


Non-Executive Report of the: Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee 4 th June 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Robin Beattie, Director of Strategy, Transformation and Improvement	Classification: Unrestricted
Scrutiny Review on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives	

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

Reasons for Urgency

This report was not available by the statutory five working days in advance of the meeting, as technical difficulties prevented access to the report for essential sign off by legal and finance officers. The report recommendations were presented to the sub-committee at the last meeting at last municipal year and it was agreed to bring the report back to next HASSC meeting which was the 4th June. The report is also the report of the previous chair, and he will only be available to attend this meeting to speak to the item.

Executive Summary

This scrutiny report establishes the findings and recommendations arising from the health scrutiny review on disabled peoples' access to sports and exercise in Tower Hamlets. The report makes six recommendations for agreement by the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Recommendations:

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASSC) is recommended to:

1. Note the attached HASSC scrutiny review report and agree the recommendations;
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 review on disabled peoples' access to sports and exercise in Tower Hamlets for consideration and agreement by HASSC.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny review provides recommendations on disabled people's access to sports and exercise in Tower Hamlets and recognises the importance and value that leisure contributes to supporting a healthy borough.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Sport England¹ identified that people with disabilities and or long-term ill health conditions are much less likely to take part in sports and exercise than abled people. Disability is a complex sector with huge variations in people's needs and preferences. The research also makes it clear that 'one size fits all' approach will not work if the ambition is to get more disabled people active.
- 3.2 The national data driven intelligence establishes that almost one in five people in England have a long-standing limiting disability or illness. Approximately 70% of disabled people are aged over 50; and with nearly 50% of disabled people have a long-term ill health condition. Furthermore, over 50% of disabled people state that they experience long term pain and that 75% of disabled people have more than one impairment.
- 3.3 The sub-committee also recognised the acute impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had on disabled residents and residents with long term health conditions. They wanted to understand the current challenges faced by disabled residents in accessing sports and exercise in the borough.
- 3.4 Health scrutiny review was chaired by Cllr Ahmodur Khan, chair of Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee and involved:
- Committee members undertaking site visits to Better Leisure and community gym facilities in the borough during December 2023 and January 2024
 - Held a workshop on 13 February 2024 in the community with residents from the disabled peoples network and older people's reference group supported by Cabinet leads.

¹ [Disabled people | Sport England](#)

- Held two sessions in council chamber discussing barriers and solutions on 15th February and 4th March 2024

3.5 The scope of the review was underpinned by the following:

- Understand the specific barriers that people with disabilities face and or those living with long-term ill health conditions encounter when trying to access sports and exercise provisions;
- Capturing the voice and views of people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions;
- Understand the main challenges in promoting inclusiveness and participation in sports and exercise for people with disabilities and or those with living long-term ill health conditions;
- Methods to Improve accessibility of the leisure facilities and for people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions;
- Explore and consider the availability and capacity of adaptive sports programme for people with disabilities and or those with living long-term ill health conditions;
- How we can improve and enhance awareness and education on the importance of inclusive sports and exercise programmes;
- How policy considerations can improve access and participation;
- Taking learning for case studies and best practice; and
- Technological applications and resourcing to improve access and participation

3.6 The scrutiny review involved a range of stakeholders including:

- Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation and Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
- HASSC Members
- CEO REAL
- CEO Ability Bow
- CEO of Disability Sports Coach
- SEN Engagement Manager, Vallance Community Sports Association
- Head Coach and founder of Alternative Movement
- Co-founder of Global Eyes
- Service users from Disabled Peoples' Network and Older People Reference Group
- Council officers

3.7 The scrutiny review resulted in the committee making the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Disability representation

The council should actively prioritise initiatives that will enhance visibility and representation of people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions within the leisure sports and fitness centre workforce

Recommendation 2: Better data driven evidence on disability access and usage

The council should develop a comprehensive approach to the collection and analysis of disability access and usage led data that supports good governance and drives continuous improvements

Recommendation 3: Developing trusted disability communication channels and campaigns

The council should engage community disability groups to co-design and develop robust campaigns that promotes physical activity and sports for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions

Recommendation 4: Create a sports and exercise disability forum that embeds a person-centred philosophy and empowers residents with disabilities and or those living with long-term health conditions to review provision and make recommendations for improvement.

The council should work with disability groups and establish a sports and exercise disability forum that empowers residents with disabilities or those living with long-term ill health conditions to undertake activities such as accessibility audits on facilities, customer service, equipment, programmes to deliver on improvements.

Recommendation 5: Collaboration with primary care, NHS and healthcare partners and voluntary and community sector

The council's leisure service should establish joint working protocols with primary care, NHS, health partners and voluntary and community sector to support widening access and become a partner referral provider for people with disabilities and or long-term health conditions.

Recommendation 6: Creating transitional arrangements from specialised fitness gyms to mainstream leisure centre facilities

The council should establish joint work protocols with community gyms (specialist in disability and long-term ill health condition) to support residents with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions to make the transition into mainstream leisure centre facilities.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The report considers the inequalities faced by people with disabilities and long-term ill health conditions. The review also included holding a workshop with two of the protected characteristic councils commissioned equality groups, namely, the Disabled People's Network and Older People Reference Group to understand the challenge they faced and some of the solutions that might support their needs.

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 The report considers the best value implications as the council will be insourcing the leisure services, it provides an opportunity to shape policy and become more inclusive for underserved communities in the borough such as disabilities and people with long-term ill health conditions and it also aims to support the council return on investment through usage by these groups.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 The report asks the Committee to agree the recommendations of the HASSC scrutiny review report and submit the report to the Mayor and Cabinet for executive response. No costings to implement the recommendations have been provided therefore the financial implications are unknown at this stage.

6.2 Recommendations would need to be implemented within existing resources or additional funding requested via the appropriate governance route.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 requires every local authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of people in its area.

7.2 Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on local authorities to provide or arrange for the provision of resources, services or facilities which will prevent, delay or reduce the need for adults in their area for care and support.

7.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public 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 different groups in society.

7.4 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the way their functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7.5 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation.

7.6 [Legal implications to be inserted when Financial Implications have been completed].

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

- NONE

Appendices

- Scrutiny Review on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives

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:

N/A