


<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9th February 2023</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Sharon Godman, Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">How the council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque, Head of Service, Corporate Strategy and Communities Filuck Miah, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Communities
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on how the council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough. The report makes six recommendations for agreement by the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Recommendations:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the attached scrutiny challenge session report and agree the recommendations; and
2. Agree to submit the attached report to the Mayor and Cabinet for executive response to the recommendations.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This paper submits the report and recommendations of the scrutiny challenge session on how the council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough for consideration by the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny challenge session provides recommendations for increasing women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough. It also recognises that residents, local leisure facilities, schools highly value these provisions and the importance of access for local stakeholders.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Gender inequality pertinent to women and girls access and participation with sports provisions and physical activities remains a key issue for the borough. The pandemic had further exacerbated this by reducing people's ability to engage with local sport facilities and physical exercise as a result of government policies on social mixing rules.
- 3.2 The United Nations Women understand the role that sport plays and the power it has to change lives and suggests its influence can drive gender equality teaching women and girls teamwork, self-reliance, resilience and confidence. Sport inspires and creates meaningful change so that all women and girls have fair access to physical activity and sporting opportunities, whilst helping to unlock some of the challenges in their lives.
- 3.3 Social factors such as social groupings, families and friends in addition to personal dynamics such as age, gender, disability, ethnicity, disposable income can influence levels of commitment and participation with physical activities. In more recent years women in sport have defied gender stereotypes and social norms, becoming the inspiring role models and showing that men and women are equals.
- 3.4 The Children and Scrutiny Sub-Committee held a scrutiny challenge session on Monday 21st November 2022 focusing on the barriers that women and girls faced with access and participation with sport provisions and physical activities in the borough and how the council and its partners can increase provisions to address this. The session was chaired by Cllr Bodrul Choudhury.
- 3.5 The challenge session was underpinned by the following:
- What are the key challenges that council service and its partners face from increasing women and girls access to sports provision/ physical activities in the borough?
 - What are the key barriers that's stopping women and girls from taking up or sustaining their access to sports provision/ physical activities in the borough?

- What are the policy solutions needed to address the challenge and have impact? Who needs to be involved? How do we need to approach this?

3.6 The challenge session involved a range of stakeholder witnesses including:

- Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation supported by council officers;
- Youth Cabinet Member for Environment
- Youth Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
- Youth Sports Trust
- Women in Sport
- Women Inclusive Team
- Fitness Reborn UK
- Voluntary Sector Children and Youth Forum Co-ordinator
- School Games Organiser

3.7 The challenge session resulted in the committee making the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Community engagement

Using the co-design framework, the Council's Sports and Physical Activity Service (CSPAS) will set up a steering group to engage women and girls on their needs for accessing sports provision and physical activities.

Recommendation 2

Affordability

CSPAS should work in partnership with the borough's sport delivery partners, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and grass root sports to ensure that access and participation in sports provision and physical activities is both affordable and is actively encouraged to women and girls.

Recommendation 3

Campaigns and publicity

CSPAS should consult the Council's Corporate Communication Service alongside partners' comms services to positively promote women's sports provision and physical activities borough wide.

Recommendation 4

Female friendly infrastructure

CSPAS will collaborate with key partners to develop dedicated female friendly infrastructure and includes location, timetable of facilities, build in competitions and develop scope for employment and training pathways for female to work in the fitness sector.

Recommendation 5

Quality monitoring, intelligence capture and audit

CSPAS will develop robust systems to capture and measure key diversity, equality and usage performance information across all provisions for women and girls. Monitoring should also include, policy reviews, mystery shopping and pulse audits to ensure that the sports provision is relevant, and sustainable.

Recommendation 6

Women and girls safe routes to sports provision and physical activities

CSPAS will use the feedback from women and girl (on safe routes to sports venues) and engage and work with key partners such as Transport for London public realm and regeneration, to ensure that any policy or access redesign takes on board and reflects the views women and girls.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The challenge session examined the key issues impacting women and girls from accessing and participating with sports provisions and physical activities in the borough. The recommendations arising from the scrutiny challenge aim to improve access and participation for women and girls residents including age, gender, race and ethnicity, disability and those from low-income families.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.
- 5.2 [Report authors should identify any other specific issues relevant to consideration of this report. Including, but not limited to, the issues noted above. This section of the report can also be used to re-emphasise particular issues that Members must have considered before taking the decision (for example issues that may come up if an objection was taken to court). Note – Paragraph 5.1 MUST NOT be deleted.]

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The fulfilment of recommendations should be carried out within existing resources of the council and its partners wherever possible. If budget growth was required, this should be requested through the budget setting processes of the council and its partners as appropriate.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires local authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- 7.2 The legislation also states that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages; take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected by that characteristic, and encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 7.3 The matters referred to in this report comply with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Scrutiny challenge session report on how the council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation with sport provisions and physical activities in the borough

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

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