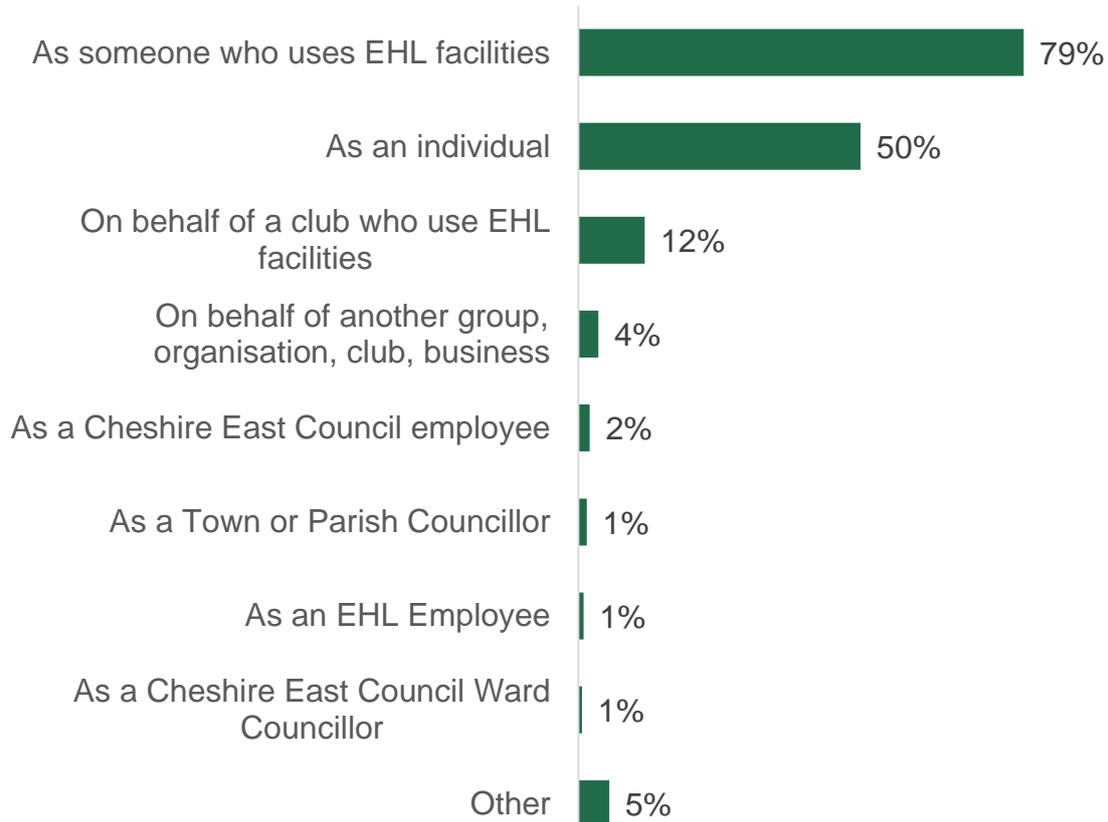
Post Town (outside CE)	No. survey responses	CE Leisure Centres used regularly
Stockport	46	33 out of 46 use Poynton Leisure Centre
Northwich	42	20 out of 42 use Knutsford Leisure Centre, 17 out of 42 use Middlewich Leisure Centre
Cheadle	13	8 out of 13 use Poynton Leisure Centre
Altrincham	9	8 out of 9 use Knutsford Leisure Centre
Winsford	8	8 out of 9 use Middlewich Leisure Centre
Lymm	4	NA – Sample too small
Stoke On Trent	3	NA – Sample too small
High Peak	2	NA – Sample too small
Glossop	2	NA – Sample too small
Chester	1	NA – Sample too small
Market Drayton	1	NA – Sample too small
Sale	1	NA – Sample too small
Middlewich	1	NA – Sample too small
Total number of responses	133	

Survey respondent type

79% of survey respondents used Everybody Health and Leisure facilities.

12% responded on behalf of a community or sports club who use Everybody Health and Leisure facilities.

How are you responding to this survey? *Tick all that apply*

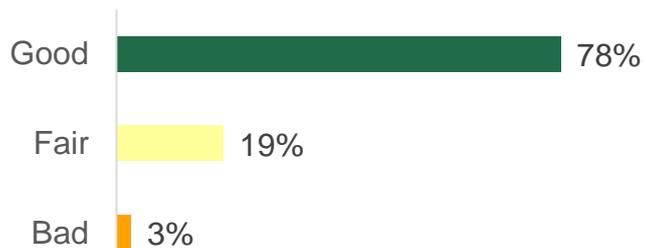


Number of responses = 2,769

Health status

78% of survey respondents stated their health was good when asked, 19% said fair, with 3% saying bad.

How is your health in general?



Number of responses = 2,688

Users of Everybody Health and Leisure sites

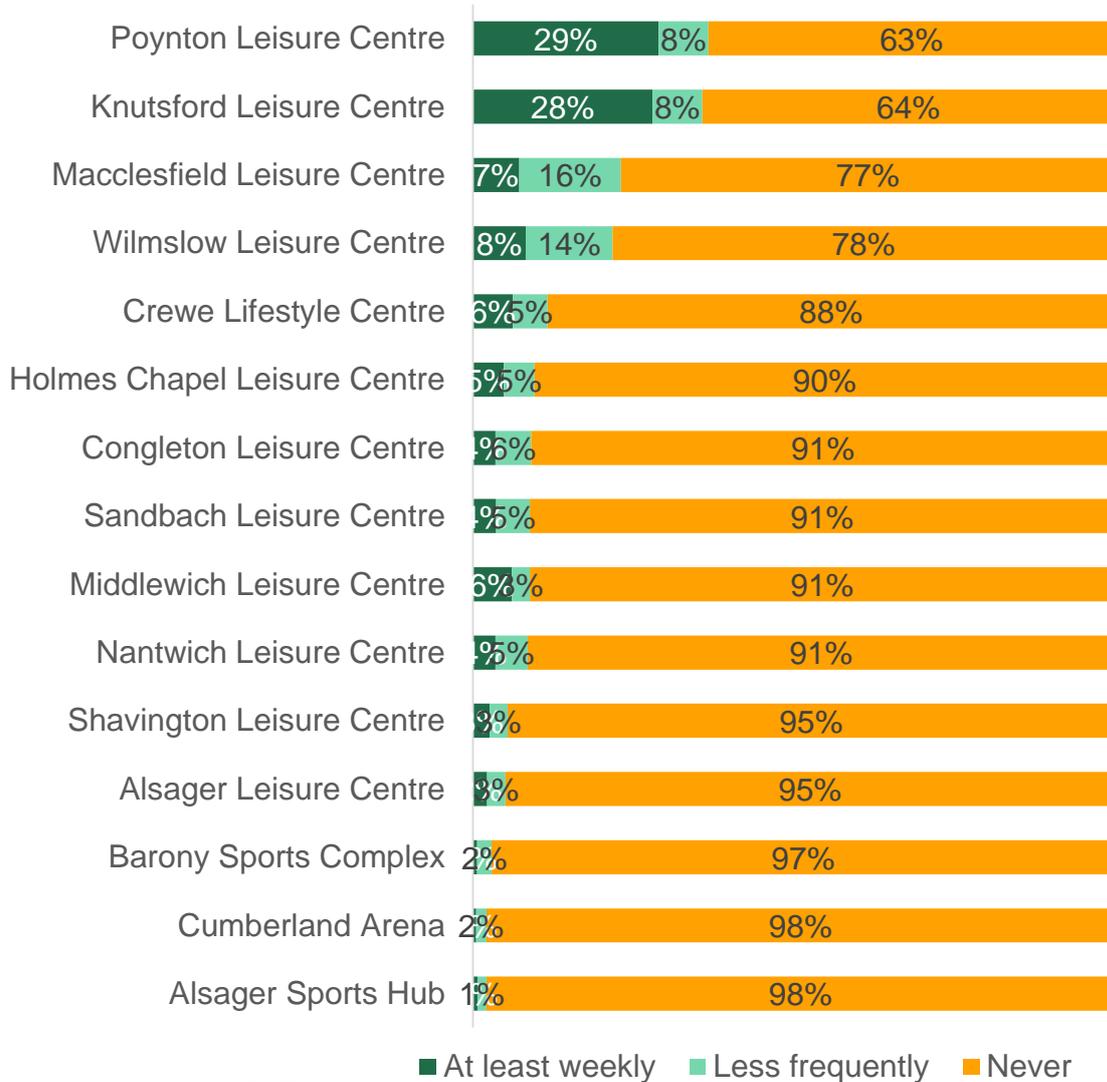
Site usage

Of survey respondents who use Everybody Health and Leisure sites, 84% use a site at least once a week, with the remainder using a site less frequently than that.

Of survey respondents who use Everybody Health and Leisure sites:

- 37% use Poynton Leisure Centre
- 36% use Knutsford Leisure Centre
- 23% use Macclesfield Leisure Centre
- 22% use Wilmslow Leisure Centre

Generally speaking, how often do you use each of the following leisure sites across Cheshire East? *Survey respondents who use EHL sites only*

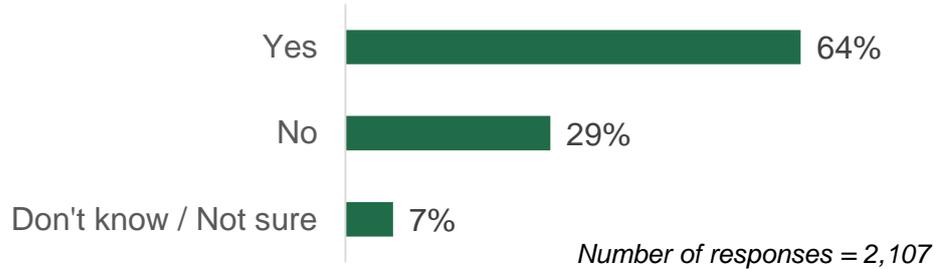


No of respondents = 2,176

Everybody Health and Leisure membership

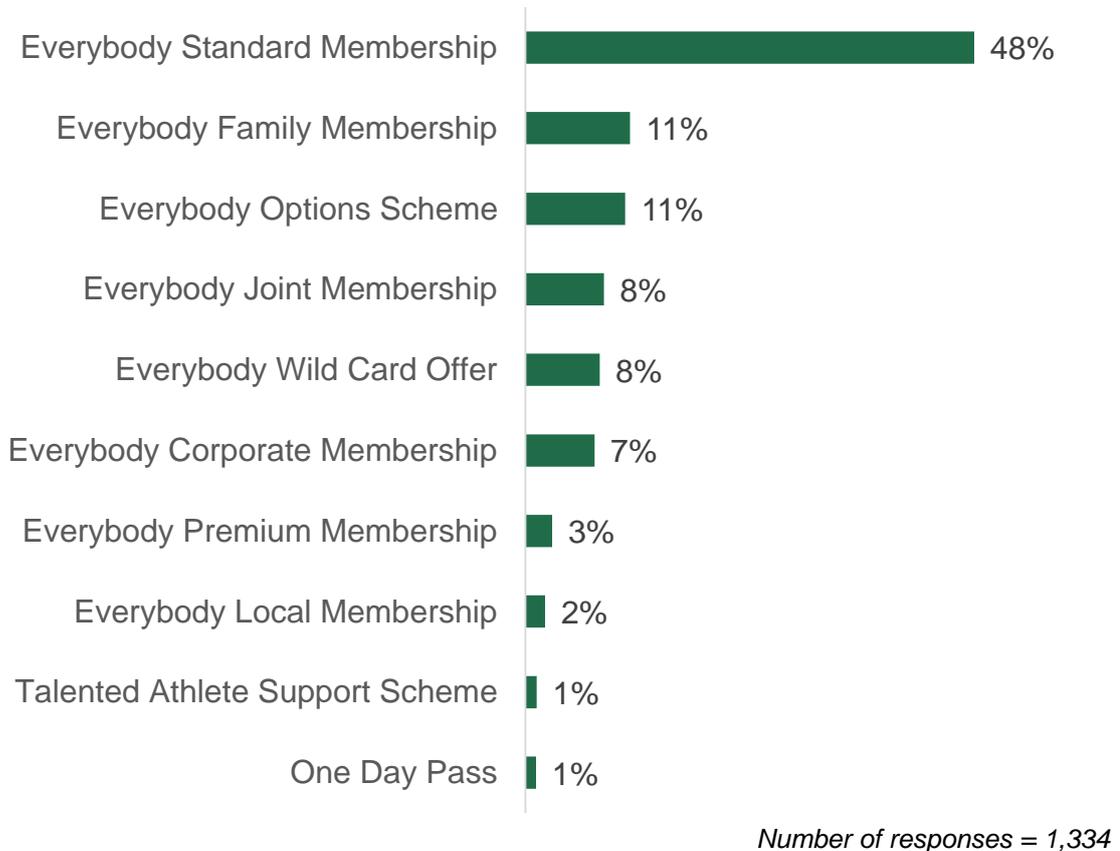
64% of survey respondents who use EHL sites are currently a registered member of a site.

