

## HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.

Present: Councillor Mrs. R. Nugent-Finn (Chairman); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Ms. J. Aviet, Mrs. J.E. Charles, O. Griffiths, S.J. Griffiths, K.P. Mahoney, R.A. Penrose and J.W. Thomas.

Also present: Councillor K.F. McCaffer (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture).

### 662 ANNOUNCEMENT –

The Chairman made reference to the recent sad passing of former Councillor Janice Birch, who was well respected by many and the Committee sat in a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

### 663 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor T.H. Jarvie.

### 664 MINUTES –

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### 665 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

### 666 LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – YEAR 7 PERFORMANCE REPORT (DEH) –

The Operational Manager for Neighbourhood Services, Healthy Living and Performance presented the report to update Committee on the performance of the Leisure Management Contract and to afford Members the opportunity to assess the performance of the Leisure Management Contract over the past 12 months.

The Officer began his presentation by thanking Members for taking part in the tour of the Penarth Leisure Centre facilities immediately prior to the meeting which he hoped demonstrated the positive aims and impact of the service for inspiring cross-generational health benefits. He then went on to advise that the Leisure Management Contract was now into Year 8 of an initial 10 year contract with a potential five year extension to the contract currently being negotiated, having been agreed in principle by Cabinet.

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Legacy Leisure, the Council's Leisure Management Contractor was required to produce an Annual Report detailing performance, service improvements and any operating issues and therefore the Officer introduced Mr. Rob Oaten, the Contracts Manager for Legacy Leisure.

The Officer advised that the Year 7 report before Members demonstrated that, despite some challenging market conditions and disruptions to services with upgrading works, performance had remained consistent with previous years and an Executive Summary for the Year 7 Annual Report from Legacy Leisure was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The Annual Report highlighted several successes achieved during the year including paid visits to the sites which continued to be in excess of 750,000 with Barry and Penarth Leisure Centres continued to be the most visited indoor facilities owned by the Council, 5,168 registered fitness members and over 1,700 customers whom attended swimming lessons every week.

Several improvements were also reported throughout the year including the provision of a new training studio at Cowbridge Leisure Centre, the development of the former health suite in Barry into a new community meeting room / staff training facility and the redecoration of Llantwit Major Leisure Centre. The Leisure Centres also continued to improve their environmental impact with electrical rewires of Barry, Cowbridge and Llantwit Major providing the opportunity to introduce LED lighting amongst other energy saving features with a rewire of Penarth being due to commence shortly.

The Officer went on to advise that Customer feedback continued to meet expectations with the main area of dissatisfaction being Car Parking which was outside of Legacy's control. The Customer Satisfaction Survey reported a 25.43% dissatisfaction with Leisure Centre car parking, of which 89% were customers at Barry Leisure Centre. The Officer went on to add that 71.43% of Barry Leisure Centre's customers surveyed were not satisfied with the car parking at the facility and this was a known problem whereby both the front and rear Leisure Centre car park at the facility were heavily occupied during office hours midweek by non-Leisure Centre users. However, effort was being made to improve this within the contract extension negotiations.

It should also be noted that Year 7 of the contract was subject to considerable interruptions to normal service delivery with contractors undertaking significant changing room refurbishments at Barry and Penarth. Committee was aware that a number of issues had arisen with these works such as drainage and floor levels that had considerably extended the time taken to complete works.

The Officer then drew Members' attention to page 7 of the Annual Report which stated that the 2018/19 customer survey outlined that 64.16% of all responses were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the addressed elements of the service. Staff attitude was responded at a level 74.57% satisfaction and in a year experiencing significant facility disruptions and many customer complaints received around the

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impacted customer experience, this was a positive reflection on the Leisure Centre front staff.

A Member then referred to the key usage statistics contained on page 2 of the Annual Report 2018/19 (Year 7) at Appendix A and queried the 1 RIDDOR incident stated as he had concerns that the instances could be as a result of poor workmanship or quality of the facilities. In response, the Contracts Manager for Legacy Leisure advised that he was unable to provide the Committee with the exact details of the case at the time of the meeting, however the RIDDOR criteria was more commonly in reference to instances whereby a member of staff or a service user had been admitted to hospital directly from the Leisure Centre and the Officer confirmed that he would make the information available directly to the Member after the meeting.

A Member then referred to the customer survey feedback data contained on page 7 which set out that car parking was identified as the highest level of dissatisfaction for service users and the fact that this related mostly to Barry Leisure Centre. Following which, the Chairman enquired whether officers were aware of who the “non-Leisure Centre users” were. In response, the Operational Manager for Neighbourhood Services, Healthy Living and Performance advised that the individuals were categorised as persons who would park in the Leisure Centre car park but not enter the building.

