

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>From:</b> BDC Cabinet Member Communities MSDC Lead Member Health and Wellbeing	<b>Report Number:</b> <b>MCa/17/29</b>
<b>To:</b> Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinet	<b>Date of meeting:</b> 4 December 2017 7 December 2017

### LEISURE, SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet endorsement of the Councils' Leisure, Sports and Physical Activity Strategy 2017 to 2030. The strategy has been developed through a cross party Councillor Task and Finish Panel and through consultation with key stakeholders.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Panel established the Councils' vision, strategic aim and priorities; and identified what the areas of focus for the Councils should be, what the Councils should continue to do, what should be supported and enabled and what the councils might cease to do. The summary strategy is included as appendix to this report and the wider supporting papers are available as background documents.
- 1.3 The strategy forms part of an integrated strategic framework and its success will be inextricably linked to decisions and outcomes from other pieces of work that are currently being developed. A key piece of work in this regard is the strategic review of our Leisure Facilities which will identify key decisions relating to the future operation and investment in the Councils leisure facilities. This is intended to identify 'invest to save' opportunities that will provide the Councils with the opportunity to consider redirecting budgets from the Councils contract management of its leisure facilities to support the delivery of the wider strategic priorities in the Leisure, Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 1.4 The Councils will need to develop a procurement strategy by mid-2018 that will set out options for the future management of the Councils leisure facilities. The future contractual management arrangements will have a greater emphasis on the delivery of the Councils wider strategic objectives and will be a key factor in the delivery of the Councils strategy.
- 1.5 The Councils will also need to develop an action plan and key performance indicators with its key stakeholders for the delivery of the Leisure, Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To endorse the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

#### Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council's to adopt a strategic approach towards the provision of Leisure, Sport and Physical activity.

### 3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. However, the implementation of the strategy could, in the future, have significant financial implications but these will be the subject of reports for consideration by both Cabinets.

### 4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report. There are however potential legal issues to be considered that would be the subject of future reports.

### 5. Risk Management

- 5.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risks as set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
If investment opportunities are not identified or identified but not implemented then resources will not be realised to contribute to the delivery of the strategy	Unlikely - 2	Noticeable - 2	Prioritise the development of investment opportunities.
If the re-procurement of the leisure contract fails to deliver savings then resources will not be realised to contribute to the delivery of the strategy	Unlikely - 2	Noticeable - 2	Develop a clear procurement strategy with affordability thresholds
If there are Legal issues with the current contractual arrangements with either or both current operators / sites, then this will adversely affect delivery of the strategy	Unlikely - 2	Bad - 3	Early involvement of legal to identify and mitigate against any issues

### 6. Consultations

- 6.1 There has been an extensive consultation process undertaken in the development of the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. These are identified in the appendices of the strategy and include key stakeholders, sports clubs, schools and the voluntary sector.

### 7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report. However, a specific focus of the Councils' strategic approach is targeted at those in need. The main strategic aim references those from disadvantaged groups as do a number of the key priorities. The broad direction of the strategy is a move towards a more community, inclusive and holistic approach.

## **8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications**

- 8.1 The Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy has been developed as a joint strategy. However, a significant element of the Councils current delivery is through their existing leisure facilities that have differing arrangements.

## **9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan**

- 9.1 The Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy makes specific reference to the Councils Joint Strategic Plan, specifically: Community volunteers are skilled and able; continued support for Health and Wellbeing outcomes that prevent interventions; manage our corporate assets effectively; targeted grants to support Community capacity building and outcome based commissioning.

## **10. Key Information**

- 10.1 The Councils' visions are for communities that thrive and flourish and where people reach their full potential. With that in mind, the refreshed Joint Strategic Plan puts active, healthy, safe, self-sufficient and strong communities front and centre in both Councils' priorities and recognises rightly the link between economic prosperity and health and wellbeing. In these challenging times with changes to the funding available to public services, linked to the delivery of growth, and greater demands and expectations on our services, it is vital that we build and strengthen economic prosperity within our communities and target our resources to help local people stay safe and healthy, and reach their full potential in terms of prosperity.
- 10.2 A key project within the Councils' Joint Strategic Plan was to undertake a Strategic Leisure Review, recognising that there are specific health and wellbeing challenges among sections of our communities and the need to understand and develop its role in encouraging healthier lifestyles both in delivering leisure and cultural activities, supporting those of our partner organisations and those that are led and organised by communities themselves.
- 10.3 The aim of the review was to ensure that a planned, evidence based, strategic approach is taken for the provision and delivery of sports, recreational and leisure facilities, which includes both how to determine the level of resources made available for leisure services; how to ensure those resources are targeted at those activities that will have the greatest impact on the Councils' priorities and vision, as well as how these services will be delivered across both districts in future

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils are proud to present our first Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy from 2017 to 2030. This district-wide long-term Strategy has been developed as a result of our strategic review of existing leisure services, local sports and recreational infrastructure and partnerships across both our Districts. It identifies future needs, trends and opportunities to support an increasing ageing population in leading a more active lifestyle.