Are you currently a registered member at a site operated by Everybody Health and Leisure? *Survey respondents who use EHL sites only*



48% of registered EHL Members hold an “Everybody Standard membership”, with 11% holding an “Everybody Options Scheme” membership.

What type of membership do you hold? *Survey respondents who are EHL members only*



Community and sports club use of EHL sites

Survey responses from community and sports clubs

12% of those completing the survey responded on behalf of a community or sports club who use Everybody Health and Leisure facilities. This equates to 324 individuals who responded on behalf of a community or sports club.

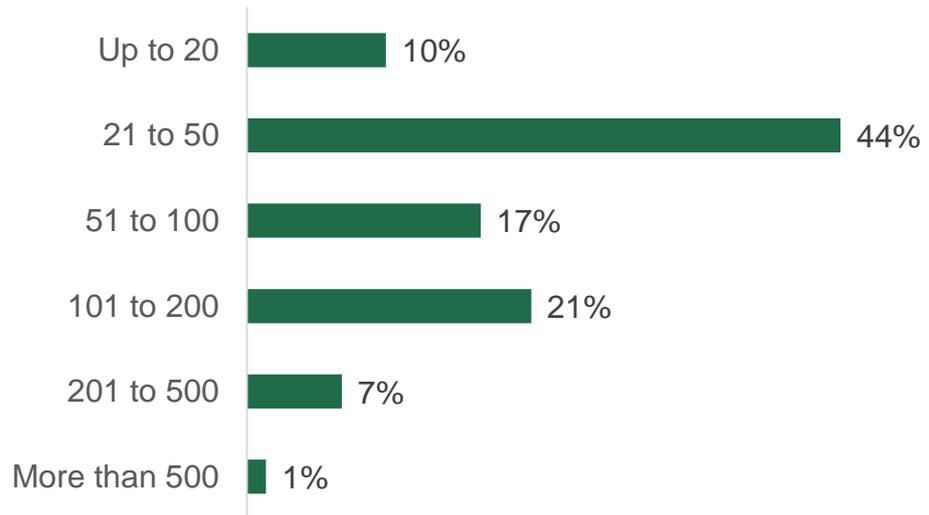
The clubs people responded on behalf of included:

Audley Aces - Netball Team	Knutsford Vikings Swimming Club
Bad Girls Badminton club	Lostock Hall Primary School
Barclays Netball Club	Lostock Rangers
Cheshire County Netball Association	Macclesfield Netball Club and Cheshire Junior Netball League
Cheshire East Integrated Care Partnership	Members of Girlguiding in Poynton
Cheshire Gymnastics	Merge Netball Club
Cheshire Stars Netball Club	Middlewich Town Football Club
East Cheshire NHS Trust	Mid-life Crisis Badminton Club
Egerton GirlsU14s Football Team	Mobberley football club
Everybody swim	Nantwich Triathlon Club
F.I.T. Therapy	Poynton Badminton club (Mondays)
Falcons Netball Club - South Cheshire Netball League	Poynton Community, Sport and Physical Activity Steering Group
Friday night footballers	Poynton Dippers
Fusion Netball Club	Poynton Leisure Centre Walking Football Group
Golden Shuttle Badminton, Holmes Chapel	Poynton Pirates Basketball Club
Goostrey Badminton Club	Poynton Probus Club
Grove Park badminton club	Radbroke Badminton Club
Hawks Netball club- Crewe netball league	Run Middlewich
Hockley Badminton Club	Scarab Triathlon Club
Holmes chapel back to netball	Second Chance football group 8pm Tuesday
Holmes Chapel Health Centre	South Cheshire harriers
Holmes Chapel Hurricanes	South Cheshire premier netball league
Holmes Chapel walking football team	The Dingle Primary School
Knutsford Bushido Ju Jitsu	Time Out Group
Knutsford Hockey Club	U3a Knutsford
Knutsford Multi-Rehab group	Vernon primary school
Knutsford Netball Club	Witton Albion Netball club
Knutsford Rugby Club	Worth Primary School
Knutsford Triathlon club	

Club usage of leisure facilities

54% of the clubs being responded for had up to 50 registered members. 1% of clubs had more than 500 registered members.

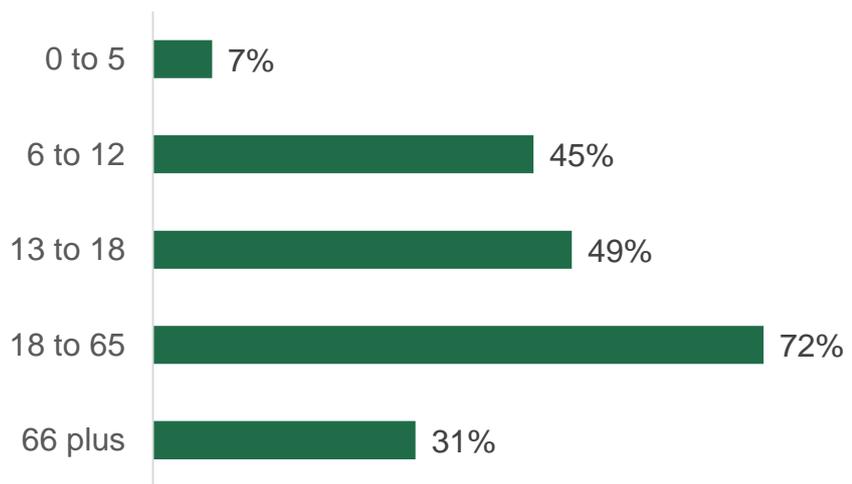
How many registered members does your community or sports club have?
Those responding on behalf of a club only



Number of responses = 216

The clubs being responded for had registered members aging from 0 to 5 (7% of clubs), up to 66 plus (31% of clubs).

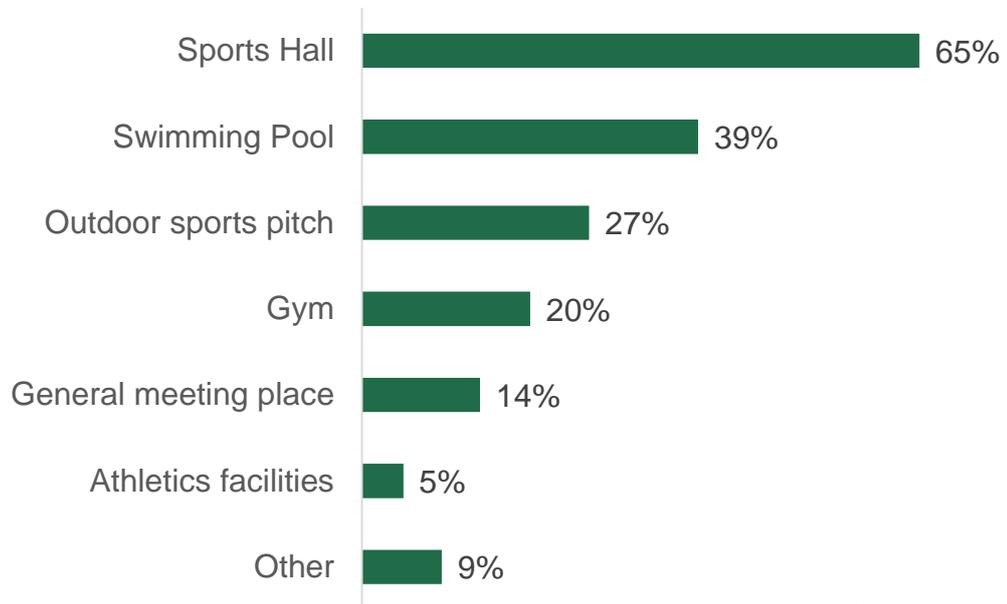
What are the age ranges of your registered club members? *Those responding*



Number of responses = 289

65% of the clubs being responded for used sports hall facilities, 39% used swimming pools, while 27% used outdoor sports pitches.

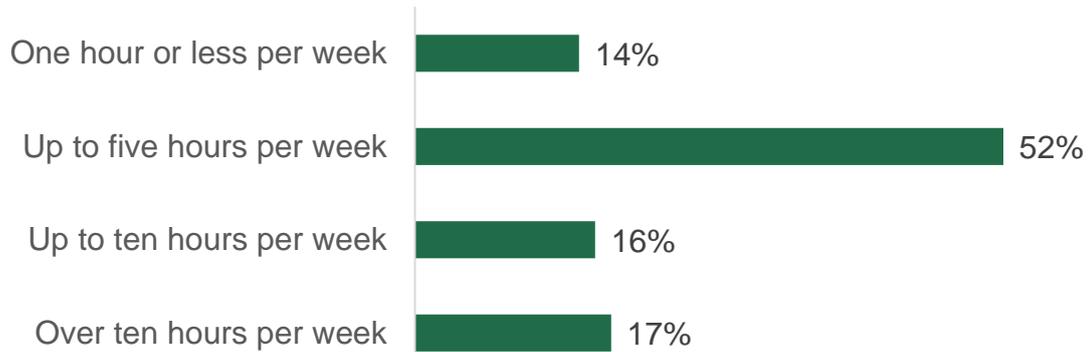
Which of the following facilities does your community or sports club use?
Those responding on behalf of a club only



Number of responses = 289

66% of clubs that responded used facilities for up to 5 hours per week.

