

WARDS:

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - CULTURE AND RECREATION

TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF URBAN ENVIRONMENT

PERFORMANCE REPORT – SPORT AND RECREATION

1.0 PURPOSE

To report the performance of the Sport and Recreation Section for the period April to December 2004 to Members.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 This report follows the format adopted by the Select Committee for the 2003-04 financial year within which the Sport and Recreation Service reported performance in the context of the Leisure Centres and Sports Development Services provided by the Council.

2.2 Leisure Centres

2.2.1 **Income/Usage** – attached at Appendix 1 is an income schedule detailing income received per centre for the period April – December 2004 and compared with the previous financial year.

Members will note that there is an inconsistent picture in performance terms which requires some further analysis. Generally all sites have suffered from difficulties in fielding full staffing compliments consistently. The main factor being difficulties in recruiting the required number of qualified staff to ensure the safe operation of swimming pools and this has led to facilities being closed for certain periods and operating a restricted service at other times, e.g. reducing bathing loads.

The principal sites to suffer this problem were Coseley, Dudley and Crystal. In addition to general staffing shortages Dudley was also closed for an extended period until August 2004 to allow the major refurbishment of the swimming pool to be completed. Members will recall that the pools closure was significantly longer than had been anticipated due to certain problems with the pool floor, walls and promenade being identified.

Similarly Crystal Leisure Centre has responded to the staffing shortage by operating a reduced service on the leisure pool. This has seen the leisure pool being closed during the daytime in term time and opened in the evenings and the reverse during school holiday periods. By doing this we are targetting the use of resources in line with patterns of customers usage and it is anticipated that the leisure pool will be fully operational by the end of April.

Neither Brierley Hill nor Halesowen have suffered the same levels of staff vacancies and as such their income levels are slightly higher than in the same period in 2003 – 04.

The Dell Stadium income levels show a decrease of approximately 10% on the 2003 – 04 figures. The principal cause as members will note from the analysis at Appendix 1, relates to poor figures from May – July. This period is the principal athletic season and there were fewer events in 2004 than in the previous year. Efforts are being made with the Athletics Club to increase the number of events and the recent successful bid to Sport England/UK Athletics under the “CARP” Programme will provide essential equipment for the site to ensure the retention of track accreditation for competition and training.

2.2.2 User Statistics

User statistics for April-December 2005 have not been included in this report as they are inaccurate and could potentially skew trend information. The main reason for this is the limited functionality of the existing Leisure Management System i.e.:

- Very slow at creating reports which review large amounts of data
- Reports produced are not in a user-friendly format
- Difficult to transfer data into other applications i.e. Microsoft Word/Excel/Access
- Based on expected and not actual income
- No forecasting ability
- Inability to track customer usage

A new Windows based Leisure Management System is replacing the existing DOS system and will go live from April 18th 2005. The expected benefits of a new system are:

- Improved accuracy and reliability of management information on income and usage
- The ability to track individual usage through the introduction of a smart card for customers (smart card scheduled for introduction in June 2005)
- Improved reporting and exporting of data to Microsoft Word/Excel/Access

- The improvement in frontline service to customers as employees work with one integrated system instead of three or four independent systems
- The improved functionality of Windows products i.e. easier to navigate around system and carry out tasks.
- The ability to manage a number of membership schemes and direct debit
- The ability to allow booking for facilities over the Internet (scheduled for September 2005).

The usage statistics will be reintroduced in performance reports from April 2005.

2.2.3 Capital

During the first three quarters of 2004/05 considerable investment took place at two of the major leisure centres. In total this work was valued at £335,000. Further monies were made available to attract Lottery Sports Fund resources for a community sports project:

(i) Dudley Leisure Centre - Pool Hall: £250,000

The pool hall at Dudley Leisure Centre was renovated with replacement of the complete tiled surface and the installation of a new lighting system and ceiling.

(ii) Halesowen Leisure Centre - Electrical Work: £85,000

Major electrical works at Halesowen Leisure Centre included rewiring the whole of the building and relamping the pool hall and other rooms. In addition the project to upgrade the Health and fitness Suite was included within the Councils Capital Programme and works will commence on this project early in the 2005 – 06 financial year.

(iii) Green Park – Lottery Fund Award and Project Development: £515,000

Following a protracted application period during which the rules of the Lottery altered on more than one occasion, Sport England announced a grant of £235,000 towards the total project cost for the Green Park project of £515,000. Matched by funding from within Sport and Recreation reserves this project will provide improved playing pitches, a multi-use games area and changing accommodation central to the St Thomas's Ward in Central Dudley.

2.4 Training

As noted in Section 2.2.1 above the Leisure Centre Service has experienced some difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified employees.

This has impacted negatively on the delivery of the service and led to periods of reduced service or closure.

It was recognised that the previous approach to training, particularly of lifeguards, had been rather ad-hoc and had been an additional duty added to the role of existing employees. As this role was not a core component of the job of those asked to deliver, it was not always a priority.

The ongoing training of lifeguards is absolutely essential in order to maintain both the individuals pool related qualification and their first aid award. To provide a more structured and efficient approach to the delivery of the training for existing employees and also to the public, from where future employees may be recruited, it was decided to redirect budgetary resources to appoint a Trainer / Assessor.

The Trainer / Assessor is a resource within the Sport and Recreation Section that will deliver the ongoing training of all employees ensuring that standards are maintained. The Trainer / Assessor will also deliver programme for members of the public and other organisations. These additional courses will provide an opportunity for recruitment of future employees.