As a supplementary point, the Vice-Chairman then queried whether the car park at Penarth Leisure Centre was being utilised by individuals wishing to travel via Cogan train station, to which the Contract Manager for Legacy Leisure advised that due to the larger capacity of car parking spaces available at Penarth Leisure Centre, instances of individuals using the train station had not caused an issue for the parking facility. The situation at Barry Leisure Centre was unique in that it sat very close to the Civic Offices and Council staff that worked within the Leisure Centre building itself.

The Chairman then acknowledged that the Civic Offices car park was also used by Leisure Centre service users after close of office hours at 5.00 p.m. and in response to the Vice-Chairman’s suggestion that the Committee raise the issue of Council staff using the Leisure Centre car parking facilities during office hours with Cabinet and therefore reducing the parking facility for service users, confirmed that a future report on car parking was already scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in the near future.

A Member then wished to congratulate officers for an easy to read report and enquired whether any improvement plans were scheduled for the Health Suite facility at Penarth Leisure Centre and highlighted that the point was not addressed within the report. Following which the Operational Manager for Neighbourhood Services, Healthy Living and Performance advised that there were currently no plans in place, however the Health Suite facility was better suited to Penarth Leisure Centre than other Centres in the Vale of Glamorgan. After which, the Contracts Manager for Legacy Leisure advised that Health Suite facilities were an excellent retention incentive for Leisure Centre Memberships but were not considered as a core health facility. The Member thanked officers for their input and stated that the Health Suite

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facilities at Penarth Leisure Centre required urgent maintenance as the facilities were looking tired.

A Member then referred to the Holm View Leisure Centre site in Barry and enquired after the provision currently offered at the Centre, to which, the Contracts Manager advised that a gymnastics club was still operational within the Centre however no other regular services were provided. The Operational Manager then reiterated that a Cabinet report was currently being drafted regarding the Legacy Leisure Contract extension proposal, within which, it was proposed that the Holm View Leisure Centre be brought back under Council control from January 2021. Subsequently, the Operational Manager agreed to share relevant reports with the Member as soon as they were publicly available.

A Member then raised his concerns regarding the recent changes to the Free Swimming Initiative in Wales and the fact that the Council was now working within a postcode eligibility system and that he was shocked by the Council practicing such inequality and it was imperative that the system be run fairly via a whole county means tested approach. The Member went on to acknowledge that the Council, in partnership with Legacy Leisure, was attempting to target individuals within areas deemed disadvantage according to Welsh Government however stressed that any leisure scheme must be equal to all.

A second Member echoed the original Member's points and added that the change was not good for the Council's reputation and that there should be a minimum of three free swimming sessions per individual each week.

In response, the Officer advised that since the Free Swimming Initiative in Wales was first launched in 2003 with the aim to get more young people (aged 16 and under) and over 60s learning to swim and swimming more regularly, an independent review into the initiative found that the initiative was no longer fit for purpose, cost effective, or made the biggest contribution to increasing levels of activity. Therefore, in October 2019, Welsh Government made changes to the initiative and announced that a reduced budget of £1.5m per annum from April 2020 was expected. It was now necessary for the Council, in partnership with Legacy Leisure, to provide a minimum standard of one free Splash session to young people each weekend, in every Local Authority run pool as well as offer free Splash sessions during the summer holidays, with each pool expected to deliver two free sessions during the week in addition to the weekend session. Pools would also offer some free and possibly subsidised sessions for over 60s.

In conclusion, the Operational Manager added that Legacy Leisure had gone beyond the minimum requirement as set out by Welsh Government and if the funding was available, the Council would wish to deliver the initiative universally. Regarding persons over the age of 60, the initiative was open to all individuals who were in receipt of housing benefit regardless of where they lived within the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture then added that regrettably, the decrease in funding meant that some senior citizens could now swim only once a week for free, but, should Welsh Government reinstate the grant, the Council would

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happily return to the old arrangement. Ultimately, the change was not a Council decision and had been taken following the 50% funding cut. The new Welsh Government guidelines required the Council to focus on deprived areas when offering the opportunity to swim for free and, in an effort to avoid the stigma of singling out individuals, the Council had made the initiative available to the whole population within certain Wards.

In response to a Member's supplementary questions as to whether Cabinet had lobbied Welsh Government directly and adequately advertised the changes to the initiative within the local media, the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture advised that the Council had strongly lobbied Sports Wales to highlight its concerns and disagreement with the changes. However, the publication of the changes was conducted by Legacy Leisure who were providing the relevant pool services. The Contracts Manager for Legacy Leisure then wished to add that Legacy Leisure, in partnership with the Council, did approach Sports Wales with an alternative arrangement in light of the necessary initiative changes, however this was not deemed acceptable by Welsh Government.