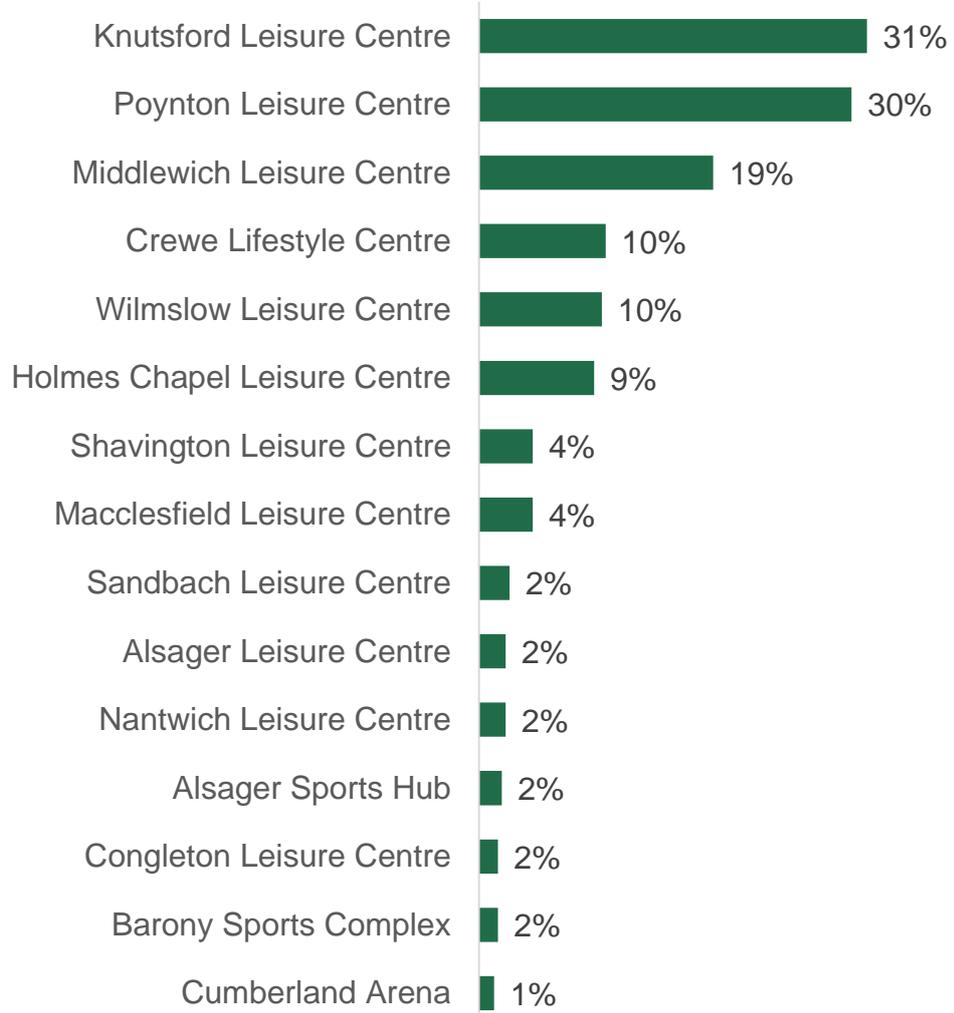
Generally speaking, how many hours a week does your community or sports club use these facilities for?
Those responding on behalf of a club only



Number of responses = 284

80% of the clubs being responded for used Knutsford, Poynton or Middlewich Leisure Centres.

Which site(s) does your community or sports club use? *Those responding on*



Number of responses = 324

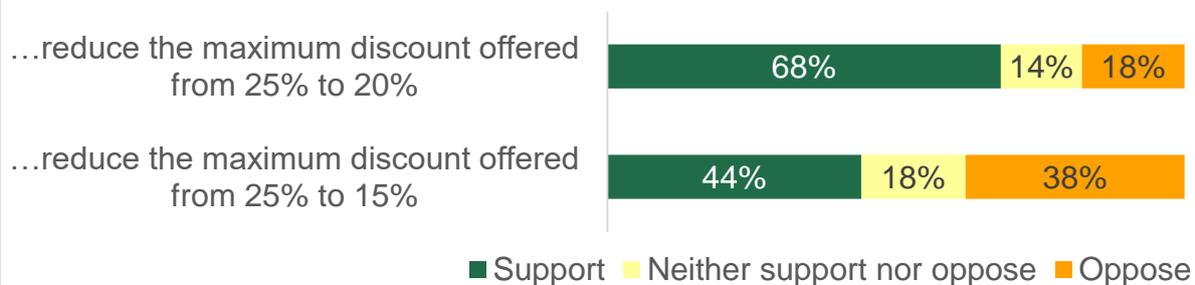
Proposed changes to the concessionary membership scheme (called Options)

Reducing the maximum Options discount offered

For the Options concessionary discount scheme there was strong net support for a reduction in the maximum discount offered from 25% down to 20%, with 68% in support of this proposal, and 18% opposing it.

Net support for a reduction from 25% down to 15% was not as high, with 44% in support of this proposal, and 38% opposing it.

For the Options concessionary membership scheme, how strongly do you support or oppose the proposal to...



Number of responses between 2,612 and 2,660

Amending the Options eligibility criteria

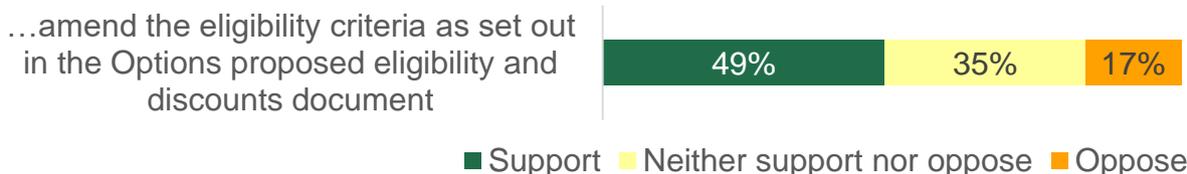
Within the consultation material, the council proposed the following revised qualifying criteria and discounts for the Options Membership scheme:

Proposed Qualifying Criteria	Proposed Discount %
Senior Citizen (aged 66 and over)	15%
Senior Citizen (aged 66 and over) plus Pension Credit	20%
Young Person (aged 18 and under)	15%
Young Person (aged 18 and under) plus full-time education	20%
Jobseekers Allowance	20%
Child Tax Credit	20%
Working Tax Credit	20%
Disabled Living Allowance, Disabled Benefit or Registered Disabled	20%
Serving armed forces personnel	20%

Ex member of armed forces	20%
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49% of respondents supported these proposed qualifying criteria and discounts for the Options Membership scheme, 17% opposed them.

For the Options concessionary membership scheme, how strongly do you support or oppose the proposal to...

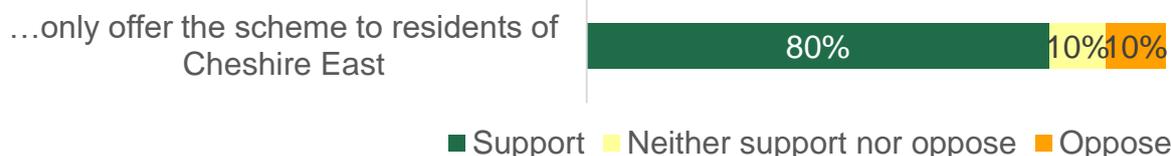


Number of responses = 2,448

The Options scheme and out of borough users

There was very strong net support for only offering the Options concessionary membership scheme to residents of Cheshire East, with 80% in support, and 10% opposing this proposal.

For the Options concessionary membership scheme, how strongly do you support or oppose the proposal to...



Number of responses = 2,668

Comments about the proposed changes to the Options scheme

Within the survey, consultees were asked if they had any comments to make about the proposed changes to the Options concessionary membership scheme.

In total, 509 comments made in response to this question have been analysed, and these comments have been grouped into categories and summarised below.

The Options concessionary membership scheme is vital	170
It's a vital service / facility / should not be closing centres / access for all	44
It's a vital concession for many users	48
Will impact health services / NHS / social care if people don't stay fit / healthy	35
Should be encouraging people to exercise / stay fit / healthy	27
Will impact those that need it most	14

Ensure young people have access through school	2
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Agreement with the proposed discounts for:	131
Older people and pensioners on pension credit only (there are lots of wealthy pensioners here)	54
Armed forces veterans, though not for serving armed forces	26
Prescribed users from health services	17
Young people and those leaving school	14
Students	8
The disabled	8
Young families	4

The scheme should only be available to some	75
The scheme should be means tested and only available for those on benefits or who have low income	47
The scheme shouldn't be discounted for those that live outside of Cheshire East	21
Assess each centre separately for concessionary schemes, there shouldn't be a blanket approach	7

Leisure service users should pay more to keep the service open	34
Agree with the proposed changes to the Options scheme if it avoids closure	21
I would pay more if it avoids closure	7
Ask if people can afford to pay more, encourage those that can to pay more	6

Don't price leisure services too high	28
Price it right and people will pay, price it too high and you'll lose members and revenue	16
This proposal will reduce membership numbers	12

Improve the membership scheme overall	44
Simplify the whole membership scheme / have a single flat rate	11
Have different memberships for swimming, gym, classes, peak / off peak etc	11
Incentivise memberships and block bookings, have introductory fees and loyalty discounts	11
Promote / market the scheme better to increase membership	8
Invest in the centre to attract more members	3

Not enough detail provided to give an opinion	27
Not enough detail, info and figures has been provided - Will the proposals prevent closure?	19
Any proposals like this need to be properly thought out	8

Proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users

There was strong net support for the introduction of a different pricing policy for any users of its leisure services whose home address is outside the borough, with 73% in support of this proposal and 14% opposed to it.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose the proposal to...

...introduce a different pricing policy for any users of its leisure services whose home address is outside the borough?



Number of responses = 2,719

■ Support ■ Neither support nor oppose ■ Oppose

Comments about the proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users

Within the survey, consultees were asked if they had any comments to make about the proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users.

In total, 565 comments made in response to this question have been analysed, and these comments have been grouped into categories and summarised below.

Support for proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users	200
A subsidised Leisure Service should be for Cheshire East Council Tax paying residents, and not for non-residents. CE should not be subsidising non-CE residents	129
Have a fixed (higher) price for non-CE residents	40
In support of the proposal if it means centre doesn't close	13
It's fair, still good value and is still being subsidised so why not	9
The centre is well supported, busy enough and over-subscribed as it is	3
Other councils do this	3
Out of borough users will impact environment more if travelling into borough	3
Opposition to the proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users	217
People should be able to use whatever leisure centre they wish as long as they are paying. Access should be for everyone	51

What about those who live on the border - if a centre is close to them even if they live outside the borough they should be able to use it. People should be encouraged to use their local facilities wherever they live	49
We should be promoting leisure services and attracting more members - more people = more income. We should be encouraging active health / well-being	40
What if their area doesn't have leisure facilities, we should allow those access where they don't have a service	29
What about those who work in the borough?	16
Non-discounted fees should be the same for everyone	12
This proposal doesn't make sense	10
Have a flat increase for everyone	6
Pricing people out will ultimately put a cost burden on the NHS	2
People depend on these places	1
This proposal will impact us (financially) if it closes, we will have to travel to another area	1

Unsure / More information needed	134
What will it save? What is the cost of administering this? Is it a significant issue? More information needed to be able to comment	51
How would it work, how will it be policed, would it be difficult?	34
What if non-residents prices are cheaper in their LA area? / Shouldn't apply if cheaper	34
This needs to be competitive and reasonably priced, or it will put people off and we will lose members	14
Opposed to proposals, unless there are reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring councils	1

Other comments	14
Ok as long as doesn't impact children's swimming / activities	6
Invest in the centre to attract more members	3
Improve efficiencies within the council	3
More discounts are needed, they should be more varied and applicable to more people	2

Alternative leisure service delivery options

Survey respondents were asked to rank 7 options for generating income or making savings from Leisure Services, from their most preferred option (rank 1), to their least preferred option (rank 7).

