

CABINET

12 MARCH 2024

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEISURE AND PUBLIC REALM

A.5 SPORT AND ACTIVITY DRAFT STRATEGY FOR TENDRING

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present a draft five-year Sport and Activity Strategy for Cabinet approval to invite stakeholder comments, through a public consultation process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet is presented with a new evidence-based draft Sport and Activity Strategy, to support delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the newly adopted Corporate Plan. This draft strategy will set the direction for the Council's focus on supporting residents to become more physically active and working with partners to improve quality of life for local people.

Research by the Department of Health demonstrates that increasing activity levels will contribute to the prevention and management of over 20 health conditions and diseases. Adoption of this strategy and the accompanying action plan can support increased participation in physical activity levels in the district, from a historically low base to improve health outcomes and all-round quality of life for local people.

Following conclusions drawn in the draft strategy from the evidence base taken into account, the following strategic objectives are considered to be key in delivering quality outcomes for local people:

- 1. Support improvement to Tendring wide health outcomes*
- 2. Improve quality of life for all local people*
- 3. Long term sustainability & quality of Sports Facilities and wider community offer*
- 4. Ensure every resident is included in sport and active wellbeing*

The draft strategy is presented with a detailed action plan, to impact on all of objectives set out above. Although it will not be possible for the Council to fund all the actions listed, adopting an action plan will allow the Council to proactively look for external funding opportunities and link projects to future developer contributions/Section 106 monies.

A key focus of this work is to ensure that all residents feel represented by the draft strategy and are afforded increased opportunities to become 'active where they live.' This can be achieved by a much wider focus on community activity in all areas of the district, through supporting and facilitating local clubs, organisations and partners to continue and extend their important work. Building on the success of the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot Scheme (LDP), the Council has a role in supporting more active lifestyles in all areas of the district.

In order to facilitate, support and influence the Tendring sport and activity community to deliver the district wide focus of the draft strategy, it is recommended that a two-year fixed term Community Sport and Activity Manager is appointed, to lead on supporting more sport and activity around the district. This will include support for partners, clubs, organisations and sourcing additional funding for approved projects. This post can be part funded by vacant posts in the Sports Facility establishment and the budget allocated to support delivery of the final strategy.

The draft strategy also sets out clear aspirations to work with health partners in creating a new state of the art Active Wellbeing Centre in Tendring. This centre would include health and leisure facilities together in one place and act as a central hub linked to others across the district. Progress will be subject to funding agreements with partners, but this exciting proposition would align with national strategies and presents an opportunity for significant transformation and create a national standard in this approach. In addition to this, there is a commitment to review the current facilities in light of this development, to put the whole leisure estate on sustainable financial footing. In order to inform this aspiration to develop such a facility, it is recommended that a feasibility study is commissioned to ensure all appropriate implications are considered in any future decision making.

Subject to Cabinet agreement, it is important to seek comments on the draft strategy from local organisations, clubs, partners, national governing bodies for sport (NGBs) and most importantly, residents. This will ensure that stakeholder can scrutinise, comment and make suggestions for the completed strategy, prior to adoption. This consultation exercise will take a minimum of eight weeks, following which consideration will be given to the feedback received. The final strategy will then return to Cabinet in the early summer for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Approves the draft Sport and Activity Strategy for consultation;**
- (b) agrees that Officers initiate a minimum eight-week consultation process and seek stakeholder comment on the draft Sport and Activity Strategy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm;**
- (c) allocates a one off sum of £122,530 from the budget for the former Joint Use Facilities towards the action plan set out in the strategy and delegates decisions for use of this budget to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm;**
- (d) supports the appointment of a new Community Sport and Activity Manager, to facilitate, influence and support the community activity set out in the action plan.**
- (e) Commission a feasibility study to explore the options and implications for developing a new Active Wellbeing Centre in the District.**
- (f) Subject to (e) above, delegates authority for the scope of the feasibility study to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance together with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

For the Council to adopt a strategic approach towards sport and physical activity, to support local people and local communities to increase participation around the district.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The only alternative option considered was not to draft a strategic approach of the Council's input to sport and physical activity around the district. This would have left a strategic void and lack of clear direction, together with a lack of direction for the Council's work on sport leisure and activity, in a challenging financial climate. Further to that, the lack of an approved delivery plan, underpinned by an evidence-based strategy, would have minimised options for external funding opportunities for both the Council and wider partners in supporting opportunity for Tending residents.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Delivering the strategic objectives and accompanying targets set out in the delivery plan will impact on the following themes, from the Council's Corporate Plan:

- Pride in our area and services to residents.
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities.
- Working with partners to improve quality of life.
- Financial sustainability and openness.

As a Community Leader the Council will support, influence and facilitate increased sport and activity across the district. Through the consultation process, it is imperative that the views of residents, organisations and local businesses are taken into consideration in the formation of the final strategy.