2.3 Sports Development

2.3.1 Active Dudley

This strategic partnership project involving the PCTs, Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning (DELL) and Directorate of Urban Environment (DUE) focuses on encouraging and developing opportunities for physical activity.

There are three elements to the Active Dudley project:

(i) Walkzone

A web based walk route planner that can be accessed from home, work or in public library settings. The individual plots a route, and the health benefits of the exercise will be highlighted.

(ii) Nursery Entrants and Parents Programme

Children at entry to nursery education will be engaged in physical activity with their parents. There will be training in the nursery setting and participants will have a bag of equipment to enable them to continue to be active at home.

It is intended to train nursery nurses and other school staff to deliver the programme, and parents will be given the same opportunity. It is

intended that parents will then be in a position to deliver sessions in other community settings.

(iii) Hillcrest Cycle Pilot

A cycle to school pilot is being run at Hillcrest School and Community College. Working through the PCT and linking with the Road Safety Unit it is intended to use the pilot to inform the future development of routes to schools.

2.3.2 Community Sports Coaches

Sport & Recreation have been successful in securing a substantial amount of funding from various sources including local sports clubs, neighbourhood renewal fund, National Governing Bodies of Sport and Big Lottery Fund which, through the Black Country Sports Partnership, has been match funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to implement the Community Sports Coach Scheme. The programme will bring a total of £288,000 worth of investment into sports delivery across the authority over a three year period.

The aim of the scheme is to 'establish paid professional coaches working at a local level to increase the number and range of high quality coaching opportunities...according to local and strategic need'. The key roles for the community sports coach are predominately

- Focus on delivery to young people
- Schools, clubs or a combination of both
- FUNdamentals/Learning to Train elements or equivalent development phases of the National Governing Body player pathway
- Retention agenda e.g. school to club links.

Following an audit of local need and discussion with National Governing Bodies of Sport and The Black Country Sports Development Forum it was decided to implement Disability, Gymnastics, Hockey and Rugby as focus sports for the initiative and the following coaches have been recruited:

| Name | Sport | Target Group |
|--------------|--------------|--|
| Sarah Hands | Disability | KS 1 – 4 Special Schools Crestwood School & feeder primarys |
| Liz Neale | Gymnastics | KS 1 - 2 |
| Simon Palmer | Hockey | 8 – 13 years |
| Ben Harvey | Rugby | 14 – 16 years Secondary Schools across the authority |

The coaches commenced employment on 5th January 2005 and in the 1st academic term of their employment have achieved the following

| Sport | Total no of children | % of females | % of BME | % of children with a disability | % of pupils in managed neighbourhoods |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Disability | 125 | 16.8 | 9.6 | 100 | 0 (no schools in managed areas) |
| Gymnastics | 1978 | 48.9 | 4.55 | 4.39 | 27.8 |
| Hockey | 1322 | 52 | 29.95 | 2.12 | 12.63 |
| Rugby | To be provided at the meeting | | | | |

2.3.3 Black Country Sports Partnership

The Black Country authorities have worked together in sport for many years with the Black Country Olympics and example of collaborative working from the 1970s to the 1990s. This annual event evolved into the Black Country Youth Games and these have become an integral element of the Active Sports programme. The Active Sports programme has been a further partnership development at a sub-regional level and has focused on the delivery of a series of activities.

'Game Plan' and the Framework for Sport both highlight the need to move sub-regional partnership working to a higher, more strategic level. With this in mind the four Black Country local authorities commissioned a review of the activities of the current Partnership in the autumn of 2004. The final report supported a move away from delivery to a more strategic role and proposed a that a link be developed with the Black Country Consortium and that a broader range of stakeholders be engaged in the future development of the Partnership.

2.3.4 Child Protection Policy

As members will readily acknowledge the Sport & Recreation Services is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available for coaches to guide them in best practice when working with all children, young people and disabled adults. Adopting best practice, through the adoption of a Child Protection Policy, helps to safeguard young people and disabled adults from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from potential allegations.

The Sport and Recreation Child Protection Policy is mandatory for all sports coaches, staff and volunteers working for or on behalf of Sport & Recreation. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, following significant legislation change in Child Protection & Sport or following a major investigation. The Policy has been endorsed by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and currently meets the relevant standards set by them. The policy has also been endorsed by the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board, formally known as the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC), of which the Principal Sport & Recreation Officer is an active member.

To date some 115 members of the Councils Sport and Recreation staff have received the necessary child protection training and regular courses are scheduled for all new employees.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 That the Select Committee consider the content of this report and comments accordingly.

4.0 FINANCE

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

5.0 LAW

- 5.1 Section 111 of the Local Government Act, 1972, enables the Council to do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of its statutory functions.
- 5.2 Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976, empowers the Council to provide recreational facilities in its area.
- 5.3 There is a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to account for the implications of the impact on community safety of actions and decisions relating to service areas.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 This report contains proposals which accord with the equal opportunities policies of the Council.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the proposals set out in Section 3 of this report be approved.



PP. Director of the Urban Environment:

Contact Officer: Andy Webb, Head of Sport and Recreation, Ext: 5579

Background Papers Used in the compilation of this Report:

'Sign Up for Sport' – The West Midland Plan for Sport –

www.sportengland.org

October 2004

West Midlands Region's Priorities for Investment – www.sportengland.org

October 2004