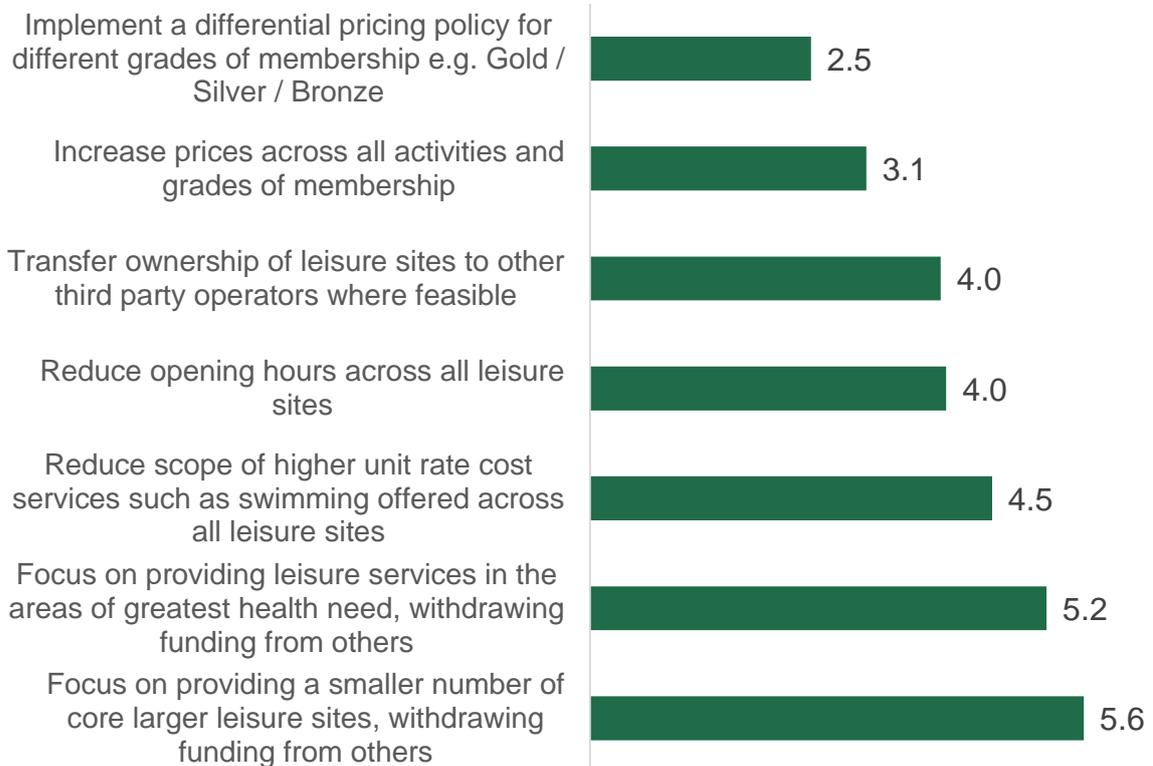
Overall, the most preferred option was “implement a differential pricing policy for different grades of membership e.g. Gold / Silver / Bronze”, which had an average rank of 2.5 out of 7, where 1 is the most preferred option.

The second most preferred option was “increase prices across all activities and grades of membership”, with an average rank of 3.1 out of 7.

The third most preferred joint options were “transfer ownership of leisure sites to other third-party operators where feasible” and “reduce opening hours across all sites”, both with an average rank of 4.0 out of 7.

The least preferred options were “focus on providing leisure services in the areas of greatest health need, withdrawing funding from others”, with an average rank of 5.2 out of 7, and “focus on providing a smaller number of core larger leisure sites, withdrawing funding from others”, with an average rank of 5.6 out of 7.

Average ranks for each of the suggested ways of generating income or making savings from Leisure Services – 1 being the most preferred option, 7 the least preferred option:



Number of responses between 1,819 and 2,594

Leisure site funding suggestions

Within the survey, consultees were asked if they had any other suggestions for how the council's leisure sites could be funded, to retain the current level of service provision.

In total, 806 comments made in response to this question have been analysed, and these comments have been grouped into categories and summarised below.

High level funding ideas	121
Allocate more budget to leisure services / divert budget from other areas	23
Lobby central government for more funding	19
Increase Council Tax	18
Apply for more grants e.g. from Swim / Sport England	15
Divert funding from Public Health e.g. agreements with NHS for rehab programmes	14
Ask developers / builders to contribute / levy builders	10
Seek lottery funding	5
Sell other council assets	4
Survey the community and council employees for ideas	6
Look at other successful funding models (e.g. European)	3
Generate funds from creative management of town centres	2
"Pay it forward"	1
Do less subcontracting	1

Stop wasting money	118
Stop wasting money as a council, be more efficient, spend money better	56
Cut leaders / councillors salaries	32
Streamline the number of council staff	23
Don't spend £1.2m to cut down trees / use it for centres	7

Increase service / site efficiency	112
Minimise energy use at leisure sites, have more efficient energy usage. Don't have rooms heated or lit when not in use. Invest in solar power / air source heat pumps, find better energy deals, re-use waste heat	79
Cut opening hours of sites according to usage and the time of year. Close smaller centres earlier in the day to cut down on energy use	11
Close smaller centres completely, or close sites with pools	7

Consolidate sites where 2 are close together e.g. Crewe and Nantwich.	6
Better supplier charges / deals / contracted services	5
Enlist volunteers to work alongside staff	3
Remove Les Mills classes	1

Charge more for services	129
Increase prices for all services at leisure centres	41
Increase charges for those who can afford it	14
Have different memberships for different users e.g. swim, gym, classes, peak, demographic	14
Charge for parking / abolish refunds	12
Increase charges for Academies / schools	9
Increase charges for clubs and classes	15
Increase charges for non-local users	6
Have surcharges for gym, swimming pool, sauna, steam room usage	6
Increase prices for swimming / lessons	6
Have different payment options i.e. monthly DD / annual	6

Increase usage of leisure centres	145
Promote the facilities more, market them to attract more users	36
Increase scope and number of classes and activities to attract more members	32
Invest in the facilities to attract more members	31
Have better value memberships to attract more members	25
Have longer opening hours to increase number of paying visitors	8
Have more company memberships / attract workers	8
Increase parking provision so more people can park / attend	3
Have a loyalty scheme	1
Promote discounted rates to medical centres to promote to customers	1

Generate more income from sites	90
Hire rooms out e.g. for parties, meetings, toddler groups	38
Provide a coffee shop / café	18
Attract more clubs / groups and charge them	11
Include other services on sites e.g. post offices, libraries, dentists	5

Charge no-shows who book, catch non-payers	4
Sub services' e.g. puppy training / well-being classes	3
Make better use of advertising space	3
Have more community related activity	3
Rent spaces to retailers	2
Incorporate ancillary services e.g. Amazon lockers	1
Charge (more) for events e.g. triathlons / shows	1
Put in spectator areas to enable basketball and netball leagues	1

Increase sponsorship, fundraising 59

Generate sponsorship from local businesses	36
Hold charity, fundraising or community events to raise money	15
Go on a crowd funding drive	5
Take voluntary donations from members, philanthropists or businesses	3

Improve commerciality of the service 32

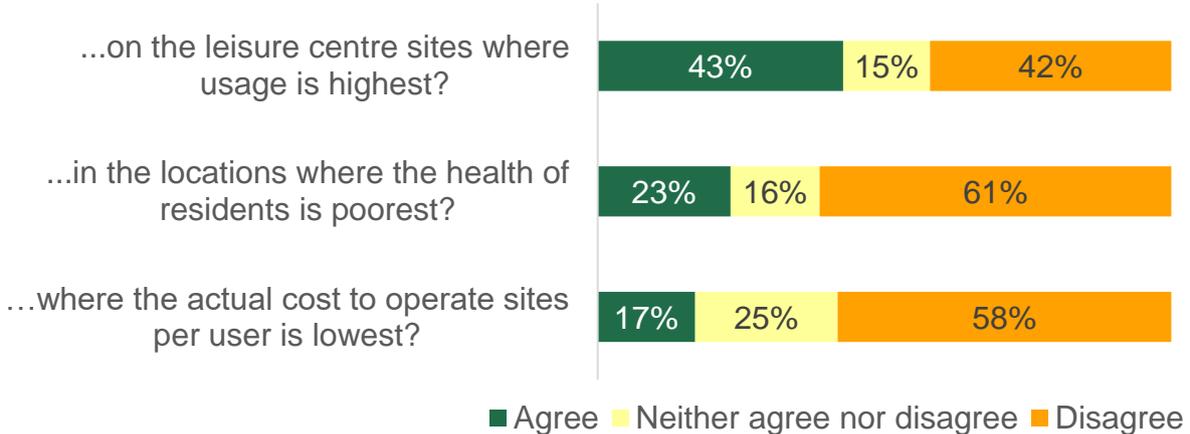
Have a Public-Private Partnerships to income commerciality	8
Ask Everybody Health and Leisure what to do / Increase involvement from EHL	8
Have an external funder take over / part privatise	7
Have Community Asset Transfer / Middlewich Town Football Club are willing to run the Astro tur pitch in Middlewich	4
Operate in a 'for profit' way / be more commercial	3
Everybody Health and Leisure do a good job – don't transfer to the council	1
Take ownership away from Everybody Health and Leisure	1

Where to focus Leisure Service resources as a last resort

Finally, as a last resort where extra savings are needed, survey respondents were divided on whether the council should focus its Leisure Service resources “on the leisure centres where usage is highest”, with 43% agreeing with this and 42% disagreeing.

However, survey respondents disagreed that the council should focus its Leisure Service resources “in the locations where the health of residents is poorest” (23% agree, 61% disagree), nor “where the actual cost to operate sites per user is lowest” (17% agree, 58% disagree).

How strongly do you agree or disagree that as a last resort where extra savings are needed, the council should focus its Leisure Service resources...



Number of responses between 2,606 and 2,682

Other things to consider when focusing resources

Within the survey, consultees were asked if there is anything else the council should take into consideration when deciding where to focus its Leisure Service resources.

In total, 1,445 comments made in response to this question have been analysed, and these comments have been grouped into categories and summarised below.

Key things to consider	692
Consider the impacts of closures on health and social care services and wider society. Closures would have an impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of local residents. This in turn would have an impact on health and social care services delivered by the council, and would cost the council more in the long run. Worsening health of the local population would have an impact on the local community	216

Consider the ease of access and time to travel to alternative centres if any sites are closed. Assess travel times, road and public transport networks, parking and availability, particularly for the elderly and disabled. Consider too how many sites are located in areas close to each other, including sites that are close to each other cross-border. Improve cross-border service delivery	156
Consider how these proposals fit in with council health and obesity strategies. The council should be encouraging health and well-being	65
Consider swimming pool provision – Learning to swim and swimming pools are essential	60
Consider environmental impacts of closures e.g. emissions will increase if people have to travel further	40
Consider the impact on schools and school children that use the centres, and the impact on school curriculum statutory requirements	48
Consider the impact on capacity at other centres if centres are closed, other centres are full to capacity as it is	30
Consider local development plans and future population increases, and the resultant increase on infrastructure requirements	22
Consider the financial impact on individuals of having to travel further to a centre	21
Consider the impacts on the lives of youth and young people who attend leisure centres, and who would have nowhere to go to keep them “off the streets”	21
Consider the impact on local sports clubs and teams	8
Consider the impact on local employment opportunities at the leisure centres	3
Determine what the essentials are that need to be provided	1
Consider the demographics of local towns	1

Data considerations and concern when making decisions	127
Consider ALL users in the data used to make decisions e.g. schools, walking football, roller disco, swimming programmes, rehab clubs, and non-members	67
How do you measure health / usage? More data is needed to evidence and back up proposals (e.g. areas with poorest health etc.)	51
The data used in previous proposals was inaccurate, flawed and out of date (e.g. tartan rug)	8
More robust and far reaching consultation with all stakeholders is needed to understand needs properly	1

Concern about proposals based on health considerations	128
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Disagree with the approach to reduce funding in the more healthy and wealthy areas – there are still poor people living in these areas. This is unfair	46
It would be a false economy to remove leisure centres from areas where the health is currently good, they will then become less healthy	44
People living in poor health areas aren't going to starting using facilities more if they aren't now	36
Concentrate provision on the areas with high highest levels of multiple deprivation	2