The Operational Manager then went on to advise that the Council was not able to offer universal entitlement and therefore the Council lobbied Sports Wales as soon as the changes were announced and as a supplementary point, means testing service users at the point of presentation would be an extremely difficult task for front staff to manage.

The Member thanked officers for their responses and understood the predicament that Council staff were now under regarding the initiative change, however expressed his view that the Council's Cabinet had not publicised the changes adequately and welcomed the Chairman's suggestion that he be provided with a copy of the lobby response from the Council and Legacy Leisure that was presented to Sports Wales. Following which, a Member requested a copy of the new initiative guidance criteria as set by Welsh Government, to which the Operational Manager agreed to share the guidance directly with the Member following the meeting.

The Chairman then requested if the Council had access to the names and postcodes of individuals over the age of 60 who were using the scheme in its original form in order that the individuals could be contacted to advise on the changes to the scheme, to which the Contracts Manager for Legacy Leisure advised that it was necessary for individuals to register in the first instance to access the scheme which would provide both the Council and Legacy Leisure with the details of who was using the service and at which Centre.

In response to a Member's supplementary question about how Welsh Government was able to identify the number of individuals using the service before the changes took place, the Contracts Manager advised that if an individual took part in a general swim session then no details would be required or collated, however if the individual was taking part in the sessions specifically set out for the free swimming initiative, then they would have registered on their first visit.

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A Member then noted that it would be beneficial for the Committee to have sight of the costings to the Council in order to keep the scheme going as it was prior to the initiative changes.

#### RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the performance of the Legacy Leisure Contract for Year 7 be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee receive a report on the changes to the Free Swimming Initiative in Wales which includes delivery service options and the costings of maintaining the scheme prior to changes made in October 2019.
- (3) T H A T a letter be sent to the Leader of the Council from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee to inform the Leader that the Committee is requesting a report on the matter of changes to the Free Swimming Initiative in Wales.

#### Reasons for decisions

- (1) To ensure that the Committee is aware of the performance of Legacy Leisure during this period.
- (2) So that Committee is able to analyse the full impact of the initiative changes for Vale of Glamorgan residents.
- (3) To ensure that the Council's Cabinet is aware of the Committee's concerns regarding the changes to the Free Swimming Initiative in Wales and that a future report has been requested by the Committee on the matter.

#### 667 SPORTS AND PLAY: UPDATE (DEH) –

The Operational Manager for Neighbourhood Services, Healthy Living and Performance alongside the Principal Healthy Living Officer presented the report to advise on the current activities and operations of the Council's Sport and Play section.

The report provided Committee with a detailed summary of the various initiatives the Sport and Play Development Team were currently involved with and detailed some of the challenges the service was currently facing to contribute to the Council's well-being targets such as:

- Evidencing the Impact that sports & play has on the health and wellbeing of local residents; and
- Improving understanding and promoting sports and play as a preventative service which can positively contribute to the Wellbeing of Future Generations. The Team was responsible for the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Council's sports development and play activities and heavily dependent on external funding which also significantly dictated the work undertaken.

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The Principal Healthy Living Officer then advised that the main aim of the sports development work was to increase physical activity levels by developing sustainable opportunities in partnership with internal and external partners for which the Vale of Glamorgan Council was in the top three of all Local Authorities in Wales. Whilst there were some elements of universal provision, there was a focus on developing opportunities for targeted groups with lower participation rates. The Officer added that there was a focus within the play service on providing playscheme provision during school holidays to disabled children, and to increase opportunities for those who were disadvantaged. This focus was partly due to the criteria for the funding received. However, the service was also keen to provide opportunities for all children to have access to quality play opportunities and was fostering new partnerships on a regular basis to allow this to occur.

Attached at Appendix A to the report was the last Annual Report for sport and physical activity which detailed overarching achievements such as:

- More than 320 partners linked to the Vale Sport and Physical Activity Plan;
- A successful mix of projects that developed participation amongst the general population, and projects that had focused on reducing inequalities – targeting groups where participation rates were lower including those experiencing mental health issues, young people experiencing wellbeing issues, females, disabled individuals and those affected by financial or rural deprivation;
- More than 40 different sports and physical activities delivered. Flexible opportunities enabling individuals to access activity at their chosen level of entry, whether that be on an informal basis, within a structured club environment or progressing to a competitive level; and
- 2,142 training opportunities attended by individuals from more than 162 organisations, in addition to 255 training opportunities supported through the Community Chest scheme.

