

Communities Scrutiny Commission

23 November 2021



Report of Hugh Evans, Executive Director People

Title: Strategic Direction for Bristol Leisure Services

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Director for Communities and Public Health

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Recommendations:

To note the strategic context and direction for Leisure Services in Bristol

The significant issues in the report are:

Physical activity is vital for population health and wellbeing. The role of the council is to foster and create the conditions which support everyone to take part in regular physical activity. The council has a particular role in ensuring equal access to activity, creating inclusive environments and cultures which support everyone to be active.

This paper focusses on the particular role of sport and leisure facilities in supporting inclusive participation in physical activity within a changing provider landscape, where the council is one of many facility providers and where the council's most important role is as a convener and facilitator of active environments, including sport and leisure facilities.

The current Bristol City Council Leisure Service Contracts have been extended to March 2023 to allow time for the procurement of a new operator. The Council has consulted on possible investment and improvement options for the portfolio, which will be secured by competitive tender. The consultation close on the 7th November. A consultation report will be prepared and presented to Cabinet with the final Leisure Services Investment and Procurement Strategy for approval in February 2022.

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an overview of the council’s ambitions for an Inclusive Active City and the role of Sports and Leisure Facilities in achieving this ambition.

2. Context

2.1 Physical Activity is vital for physical and mental health. The council has a key role and responsibility for creating the conditions which support everyone to be physically active. Sport and Leisure Services contribute to this ambition.

2.2 Historically Sport and Leisure Facilities were funded and developed by local councils. Over the years, both the needs and the market have changed, alongside the changing role of local authorities.

2.2 There are now many private operators, offering leisure clubs, swimming, and gym facilities. The council’s role has therefore changed and rather than being the primary or main provider, the council is now one of many leisure facility providers in an increasingly mixed economy within the City. The council prioritises capital and revenue investment within this mixed economy to deliver best value and meet identified need, not otherwise met by the private sector.

3. Policy

3.1 [Bristol Active City - European City of Sport in 2017](#)

In 2017 Bristol was European City of Sport. A legacy of this award is the Bristol Active City approach and the establishment of a multi-agency One City web site which is a one stop shop for sport and physical activity in Bristol.

3.2 [A-Playing-Pitch-Strategy-for-Bristol.pdf \(bristolactivecity.org.uk\)](#)

In 2017 a 5 year Playing & Pitch Strategy for Bristol (2017-23) was published. This was a joint strategy with key partners such as Sport England. The strategy outlined the challenges and opportunities with regard to the playing fields and pitches in the city.

3.3 [A-Sport-and-Active-Recreation-Facility-Strategy-for-Bristol-SaARFS.pdf \(bristolactivecity.org.uk\)](#)

The Sport & Active Recreation Strategy 2018-2023 looked at need in built facilities including sports halls, badminton courts etc. This strategy identified the case for improvements at Easton Swimming Pool and advised that an expansion of Easton Leisure Centre.

3.4 In 2019 a **Physical Activity Needs Assessment for Bristol** was published. This needs assessment looked at the health benefits of Physical Activity and the barriers which some groups face to participating in required amounts of physical activity.

[Bristol Physical Activity Needs Assessment 2019 \(bristolactivecity.org.uk\)](#)

3.5 [BD12440-Bristol-Sports-Strategy-2020-25-1.pdf \(bristolactivecity.org.uk\)](#)

The needs assessment informed the **Bristol Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2025** which was approved by Cabinet on 21.1.20. This strategy reviews the current state of provision and make

recommendations for the future direction of travel, including the commitment to a mixed investment model, including community ownership and private investment.

3.6 [Cabinet Report Leisure Investment Options FINAL 020921.pdf \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

In September 2021 Cabinet received a draft Leisure Facilities Investment Strategy. This authorised a public consultation on a range of options, with affordability caveats. The key options within this strategy includes choices about

- wet side or dry side only improvements at Easton
- gym expansion at Horfield
- improvements at south Bristol pool
- Closure or divestment to another provider of Kingsdown

3.7 The contract for Jubilee Pool ends on March 31st 2022. Jubilee Pool is an older facility which will require considerable investment and based on the recommendations of the Recreation and Sports Facility Strategy (2018 – 2022) the council consulted with the public on the proposed closure of the facility as part of its wider strategic plan for pool provision in the city. As a result of this consultation and further community engagement it was decided that a final decision on the future of the pool would be taken with the wider decision on the investment strategy in February 2022. As part of this a Community Asset Transfer has been raised as an alternative option to closure and a prospectus was published in October 2021. Expressions of Interest for Community Asset Transfer must be submitted by Jan 7th 2022.

3.8 A **Leisure Services Procurement Strategy**, to inform the forthcoming procurement of the councils' leisure services portfolio a paper will be brought forward for approval at February Cabinet 2022. The procurement strategy will be informed by the Leisure Services Investment Strategy, the Bristol Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, views from scrutiny and findings from the recent consultation and recommendations from Officers.

4. Consultation

a) Internal

This report has been prepared by the Director for Communities and Public Health as the Director responsible for the programme.

Leisure Services Strategy is subject to Bristol City Council decision making processes and the oversight of the Corporate Leadership Board, Capital Investment Board and Cabinet.

The portfolio holder for Sport and Leisure is the Mayor.

b) External

A full public consultation has been undertaken on Leisure Services Investment Options.

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 5b) An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Leisure Investment Strategy Consultation (1.9.21)

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

Listed above