In addition, the draft Sport and Activity Strategy should be considered in conjunction with a range of approved and emerging Council strategies, including the Economic Strategy and a range of national and regional strategic documents.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)

Although discussions have taken place with partners and key groups in the production of this draft strategy, the next stage will be to consult with a full range of partners and the wider community on the content. The outcome from that consultation process and respective changes made as a result, will be set out in the covering report when the final strategy returns to Cabinet for adoption.

The draft strategy has also been informed by national and regional strategic documents, which are referred to throughout. Further to this, consultation commissioned by the Council to inform the recently adopted Corporate Plan was also used to draw some conclusions established in the draft document presented to Cabinet.

The Council's Sports Facilities team will also be consulted about those implications relating to our staff, which are set out in the strategy.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation	Yes	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is	X Significant effect on two or more wards
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a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	a Key Decision	x Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
	And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	Wednesday 14 September 2023

The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

Partnerships and Community Engagement is one of the strands expected for demonstrating the Council's Best Value Duty under Local Government Act 2003. In its draft Statutory Guidance published in July 2023, government has described a number of standards for Councils to be meeting as a Best Value authority. Authorities should have a clear understanding of and focus on the benefits that can be gained by effective collaborative working with local partners and community engagement in order to achieve its strategic objectives and key outcomes for local people.

Key characteristics for Partnership and Community Engagement are:

- early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services; and
- Evidence of joint, planning, funding, investment and use of resources to demonstrate effective service delivery, but transparent and subject to rigorous oversight. The Council needs to be clear.

Through the consultation and engagement process on the draft strategy, the Council needs to be very clear what it is intending to be responsible for in delivery and areas it will work together with others to take forward.

The approval of a draft strategy for consultation does not commit the Council to its aspirations and further decisions will be required within the Council's Constitution and governance framework to take the projects forward once adopted.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In order to support some of the actions in the delivery plan, it is recommended that £122,530 from the former Joint Use Facility budget is allocated to the Sport and Activity Strategy.

With Local Authorities under increasing financial pressures and competing priorities for expenditure, it will not be possible for the Council to fund all the proposed actions in this draft strategy. Adopting a final action plan however, will ensure the Council and other partners are able to maximise opportunities from emerging external funding bodies and developer contributions (Section 106, if appropriate), as and when they become available.

The adoption of an action plan will ensure the Council and partners, can move quickly in making cases to funders, that there is a considered, evidence-based plan to improving active lives in the district and the wider benefits to improving health inequalities, wellness and all round quality of life.

Through the strategy, the Council should also consider sustainability of its leisure stock. Operating leisure centres is a significant financial challenge for Local Authorities, requiring increasing subsidies over recent years to pay for rising energy and service costs. In respect of these significant challenges and substantial investment required on ageing stock, the Council needs to consider what public sports facility offer can be provided and sustained into the future.

A feasibility study into the future of the Council's sports facilities is recommended in the action plan and the budget costs for the three indoor sites as approved by Full Council for the 24/25 financial year is set out below:

The approved combined budget to run the Council's sports facilities at Clacton Leisure Centre, Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles and Walton on the Naze Lifestyles in 2023/24 is £1.056m, as approved by Full Council. In addition, there are further internal recharges of £491,490 accounted for against the cost of running these facilities. In addition, there is a supporting budget (Management of Sports Facilities) which totals £400,880 of direct costs (and £931,250 including recharges).

The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

The proposed strategy addresses a number of key best value and value for money elements / considerations. In terms of potential rationalisation that is highlighted in the strategy, this will need to be considered within the context of the best value / value for money requirements expected of Councils in terms of how they plan to bridge funding gaps and the identification of achievable savings.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

<p>A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;</p>	<p>Although resourcing for the Council's Sports Facilities is long established, in order to deliver the community focus of this draft strategy, a dedicated resource will be required. This will ensure there is a member of staff to work with partners, clubs and organisations to target interventions all around the district. Further to this, there will also be resourcing to focus on applying for external funding, as and when this becomes available to deliver actions from the action plan.</p>
<p>B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and</p>	<p>Once adopted by Cabinet, each individual project will be subject to stand alone governance arrangements and in some cases, business plans. This will highlight any risks and financial resources, including sustainability.</p>

<p>C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.</p>	<p>This draft strategy will ensure good value for money, by focussing attention on objectives approved by the Council. A review of the Council's Sports Facilities will ensure consideration is given to long term sustainability and that the Council is working within its approved budget framework.</p>
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MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Following agreement by Cabinet to seek stakeholder comments on the draft Sport and Activity Strategy through consultation process, the milestones will be as follows:

- 1 April 2024: Consultation Commences
- 26 May 2024: Consultation Closes
- 27 May 2024 – 23 June 2024: Consideration of consultation responses
- Summer 2024: Sport and Activity Strategy presented back to Cabinet with consultation responses and any changes made as a result.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

There are no significant risks attached to the agreement by Cabinet to commence consultation on the draft strategy. There are risks however to leaving a strategic void and the Council not agreeing a clear direction for its input into Sport and Physical Activity.