- 10.4 Non-traditional sport and physical activity and informal active recreation are now recognised as being of equal importance to formal sports activities and provision. The draft Strategy acknowledges this shift in emphasis to a health and wellbeing based approach rather than just a focus on a 'sport for sport's sake'.
- 10.5 The rural nature of our communities means that the Councils cannot rely solely on core leisure facilities, but need to maximise the potential of open spaces, playing fields, community centres and schools. The need to enable community groups, sports clubs and volunteers to bring local opportunities to life for people of all ages and abilities is a fundamental challenge also addressed within the Strategy.
- 10.6 The Council's strategic partners have highlighted the importance of shifting the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy more towards health and wellbeing through behavioural change, integrated working and pooling resources and expertise.
- 10.7 The draft Strategy supports the Councils to make key decisions relating to the future operation and investment in our leisure facilities. This has been explored through the development, in parallel, of a Leisure Facilities Strategy which has identified 'invest to save' opportunities to redirect funding from efficiency savings to support the wider strategic priorities of the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 10.8 Linked to a strategic Vision, the Councils have developed a set of clear strategic priorities which are directly linked to national policies on behaviour change and addressing inactivity. These will underpin any future grant aid, partnership working and community engagement with schools, sports clubs, the private sector and third sector groups.
- 10.9 The role of this Strategy in leading a coordinated approach to the provision of Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity is vital to maintaining and enhancing the social and physical infrastructure within Babergh and Mid Suffolk to support people of all ages to live active and healthier lives.
- 10.10 The Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy forms part of an integrated strategic framework of strategies which is linked to the Councils overarching priorities, a national and county-wide commitment to health and wellbeing, local sports and recreation infrastructure, and sustainable leisure facilities. This should ensure that the Councils make the very best use of resources and expertise available to support a more active community.
- 10.11 This Strategy is an opportunity to shift the emphasis away from traditional leisure provision over the next two decades to a more dynamic, holistic approach supporting community health and wellbeing, presenting an opportunity to:
- Target the current and future inactive and their behaviours (rather than provide new facilities for the already active)
  - Provide clarity on how we will play our part in working with other organisations to address the huge social care challenge and the wellbeing and ageing well agenda for our elderly population
  - Support and enable others to deliver targeted services through outcome based commissioning

- Directly deliver only where considered essential and where otherwise not possible
- Develop a more joined-up approach with partners e.g. Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Suffolk Sport and Most Active County Team.

10.12 The role of the Councils (and those of our partners) in supporting the Strategy will continue to evolve and highlight what changes are needed in future to take account of meeting the needs of the community, linked to:

- The future of our leisure facilities and related services
- How to support and enable the voluntary sector, sports clubs, schools, Town and Parish Councils to support behaviour changes in the community
- How to work with County wide partners such as Suffolk Sport, Suffolk County Council, Most Active County Programme and One Life Suffolk through commissioning of services and sharing resources
- How to create opportunities for private sector investment in Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity in the longer term through planning and economic development.

### **Vision, Strategic Aim and Priorities**

10.13 The Councils' Vision for leisure, sport and physical activity seeks to provide guidance and inspiration as to what the Councils and our partners are focused on achieving up to 2030.

*"Mid Suffolk and Babergh will support, encourage and inspire their communities to be more active and achieve a better quality of life."*

10.14 The Councils' strategic aim is:

*"To support and enable increased levels of sport and physical activity participation across Babergh and Mid Suffolk; to support the improvement of health and well-being within our communities, particularly those from disadvantaged groups."*

10.15 Below are the top six Strategic Priorities for leisure, sport and physical activity within Babergh and Mid Suffolk developed through detailed consultation with elected Members and strategic partners.

1. Children and Young People - Increase the number and frequency of children, young people (1-18 years) and families across the district regularly taking part in traditional and non-traditional sport and physical activity.
2. Older People - Increase the number and frequency of older people regularly taking part in traditional and non-traditional sport and physical activity to reduce social isolation and to improve health and wellbeing.
3. Volunteers - Increase the volunteer base of sport and physical activity clubs and groups to build capacity, resilience and support growth in participation levels.
4. Mental Health - Increase active participation and benefits to participants with mental health issues through sport and physical activity.