On the matter of funding, the Officer advised that for sports development the main funder was Sport Wales, with play receiving funding from various sources including the Welsh Government Children and Communities funding, Town and Communities Councils, Section 106 funding and a local Housing Association. Sport Wales currently funded much of the Sports Development service in the Vale (and across Wales) and were currently undertaking a significant review of sports development across Wales as part of their national regionalisation programme.

Therefore, Sport Wales were seeking to move to a more regional approach that could see the service operating on the Education consortium area model and this was likely to have significant implications for the service. Officers were currently working with both Sport Wales and colleagues in other Authorities to produce a service delivery model that would not disadvantage Vale of Glamorgan residents however there were concerns that funding could be diverted to areas of deprivation within the South-Central region which would have a detrimental impact on physical activity opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan.

There was also uncertainty regarding long term funding for play. The service continued to work with current partners such as United Welsh Housing, Wick and Dinas Powys Community Council and was proactively seeking to identify potential

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new partnership opportunities to secure future service delivery. The Team were grateful to the various organisations that contributed to the service at present.

In conclusion, the Officer highlighted the importance of play being a fundamental building block for children. It is also the starting point to developing the skills necessary to become physically active which will assist with motivating people to continue participating into adulthood. The service was guided in its work by cases of inequality. Whilst the Sports Development Team worked in partnership with schools to develop extra-curricular opportunities, their funding situation restricts them from developing curriculum-based activities.

The Officer provided an overview of a range of projects the Sports & Play Team deliver that positively impacts on targeting inequalities. A Member then referred to the Hungry Holidays project which the Officer had advised was established to provide healthy snacks during schemes and assist with tackling holiday hunger as some children were hungry during the school holidays when they were not accessing school meals. The Member raised his concerns over children not receiving meals at home. To which the Officer advised that the project was a minor step in supporting young people from deprived families however acknowledged that the project could not tackle wider parenting issues. The Officer mentioned the School Holiday Enrichment Project they had been involved with which provided activities and a full meal for those attending at Cadoxton School during the school holidays. The Officer stated that whilst the SHEP project was successful there were some children who preferred to attend project activities outside of the school setting as they were disinterested in using their regular school building and / or may have negative feelings towards the building if they were unhappy within regular school. The Hungry Holidays project could therefore benefit.

The Officer then went on to describe the Social Physical Activity project. The Officer advised that it was recognised that some adults did not wish to take up formal membership of a club and would rather attend activities that were more flexible in attendance and lower cost / no cost such as walking and running. It was noted that there were lower participation rates in sport and physical activity for females. This prompted a Member to raise his concerns regarding the impact of female participation within the 5x60 school-based scheme, with monitoring information showing a 50% drop in female participation since the merger of two single sex comprehensive schools in the Barry area in September 2018. In response, the Officer apprised the Committee of the "Women and Girls on the Move" programme which had been created in the Vale to increase participation rates amongst females, and to narrow the gap between male and female participation. As a result, more than 1,662 females had participated in the associated activities within extracurricular school-based provision as well as in community-based opportunities. Work was ongoing to ensure that females were accessing opportunities appropriate to them. In addition, the Officer highlighted that the decrease in participation was most noticeable within Pencoedtre High School. Now that the issue had been identified the service was working with the school to ascertain the reason for the decrease in participation, as the school had also seen a decrease in participation within their extra-curricular programme. Staff sickness within the Sports Development Team had also negatively impacted. In response to a Member's supplementary question, the



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Officer confirmed that the decrease in participation at Pencoedtre High School was not a reflection across all schools within the Vale of Glamorgan.

A Member then apprised the Committee of his visits to the new secondary schools in Barry and that a clear message was received from the female pupils that they wished to engage with activities / sports that were stereotypically identified as male sports and that the same/opposite message was received from the male pupils at the school. However, the Member added that the schools appeared to be resistant to the idea. Following which, the Officer added that the stance on gender specific sports had changed significantly over recent years but acknowledged that some schools were better than others with regards to female engagement, however irrelevant of gender the key message remained that any physical activity was welcomed across every school.

A Member then enquired which housing association the service was currently engaged with as he was aware that housing associations had the ability to access funding streams that the Local Authority would not be able to. To which the Officer advised that the service worked closely with Newydd Housing Association which had recently provided funding to set up the Fit Bit project for young girls in Pencoedtre High School. The project was initiated by Newydd Housing and would be targeting girls in areas of deprivation, in two schools, encouraging them to take part in Fit Bit challenges. Whilst planning had taken place, the project had been delayed due to partner staffing shortages and priorities but would progress in 2020. The Officer then highlighted that the Housing Association used to have a specific member of staff whose role would be responsible for sport/physical activity. This role had changed however where their capacity allowed the Housing Association still worked in partnership with the Sports Development Team on specific projects. As a supplementary point, the Officer added that the service had recently invited all local associations to meet collectively in order to share best practice and establish opportunities for joint working.

