

# CABINET

20 DECEMBER 2024

## REFERENCE REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### A.1 SCRUTINY OF THE SPORT AND ACTIVITY STRATEGY FOR TENDRING

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee (“the Committee”) at its meeting held on 15 October 2024 scrutinised the Sport and Activity Strategy for Tendring.

Invited to the meeting had been Councillor Mick Barry (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm), Lee Heley (Corporate Director for Place and Economy), Kieran Charles (Sport & Leisure Operations Manager), Sylvia Gentleman (Delivery Oversight in Essex for the Active Wellbeing Society), Hayley Chapman (North Essex Relationship Manager for Active Essex), Jason Ferguson (Board Member for Sport England, Senior Leader in public health at Essex County Council and Director for Active Essex) and Sharon Alexander (Chief Executive Officer for CVS Tendring). A precis of their contributions to the meeting is as set out hereunder.

#### Councillor Mick Barry

- introduced the Sport and Activity Strategy for Tendring that had been approved by Cabinet on 20 October 2024;
- advised the Committee that an extensive consultation had been undertaken as part of the development of the strategy and that advice, guidance and best practice identified from national bodies had been integrated into it;
- informed the Committee that the strategy was a working document that included timelines and actions;
- made the Committee aware of the different elements of the strategy, such as, the consideration of a Community Sport and Activity Manager post and the funding applications for up to five Play Zones to be placed in the District;
- pointed out that intention was for the Strategy to be consistently reviewed in collaboration with other relevant bodies;
- drew attention to the supplementary report that had been circulated to the Committee with the views and comments from Sport England on the strategy.

#### Lee Heley

- advised the Committee of the importance of the Strategy and particularly referenced how the strategy sought to shift the way sport and activity was viewed by the Council and the wider community.

#### Kieran Charles

- advised that through gathering the local and national data on activity it recognised where there had been positive improvement, and that the strategy would be able to further boost these improvements through the community engagement projects in sport and activities in the District.

#### Sylvia Gentleman

- advised the Committee that the Active Well-being Society had been working with Active Essex for a number of years on the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot, particularly Essex Pedal Power;
- presented to the Committee several PowerPoint Slides that explained their work within the District;
- provided the Committee with the Active Wellbeing Society's thoughts on the Strategy and advised that their experience of working within the District was that to get engagement from residents it was necessary to approach people in ways they could relate to and not simply provide opportunities and expect the public to be in a position to take up those opportunities;
- felt that this element of learning they had experienced had been captured within the Strategy.

#### Hayley Chapman

- advised the Committee of Active Essex's partnership work with Tendring District Council, CVS Tendring, and North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance for a number of years as a part of the work undertaken by the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot;
- advised that Active Essex was supportive of the Strategy, especially in terms of incorporating the learning from the Local Delivery Pilot, and the action plan that had been included within the Strategy that showed a clear path to achieving the ambition of the Strategy.

#### Jason Fergus

- advised Members that he also sat on the Board for Sport England;
- raised that the recommendation report from Sport England had positively commented on the Strategy;
- also highlighted that the Strategy directly aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan themes.

#### Sharon Alexander

- commented on the long-term strong partnership CVST had with Tendring District Council and the partnership work with Active Essex as well facilitating the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot.

The Committee then asked questions around the options for sustainability and were informed that a piece of work was being commissioned to review the financial and wider sustainability of the three leisure centres and that it had been included within the Cabinet report (Minute 52 of Cabinet's meeting on 20 September 2024 refers)

and was one of the first actions to take place. They were also advised that the outcome of this review was envisaged to be completed in March 2025 and that the outcome would then pull out what the options were.

The Committee also enquired what the prospect was of the Community Sport and Activity Manager role being established. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm advised that community engagement was a key part of the strategy and part of this role would be to work with partners and established groups to support and enhance what they were already doing. Bidding to fund this role was underway.

The Committee considered the five Play Zones that were being identified and wanted to understand the reasons for the placement of the zones within the District and why some areas had not been included. The Committee was informed that the placement of the five Play Zones was heavily influenced by the current land ownership position and what was already readily available (in view of time constraints to deliver these first five Play Zones). It was confirmed by Officers that when open discussions commenced in relation to the funding in 2025/26 there would be an opportunity to look into opening further Play Zones around different parts of the District. As such, time was a key consideration for the location of the first five and it was hoped that more time would mean further Play Zones could be located to achieve widespread access to them.