5. Physical and Learning Disabilities - Improve the engagement and uptake of those with physical and learning disabilities into community and leisure facilities, ensuring that facilities are accessible and activities are available to all.
6. Sports and Leisure Infrastructure - Support the provision of sustainable community sport and leisure facilities and the spaces and infrastructure that individuals, clubs, schools and groups can access and use to take part.

### **Playing our part in the Strategy**

- 10.16 There are four key areas of focus for the Councils to support the Strategy and its strategic priorities, which are summarised below:

#### **Direct provision of leisure facilities**

- 10.17 Currently the Councils are providing significant subsidies to their respective operators in Mid Suffolk and Babergh. The Councils will continue to consider 'invest to save' opportunities in their facilities to ensure they are operated utilising the most efficient management models, and consistently with the Vision and Priorities of the Strategy.
- 10.18 This will include potential improvements to the core facilities through targeted investment at Sudbury's Kingfisher Leisure Centre, Hadleigh Pool and Fitness and Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre Stowmarket subject to financially sustainable business plans. Any such investments would not only need to be affordable but would need to maintain or improve levels of participation, ensuring that the proposal meets the future needs of residents.
- 10.19 In Mid Suffolk, the cost of any investment is intended to be met through improved financial performance of any retendered contract in 2020. It is anticipated that this contract will deliver significant savings compared to the current levels which could be redirected to supporting the wider Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.
- 10.20 In Babergh the Council is working closely with its operating partner, South Suffolk Leisure, to reduce their management fee through operational efficiencies and supported by investment in Hadleigh Pool and Fitness and Sudbury's Kingfisher Leisure Centre, subject to agreed and affordable business cases being approved.

#### **Enabling support**

- 10.21 The Councils will continue to provide support for voluntary groups, schools, sports clubs, communities, Town and Parish Councils, particularly in supporting their contribution to the six strategic priorities and promoting positive behaviour change. It is intended that the facilities operators will have a greater and more proactive role in enabling and supporting outreach support for schools, communities and sports groups. Funding for this would be generated through improved financial performance of the core leisure facilities.

#### **Partnership Working**

- 10.22 The Councils will continue to play a proactive role with strategic partners through commissioned programmes and support, working with key partners, including Sport England, Suffolk Sport, Most Active County Programme, Public Health, Suffolk County Council, One Life Suffolk and Education partners. Given the challenges on

future public funding, any external funding secured will be focused on achieving specific outcomes for identified target groups and promoting long term behaviour change.

### **Encouraging investment from the private sector**

- 10.23 The Councils will use their planning powers and economic development role to support and enable private sector investment in improving the Leisure infrastructure where this can be sustainable and complements existing provision. Any investment by the private sector is likely to be limited whilst our core leisure provision is meeting the needs of the market. The Councils will support the Town and Parish Councils that are significantly affected by large scale developments through Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements to identify, evidence and define their needs and liaise with developers to ensure that the greatest possible benefit for residents is achieved.

The following policy position has been developed to underpin the Strategy. It sets out what involvement the Councils will have in funding, delivering or enabling leisure, sport and physical activity provision.

### **The Councils will continue to - *Build on success of the past***

- Supporting local providers in recognising the important role leisure, sport and physical activity can play in reducing health inequalities
- Encourage the wider use of schools by the community
- Support communities and individuals who wish to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing through improvements in leisure, sport and physical activity provision
- Recognise local achievements of volunteers who make leisure, sport and physical activity opportunities happen in the districts.
- Facilitate partnership and collaborative working across the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide local leisure, sport and physical activity opportunities
- Support sustainable facility developments that are evidence based on needs of the local community
- Maximise opportunities with partners to encourage active and healthy lifestyles throughout the district through active promotion and community engagement
- Seek to identify opportunities to enable and attract external investment in sport and leisure facilities in the districts in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Facilitate partnership and collaborative working with partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

### **The Councils will support and enable - *New ways of working***

- Specify through leisure operating contracts the key priority outcomes for our Leisure Operators to deliver over the life of the contract, which include greater outreach and community engagement
- Recognition of local resources and support for strengthening the ability of communities to develop local solutions to meet local needs
- Encourage shared use of sports facilities and infrastructure to support sustainability of local sports clubs
- Commission targeted interventions based on strategic need – e.g. directing scarce resources at those who will benefit from it the most in the long term
- Continue to proactively seek to encourage long term behaviour change across the community to improve health and wellbeing.

