

Leisure, Culture and the Third Sector Scrutiny Board

15 June, 2015

Summary of Matters Considered at the Board

Report of the Chair, Councillor Ahmed

The Scrutiny Board met on 15 June, 2015 and the following items were considered. I have selected the main points of the discussion which I feel members of the Council will be particularly interested to know more about. For more detail, a copy of the minutes is available on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) via the Council's website at <http://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cmis5/>

1.1 Delivery of Leisure Services

The Board noted a presentation on how leisure services are managed and delivered in Sandwell and the Council's relationships with Sandwell Leisure Trust and Places for People.

Sport England's 2015 Active People Survey reports that the number of people in Sandwell who engage in 30 minutes of exercise a week is just 32.4%. It is recognised that increasing levels of physical activity is essential to improving both the physical and mental wellbeing of residents, and reducing the impact on health and social care budgets.

The Board welcomes the proposal to establish a Community Activity Network in Sandwell, subject to a successful bid to Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund, and the creation of six Community Activity Network Development Officers to work across the six towns. In particular, the Board was interested to hear that part of the role of these officers will be to establish a picture of the voluntary sector organisations that provide sport and leisure activities in Sandwell and determine what assistance the Council can provide to complement its own delivery of a comprehensive and sustainable, community focussed leisure service. The Board has requested a report following the completion of this work.

Having previously felt some concern about the impact of the rise of low-cost gyms on the use of the Council's facilities, the Board has been assured that low cost gyms are not having a sustained impact upon Sandwell Leisure Trust and Places for People's membership numbers.

The Board noted the condition of Sandwell Leisure Trust's facilities and the long-term future of certain premises. It is acknowledged that some facilities are becoming less and less cost effective to run as their maintenance costs increase due to the age of the buildings.

1.2 Work Programme

The Board discussed its work programme for 2015/16 and agreed a number of topics for scrutiny including:-

- The contribution of the third sector in Sandwell.
- Feedback on the Community Activity Network programme and the work of the Community Activity Network Officers.
- Sandwell Leisure Trust's proposals for a sustainable leisure service.

Councillor Ahmed
Chair of the Leisure, Culture and the Third Sector Scrutiny Board