

EAB discussion on a Leisure Strategy 21 November 2016

Corporate plan goal

- The corporate plan sets a goal to prepare a Leisure Strategy by May 2017

“Leisure” is a very broad term and can cover an array of activities. For a leisure strategy to be successful it must have a very clear and focussed objective.

What is a Leisure Strategy?

- Different councils have different ideas as to content but broadly one or a combination of the following:-
 - Health and wellbeing
 - sport development
 - pitch strategies
 - cultural strategies
 - facilities planning
- Guildford already has a Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a Sports Development Strategy.

Other influences on Leisure policy

- The Leisure Partnership Agreement (LPA) sets out the summary objectives for the operation of the leisure venues, but apply to most leisure provision
- the decision to contract out in itself a significant leisure policy
- LPA runs till 1st November 2021
- other strategies e.g. Play & Art
- other contracts and agreements such as the entertainment venue contract with HQ Theatres

Pitch strategy

- Pitches well used and well maintained
- currently do not have a pitch strategy and there appears little additional benefit from having one
- Stoke Park management plan and event policy impact and available resources
- numerous pitch locations with various types and size of pitches
- some pavilions could benefit from a more operationally focussed approach linked to their maintenance planning.

Cultural strategy

- The previous incarnation of this strategy fell into disrepute and was not renewed when it expired some years ago
- facilities which may be included within such a strategy are currently undergoing substantial change and now is unlikely to produce a meaningful, coordinated focus for their direction

Facilities Planning

- This type of Leisure Strategy is often linked to major changes in the property portfolio
- many of the council's facilities are contracted out to third party operators e.g. GLL/Freedom Leisure (sports venues) or Guildford Action or Challengers (some community centres) or HQT (G Live)
- some council facilities, whilst subject to an annual building assessment, do not have a plan linking their operation to the building facilities e.g. pavilions

What Leisure facilities could be included?

- Sports venues – Spectrum/Ash Manor/Lido (subject to existing planned maintenance as part of Leisure Partnership Agreement)
- entertainment venues e.g. G Live (subject to existing planned maintenance as part of the entertainment contract)
- community centres
- pavilions

What could a facilities based strategy cover?

- Analyse demand for facilities within wards by analysing demographic and engaging with the community
- Map existing offers to match demand
- Set out principles for the management of facilities
 - Review operational state to ensure fit for purpose
 - Review operational delivery e.g. cleaning regime
 - Look at asset management plan
 - Review need for annual plan over and above building maintenance i.e. how is the building best used and invested in

What could a facilities based strategy cover? (continued)

- Secure funding for investment
- Recognise the link to other strategies such as Health and wellbeing
- It could prioritise provision e.g. is a swimming pool more important than a community centre
- Review the methods of monitoring costs of operation
- Links with discretionary National Non Domestic rate (NDR)
- Review the risk partition for sites – aim for self sustaining?

Other corporate plan goals

- The paper considered by the Borough, Economy and Infrastructure EAB on 31 October concerning the feasibility of a new entertainment venue is intrinsically linked
- When the significant public consultation process is done for that project it will analyse demand for the potential facilities mix at a new venue
- This information would be crucial source data for a leisure strategy. To prepare a leisure strategy prior to this may provide an inappropriate steer for future decisions

Cost and Timetable

- If a Leisure Strategy were to be produced the cost and the timetable would depend on the breadth of the brief.
- The May 2017 deadline is unrealistic if a strategy is to be produced with the benefit of the source consultation data from the feasibility study process for the new sport and entertainment venue.
- Any costs would be required to be met from existing revenue budgets within the Leisure Client function

Suggested discussion points for the EAB:

- Whether it believes a facilities led Leisure Strategy will add value at this time
- If so, what scope of facilities should be included within the Leisure Strategy process e.g. include the pavilions and community centres or not
- identify any particular locations where facilities are lacking provision
- identify particular demographics where facilities are lacking
- highlight any restrictions pertinent to the process