A Member then shared his surprise at the statement contained within page 18 of the Annual Report which stated that primary school teachers did not feel confident in delivering sport activity lessons. The Officer subsequently added that the Sports Development Team had built links with 48 Vale Primary Schools through the Junior Sport Programme. All Vale of Glamorgan Primary Schools had the opportunity to be involved in the Junior Sport programme and were able to choose the level of involvement that they wished to have. Through consultation as part of this programme, teachers from a number of schools had provided feedback about their lack of confidence in delivering the physical education curriculum. The Sports Development Team are not curriculum specialists and their role does not include the development of the curriculum. However, the Healthy Living Team passionately felt that in order to enthuse young people about the positive benefits of physical activity and develop their motivation, confidence and physical skills, they needed to receive positive experiences in primary school. Therefore, two courses had been organised by the team which was delivered via an external organisation specialising in PE targeting school-based staff and, to date, 24 individuals from 20 schools and the Healthy Living Team had received support, in addition to providing a range of fun activities. Elements of the training also complimented aspects of the new curriculum, for example resilience, creativity and developing social skills and the training had

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had a great impact within the schools as staff felt more confident delivering activity which ultimately benefitted the pupils.

Following the Chairman's observation that the standard of PE lessons across schools was inconsistent as well as a vast amount of sports equipment being of poor quality, a Member advised that the Governors at his particular school would be extremely interested to hear the officer's feedback and that engagement with physical activity within secondary school would be greatly impacted if the pupils had not had adequate experience of physical activity at primary school.

The Vice-Chairman then added that, given his previous experience as a teacher, he was not surprised to hear that teachers felt unconfident in delivering physical education lessons or that they had concerns over a child hurting themselves during a lesson. The Member then added that physical education was only classed as a specialist teaching subject at secondary level with primary training being very general and classed as a lesser subject in comparison to the core subjects English, Maths and Science. Therefore, it would be of great benefit to all primary schools if they were able to employ a specific physical education teacher, however the current funding situation for all schools made this impossible.

The Vice-Chairman then wished to move on to the closing comments, page 44, of the Annual Report which set out that staffing levels within the Healthy Living Team had impacted on anticipated participation figures, with staff members leaving the sporting sector due to uncertainty regarding the future around the regionalisation process being progressed in Wales and enquired if there had been any further progression on the matter. Subsequently, the Officer confirmed that staff members were currently working on an annual contract basis and that the future focus for regional working was encouraging staff to look at more long term permanent external options. As a result, it was difficult for the Healthy Living Team to create long term plans when certainty around the service delivery was much needed.

In conclusion, the Vice-Chairman enquired whether the singular issue regarding female participation at Pencoedtre High School had been raised with the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee as the Committee was best qualified to scrutinise the ongoing struggles to engage young people in the mixed comprehensive setting as well as the feedback received from Vale of Glamorgan primary school staff not feeling confident to deliver physical education lessons. In response, the Officer advised that the Healthy Living Team were part of the Wellbeing in Education group, was in regular contact with the Prevention and Partnership Manager from the School Improvement & Inclusion Service who is also a member of the Vale Sports & Physical Activity Monitoring group. They have also had contact with the Head of Additional Learning Needs and Wellbeing who was recently made aware of the situation, however welcomed further support from Members regarding the issues.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to thank all Members for travelling to Penarth Leisure Centre which provided the Committee with the opportunity to consider a leisure themed agenda within a public and very relevant arena.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the information contained within the Vale Sport and Physical Activity Annual Report 2018-19 be noted.
- (2) T H A T a further Annual Report on the activities of the Council's Sports and Play Development Team be submitted to Committee.
- (3) T H A T pages 3 through to 23 of the Vale Sport and Physical Activity Snapshot report (Appendix A) be referred to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) To note the current good work being undertaken by the Council's Sport and Play Development Team.
- (2) To keep Committee informed of the work of the Council's Sport and Play Development Team.
- (3) To ensure that the following concerns of the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee are referred to the most appropriate Scrutiny Committee for further consideration:
  - the decrease in female pupil participation rates as part of the Women and Girls on the Move programme (page 6);
  - feedback received from primary school staff over a lack of confidence in delivering a physical education curriculum (page 18).