

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Leisure & Environment Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 22 June 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R Jackson (Chairman)
Councillor N Mison (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor L Brailsford, Councillor S Carlton, Councillor M Cope,
Councillor D Cumberlidge, Councillor B Loughton, Councillor J Lee,
Councillor Mrs Y Woodhead and Councillor M Brock (substitute).

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor P Harris (Committee Member) and Councillor Mrs L Hurst
ABSENCE: (Committee Member)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

Councillor S Carlton declared personal pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 9 – Active4Today Update on Governance Arrangements and Item 10 – Active4Today Annual Report 2020/2021, as he was a Director for Active4Today.

Councillor B Loughton declared a personal pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 – Active4Today Update on Governance Arrangements, as he was a Trustee on the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust.

2 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTIONS TO RECORD THE MEETING

Other than the Council recording in accordance with usual practice, there were no declarations of intention to record the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2021

AGREED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman provided an update to the Committee on the major developments that had taken place within the Committee's remit since the last meeting held 16 March 2021.

Colleagues had once again supported businesses, communities and residents, to recover as quickly and as safely as possible. Officers within Environmental Health visited outdoor attractions, personal care premises, retail and hospitality venues as they were able to open. On the first Saturday after outdoor hospitality re-opened, more than 50 pubs and restaurants were visited that evening, to ensure compliance with the rules and support businesses with any queries or help they required. This exercise was then repeated on the first weekend when indoor hospitality was able to commence once more. Colleagues also visited premises and played a visible role in town centres during this time, positively reinforcing messages around hands, face and space and reassuring residents returning to town centres with their presence.

The proposed move to Step 4 of the Government roadmap had been delayed to 19 July, but there was now an end in sight at long last.

Members of the Committee had been invited in May to a tour of the new swimming pool at the Dukeries Leisure Centre in Ollerton which was very impressive and was hoped to provide a big boost to the local community when opened in late June 2021, with a formal opening on 3 July. A further Member visit to see the completed development would take place on 1 July and Members of the Committee were again invited to attend. The new pool was arriving just at the right time as Active4Today aimed to recover from the trials and tribulations of the past 15 months. It was hoped that the pool would provide a great boost in the drive to recover lost memberships – and hopefully grow new ones.

In relation to the Council's cleansing and grounds maintenance services, since the last meeting, the business unit had won 11 new contracts with town and parish councils for grounds works. This was in addition to bringing the housing grounds maintenance service back in-house from 1 April. Taken together, this was more good news in terms of trying to bring better consistency to making Newark and Sherwood greener. A report would be submitted to the September Committee, setting out what scope there would be to bring in more work to the Council, particularly from town and parish councils. In a similar vein, since the garden recycling service was brought back in house on 1 April, last year, an additional 3,000 customers had signed up to the service, representing a 24 % increase. Whilst there was more to do, this was a fantastic achievement in a short period of time and achieved against the backdrop of the service being stretched as it was forced to change operating practices as a result of Covid. Committee Members would be aware that the national landscape in relation to recycling may be about to change in a very significant manner. Some of the proposals published as part of the National Waste and Resources Strategy in December 2018, were due to be wrapped up in a new Environment Bill which was due to receive Royal Assent over the Autumn. If enacted in the form they were originally proposed, this could see garden waste being collected free of charge, as well as a common set of recyclables being collected from the kerbside across the country from 2023. This could include glass and food waste.

The ramifications and costs would be significant, an update would therefore be provided for Committee in September, ahead of that Royal Assent date, to appraise of the latest position.

The Chairman paid tribute to the army of volunteers who gave up their time during the Great British Spring Clean week to help make Newark and Sherwood cleaner.

More than 20 litter picks took place in towns and villages across Newark and Sherwood. These picks often took place on non-public land which meant that when they were combined with the Council's efforts on public land, went an awful long way to making sure that we live in a clean and pleasant environment. The Council had also recently been successful in applying for Government money to invest in additional bins across Newark and Sherwood. The £25,000 that was awarded would be spent on bins to go in laybys along major truck roads and would be yet another positive development in helping to ensure that the district remained clean and green and a place we could all be proud of.