Proposals based on site size	26
Smaller sites will have fewer visitors! Usage should be on the percentage of the population using them	26

Service reduction should not be considered	425
Everyone should have access to a local leisure centre, the council should not be reducing services, access to a leisure centre is a right and there should be equality on provision, you shouldn't be focusing on one area over another	234
Focus on increasing revenue, increasing footfall and promoting sites more. Offer more at the centres to increase usage e.g. events, support groups, children's parties, crafting, café, daytime classes. Increase opening hours to generate more income.	55
Invest in centres to encourage more use and provide more fitness offerings	26
Improve efficiencies and cut down on running costs. Reduce energy costs	26
Stop wasting money on other things (e.g. Poynton pool)	16
Increase prices for services	15
We pay for this. Why should we continue to fund a service we do not benefit from?	12
Reduce the CEO salary and make cuts elsewhere	8
Lobby government for more funds / should be coming from central government	5
Team up with NHS services to provide other well-being services e.g. physio, weight loss, stopping smoking, rehab	5
Get a better tenant to run it. Have shared ownership. Allow local Town Councils to run them	6
Levy builders and developers to invest in leisure and community services	4
Provide different membership options, pricing structures and incentives	4
Consider partial closure of centre but keep all centres	4
Place running of centre under town responsibility / in partnership with	2

Sell other assets (e.g. HS2 land)	2
Remove the booking system	1
Ask Everybody Health to input / ask what they can do	1
Attract schemes to bring investment to support centres	1

School specific comments	6
Availability of facilities and classes is low due to school lessons, services are always booked. Time on facilities is restricted times due to school bookings	4
Close those sites that are attached to schools, schools limit opening hours	1
Sell Sandbach leisure centre to the school	1

Other comments	41
A pool will always cost more to run	11
Review contracts / services purchased / better deals	8
The survey is not well designed and not easy to complete	4
Subsidise only those in genuine need	4
Adjust opening hours according to usage / demand	3
Spread the costs / charges – High usage centres should subsidise lower usage centres	3
Don't increase Council Tax	2
Charge non-CE residents more to use subsidised services	1
Improve parking to allow / attract more users	1
Don't close Nantwich outdoor brine pool	1
Redevelop Crewe town centre to attract more people	1
The Everybody Health and Leisure website is poor / not user friendly	1
The centre is a venue for emergencies	1

Final comments

Within the survey, consultees were asked if they had any final comments to make about the consultation.

In total, 2,772 comments made in response to this question have been analysed, and these comments have been grouped into categories and summarised below.

Keep leisure centres open	686
Keep our centres open as a priority, please don't close them. Closing Leisure Centres is short sighted, and the council must think long term	282
Equality for all - All residents should have equal access to a local leisure centre, it's a human right. We all pay for this service, we expect to have it	173
Please don't close Poynton Leisure Centre, it is well used	109
Please don't close Knutsford Leisure Centre, it is well used	92
Please don't close Middlewich Leisure Centre, it is well used	15
Ask / consult with EHL	8
Look at other successful centres / models	7

If my local Leisure Centre closes, I would not be able to use another one	285
It would not be viable for me to travel to another Leisure Centre, I do not drive and there is no public transport	133
There is no alternative Leisure Centre nearby	81
I would not be able to afford to travel further, or afford to pay for a more expensive alternative	49
There is not enough capacity at alternative Leisure Centres	22

Consider the impacts of Leisure Centres closures	1,181
Consider the long-term costs and burden on council health services and the NHS. Leisure Centres are vital to mental and physical health and well-being. They help fight the current obesity crisis and improve long-term health.	492
Consider the impacts on swimming ability in Cheshire East - Children will not be able to earn this vital, lifesaving, skill. We need swimming pools as a form of exercise	162
Consider the social impact on communities, leading to greater isolation and lack of cohesion	137
Consider the impacts on children and young people. Where will they go, what will they do, they will be stuck at home	115

Consider the impacts on sports clubs - Netball, hockey, dippers, football, basketball etc.	100
Consider the impact on schools that use them. Where would they go to deliver the curriculum?	83
Consider the environmental impacts	50
Consider the impacts of a growing population, adequate infrastructure is needed	41
Consider the impact on the local economy and businesses if people don't have a local leisure facility	1

Ideas for increasing Leisure Centre income	252
Invest in centres to encourage more use	47
Charge more, particularly for those that can afford it	47
Encourage and promote wellbeing, not doing so goes against the council's mandate	41
Advertise / promote to attract more members and users	32
Look at energy efficiencies at all centres	27
Put more classes on with more variety	21
Combine other services within leisure centres e.g. team up with NHS, hire rooms out	20
Implement better / different pricing structures. Have membership options to attract and allow more users	11
Do a community asset swap, long lease or peppercorn rent to club(s)	3
Get sponsorship for site	2
Charge clubs more to use sites	1

General funding comments	158
Make cuts from other services	73
Ask central government to step up, lobby central government for more funding, central government should be accountable	26
Find the funding from somewhere (e.g. the funds used for HS2)	16
Make efficiencies across the council, reduce the number of staff	10
What about the funds allocated to leisure services, where's that?	8
Make efficiencies in opening hours, adjust them according to usage	7
Close the less well used, smaller or most costly to run centres	6
Review council providers, contractors, and all costs and spending	5
Levy developers and builders to contribute to leisure services	5

Increase council tax to cover costs	1
Get external funding / Involve private sector	1

Lack of confidence in the council	48
Lack of confidence in the council's spending and general competence. There is mistrust, previous data has been flawed, the council is failing us	37
The scheme to cut trees down in Poynton - Don't cut those trees down, use that money instead, that report was flawed	11

Consultation and data comments	105
The consultation seems pre-determined, the question styles were not good as people were forced to choose (the ranking 1 to 7 question). Will the council listen and act on the results?	43
The pre-consultation data used was flawed, it didn't count the users it claimed and missed out clubs, non-members and schools etc.	30
The data used should transparent, up to date, accurate and correct	24
More robust consultation needs to take place, to include schools and seek input from others e.g. businessmen	5
The consultation is appreciated	3

Focusing leisure services resources are areas of poorest health	45
Disagree with the good / poor health data approach	24
Assumptions have been made about affluent area - They still have poor people with low disposable income living in them	21

Other comments	12
Knutsford Leisure Centre is an evacuation point	4
Don't increase Council Tax	3
What will it cost to close / mothball a centre, in terms of redundancies and equipment?	2
Don't increase prices for memberships	2
Do not sell off to private companies	1

Conclusions

The level of consultation response

The level of response to the consultation was very high, indicating strong feeling within communities about leisure centres and the role they play.

The large volume of email and letters received, especially from some towns in particular, is unusual and indicates a high level of organised response from these communities. Large volumes of responses were received from consultees in Poynton, Knutsford and Middlewich, it is clear that these communities came together to oppose perceived threats to their leisure services.

Response bias

It is important to note therefore that results are biased towards respondents from these areas, but also towards leisure services users as opposed to non-users – were results presented that were representative of the whole borough, they may be quite different.

Pre-consultation material development

The consultation response highlights the importance of pre-consultation material development being conducted with care and consideration for the communities that proposals may impact.

Of the 421 separate comments made in the emails received during the consultation, 374 comments were directly opposed to proposals to close sites, which had not been put forward during the actual consultation. These proposals had been discussed during pre-consultation material development at Environment and Communities Committee on 9 November 2023.

It is clear that the original proposals discussed at Committee, which weren't consulted on, created a significant level of concern within communities.

Changes to the Options scheme

There are high levels of support for the proposed changes to the Options concessionary membership scheme from survey respondents, though this may be a case of a majority of respondents voting for proposals which do not affect them.

Those who will be affected by these proposals are some of the most vulnerable in our communities, and great care must be taken to ensure that if these changes are implemented, mitigations are put in place to ensure those who really need concessions still receive them.

Changes to prices for out of borough users

There are also high levels of support from survey respondents for proposed differential pricing policies for out of borough users, and again this may be a case of a majority of respondents voting for proposals which do not affect them.

That said, questions were raised in the feedback about how much money this proposal would save the council and whether it would be workable. Concern was also expressed about this proposal from some Members, particularly for the Wilmslow and Poynton areas of the borough. Careful consideration should be given to the implementation of this policy if it goes ahead.

Alternative leisure service delivery options

Respondents were quite clear throughout the consultation that reductions in service provision, and sites closures, were their least preferred options for the service. Increases in prices for services, differential pricing policies for different types of membership, and even a reduction in opening hours are preferred to site closures.

Respondents listed a number of alternative funding ideas listed within this report which should be explored, including increasing commerciality of sites, as well as perhaps diverting funding from other services such as Public Health services. A number of alternative delivery vehicles were also suggested in emails, including the transfer of sites over to parish councils through Joint Management Agreements or similar.

Where to focus Leisure Service resources as a last resort

None of the options as to where to focus funding as a last resort were popular, though as a last resort the most popular option seemed to be to focus funding on sites where usage is highest.

There was significant opposition to the idea of focusing resources and selecting sites for closure based on health analysis, which is perhaps not surprising given most survey respondents, and most leisure centre users, are in good health.

Respondents also listed a long list of things that should be considered in any future site assessment, over and above just site usage and local health considerations.

Finally, respondents urged the council to take a long term and holistic view regarding leisure provision in Cheshire East, stating that any reductions in leisure provision in the borough could have long term consequences on council health and social care services, and on the wider community.

Appendix 1 – Email and letter feedback

Given the large response to the Strategic Leisure Review Consultation 2023, emails and letters received during the consultation have been printed verbatim within this supplementary report:

[Strategic Leisure Review Consultation 2023 – All letter and email feedback report \(PDF, 5.8MB\)](#)

In total 392 emails and 11 letters were received during the period of the consultation, making a total of 431 comments between them. A summary of these comments is provided in the below table.

Summary of email content:	No. of comments
Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre / Sports hall.	254
Opposition to the closure of Middlewich Leisure Centre / the Astro pitch at Middlewich LC.	91
Opposition to the closure of Knutsford Leisure Centre.	28
Suggests alternative ways of keeping leisure centres open, including: increasing charges to use facilities and classes; working with Everybody Health and Leisure to find savings; the council transferring leisure centres over to schools to manage; the council encouraging private gyms to come into the area to provide services; a Council Tax rise of more than 4.99%; running Leisure Services as a "revenue model with KPI's".	14
A very in-depth critique of the consultation material and data used to support it.	8
Opposition to the closure of any leisure centres in Cheshire East.	4
Comments on proposals from a school and from an Everybody Health & Leisure perspective.	3
Alsager Town Council – Opposition to the reduction of services at Alsager Leisure Centre. Suggests alternative ways of keeping the leisure centre open.	1
Councillor Mary Brooks – A very in-depth critique of the consultation material and data used to support it.	1
Councillor Sue Adams – Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre / Sports hall.	1
Crewe Town Council – Detailed comments on how to prioritise sites.	1
David Rutley MP – Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre	1
Disley Parish Council – Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre.	1
Everybody Health and Leisure – Background from an EHL perspective; critique of and comments on the Strategic Leisure review, findings and data; critique of the consultation and questionnaire; working with the council in future	1

Goostrey Parish Council – Opposition to the closure of any leisure centres in Cheshire East. Suggests alternative ways of keeping the leisure centre open.	1
Holmes Chapel Parish Council – A very in-depth critique of the consultation material and data used to support it.	1
Knutsford Town Council – Opposed to a reduction in funding for any leisure centres. Sets out funding preferences for keeping sites open. Indicates the Town Council may be open to future discussions about Town Council funding of Knutsford Leisure Centre.	1
Middlewich Town FC – The club may be willing to take on management of the Astro football pitch at Middlewich Leisure Centre.	1
Poynton High School – Opposed to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre. Willing to work with the council to find a resolution.	1
Poynton Netball Club – Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre.	1
Poynton Rotary Club – Opposition to the closure of Poynton Leisure Centre	1
Poynton Town Council – Encourages the council to maximise investment potential of Poynton Leisure Centre.	1
Sandbach Town Council – Opposition to any reduction in service at Sandbach Leisure Centre, and opposition to an increase in prices for leisure centre services. Support for the option “focus on providing services in the areas of greatest health need withdrawing funding from certain sites which by assessment do not meet a minimum threshold level”.	1
Confusion at what is being proposed.	1
Clarification sought of the amount of time the savings need to be realised over	1
Comments on the benchmarking document	1
Comments on the poor quality of equipment provided in Cheshire East subsidised gyms, as compared to privately run gyms.	1
Complaint about the online consultation form.	1
Critical of Everybody Health & Leisure’s running of leisure centres.	1
Detailed comments on how to prioritise sites.	1
Leisure sector consultant, offering services to make leisure services more profitable.	1
Opposition to the closure of the Astro at Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre.	1
Opposition to the closure of Wilmslow Leisure Centre.	1
Opposition to the reduction of services at Alsager Leisure Centre.	1
Opposition to the reduction of swimming pool provision in Cheshire East	1
Suggests transferring Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre and pitch over to Holmes Chapel Parish Council. Suggests the parish council were part of a previous Joint Management Agreement, and that consideration should be given to HCPC’s view and wishes, and that	1

examination of cost saving opportunities should occur alongside consideration of alternative methods of service delivery.	
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Appendix 2 – Event feedback

Two online events were held during the consultation. During these events members of the council's Leisure Services management team presented an overview of the consultation and answered questions.

