

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Thursday, 27th February, 2020.

Present:- Councillors Plenty (Chair), Wright (Vice-Chair), Ajaib, Gahir, M Holledge, Matloob, Minhas and S Parmar

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillor Nazir

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Hulme and co-optee Trevor Pollard

PART 1

53. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

54. Minutes of the last meeting held on 14th January 2020

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

55. Member Questions

None were received.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Gahir declared that he was a taxi driver. He remained in the Council Chamber throughout the meeting.

56. Impact of the New Leisure Facilities

The Leisure Services Manager introduced a report that set out the impact of the Council's Leisure Capital Development Programme, which formed part of the Council's Five Year Leisure Strategy.

Members were informed that the Leisure Strategy set out to achieve the following four priorities: to provide new, quality core leisure facilities for residents; to provide a network of improved and accessible free leisure facilities in parks and open spaces; to provide a comprehensive programme of accessible opportunities for local residents of all ages and abilities to participate in regular physical activity; to procure a new leisure operator to manage the new, core leisure facilities.

As part of the Strategy, a four year construction programme had been undertaken to provide a network of new leisure facilities. As a result the following facilities had opened: Arbour Park Community Sports Stadium, Slough Ice Arena, Salt Hill Activity Centre, Langley Leisure Centre, and The Centre. In 2017, following a procurement process, the Council awarded

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Everyone Active a ten year contract to manage the new leisure facilities. The new contract offered the Council a far more favourable financial package than had previously been in place and was expected to return in excess of £10 million to the Council during the period of the contract.

Over the last five years' sports facilities in parks and open spaces across Slough had seen significant investment, including the installation of twenty-six green gyms, seven new multiuse games areas, a skate park, a parkour, seven artificial cricket wickets, four cricket practice nets and a network of dedicated walking tracks.

In relation to the impact of the new facilities, Members were advised that in 2019, the Council had carried out the largest survey of residents' attitudes to health and physical activity. 1,600 face-to-face surveys were undertaken and this had indicated that inactivity in Slough was decreasing and activity levels were improving above those reported nationally.

The new leisure facilities were expected to receive over 1.2 million visits during 2019/20, an increase of over 400,000 visits since 2017; the year the facilities were last open to the public.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair invited Members to comment and ask questions.

During the course of the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Referring to the usage data of Everyone Active managed facilities, set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report, a Member requested a further breakdown of the usage figures for each leisure facility. In addition, it was requested that performance data was provided in the context of the performance of other comparable local authority leisure facilities. The Leisure Services Manager agreed to provide this information to the Panel.
- A Member asked, of the anticipated £10 million return, how much of the revenue the Council had currently received. It was explained that the operator had been given a two year grace period so had not yet returned a profit to the Council. From the third year of the contract, the operator was expected to return in excess of £1 million. In addition, it was explained that if the operator exceeded the expected profit return, the Council received a profit share.
- It was noted that Everyone Active ran an apprenticeship programme, offering eight placements per year for Slough residents, which allowed participants to work in a leisure centre whilst studying for level 2 and 3 qualifications in leisure management or fitness and health. A Member requested information regarding the number of apprentices currently

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employed in the Council's leisure centres. The Leisure Services Manager agreed to provide this information.

- A Member highlighted that Langley Leisure Centre had proved to be very popular with residents, and the membership and usage targets had been surpassed. It was asked if any other facilities had also exceeded targets. It was explained that swimming lessons at Langley Leisure Centre had proved particularly popular. The uptake of ice skating in the arena at Montem Leisure Centre had been slower; however ice skating was seen as a more seasonable activity and television shows such as Dancing on Ice, increased interest and popularity of this pastime. Caving at Salt Hill Activity Centre had received mixed reviews, and had not proved as popular as had been hoped.
- A Member asked if the quarterly performance reports for each leisure facility could be shared with the Panel. It was agreed that these could be shared with Members, however it was highlighted that some of the information would be commercially sensitive and could not be made public.
- It was noted that the lowest percentage of users were aged 65 and over. It was asked what could be done to increase participation in this age group. It was explained that free activities such as swimming and badminton were offered to people over 60 years old. A targeted programme of activities was also being established to encourage activity amongst the over 60s.
- A Member highlighted the importance of all forms of exercise, including activity undertaken in the outdoors, such as walking. The Leisure Services Manager was requested to consider the possibility of the Council providing dedicated dog walking areas in Slough.
- From spring 2020, Slough's Looked After Children and care leavers would be given a package of free use for all leisure facilities in the borough. A Member asked if a similar package could be provided to children from low income families. It was explained that unfortunately there was no funding available to provide this for children of low income families.
- A Member requested information about the level of obesity in Slough. The Leisure Services Manager agreed to request this information from the Council's Public Health Team and circulate the response to the Panel. In addition, it was explained that the leisure facilities contract stipulated that healthy eating options had to be provided in leisure centre vending machines and cafes.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.