***To Promote self-reliance - The Councils will no longer***

- Subsidise sport and leisure facilities and services that should be self-sustaining
- Provide financial support based on historical arrangements and previous policy decisions
- Commit to re-provision of sport and leisure facilities that come to the end of their operating life.

**11. Future needs**

- 11.1 The Built Sports Facility Audit and emerging Leisure Facility Strategy has identified that there is a shortfall of swimming pool provision in Mid Suffolk – equivalent to 2 x 25 m pools. This will remain a future challenge given the limitations on funding or other commercial provision.
- 11.2 In Babergh, there is an identified need to retain provision of existing swimming pool capacity with the need to provide some additional capacity by 2030.
- 11.3 The emerging Leisure Facility Strategy has also identified opportunities to optimise the health and fitness provision (gyms and studios) in Sudbury and Stowmarket, which would enable facilities currently funded by the Council to move towards becoming 'break even' or provide a surplus to fund the wider Strategy across the District.
- 11.4 Existing Sports Hall provision in Babergh will need to be maintained, replaced or refurbished in order to meet sports hall demand up to 2031, albeit there is a current oversupply of 10 courts reducing to 9 courts in 2031. However, many of these courts have restricted access.
- 11.5 There are a significant number of public use sports hall facilities distributed across Mid Suffolk, a number of which have been refurbished in the last 10-15 years. As with Babergh, access to school sports halls in Mid Suffolk can be restricted and is an area where further community use can be explored through partnership working.



- 11.6 The majority of both Districts fall within a 20-minute drive time catchment of a publicly accessible main sports hall facilities; nonetheless, there are some gaps in provision in both districts.
- 11.7 The role of community and village halls cannot be overstated and the network of 150 across both Councils plays a vital role in providing low cost indoor provision.
- 11.8 The Councils commissioned a Playing Pitch Audit (2016) as part of the evidence base for this strategy which highlights future needs for provision, an assessment of quality and under/over-supply of main outdoor sports. This will enable the Councils to plan the right number of facilities to meet population growth and the needs of individual sports. An action plan from this Playing Pitch Audit will form part of the leisure strategic action plan.

## **12. What the consultation exercise told us**

- 12.1 The Councils consulted strategic partners, schools, voluntary groups and sports clubs in developing this Strategy.
- 12.2 Strategic partners have highlighted the importance of shifting the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy more towards health and wellbeing through behavioural change and integrated working with key partners, pooling resources and expertise. They emphasised the need to address physical inactivity.
- 12.3 With Suffolk aiming to be the Most Active County – the Suffolk partnership arrangements are well positioned to enable us to gain maximum support and leverage for the Strategy in the future.
- 12.4 Sports Clubs have highlighted that the biggest barrier to growth is a lack of volunteers and coaches. Sports Clubs have also highlighted the issues of funding for their own facilities / pitches and the need to improve them through investment.
- 12.5 95% of schools have identified a key role for the Councils and leisure facility operators including facilitating school/club links, enabling community use of facilities, support with grant applications and networking.
- 12.6 Key stakeholders informed us that there is a compelling need to support schools in opening up their community facilities to the public to optimise opportunities for greater participation and engagement.
- 12.7 Voluntary Organisations have identified a number of opportunities to support them in creating more opportunities in rural areas for people to become more active, similar to the issues identified by schools in 12.5 above.
- 12.8 The role of the Councils leading a coordinated approach to enabling the provision of Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity has been reinforced by key stakeholders as being vital to support people living active and healthier lives.

## **13. Our core leisure facilities**

- 13.1 The Councils' very popular Leisure facilities are ageing and at some point in the future will not be able to continue to operate effectively and efficiently. Recent condition surveys have highlighted the following:

- Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre in Stowmarket and Stradbroke Swimming Pool and Fitness will need to be replaced by circa 2030.
- The Swimming Pool at Hadleigh Pool and Fitness will need to be replaced in the next 1 – 2 years.
- Kingfisher Leisure Centre at Sudbury will need to be replaced by c 2035-40.

13.2 The strategic review of our leisure facilities has identified opportunities for investing in Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre, Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Pool to improve their financial performance in the longer term with a view to striving to becoming revenue neutral at no cost to the Councils.

13.3 We will need to start planning for the longer-term re-provision of Leisure Facilities, seeking to work in partnership with private sector investors and education partners.