Details of these events are provided in the below table:

Event	Date	No. of attendees
All Member Briefing (1 of 2)	15/12/2023	18
All Member Briefing (2 of 2)	18/12/2023	16

Summaries of these events are provided below. Feedback has been anonymised to protect the identity of individuals.

All Member Briefing (1 of 2) – 15 December 2023

The Leisure Services management team ran through a presentation about the consultation, which took approximately 10 minutes.

Q: Can you confirm this item will be discussed at March 2024 Environment & Communities Committee rather than the February one.

A: This is true, this item has been scheduled for the March 11 2024 meeting, and that will give us more time to review consultation responses and draft recommendations.

Q: How does this review and consultation fit in with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approval at Full Council in February 2024?

A: Savings targets that are currently being consulted on are baked into the MTFS, these are the minimum savings levels. We will look to maximise savings where we can, given the overall financial situation of the council.

Q: If more responses are received from some towns/areas of the borough than others, how will that be dealt within the consultation analysis? Will results not be biased?

A: This consultation, as with all council consultations, is open to all those who wish to respond, and so it is likely it will receive proportionally more responses from some areas than others. This consultation is not being run as a statistically robust random sample survey, and so results will be presented as they are received, alongside a full description of the consultation methodology, so that those reading the report can assess the results in the context in which they were gathered. We also encourage consultation responses from those areas which have seen a low response rate so far, and would encourage all Members to promote the consultation within their local areas.

Q: In the presentation it is quoted that there are 2.5 million visits per year – are you counting school children in those visits as well? Lots of schools use them, and schools pay to use them.

A: This is just a best estimate for this financial year and the forecast is provided by EHL as part of the contract management and monitoring process, each year.. We are gathering extra data.

Q: Does the 2.5 million include school children or not?

A: We would have to confirm with Everybody Health & Leisure (EHL) who have provided this forecast.

Q: Joint sites were metered as one site and then portioned. Do we know the precise cost for running and heating individual sites?

A: All but one site is separately metered, so the utilities costs incurred are accurate

Q: What's the availability for new memberships across the board?

A: Probably a mixture. There is capacity for memberships to increase at some sites, however it is evident from the initial work undertaken that specific sites are at peak demand hours operating at capacity, hence users chose to migrate to adjacent facilities. The main example of this is Crewe and Shavington

Q: Could we see those figures? I imagine Congleton is quite close to capacity?

A: Membership is high, capacity has been eaten into. It is currently performing quite well. But the likes of Crewe, Macclesfield, Nantwich, capacity is not there. People are going to use other sites.

Q: Those figures would be useful.

Q: Should there be closures, has any analysis been done on the financial implications on health services as a result of closing sites?

A: Closures will only be considered as a last resort. We are looking at different ways of delivering services, perhaps through third parties such as schools, so delivery without council involvement. No analysis has taken place on the potential deterioration on health if centres were to close, however it should be noted that publicly funded leisure centres are one option in relation to residents health and wellbeing, but in the vast majority of cases not the only option. Hence it is likely to be very difficult to directly relate any reductions in public leisure provisions as a specific reason for any financial implications on health services.

All Member Briefing (2 of 2) – 18 December 2023

The Leisure Services management team ran through a presentation about the consultation, which took approximately 10 minutes.

Q: Poynton Town Council has been having discussions about the Poynton site, we have been asked to make a contribution to the leisure centre, are you expecting all sites to make a contribution?

A: We have met with 9 Town Councils to discuss arrangements, and written to 5 with the same offer we have made to Poynton Town Council. The remainder will also be written to imminently. Similar to the Libraries review, this is regarding a top-up feature, and it is down to T&PCs if they want to take that up, but it is being approached in a consistent way across all sites.

Q: If more responses are received from some towns/areas of the borough than others, how will that be dealt within the consultation analysis? Will results not be biased?

A: This consultation, as with all council consultations, is open to all those who wish to respond, and so it is likely it will receive proportionally more responses from some areas than others. This consultation is not being run as a statistically robust random sample survey, and so results will be presented as they are received, alongside a full description of the consultation methodology, so that those reading the report can assess the results in the context in which they were gathered. We also encourage consultation responses from those areas which have seen a low response rate so far, and would encourage all Members to promote the consultation within their local areas.

Q: With all the discussions that have taken place so far, is there a light appearing at the end of the tunnel about how to go forward without closing sites?

A: The short answer is yes, but with the caveat that the final recommendation will be a mixture of a different types of solutions, not a “one size fits all”. We have had proposals from Everybody Health & Leisure, they have brought something forward and that is still subject to negotiation. It won't address the entirety of the problem, so there will need to be other things we need to look at to support that, which is why we are reaching out to Town and Parish Councils. Cautious optimism is how I would describe it, we are doing a lot of work in the background to engineer a viable solution.

Q: What percentage of our users are from out of area?

A: It varies from site to site, in sites in the North (Wilmslow, Poynton) there is a large migration, anywhere up to 15% - 20% in some of those sites. In other sites that is far less prevalent, particularly where they are not on or close to the border with a neighbouring local authority.

Q: In Disley there is a lot of migration the other way e.g. Disley to New Mills. Not convinced changes prices for those outside the area will change anything, so surely it is to the benefit for people to come into the borough to use sites?

A: In some areas we have waiting lists for swimming, and some of that might be that we are servicing people from outside the borough. And there is a price differential between prices in CE, and prices in other areas, other areas are more expensive.

Q: It is cheaper at New Mills than Disley. We need to be very careful with this.

Q: What is included in the management fee.

A: The total management fee for 2023/24 is in the order of £1.2 million with a pensions contribution paid in addition to this. The breakdown of the management fee equates to £500k as a subsidy to the Options membership scheme. There are 5,000 members on the Options scheme or c.25% of the total registered members for EHL. The remainder of the management fee is paid to support the wider operation of the Trust.

Q: What is the response rate so far from Macclesfield please?

A: We can't say exactly at this moment, although based on a previous snapshot of the consultation responses it was clear there have been fewer responses from Macclesfield than other areas.

Q: Responses from Crewe and Macclesfield are traditionally low, we need to improve responses from these areas.

Q: On slide 7 you mentioned "substantiated health outcomes" what is that?

A: "Substantiated health outcomes" in the context of the one off contribution from Public Health reserves in 2023/24 were based around the ongoing subsidy for the delivery of the Options scheme.

Q: Data from areas next to us in Poynton (Hazelgrove), I would be interested to know why people would come to Poynton when the service offer in Poynton is not as good as it is over the border.

A: The data is EHL data, it isn't ours. We have undertaken a plotting exercise to understand where members live and this has highlighted the migration of users from other Local Authorities.

Q: We have had reports about rises in obesity across the board, has that been taken into account as part of this consultation? This is a problem across the board.

A: The public health element will be revisited, only in the scenario that a site assessment process is needed as other viable savings proposals cannot be secured. It should be noted that publicly funded leisure centres are not the only means through

which residents can access health and wellbeing services, but are one element of a wider consideration.

Q: Within the Public Health budget we gave £1.2 million to determine wider health determinants. That is coming up to Adults & Health Committee soon.

A: It is understood that this reference is to the One You contract, undertaken by a competitive bidding process. Everybody Health & Leisure put in a bid but weren't successful. That is another piece of procurement work managed by Adults & Health, which based on our understanding is currently being re-procured. EHL may choose to tender for that work. It is a different set of services targeted towards specific public health outcomes.

Q: Are we working in a joined up way with this contract? This consultation will impact health and leisure.

A: We are in contact with officers in the adult commissioning team, those conversations are happening.

Q: If you're looking for £500,000 of savings – there we go.

Q: I'm a little concerned about what I'm hearing about Poynton and Wilmslow. We don't have the proper decisions to make about pricing, I don't think it has been properly analysed from what I've heard today. I used to be a data analyst and can offer professional input, I don't think this has been properly analysed. Not enough work has been going on to look at this in detail.

A: Everybody Health & Leisure do the market research and set the price, that is their sole discretion, that is what the contract says. It isn't the council's role to do this, but it can negotiate where it feels that this is appropriate.

Q: I'm very unhappy with what I'm hearing.

Q: There was just some talk about a previous contract, what was that?

A: The One You contract is operational, and is a contract led by Adults, it is a contract not in the scope of this consultation, that is up for renewal in the next 12 months. We are talking to colleagues in Adults.

Q: It is nothing to do with Environment & Communities Committee – You're saying there's nothing in it for our use.

A: Yes, it is a contract for the delivery of different bespoke health services for adults, this consultation is about leisure services. My understanding is that will be reprocured on a competitive basis.

Q: Question again around funding. I know these 2 contracts are different. We were also commissioning smoking cessation services from other providers.

Q: Are we still commissioning smoking cessation services through housing providers?

A: We will have to pick that up with the Adult Commissioning team as we do not hold this information. That is something that team will dictate, that isn't delivered through leisure services.

Q: I've heard a lot of relevant comments and discussion here, the interesting debate is what funding pockets are available around leisure, and about inter-departmental work. Thanks team, you are under pressure, we are under pressure too from residents. Merry Christmas.

A: Thank you for the positive feedback. The officer team are working very hard to find solutions.

Appendix 3 – Social media engagement

There were 522 total consultation engagements via social media – these have been detailed below.

X

21 posts issued:

- More than 22,500 impressions (number of times posts were displayed to users on X)
- More than 330 engagements (resharing, clicking links etc)

Facebook

16 posts issued:

- 31,000 reach (number of users seeing posts)
- 192 total engagements including 136 link clicks through to consultation from our original posts, and 56 direct engagements with our original posts.

LinkedIn

1 post (analytics not yet available).

Appendix 4 – Newspaper articles

As of 8 January 2023, a total of 15 newspaper articles had been published online throughout the duration of the consultation. These are listed below.

