

Minutes of Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Wednesday 10 March 2022 at 4.00 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor L Giles (Chair);
Councillors E M Giles and Moore.

In attendance: Councillors Bhullar and Gavan.
Alice Davey (Director of Borough Economy) and Gemma
Ryan (Assistant PE and Sport Strategy Manager)

8/22 Apologies for Absence

An apology was received from Councillor Anandou.

9/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

10/22 Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider.



11/22

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved that the public and press are excluded from the rest of the meeting. This is to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial and business affairs of any person, including the authority holding that information.

12/22

Sandwell Leisure Trust Business Plan 2021-2024 & Leisure Management Option Appraisal Approach

Further to Minute No. 33/22 of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 February 2022, the Board was apprised of the Options Appraisal process and approach in relation to the future delivery arrangements for the management of 9 of the leisure facilities in Sandwell, and the new aquatic centre.

A termination letter had been served to Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) in February 2022 and negotiations were currently taking place regarding the exit plan and transition period. A joint statement had been agreed between the Council and the Trust to announce the decision.

An in-depth first stage management Options Appraisal had been undertaken by an external leisure consultant and was presented to officers and Cabinet members via a series of cabinet workshops. This appraisal was provided to Members of the Scrutiny Board. The Board was informed of the advantages and disadvantages of each option and the approach to the final selection of a preferred option for the future long-term delivery of leisure facilities in Sandwell. The decision and final scoring for a preferred management option will be based on the following key elements for Sandwell:

- Finance
- Risk / deliverability
- Delivery of Council priorities and principles

Sandwell residents are among the most inactive in the country so the development of a wider wellbeing offer was a key principle in determining and developing future provision.

Financial considerations were outlined to the board in terms of the principles and priorities under consideration for the service specification moving forwards, including the issue of a holistic service provision. It was outlined that it is understood that a relatively low number of people use leisure centres (assessed in Sandwell at around 25% - which is likely to be a high estimate), and therefore budgetary consideration is being given to the broader population who chose to take part in physical activity in a variety of other settings with services delivered by different sectors, including but not limited to the following:

- Parks and open spaces
- Sports clubs provided by the voluntary sector
- Community settings such as halls and rooms in facilities
- Education settings, schools or colleges
- Private sector fitness facilities and gyms

The Board considered the potential for the delivery of a holistic service to encompass a broader offer and the use of the Council's existing budgets to achieve this, through the realisation of efficiencies and reinvestment of a portion of this.

The Council has maintained a dialogue with Trades Unions, however, direct engagement with SLT staff was being led by SLT as the employer.

A final decision relating to the option appraisal for the facility management would be made in the early Summer 2022. The Board would receive further updates as appropriate.

Meeting ended at 4.54pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk