

REPORT FROM LEISURE PROVISION TASK GROUP – 31st July 2014

One of the main aims of the last meeting was to re-visit the Terms of Reference and agree to any specific areas where the Task Group needed more detail.

Although the pre-scrutiny of the Dolphin Centre had not been included within the Terms of Reference, the Group felt that this had been a useful piece of work.

The Democratic Services Officer, Amanda Scarce had provided further information of evidence which highlighted facilities and activities available throughout the district which had been covered by other Task Groups including the Youth Provision Group but it was felt important that we did not duplicate areas of work which had already been covered by those Task Groups.

Additional information was also tabled at the meeting which included a number of activities facilitated by Age UK, local Children's Centres and Worcestershire County Council and which were carried out at venues throughout the district. It was however acknowledged that not all of the activities were facilitated by Bromsgrove District Council but they did have indirect involvement.

Discussion was held as to whether or not the Council had a statutory duty to provide any of the activities, but at the same time, ensure the activities provided are meeting the needs of residents and that the Council receives value for money from the service. It was agreed that this was an area which should be covered in the final report in some detail and that clarity should be given as to the legal position and used as supporting evidence. Agreed that Mr John Godwin be asked to clarify the position in respect of any statutory duty. The discussion covered:

- Duty on Councils for health and wellbeing of its residents under the Social Care Act 2012.
- It was likely that only a very few Authorities did not provide leisure services.
- Income generated from leisure facilities – hire of tennis courts, football pitches.
- Members were in agreement that they would not want the Council to be seen as making a profit from such services.

Concerns were raised about the charges for the facilities at the Dolphin Centre as it would be competing with other leisure facilities throughout the district. It was felt that the principle was that the Council could provide services to enable those who would not be able to access such facilities provided by the likes of David Lloyd. It was agreed that a possible recommendation be 'That charges for leisure facilities, such as the Dolphin Centre, should be cost neutral and should not be increased in order to make a profit'.

Comment was raised on the cost of the High Flyer event which had taken place in the Town Centre recently and whether this had proved to be value for money. There appeared to be conflicting information as to the cost which had ranged from £17 - £26k.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that further information was required on the following:

- Concern was also raised at the last meeting with regard to the closure of EPIC and of the Health Hub. Members of the Task Group were not aware of these closures.
- Duplication of provision for the disabled – activities being carried out by Bromsgrove District Council and the Ryland Centre.
- Information on activities which were run by Age UK taking place at Amphlett Hall.

REPORT FROM LEISURE PROVISION TASK GROUP - Thursday 21st August 2014.

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Godwin, Head of Leisure & Cultural Services and Miss Laura Kerrigan, Sports & Physical Activity Development Manager to the meeting of the Task Group.

At the previous meeting held on 31st July 2014, one or two queries were raised which members of the Task Group requested confirmation of from Mr John Godwin.

- **Duplication of provision for the disabled** – Members were informed that this referred to the ‘Keep on Moving’ project held on a Friday in the Spadesbourne Suite and attended by people from Amber Support who were based in Sidemoor and further details were provided.
- **Statutory Duty of the Council** – With regard to the statutory duty of the Council, Mr Godwin stated that the Council were under no statutory duty to provide leisure facilities other than allotments. Referring to the Allotments Act 1950, there was a requirement if the land was owned by the Council and used as allotments, then it did become a statutory duty to remain as such. This also applied as a same legal requirement to land owned by a Parish Council.

Mr Godwin reported that over recent years they had started to offer and provide starter plots which were half the size of the 16th of an acre plot and had also changed the season to March – September for the growing season. Mr Godwin also confirmed to the Task Group that the allotments at Stoneybridge, Fairfield were owned by Bromsgrove District Council. It was agreed that the Legal Department be consulted to confirm the statutory duty position with respect of allotments.

Mr John Godwin – Head of Leisure & Cultural Services

Mr Godwin discussed with Members several areas in respect of the Dolphin Centre and the business case for the new Centre. In particular these discussions concentrated on the inclusion of a sports hall, as Members had previously aired their concerns over the lack of this facility in the business case and the options available to the Council to address this.

Badminton facilities were discussed in detail and the availability of facilities at other venues and whether these were adequate for the needs of players.