Date	Publication	Link
01/11/2023	Cheshire East Council	Council set to consult on proposals for leisure services (cheshireeast.gov.uk)
02/11/2023	BBC	Cheshire East leisure centres could close amid budget shortfall - BBC News
02/11/2023	Nantwich News	Four leisure centres facing closure as CEC budget cuts deepen
02/11/2023	Northwich Guardian	Middlewich Leisure Centre at risk of closure under new council plans
03/11/2023	Northwich Guardian	Everybody Health and Leisure raises concerns over council plans
05/11/2023	Cheshire Live	'Worrying news' as four leisure centres face closure over council funding cut
06/11/2023	Knutsford Guardian	Fury over threat to axe funding for Knutsford leisure centre
08/11/2023	Cheshire Live	A generation of Cheshire swimmers could be lost if council cuts go ahead, says club leader
10/11/2023	Northwich Guardian	Future of Cheshire East's leisure centres still uncertain
21/11/2023	Northwich Guardian	Esther McVey: 'Knutsford Leisure Centre needs to stay open'
23/11/2023	Cheshire East Council	Council launches consultation on proposals for leisure services
24/11/2023	BBC	Opening times at Cheshire leisure centres could be cut
24/11/2023	Northwich Guardian	Cheshire East launches leisure centre cost-cutting consultation
29/11/2023	Business Cheshire	Cheshire Leisure Centres Could See Increased Fees And Reduced Opening Hours
18/12/2023	Cheshire East Council	Residents invited to have their say in leisure services consultation

Appendix 5 – Survey respondent demographics

Gender

58% of survey respondents were female, 38% male.

Gender	Count	Percent
Female	1,587	58%
Male	1,037	38%
Prefer not to say	93	3%
Other	12	0%
Total valid responses	2,729	100%

The 12 “other” responses comprised of the below which have been printed verbatim in alphabetical order:

- “I am a woman, my SEX is female, gender identity is a highly contested ideology.”
- “I do not have a gender identity. I am female - this is a fact not an identity.”
- “I don't have a gender identity. I have a biological sex”
- “If the council spent less money on this kind of nonsense they might have more money to spend on leisure centres. I am male.”
- “Non-binary”
- “Of female sex.”
- “P****d off”
- “Responding as Squadron entity “
- “There are 2 genders, it's not a choice!!!!”
- “We are a club that do define people by their gender.”
- “You don't need the info on this page.”
- “You should be asking for sex as gender identity is made up nonsense”

Age group

Survey respondent numbers by age group were as follows:

Age Group	Count	Percent
16-24	66	2%
25-34	165	6%
35-44	573	21%
45-54	713	26%
55-64	548	20%
65-74	405	15%
75-84	158	6%

85 and over	11	0%
Prefer not to say	89	3%
Total valid responses	2,728	100%

Health or disability status

Survey respondent numbers by health or disability status were as follows:

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? This includes problems related to old age.	Count	Percent
Yes	366	14%
No	2167	80%
Prefer not to say	178	7%
Total valid responses	2,711	100%

Appendix 6 – The consultation material

During the consultation the council set out its proposals within its consultation material, that respondents could then feedback on. A summary of this material is provided below.

Strategic Leisure Review Consultation 2023

Purpose of this consultation

Cheshire East Council approved its **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)** for 2023 to 2027 at a meeting of Full Council in February 2023. A draft version of this MTFS had been consulted on prior to being approved.

This MTFS put forward proposals showing how the council could balance its budget for the next 4 years - something which all councils must do. The draft MTFS approved in February 2023 was an extremely challenging one, given the impact of the cost of living crisis and inflation on council finances.



The approved MTFS included a proposal to review leisure services in Cheshire East, with this review comprising of 2 stages:

Stage 1 – To make £1.3 million of savings from the service in 2023/24. This stage **has already been delivered**, with these savings having already been made.

Stage 2 – In the context of needing to secure a further **minimum** £479,000 of savings against current commissioned leisure services, looking at how leisure services in Cheshire East can be targeted to the best effect. This is to ensure that these services are having the biggest impact on the health and wellbeing of residents that need them the most, for the amount of money the council has to invest.

The council is now conducting this consultation to determine how Stage 2 of this review might best be delivered.

Current financial challenges



In the context of the wider financial challenges the council is facing we must consider the long-term affordability of all services, and where funding should be focused so that it has the biggest impact for the greatest number of people. In the last few weeks the council published an updated financial forecast which shows a potential shortfall of £18.7m against anticipated expenditure in 2023/24.

It is expected that the financial challenges driven principally by high levels of inflation and unprecedented levels of service demand will continue to increase over the coming years.

How council Leisure Services operate

The council subsidises leisure services in two ways:



- The payment of an annual management fee to Everybody Health and Leisure which pays for the likes of the concessionary membership scheme "Options". In accordance with the obligations under the contract this has seen a year-on-year decrease.
- Acting as the "corporate landlord" under the operating agreement with Everybody Health and Leisure the council are responsible for paying for the leisure centres themselves, including utilities (gas, electricity and water) and maintenance of the buildings both planned and reactive. In 2019/20 the actual costs to the council were £2.88million, rising to £3.72 million for 2022/23. In the current financial year these costs are forecast to grow to £4.23 million, representing a further £510,000 increase in costs over a 12 month period.

Cheshire East Council's leisure centres are operated by its current delivery partner Everybody Health and Leisure (EHL), which is a charitable trust (see <https://everybody.org.uk>).

Reasons for the proposals

It is the "corporate landlord" subsidies as detailed above which the council needs to consider in terms of how to fund these costs into the future. As has been felt by all sectors and by residents, costs for utilities have increased significantly over the last 18 months, with no sign of these cost increases stopping. Leisure centres, due to the types of services offered, are some of the most expensive to operate and maintain for the council. The council cannot now afford to continue to fund these costs and hence viable funding alternatives need to be found.



At present any capital investment into the leisure centres themselves is also underwritten by the council, and with interest rates at their highest level for many years, future investments are now significantly constrained from a business case perspective.

As part of this consultation the council is putting forward a number of proposals to change the way Leisure Services are funded in Cheshire East. The council is putting forward these proposals so it can:

- Focus its reducing resources on the communities and people that need it the most
- Bring its Leisure Service offer in-line with other councils which it has benchmarked itself against (see the benchmarking exercise document in the consultation pack)
- Continue to be able to achieve a legally balanced budget

Any financial savings made as a result of any proposals being implemented will be used to offset the rising costs of commissioning leisure services and protect the core offer.

Giving your feedback

You can give your feedback on this consultation by:

- Completing this survey online by typing this link into your internet browser <https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/SLRC23>
- Completing this survey online by following the below QR Code



- Completing this paper survey and returning it to us using the freepost return envelope included in the consultation pack
- Emailing RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Calling 0300 123 55 00

This consultation will close on 7 January 2024.

Contact us



If you have any questions about this survey, or if you want this questionnaire in a different format or to submit your response in a different way:

- Email RandC@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Call 0300 123 55 00

Keeping your data safe



Any personal information you give us will remain private, be stored securely, and be used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. To read more about how we use your data read our Privacy Notice, a copy of which is included in the consultation pack.

About you

How are you responding to this survey? *Tick all that apply*

- As someone who uses Everybody Health and Leisure facilities
- On behalf of a community or sports club who use Everybody Health and Leisure facilities
- As an Everybody Health & Leisure Employee
- As a Cheshire East Council Ward Councillor
- As a Town or Parish Councillor
- As an individual (e.g. resident)
- As a Cheshire East Council employee
- On behalf of another group, organisation, club or local business
- Other (*write in*):

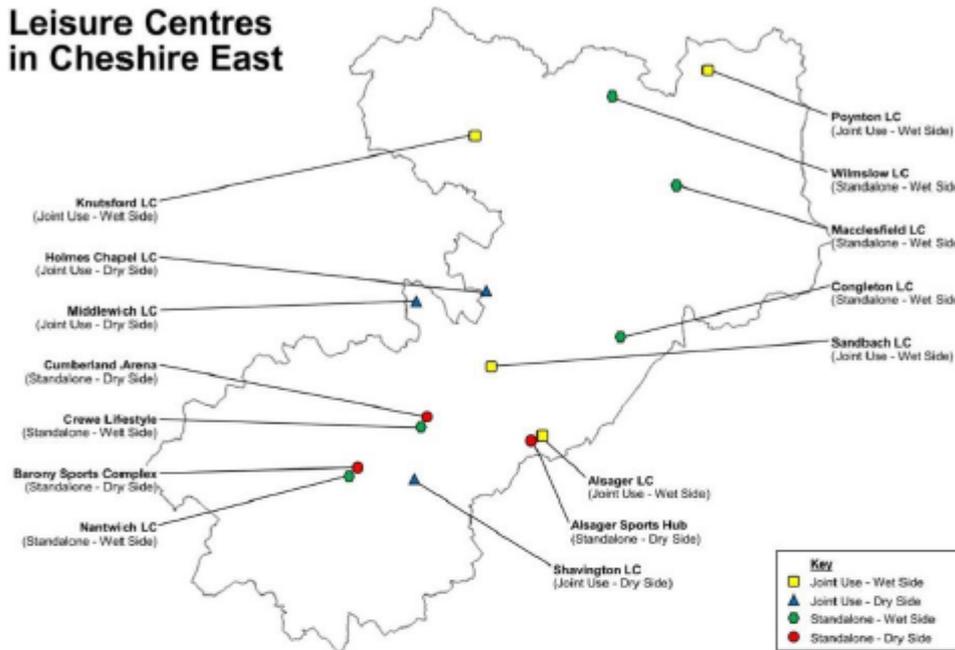
If you are responding on behalf of community or sports club who use Everybody Health and Leisure facilities, or any other group, organisation, club, business, please write its name in the box below: *Write in below*

Your use of leisure sites across Cheshire East

Only complete this section if you use Everybody Health & Leisure facilities.

Cheshire East Council currently provides funding towards the 15 Leisure Centre sites across Cheshire East shown on the map below.

Leisure Centres in Cheshire East



Generally speaking, how often do you use each of the following leisure sites across Cheshire East? *Tick one box only in each row*

	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less frequently than once a month	Never
Alsager Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alsager Sports Hub	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barony Sports Complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congleton Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crewe Lifestyle Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cumberland Arena	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knutsford Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Macclesfield Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less frequently than once a month	Never
Middlewich Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nantwich Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poynton Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sandbach Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shavington Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wilmslow Leisure Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are you currently a registered member at a site operated by Everybody Health and Leisure? Tick one box only

Yes

No – Go to “Community and sports clubs” on page 8

Don't know / Not sure – Go to “Community and sports clubs” on page 8

At which site are you a registered member? Tick one box only

Alsager Leisure Centre Macclesfield Leisure Centre

Alsager Sports Hub Middlewich Leisure Centre

Barony Sports Complex Nantwich Leisure Centre

Congleton Leisure Centre Poynton Leisure Centre

Crewe Lifestyle Centre Sandbach Leisure Centre

Cumberland Arena Shavington Leisure Centre

Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre Wilmslow Leisure Centre

Knutsford Leisure Centre

What type of membership do you hold? Tick one box only

Everybody Standard Membership

Everybody Premium Membership

Everybody Family Membership

Everybody Joint Membership

Everybody Corporate Membership

Everybody Options Scheme

6

- Everybody Local Membership
- Everybody Wild Card Offer
- Talented Athlete Support Scheme
- One Day Pass

Community and Sports Clubs

Only complete this section if you are responding on behalf of a community or sports club who regularly use one of the Cheshire East leisure centres.

Which site(s) does your community or sports club use? Tick all that apply

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alsager Leisure Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Macclesfield Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alsager Sports Hub | <input type="checkbox"/> Middlewich Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barony Sports Complex | <input type="checkbox"/> Nantwich Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congleton Leisure Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Poynton Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crewe Lifestyle Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandbach Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cumberland Arena | <input type="checkbox"/> Shavington Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holmes Chapel Leisure Centre | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilmslow Leisure Centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knutsford Leisure Centre | |

Which of the following facilities does your community or sports club use? Tick all that apply

- Sports Hall
- Swimming Pool
- Gym
- General meeting place
- Outdoor sports pitch
- Athletics facilities
- Other (write in):

What are the age ranges of your registered club members? Tick all that apply

- 0 to 5
- 6 to 12
- 13 to 18
- 18 to 65
- 66 plus

How many registered members does your community or sports club have?