There were discussions around what successes were envisaged to come out of this Strategy and the Committee was advised that it would look to increase availability and access to activities/sport within the District and also to provide a platform for further opportunities/development.

There were also questions around how communication barriers could be broken down to inform a wider audience of the Sport and Activity engagement that would take place around the District and whether forums could take place with the relevant persons to support breaking down these barriers. The Committee was advised that 'word of mouth' would play a significant role in informing members of the public about the Strategy and its actions.

The Committee was further advised that within the Strategy there was a detailed section around the marketing aspects and the marketing plan.

The Chairman then thanked all the attendees for their contributions which he had found most helpful towards the Committee's enquiry into the recently adopted Sport and Activity Strategy. This view was echoed by the Committee's members.

**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION(S) TO CABINET**

The Committee had resolved to RECOMMEND to Cabinet that –

- (a) that the following actions that had been included within the Sport England submission be pursued:-

- (i) to support an expanding population in the west of Tendring (Garden Community Project) the scope should be broadened from identifying new sports facilities to identifying new opportunities for creating active environments;
- (ii) to ensure that appropriate contributions towards sport are consistently secured. Furthermore, the scope of contributions should be extended to cover capital projects that would support the delivery of physical activity priorities;
- (iii) encourage the application of Active Design principles into new developments to help ensure that opportunities for encouraging physical activity are maximised in practice; and
- (iv) that new/refurbished buildings that the Council funds have fully considered environmental sustainability.

(b) that the following actions should also be undertaken:-

- (i) showcase activities fairs being held at centres across the District in 2025 to allow clubs and organisations to offer to the public opportunities to be involved in sport/be active;
- (ii) an Activities Council/Committee to be created and meet to help encourage further dialogue between sports activities providers;
- (iii) creation of sports/activities promotion videos that the public can access to encourage involvement in those activities/access information on activities locally; and
- (iv) develop proposals for more play zones including on sites in the west of the District to then be implemented as and when funding becomes available.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENT(S) AND RECOMMENDATION(S) TO CABINET**

The response of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Public Realm is as follows:-

*“Thank you to the committee for your consideration of the Sport and Activity Strategy and the comprehensive list of recommendations. The action plan included with the strategy was developed following evaluation of the evidence base and a comprehensive consultation process. Together with Officers, I am now in the process of prioritising those actions to deliver the best outcomes for local people, within the resources we have at our disposal. The strategy has a strong consideration of population expansion in the west of the district and how the Council can work with developers to improve activity levels across the district together with quality of life for local people. The Council will continue to work with partners to drive forward improvements and we will reflect on the positive contribution and comments from Sport England.*

*The Council is already working with local leaders in the district, to consider future Playzone projects in additional locations, if and when external funding becomes available. In addition to this, through the agreed action plan, the development of an evidence based pipeline of capital projects will be compiled for future consideration. It should be noted however that projects will need to be demand led and importantly, align with Council priorities. Once the pipeline is adopted, suitable projects can subsequently be considered for external funding opportunities, as and*

*when they become available and obviously subject to our own internal resources. I am also pleased that the delivery plan aligns with the Committee's recommendation to consider environmental sustainability within our facilities.*

*Following the wide ranging consultation process which took place prior to the strategy adoption, it is clear that a platform which can be used by local people to identify the range of sport and activity services on offer around the district was a key priority. This is likely to be a key focus for delivering the strategy and the committee's various recommendations for wider marketing and promotional activities align closely with the adopted action plan and the points suggested, will be considered together with a range of further measures, through the development of an annually reviewed marketing plan.*

*Following recruitment of the Community Sport and Activity Manager, the action plan will form the basis of their project task list and together with Officers and partners I will constantly review the effectiveness of our delivery plan and the outcomes achieved. The recommendations from the committee are consistent with the adopted plan and will be considered for effectiveness and availability of resources, following the recruitment of the Community Sport and Activity Manager."*

**RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:**

**That the recommendations made by the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted and that the response of the Portfolio Holder responsible for Leisure and Public Realm thereto be endorsed.**

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

*"It is worth highlighting the comments relating to the piece of work that is being commissioned to review the financial and wider sustainability of the three leisure centres, with outcomes expected in March 2025 – this can therefore be considered alongside the on-going development of the Council's long-term forecast as necessary."*

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

*"I have nothing further to add to the contents of the report."*