

Scrutiny Report

Committee: Community Scrutiny
Meeting or Proposed Decision Date – 30th
October 2024
Key Decision – No



Leisure Services

Chair of Committee:
Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts
Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: All
Executive Director: Chris Hall

Executive Summary

The Council owns 16 leisure facilities which are operated by external operators. A summary of the leisure facilities can be found in the table in Appendix 1. This report is to provide an update on the performance of the Council's leisure contracts for the five facilities in the west and four facilities in the south of the County. The contract in the west is with Sports & Leisure Management Ltd (trading as Everyone Active) whilst that in the south is with Wealden Leisure Ltd (trading as Freedom Leisure).

Both contracts return an increasing positive financial contribution to the Council and are in place to 2035 and 2036 respectively. Both contracts have been affected by the effects of the recent pandemic, rising utility prices and by major decarbonisation works but have recovered well from each of these challenges.

Each Operator will provide a short presentation to summarise recent successes and provide an update on performance as well as provide an opportunity for members to ask questions of the Operators or Council Officers. The recommendation of this report is that Councillors note the update on performance from the two Operators.

Other areas of the leisure service such as the delivery of leisure services in the north and east will be covered at the next opportunity.

Recommendations

That Community Scrutiny Committee note this report and the verbal updates from Everyone Active and Freedom Leisure.

Reasons for Proposals

The meeting is an opportunity for Councillors to better understand the delivery of the leisure services in these two key areas and to ask questions of the Operators following their presentations and to request further information about the operations.

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Main report and supporting information



Background and purpose of report

1.1 All the built leisure facilities owned by Somerset Council are delivered under contract or via a landlord/tenant arrangement (east). The contracts in the south and west deliver positive financial contributions for the Council over the life of the contracts.

The contracts require the Operators to provide monthly key performance indicator reporting and bi-annual or annual reports to the Council which in the past have been summarised at Scrutiny meetings where Councillors can explore any issues relating to the service.

1.2 Council officers meet regularly with Operators to discuss performance. Major contract change is managed under the terms of the contract but with regular liaison between the Council and the Operators forward planning tends to be proactive and positive.

1.3 Both Freedom (south) and Everyone Active (west) are performing well at present despite challenges from the recent pandemic, rising utility prices and by major decarbonisation works. Councillors are encouraged to explore performance by asking questions of the Operators during the meeting.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

2. The delivery of our leisure services links to all elements of the Council Plan

- A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset – through decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures of five of the sites.
- A Healthy & Caring Somerset – through providing opportunities for all to be active and to remain healthy.
- A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset – by providing facilities across Somerset with affordable access opportunities.
- A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset – our Operators provide significant employment in the area, particularly for young people.

Other options considered

3. Not applicable. This is an update to Community Scrutiny Committee for information.

Key considerations for the Council

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

4. Not applicable as this is a report to Community Scrutiny Committee only.

Consultation and feedback

5. Given that there are existing contractual arrangements in place the Council has not recently undertaken any consultation regarding the leisure provision.

Financial and Risk Implications

6. There are no financial implications from this report. However, it should be noted that the contractual agreements the Council has with the two leisure operators provides the Council a positive financial return.
7. There are no risk implications from this report.

Current Risk Score:

Projected risk score if recommended actions are agreed and delivered:

Legal and Procurement Implications

8. There are no legal or procurement implications.

HR / Workforce Implications

9. There are no HR implications.

Equalities Implications

10. There are no equalities implications as this report and verbal update are for information only.

Community Safety Implications

11. There are no community safety implications as a result of the recommendations of this report.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

12. There are no climate change and sustainability implications resulting from this report. However, significant investment has recently been made by Somerset Council and through Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding, with the support of our leisure operators, to decarbonise some of our leisure centres in

both the west and south. Further information on these works will be included in the verbal update to the Committee. Both leisure operators are also committed to running the leisure centres with environmental sustainability in mind.

Health and Safety Implications

13. There are no health and safety implications resulting from this report. However, any health and safety matters which arise in relation to the leisure provision are addressed as necessary by the leisure operators and the Council.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

14. The proposals of this report have no implications for health and wellbeing. However, the work of the leisure operators has a positive impact upon the health and wellbeing of Somerset residents by providing inclusive opportunities to access sport and leisure activities which have benefits for both physical and mental health.

Social Value

15. There are no social value implications as a result of the recommendations of this report. However, the work of our Operators provides significant social value to our communities and information on this will be included as part of the verbal update to the Committee.

Background Papers

16. None.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Table of Leisure Operators

Report assurance checklist ahead of report publication (for Audit, Executive, Full Council and Scrutiny Committees)

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	
Asset Management (*)	Oliver Woodhams	
Executive Director	Relevant Executive Director	17/10/24
Executive Lead Member	Relevant Lead Member	16/10/24
Consulted:	Councillor Name	

Local Division Members	List local members	
Opposition Spokesperson(s)	Relevant Opposition Spokesperson	
Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)	Relevant Chair	

Note:

Directors may nominate additional officers to act on their behalf

(*) – these areas only need to be consulted on proposals if the proposals have workforce or asset management implications

Reports will not be published if assurance checklist has not been adequately completed – report author to liaise with Democratic Services well ahead of publication deadline