Write in below

Please provide a brief description of your community or sports club needs from these facilities: *Write in below*

Generally speaking, how many hours a week does your community or sports club use these facilities for? *Tick one box only*

- One hour or less per week
- Up to five hours per week
- Up to ten hours per week
- Over ten hours per week
- Other (write in):

Alternative leisure service delivery approaches

There are a number of potential ways Cheshire East Council could generate income, or make savings, to meet the income / savings target as set out in the introduction of this questionnaire.

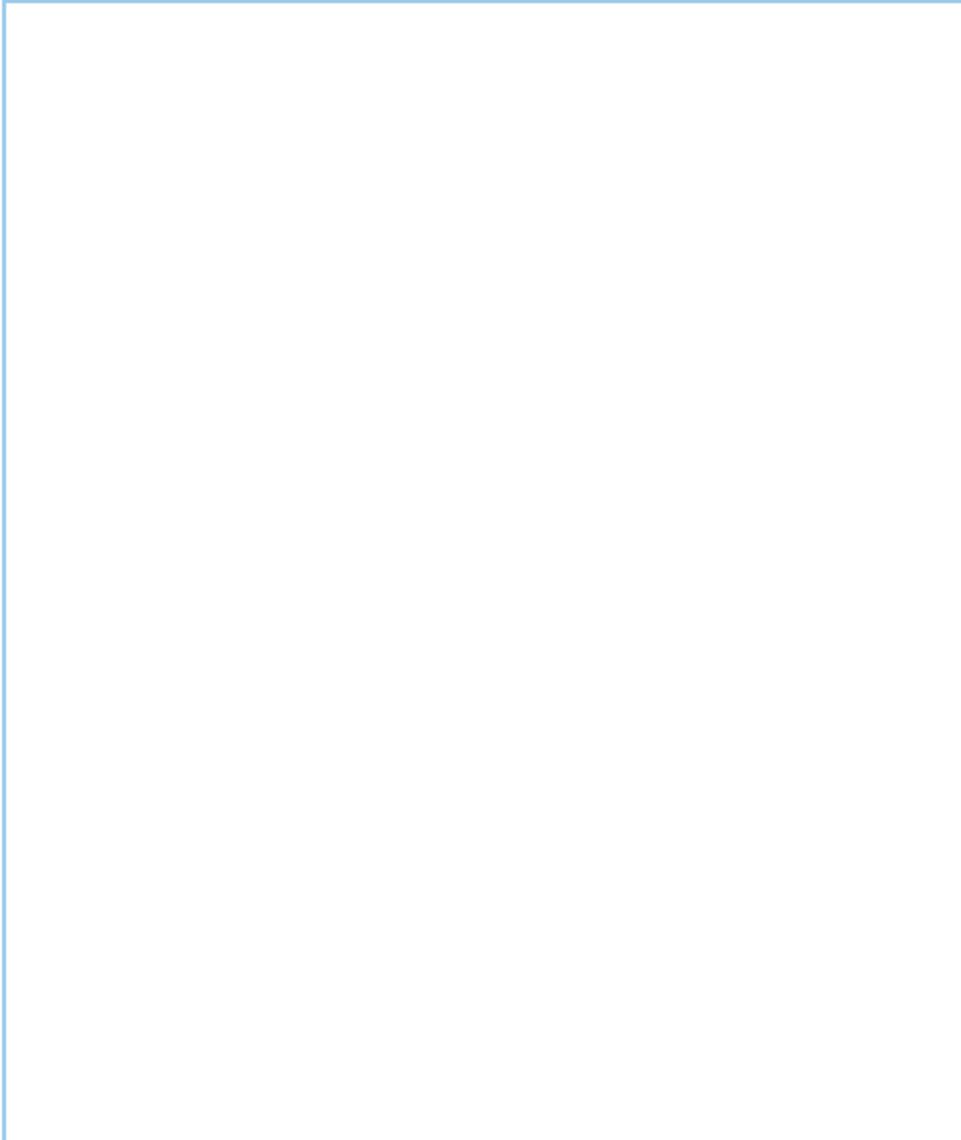
For each of the suggested ways of generating income or making savings from Leisure Services listed below, rank each one from 1 to 7, where 1 is your most preferred option, and 7 is your least preferred option.

Note that you should only use each number once, e.g. only one option should be given a 1, only one option should be given a 2 etc. Note that the final proposal is likely to involve a combination of these options.

Write in ranks 1 (most preferred) to 7 (least preferred) below. Suggestions are listed in alphabetical order.

- Focus on providing a smaller number of core larger leisure sites, withdrawing funding from those sites less well attended
- Focus on providing leisure services in the areas of greatest health need, withdrawing funding from sites which by assessment do not meet a minimum threshold level
- Implement a differential pricing policy for different grades of membership, like a Gold / Silver / Bronze reflecting the range of service offer. This would allow higher cost activities such as swimming provision to be charged at a different unit rate.
- Increase prices across all activities and grades of membership
- Reduce opening hours across all leisure sites
- Reduce scope of higher unit rate cost services such as swimming offered across all leisure sites
- Transfer ownership of leisure sites to other third party operators, where an interest is expressed and there is a clear business case to do so.

Do you have any other suggestions for how the council's leisure sites could be funded, to retain the current level of service provision? If your suggestion relates to a specific leisure site, please clearly state which site you are referring to
Write in below



Proposed changes to the concessionary membership scheme (called Options)

Cheshire East Council is also proposing to make savings from its Everybody Options scheme. This is the Everybody Health and Leisure concessionary membership scheme that provides membership and access to activities at our centres at a discount.

The scheme is only available to people who meet the eligibility criteria which include senior citizens, students and young people, as well as armed services personnel and those in receipt of certain types of income or disability support. Currently, the council directly funds these concessionary memberships.

There are a number of ways of making savings the council is exploring, including:

- Reducing the maximum discount offered from 25% to 20%
- Reducing the maximum discount offered from 25% to 15%
- Only offering the scheme to residents of Cheshire East
- Amending the eligibility criteria as set out in the Options proposed eligibility and discounts document which is included in the consultation pack

These proposals are being put forward to bring the council in-line with other councils which it has benchmarked itself against (see the benchmarking exercise document in the consultation pack).

For the Options concessionary membership scheme, how strongly do you support or oppose the proposal to... *Tick one box only in each row*

	Strongly support	Tend to support	Neither support nor oppose	Tend to oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know / Not sure
...reduce the maximum discount offered from 25% to 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...reduce the maximum discount offered from 25% to 15%	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...only offer the scheme to residents of Cheshire East	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...amend the eligibility criteria as set out in the Options proposed eligibility and discounts document included in the consultation pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments to make about the proposed changes to the Options concessionary membership scheme? *Write in below*

Proposed change to prices for out of borough leisure service users

Cheshire East Council is proposing to introduce a different pricing policy for any users of its leisure services whose home address is outside the borough. The pricing for these users will be the same as prices in their local authority area.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose the council's proposal to introduce a different pricing policy for any users of its leisure services whose home address is outside the borough?

Tick one box only

- Strongly support
- Tend to support
- Neither support nor oppose
- Tend to oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know / Not sure

If you wish to, explain why you support or oppose this proposal below, including explaining how this proposal might affect you: *Write in below*

Focusing future council investment into Leisure Services

Finally, if the council is unable to meet the required income / savings target through the generation of additional income or through alternative delivery models, the council may have to consider reducing or removing subsidies for some of its sites in the borough.

If this were to happen, as a last resort, the council is proposing to focus its continued investment into Leisure Services:

- In the locations where the health of residents is poorest
- On the leisure centre sites where usage is highest. This will consider not only the use of these sites by registered EHL members but also by those community and sports groups who respond to this consultation, as well as where appropriate any use by schools.
- Where the actual cost to operate sites per user is lowest. For each individual site this will consider day to day operating costs, as well as the council's corporate landlord costs, offset by any income generated by individual sites.

It is proposing these changes so that the council can focus its limited resources on the communities and people that need them the most. It is proposing to target resources where they will have most impact, as this will be the most effective way to improve overall health across the borough. Some areas have more health needs than others, which has been well documented through a variety of widely available public health assessments such as the Health Profiles for Electoral Wards (aka the Tartan Rug – see a copy in the consultation pack).

It is therefore proposed if needed to undertake any final assessment of sites on these key principles. The assessment undertaken will be presented in support of any final recommendations.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that as a last resort where extra savings are needed, the council should focus its Leisure Service resources...

Tick one box only in each row

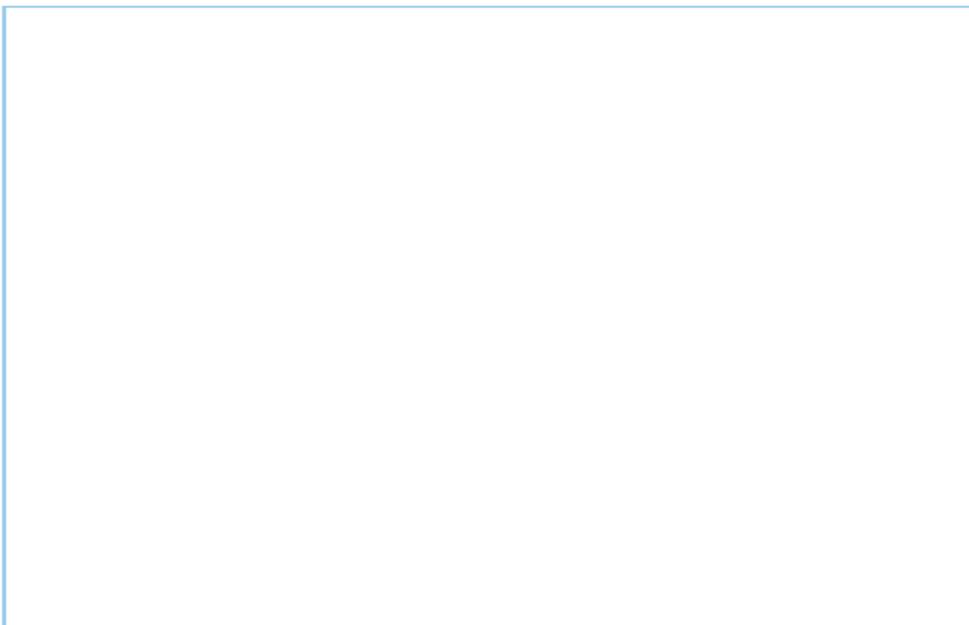
	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Not sure
...in the locations where the health of residents is poorest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...on the leisure centre sites where usage is highest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...where the actual cost to operate sites per user is lowest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything else you think the council should take into consideration when deciding where to focus its Leisure Service resources? *Write in below*



Final comments

Do you have any final comments to make about this consultation? *Write in below*



About you

It would help us if you could answer the questions below - the information will be used to see if there are any differences in views for different groups of people. You do not need to answer any of the following questions if you do not wish to.

What is your home postcode? We ask this so we can be sure we have obtained a range of views from across the borough *Write in below*

What is your gender identity? *Tick one box only*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe (*write in*):

What age group do you belong to? *Tick one box only*

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85 and over
- Prefer not to say

Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? This includes problems related to old age. *Tick one box only*

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

How is your health in general? *Tick one box only*

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad

You have now reached the end of the questionnaire, thank you.

Please return this completed questionnaire to us in the freepost return envelope included in the consultation pack.