Once the final strategy has been adopted, there may be further consideration required on individual projects included in the action plan.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

This draft strategy has equality at its heart and the action plans are targeted to ensure all residents have opportunities to become more active as a result. The strategic objectives are evidenced based and interventions are targeted to ensure support is provided in those communities who might be disenfranchised from accessing sports facilities.

Any changes to service provision will be considered through an Equality Impact Assessment prior to implementation.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The social value provided by the Council's Sports Facilities to the wider community, are monitored through figures derived from Sport England's 'Moving Communities' platform. It is estimated that Clacton Leisure Centre, Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles and Walton on the Naze Lifestyles provide over £3.5m in social value across physical and mental health, individual development and social and community development. This figure is likely to be on the modest side, as it does not account for those customers without a record on the Sports Facilities database.

There is likely to be significant further social value through the community sport and activity proposed in the draft strategy. This will be more challenging to measure, as it will be delivered in a more informal manner, without a digital system to support an evaluation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2030

The draft Sport and Activity Strategy has a strand on 'Sustainable Facilities and Carbon Reduction' which sets out a number of measures to continually reduce the Council's carbon

footprint. This includes actions to reduce energy use and costs at the Council's sports facilities, but investing in the Pool Plant and other energy saving projects. This will build on investments which have already been made to install swimming pool covers and update lighting to LEDs across the three Sport Facilities.

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder	Increasing opportunities for young people to become more active can lead to positive social outcomes and sport is a recognised diversionary activity which has the power to educate about team dynamics and how work ethic and endeavour can improve life chances and quality of life. Working with local clubs and organisations and encouraging more people to use local facilities has the potential to decrease Anti-Social Behaviour and pathways to crime in our communities.
Health Inequalities	Supporting an increase in local physical activity levels will play a critical preventative role in reducing health inequalities and the maximisation of health and well-being for all residents. This will be maximised if targeted interventions are successful in reaching those who are either sedentary or rarely active.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	There are no subsidy control issues anticipated through this draft strategy and any funding issued as a result, will be subject to competition and the Council's procurement rules.
Area or Ward affected	This draft Sport and Activity Strategy will impact on all wards in the district.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Draft Sport and Activity Strategy

Evidence suggests that committing to an active lifestyle improves personal wellbeing and helps to tackle any number of health conditions, including heart disease, obesity and strokes. In addition to this, amongst other positive benefits, evidence shows it supports improved self-esteem, immune systems, sleep and personal concentration levels.

Sport can be a significant force for good and for our young people, being part of a club or an organised activity can support the development of so many life skills, aspirations and self-confidence. There is also clear evidence linking sport to a reduction in crime and anti social behaviour and Tendring is rich with impressive sport and activity clubs and organisations,

who do so much to support our way of life.

The Council's sports facilities at Clacton, Dovercourt and Walton on the Naze continue to act as hubs for sport and activity in the district. We know from the Sport England Active People survey how important fitness is to our residents and it is still the top-rated physical activity in Tendring. Together with ensuring they are continually more accessible, that is one of the many reasons all three of our gyms have been refurbished in recent years. There are currently 1693 residents registered on the Council's learn to swim programme, which is such an important life skill in a coastal community.

Like most public sector organisations, Tendring District Council is faced with a challenging financial position. With significant revenue savings to find in the next three years, the Council will need to work with partners and be creative. There is an action in the draft strategy plan to review the current facilities, in light of the Active Wellbeing Centre, to put the whole leisure estate on a sustainable financial footing. This review will focus on savings option to reduce the cost of subsidy to leisure centres in future years and could include the rationalisation of the estate.

The Council will also work with partners to secure investment opportunities, if improvements are to be made to existing leisure assets or new facilities are provided.

Over the next 25 years the population of Tendring is expected to increase higher than the national rate. This includes proposed developments at Tendring/Colchester Garden Communities and Hartley Gardens in Clacton on Sea. The development of this draft strategy will ensure the Council will have a strong evidence base to consider developer contributions, when new housing is proposed in the district.

It is important that the action plan is informed by clear evidence to ensure strong outcomes and an improved picture for local people. With that in mind, reports commissioned to support the Tendring/Colchester Garden Communities Project have been used to inform this draft strategy. An external consultant has developed that work, which has been subject to input and scrutiny by Sport England and National Governing Bodies for Sport.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sport and Activity Draft Strategy for Tendring

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