(Councillor Mrs D Cumberlidge arrived during the Chairman's report.)

5 MENTAL HEALTH WELLBEING PRESENTATION FROM THE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT OFFICER

The presentation was deferred to the 21 September 2021 Leisure & Environment Committee due to technology problems.

AGREED that the presentation be deferred to the 21 September 2021 meeting of the Leisure & Environment Committee.

6 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BEST START STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement Officer, which sought to secure approval to adopt the Nottinghamshire County Council's 'Best Start Strategy' ambitions and to ensure representation at the new Best Start Partnership and work collaboratively with partners to embed the ambitions within the Newark and Sherwood Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

It was reported that the development of the Nottinghamshire 'Best Start Strategy' was now complete and the Best Start Partnership has been created. The strategy included the following 10 ambitions:

1. Prospective parents are well prepared for parenthood.
2. Mothers and babies have positive pregnancy outcomes.
3. Babies and parents/carers have good early relationships.
4. Parents are engaged and participate in home learning from birth.
5. Parents experiencing emotional, mental health and wellbeing challenges are identified early and supported.
6. Children and parents have good health outcomes.
7. Children and parents are supported with early language, speech and communication.
8. Children are ready for nursery and school and demonstrate a good level of overall development.
9. Children have access to high quality early years provision.
10. Parents are in secure employment.

Members welcomed the strategy and commented that the early years in a child's life were very important.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Nottinghamshire County Council's 'Best Start Strategy' ambitions, as detailed in 2.5 of the report and in the minute above, be noted; and
- (b) officer representation at the new Best Start Partnership and work collaboratively with partners to embed the ambitions within the Newark & Sherwood Health and Wellbeing Partnership, be endorsed.

7 LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE REVENUE AND CAPITAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director - Customers, which presented to Members the 2020/21 financial outturn position on the Leisure & Environment Committee's revenue and capital budgets, including the General Fund (GF) Revenue; and Capital Programme.

The forecast outturn position for the Leisure & Environment Committee was an unfavourable variance of £0.100m. The reasons for this variance were detailed in Appendix A to the report. The financial outturn position to 31 March 2021 for the Leisure & Environment Committee's capital programme was a favourable variance of £1.343m, of which £1.328m required reprofiling to 2021/22. Details were contained in Appendix B to the report.

AGREED that the report be noted.

8 ACTIVE4TODAY UPDATE ON GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement & Community Relations Manager which provided an update on the various amendments to the Governance Arrangements between the Council and Active4Today.

AGREED that the report be noted.

9 ACTIVE4TODAY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement & Community Relations Manager which provided an update on the performance of Active4Today (the Company) for the financial year ending 31 March 2021.

An overview of the Company's Final Accounts and Performance Update was contained in Appendix A and the Directors' Report and Financial Statements Report for 2020-21 was attached at Appendix B to the report. Performance overall had been decimated through the period due to lockdown requirements as directed by Government and the limited periods of restricted opening between the dates of 25 July 2020 to 4 November 2020 and 3 December 2020 to 31 December 2020 which offered little opportunity for the Company to make any serious inroads into the recovery process due to the stop start nature of the pandemic and its relationship with its customer membership base. Whilst exceptional efforts were made by the Company to maintain the relationship with its Activo and Xperience members and users generally the operating model of a predominantly monthly direct debit membership base of customers had resulted in a significant downturn in income levels due to suspension of and in some instances cancellations of memberships. This was a direct consequence of the uncertainty of when restrictions would be lifted and business could return to something resembling the pre-covid leisure offer. Despite the covid challenges the Company had done an excellent job in retaining approximately 70% of its membership base, (which was higher than the industry predictions, which ranged between 40% and 60%). However, the 30% loss was higher than initially anticipated, due to issues of confidence within certain groups which were identified as being at

higher risk to return to the centres, such as the 60 plus market, GP referrals and users with disabilities. In addition, the impact of clubs not returning also had a negative effect, due to adult group participation restrictions driven by Government and the Sports National Governing Body's (NGB) guidelines. Pay and play income had also been lower than expected during the periods of opening, in comparison to previous years and this was mainly due to the initial restrictions from NGB's impacting on club block bookings.

