

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet Sub-Group on Leisure Services**
held on Monday, 20 April 2009 at Westfields, Sandbach

Present

Cabinet Sub-Group Members:

Councillor Andrew Knowles (in the Chair)
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Roland Domleo

Other Members:

Councillor Dorothy Flude
Councillor John Hammond
Councillor Ray Westwood

Officers:

Guy Kilminster, Head of Health and Wellbeing
Rob Hyde, Service Development Manager
Mark Wheelton, Leisure and Green Spaces Manager
Keith Pickton, Interim Leisure Services Manager
Ceri Harrison, Head of Transformation, People Directorate
Paul Mountford, Legal and Democratic Services

Apologies

Councillor Frank Keegan
Councillor Ainsley Arnold
Councillor Paul Edwards
Tony Parr, Manager Leisure Services (Congleton)

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Group's meetings on 2 and 23 March 2009 be approved as a correct record.

On consideration of the minutes, the Officers advised that the tell-us data in its present form was of limited use and further work and analysis would be carried out in order to inform the terms of reference of the options appraisal.

2. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (DDA) COMPLIANCE AT CHESHIRE EAST LEISURE CENTRE FACILITIES

The Group received an overview of compliance with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation at Cheshire East Leisure Centre facilities and a snapshot of disability-related club or group use of leisure facilities.

It was noted that leisure centres differed widely in the extent to which they were DDA compliant, and some facilities, such as Alsager Leisure Centre, were currently not compliant. Meeting the needs of the legislation would be challenging in the light of finite resources.

Joint use facilities also posed a problem in that schools had been given an additional ten years in which to comply with the DDA legislation. This would need to be an area for discussion and agreement between the authority and the schools.

Whilst it was necessary to develop a long-term strategy for the Borough, it was also necessary to identify what needed to be done now, particularly in relation to key buildings such as Crewe Swimming Pool.

There was also a need to work closely with disability groups and the Council's Property Service in pursuing DDA compliance.

RESOLVED

That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the information in the report be used as the basis for an improvement plan for Leisure facilities in Cheshire East.

3. COMMISSIONING OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Members received a report on the next stages of the project plan and considered proposals to commission consultants to provide an options appraisal for the future delivery of leisure facilities in Cheshire East.

There was insufficient capacity and expertise within the current staff structure to conduct the appraisal internally. Commissioning external consultants would add objectivity and rigour to the process.

The outcomes of the Group's previous meetings had been captured by the Officers and would help to shape the terms of reference for the options appraisal.

The Officers also reported that an offer had been received from Sport England to provide a Facilities Improvement Service (FIS). This was a free

Service principally designed to provide Officers with the knowledge and tools to develop a clear plan for the development of facilities as opposed to the running of facilities. The idea of using the same consultants to provide a detailed options appraisal was rejected by the consultants and Sport England because of potential conflicts of interest. The FIS offer had been accepted. This would be delivered over approximately 20 days and comprise support towards:

- the Strategic Planning context, including BSF opportunities
- Financing Options
- Cost, design and procurement of facilities
- Facilities Management

The service would conclude with a final document, which would provide:

- viable options for procurement
- supplementary planning advice
- an identification of alternate funding opportunities
- a document which can be integrated into a Sustainable Community Strategy
- a framework for the delivery of sport and recreation facilities under BSF

The timing of the FIS had yet to be agreed with Sport England. It was hoped this could be initiated very quickly. Should the timing allow, the findings of this could usefully feed into the final preferred recommendations on future delivery arrangements for Leisure Facilities.

RESOLVED

That

- (1) the acceptance of the offer by Sport England to provide a Facilities Improvement Service be noted; and
- (2) consultants be commissioned to provide an options appraisal within the terms discussed.

4. FREE SWIMMING UPDATE

The Group received an update on progress with the free swimming initiative for people aged 16 years and under and people aged 60 years and over introduced on the 1 April 2009.

Approximately 7,000 youngsters had so far signed up to the scheme. The data would be analysed in various ways to provide a detailed demographic breakdown.

Whilst it was still too soon to predict the longer-term position, this early level of take-up was encouraging and the Leader of the Council was preparing an appropriate press release.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the Group be provided with further updates as appropriate.

5. CHANGE4LIFE AS A BRAND FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN CHESHIRE EAST

The Group received a report on the Change4Life brand and the potential for Cheshire East Council in adopting and using this high profile national brand. The report also sought Members' support for the Council becoming a 'Partner Organisation' to the brand.

Change4Life, launched in January 2009, was a £275 million government-led nationwide social marketing campaign which would spearhead wider cross-government department work targeted at achieving the Government's goal of being "the first major nation to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population" (DoH 2008). It was a unique collaboration between central government, local health authorities, local organisations, charities and the commercial food industry. To date, 12,400 organisations had signed up to the three-year campaign which sought to kick-start a nationwide population lifestyle revolution. The target audience was everyone in England and the focus was on long-term prevention.

Local authorities who became supporters or partners in the Change4Life movement would benefit by being aligned with a national movement that had already caught the attention of the public and had strong brand and message recognition.

RESOLVED

That it be recommended that

- (1) Cheshire East Council sign up to become a partner organisation of Change4Life;
- (2) the signatory to becoming a partner organisation be the Portfolio Holder, Councillor A Knowles;
- (3) subject to observing Cheshire East brand conditions, the Brand be used extensively by all Health and Wellbeing services and facilities and as an integral part of future marketing and sales; and
- (4) programmes of activities be developed and timetabled, so far as is possible, to coincide with the publicity and launch of the various national initiatives over the next 18 months or so.

6. 2012 UPDATE

Members received an update on the work of the Cheshire West and Cheshire East and Warrington 2012 Steering Group.

The Steering Group had produced a legacy framework strategy known as “Embrace the Games” to ensure that this part of the Country maximized its opportunities to benefit from the Games and their legacy. A copy of the strategy was circulated at the meeting.

The strategy concentrated on four main themes which the Steering Group felt would provide the greatest benefit locally:

- Sport and Physical Activity
- Cultural Olympiad
- Visitor Economy
- Local Business

Each theme had a “champion” whose role was to advocate, drive and achieve the benefits for their sector.

The strategy had identified that some investment would be needed to ensure that it was adequately supported. The following bodies were making a financial contribution to a co-ordinator post which would be advertised shortly and hosted by the Cheshire and Warrington Sports Partnership (formerly known as ‘Sport Cheshire’):

- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West and Chester
- CWEA
- VCC
- Cheshire Sports Partnership
- Warrington BC

The following bodies had yet to make a financial offer. The involvement and commitment of the Universities was very important and it was hoped that these bodies would shortly sign up to the funding arrangement:

- Chester University
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Chambers of Commerce

Once the coordinator post had been filled, a detailed action plan would be drawn up and Members would receive a further update.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 17 June 2009 at 10.00 am in Committee Suite 2, Westfields, Sandbach.