Referring to the Swimming Club, Mr Godwin confirmed that they had been fully consulted and had supported the proposals and they would be further consulted as more detail is worked out for the swimming pool. There was however a reduction in the spectator space and the pool could deal with this except for large galas of which only 2 galas had been held in the last 12 months. There were other venues available and the ASA had been more than happy with the new arrangements.

Referring to block bookings at the Dolphin Centre, Mr Godwin stated that the one group remained which needed to be addressed. The parties were very successful and members were informed on details of how Wychavon Leisure rotated the inflatables between the sites they managed in order to maintain interest.

Laura Kerrigan – Sports & Physical Activity Development Manager

Laura Kerrigan, Sports & Physical Activity Development Manager gave an in-depth report to Members of the Task Group on the types of activities, including disability groups held within Bromsgrove and the District and which covered all age groups in providing something for everyone but at the same time, ensuring that activities were not duplicated. These details were regularly sent to all Councillors for their information.

The activities were all very well attended some being developmental and could lead to Clubs being formed whereby the Council would help by providing a small pot of money for support to help them progress, but at the same time, be mindful that the groups are ones which the Council would want to be associated with in helping. Examples of where this had been successful was reported on by Mr Godwin – the Rugby and Hockey Clubs and also Bromsgrove Sporting whereby the Council had supported them in applying for funding together with meeting the health and wellbeing agenda. The Council had also supported other groups in providing Positive Activities.

Details were also given by Laura Kerrigan on other initiatives which were taking place, run completely by volunteers who the Council had supported and trained as 'run leaders'. The groups build up runners who then register and pay a small fee to cover any expenses.

Further details were given:-

- The new Couch to 5k run in conjunction with 'Run England' to get Bromsgrove running and would be held at different venues throughout the District – Catshill Meadow, Rubery, St. Chads and Cofton Park commencing in September.
- Children's Junior Park Run - running groups in Sanders Park on Saturday mornings. This had been set up and funded through Cllr. Mallett's County Council Divisional Funds and had been very successful with around 60 children taking part each week.
- The Sports Development had also supported other groups such as the table tennis group held at the Dolphin Centre.
- Keep Fit sessions on Saturday mornings were held in Sanders Park.
- Walking for Health on Monday's – (1 – 3 miles) from Sanders Park

and on Friday's starting from different areas within the district and driving out into the countryside for a 3 – 4 mile walk.

All the above sessions were free of charge to residents and children.

Laura Kerrigan informed the meeting on other groups including a fairly new group – Nordic Walking at the Lickey Hills. Bromsgrove District Council were working in partnership with Birmingham City Council and this was proving to be very successful. Disabilities sailing at the Upton Warren site with Chadsgrove School and other disabilities clubs – training of some of their Staff would be done to further develop this activity.

Information was also given with regard to the Bromsgrove and Redditch Active Volunteering Opportunities (BRAVO). BRAVO was a flexible programme and there were a wide variety of placements for volunteers to choose from such as IT support for clubs and to assistant coaches for health intervention for older people. Both Bromsgrove and Redditch had a wealth of sports clubs/organisations and had a huge impact on the people who live in these areas.

Following the lengthy discussions, it was agreed by all members of the Leisure Provision Task Group that the Council provided excellent opportunities for the residents of Bromsgrove and the district to partake in the many activities, suitable for all ages and at a variety of venues across the Bromsgrove area.

It was however felt that we needed to widen the circulation across the whole district so that more residents could be informed on the many excellent and wide ranging activities/opportunities offered to join the many groups.

Members of the Task Group wished to record thanks to Mr John Godwin, Laura Kerrigan all the members of the Sports Development Team who were working so hard to enable these facilities to be provided for residents, of all ages.

Possible recommendations and Final Report - Amanda Scarce discussed with the Task Group a suggested template for the Report which included – statutory duty, the Dolphin Centre Business Case and Value for Money and meetings the needs of residents. Additional recommendations had also been picked up from this meeting and members were asked to let the Officer or the Chairman know if there were any further suggestions for recommendations.

Future Meeting Dates It was agreed by members of the Task Group that one further meeting would be required in order to consider the final draft report and recommendations. It was also agreed that although the report could be ready earlier than expected, it would still be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board for the November meeting.

Cllr. Caroline Spencer
Chairman
Leisure Provision Task Group

2nd September 2014