Covid impacts reduced memberships from 11,991 compared with the corresponding period in the previous year down to 7,784 (A4T 5,169 and SLC 2,615) at year end. In terms of usage the figures reported were even more dramatic with visits reducing to 262,324 across all sites compared to the previous year's outturn of 1,189,899, a net reduction of 78% in total. However, this position would not have been achieved without the work that the Company did around recovery plans to support members and users through the various re-openings and the need to have in place robust covid-secure safe systems of work to ensure returning customers were safe.

During the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, the financial statements at Appendix B to the report showed that the Company recorded a net trading deficit of £197,261 for the year, however, this figure reduced to net zero or a neutral position in effect following an equivalent transfer of funds from the Company's reserves as previously reported to Leisure and Environment Committee. Details of the financial outturn were covered in Section 3 of Appendix A to the report, however, in effect the trading position had been affected by a number of factors which included management fee payments made to the Company, savings achieved through reductions in operational expenditure, grant payments received through the furlough scheme, Covid Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG), Business Rates support grants, DCMS and Sport England's National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF) grant and re-modelling of the staffing structure and resource allocation to return the break-even outturn.

Due to the transfer of funds from reserves the Company's earmarked usable reserves, as at 31 March 2021 stood at £199,558 down from £396,819 on the balances held at 31 March 2020, a decrease of £197,261 as highlighted in paragraph 3.9 of the report.

A Member sought clarification regarding the number of furloughed staff. It was confirmed that a skeleton team of core officers was retained for maintenance duties within the leisure centres and a staffing re-structure had been undertaken. A written answer providing numbers of staff furloughed during the pandemic and staff that had left the company would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

AGREED that:

- (a) the outturn performance of Active4Today in 2020/21, be noted;
- (b) the ongoing impacts of Covid on the Company's performance be closely monitored and proposals to support the Company through the pandemic be brought to future meetings of the Committee;

- (c) the proposed Key Performance Indicators for Membership and Usage for 2020/21 and targets for 2021/22 (Appendix C) be noted; and
- (d) a written answer providing numbers of staff furloughed during the pandemic and had left the company would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

10 HEALTH & WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2019 - 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement & Community Relations Manager which provided an update on the progress made in relation to the Health & Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2019 – 2022.

A Member asked how people could access the activities detailed in the report and where were the actions for those activities. It was confirmed that the activities contained within the report had been identified locally and were appropriate when the plan was first prepared. Partnership plans containing actions for activities would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

AGREED that:

- (a) progress with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan be noted;
- (b) the proposed review and refresh of the plan be progressed and the newly aligned plan be presented to the Leisure and Environment Committee in early 2022 for adoption; and
- (c) Partnership plans containing actions for activities would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

11 COMMUNITY, SPORTS AND ARTS GRANTS 2020/2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager which provided Members with an overview of the Community, Sports and Arts Grants programme for 2020/2021. A summary of the community, sports and arts grant awards made in 2020/2021 was detailed in Appendix A to the report.

A Member requested the criteria for the grants programme be circulated to all Members of the Council.

AGREED that:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the Community, Sports and Arts Grants 2021/2022 Annual Review be reported to the Leisure & Environment Committee in 2022; and
- (c) the criteria for the grants programme be circulated to all Members of the Council.

12 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS PLAN 2018-2021 - YEAR END UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager which provided an update in relation to the current Physical Activity and Sport Plan 2018-2021, in terms of its review and subsequent refresh based on the recent publication of Sport England's the new national strategy 'Uniting the Movement'.

AGREED that:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) a further report be presented to Leisure & Environment Committee to provide an update on progress with the proposed review and refresh of the Physical Activity and Sport Plan 2018-2021.

13 LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN (22 JUNE 2021 - 22 MARCH 2022)

The Leisure & Environment Committee Forward Plan was provided for Member information. Members were encouraged to submit any areas of work they wanted to address for the forthcoming year.

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted.

Meeting closed at 6.55 pm.

Chairman