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- (b) That the Leisure Services Manager be requested to circulate responses to the queries raised and undertake the action points, as detailed above.

57. Safer Slough Partnership Update

The Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager introduced a report that provided an update on the progress of the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP), in relation to the delivery of work aligned to the Partnership's 2019/2020 priorities.

Slough Borough Council's Chief Executive, in her capacity as Co-Chair of the Safer Slough Partnership introduced a Powerpoint presentation to the Panel.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Chair invited comments and questions from the Panel.

During the course of the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Referring to the workstreams of the Violence Taskforce, a Member requested that in future reports data be provided to indicate the performance of each workstream compared to the previous year. The Panel was advised that the Violence Taskforce had been initiated in October 2019, so the data currently available was limited. It was agreed that this was something that could be reported in future reports.
- A Member requested that the Slough Violence Taskforce and Action Plan, including tasks and achievements to date be circulated to the Panel.
- With regard to the Choices Programme, a Member sought the details of the schools that had signed up to the Programme and had hosted sessions. It was agreed that these details would be circulated to the Panel.
- It was noted that there had recently been two major knife crime incidents in Slough, perpetrated by children. The link between excluded children and knife crime was highlighted. In view of this, the Panel considered it particularly important that Haybrook College and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) signed up to the Choices Programme. It was explained that the Choices Programme was a preventative initiative that aimed at supporting Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to understand the process of making 'good' choices and equipping them with the skills to manage issues they may encounter. The delivery of the Year 7 element of the Programme was scheduled to be piloted within the current academic year (2019/20). The design of the Year 8 element was scheduled to be rolled-out during the 2020/2021 academic year, and the delivery to Haybrook College and PRU pupils would be considered as part of the second phase.
- It was explained that the sessions were carried out in the context of a lesson and teachers were fully briefed and encouraged to follow up any concerns with pupils. Teachers were equipped with the skills to refer

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any disclosures made to them to the most appropriate authority (i.e a parent or the police).

- A Member asked what measures the Council took to tackle modern slavery. It was explained that on 18th October 2019, the Safer Slough Partnership launched wave two of its campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery. The first wave of the campaign had been rolled-out in October 2018. Over the course of the campaign, calls to the Modern Slavery helpline had increased by 400%.

The Chair then invited Councillor Nazir to address the Panel under Rule 30.

Councillor Nazir highlighted that often perpetrators of knife crime were known to each other; therefore it was important that partner agencies worked together to educate young people of the dangers of carrying knives.

Resolved –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager be requested to provide the following to the Panel:
 - Slough Violence Taskforce and Action Plan – including tasks and achievements to date.
 - Details of the schools which had signed up to the Choices Programme and had hosted sessions.

58. Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel 2019/20 Work Programme

The Policy Insight Analyst presented the Forward Work Programme and updated Members on relevant items.

The Panel was informed that a request to scrutinise the Council's Hub Strategy had been received from Councillor Hulme. It was agreed that the item would be considered at a future meeting.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Policy Insight Analyst be requested to add the Council's Hub Strategy to the Work Programme as a 'To be programmed' report.
- (b) That, subject to the amendment set out above, the Forward Work Programme 2019/20 be approved, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

59. Members' Attendance Record 2019/20

Resolved - That the details of the Members' Attendance Record be noted.

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60. Date of Next Meeting - (Extraordinary) 17th March 2020

Resolved - That the date of the next (extraordinary) meeting was confirmed as 17th March 2020

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.31 pm)