#### **14. Making it Happen**

14.1 The Councils will need to ensure the Strategy is resourced, embedded, communicated, delivered and has impact up to 2030. In order to do this, the Strategy will need to be embraced and integrated by all Council Departments.

14.2 This Strategy is inextricably linked to the emerging Leisure Facilities Strategy which will consider proposed future investment options within the three leisure facilities and the business plans that our operating partners in Mid Suffolk and Babergh are developing to demonstrate the financial benefits of any investment and how the Council plans to manage the facilities to optimise their financial performance post 2020.

14.3 There are a number of key leisure facility related decisions that will need to be managed in the short term progress the investments in the facilities and unlock funding and resources for the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. These relate to both Mid Suffolk and Babergh.

#### **Mid Suffolk**

14.4 The Council's two core leisure facilities, Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and Stradbroke Swimming and Fitness Centre play a critical role currently in providing publicly accessible sports and leisure facilities for residents of the District. We intend to retain these facilities, continue to invest in them and continue to recognise their importance in meeting local need subject to affordability.

14.5 The re-procurement of the Mid Suffolk contract in 2020 is integral to the Council's strategic decision making regarding future investment into facilities and presents an ideal opportunity to secure a long-term business case for investment in partnership with its appointed operator.

14.6 Critical to any future investment at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre is the negotiation with Stowmarket High School and Suffolk County Council regarding future arrangements of the land that part of the centre sits on. We will seek to secure agreement regarding the transfer and establish a constructive partnership with the school going forward. A slight complication with this is that Stowmarket High School has applied for and been approved to transfer to an Academy later this year or early next year.

- 14.7 Prior to 2020, we will seek to negotiate a commercially acceptable business case with the incumbent operator, SLM for investment in Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre prior to 2020 if agreement can be reached.
- 14.8 In the event that we are not able to secure a commercially acceptable business case, we will wait until the re-procurement to invite proposals from the market. This provides a lower risk route to investment as we will have a secure and contractually binding financial offer and business case where all of the risk on achieving the projected income is held by the appointed operator.

### **Babergh**

- 14.9 Our two core leisure facilities in Babergh, Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Pool and Leisure play a critical role currently in providing publicly accessible sports and leisure facilities for residents of the District. The Council intends to retain these facilities, continue to invest in them and continue to recognise their importance in meeting local need, subject to affordability.
- 14.10 Critical to the future affordability and sustainability of leisure facilities provision will be the Council's approach to its existing management contract with South Suffolk Leisure (SSL). Advice provided by specialist consultants SLC has highlighted potential achievable savings if the Council were to break the current lease with SSL and re-procure the contract along with Mid Suffolk in 2020. Whilst this represents a potential saving there are risks and costs associated with this approach. SSL undertake more than just the management of Babergh's leisure facilities and Babergh District Council would need to consider the wider social and community issues, as well as the legal implications of breaching this contract, alongside any financial benefits.
- 14.11 It is intended to provide SSL with the opportunity to develop a commercially acceptable business and a revised management fee offer linked to the delivery of investment at Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Pool and Fitness. As part of these negotiations, the Council will undertake detailed design and costings for the replacement pool at Hadleigh Pool and Leisure. This investment option is arguably the most pressing due to the current condition of the pool but also the option that relies most heavily upon savings secured across the contract as a whole in order to help subsidise its delivery.

### **Joint recommendations**

- 14.12 We will also explore options for 'invest to save' investments in new plant technology in our leisure facilities. The leisure industry is beginning to see significant savings on utilities costs (circa 40%) generated through new innovative energy saving plant.
- 14.13 The Councils will need to ensure that the Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy is embraced by all our relevant services and teams. This may require some reorganisation of internal resources across services making better use of existing and future available resources.
- 14.14 A dedicated resource will be required to lead the development of the Strategy. The Councils will review the current structure and resourcing for Community Grants, Sports Development and Community Development to optimise resources and funding to support the Strategy and its strategic priorities.

14.15 The Councils will need to develop a joint action plan for the delivery and implementation of this strategy. SLC assisted the Councils and key strategic partners in developing a draft action plan as part of the strategy development process and further work is required to develop and resource this for Councils' future consideration.

14.16 The Councils will also need to develop key performance indicators to ensure that they can monitor the effectiveness of the strategy. Draft performance indicators have been established but further work needs to be undertaken to establish a baseline position.

## **15. Appendices**

Title	Location
(a) Leisure, Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Summary 2017-2030	

### **Authorship:**

Chris Fry

Assistant Director Environment and Projects

Tel. 01449 724805

Email: [chris.fry@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:chris.fry@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)