

<b>Community Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	31 October 2023
<b>Report Title</b>	Leisure Options Working group
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Jay Jenkins, Leisure & Technical Services Manager
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.</li> <li>2. Members agree the 'Leisure Options Working Group' Terms of Reference. Appendix 1.</li> </ol>

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to update the Community Committee on the future Leisure Options work that has been undertaken to date and agree a draft Terms of Reference for the Members' Working Group.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The existing leisure contract (covering Swallows & Sheppey sites) is due to expire on 31 March 2025. Faversham Pools Trust has a long-term lease which is linked to an annual grant agreement.
- 2.2 The initial fifteen-year Leisure Centre management contract with Swale Community Leisure (SCL) & Serco Leisure was due to end in September 2019, but due to uncertainty in the leisure market and further investigations needed on facility investments, the contract was subsequently extended by 5 years and 5 months (to bring it in line with SBC's financial year). The pandemic created massive disruption to the leisure market and has only just started to recover. Therefore, now is the time to restart the work to look at future options.
- 2.3 We have been working with the leisure consultants 'Strategic Leisure' on a new Built Facilities Strategy (BFS), which looks at the current supply and demand of leisure facilities and predicts future requirements. The strategy covers a period in line with the Swale's developing Local Plan.
- 2.4 A decision is required on which option(s) should be worked up by officers, with support of the consultants. The aim of the working group is to consider the benefits and disadvantages of a range of options that can then be brought to Community Committee for final decision.

- 2.5 The group will need to look at all options from the least palatable ‘cease the leisure centre service’ to ‘large scale investment’ in the facilities and a number of options in between. They will also need to consider the operating model that will ensure the service brings value for money and helps to meet the financial challenges in the medium-term financial strategy.
- 2.6 In order to frame the discussions at the working group, a number of strategic outcomes need to be considered. These will also ensure we can respond to recent Government and Sport England policy changes.

### 3 Proposals

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
- 3.2 Recommend that the Members’ Leisure Options Working Group Terms of Reference be agreed.

### 4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 To not continue with a Leisure Options working group or to not adopt the terms of reference. This is not recommended as it is a key service for the community and there needs to be time to work through the options before the contract expiry date.

### 5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with a range of key leisure stakeholders, including Swale Community Leisure, Serco Leisure Ltd & Faversham Leisure Trust.
- 5.2 In addition, Strategic Leisure has undertaken a soft market testing consultation with the main operators in the industry to help inform current thinking about any future opportunities in Swale.

### 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The new Corporate Plan is currently being developed. The existing Corporate Plan identifies the importance of health and wellbeing on our communities. Under Priority 3 objective 5 states ‘Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural and other leisure activities appropriate and accessible to each age group.’
Financial, Resource and Property	The leisure service is a considerable cost to overall Council budget (circa £580,000 in 2022-23). The working group need to consider which options can contribute to reducing the cost of the service. The estimated cost for the current financial year is <b>£630,672.</b>

	As well as annual running costs, the future investment requirements are a key consideration as the buildings are all circa 30 years old. In additional consideration of the costs of providing this service in terms of the medium-term financial strategy.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The route to deliver the Leisure Service is dependent upon the decisions of the working group but will require procurement/legal intervention throughout 2024.
Crime and Disorder	None identified.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Any investment in the buildings need to consider reducing the carbon footprint of the service, due to their high energy usage.
Health and Wellbeing	Healthy & Wellbeing is a key output of any Leisure contract. Social impact outcomes are directly linked to the Borough's ability to offer a suitable and easily assessable leisure offering
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified.
Equality and Diversity	Links with disability and mental health provision in the borough and a community impact assessment
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 Leisure Options Working Group Terms of Reference

## **8 Background Papers**

9.1 None