

Cabinet 27 November 2024	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Simon Baxter, Corporate Director Communities	Classification: Unrestricted
Response to Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASS) recommendations on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives	

Lead Member	Cllr Kamrul Hussain, Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation.
Originating Officer(s)	Keith Townsend - Programme Director - Leisure Insourcing Simon Jones - Head of Leisure Operations Amelie Gonguet - Public Health Manager Leisure Insourcing
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Forward Plan Notice Published	18 October 2024
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	Priority 4: Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure With measures including supporting small businesses, start-ups, and markets; creating jobs and training opportunities; and one hour free parking at our markets. Priority 5: Investing in public services Bringing outsourced services back into public hands. Priority 8: A council that listens and works for everyone

Executive Summary

This report submits the Executive's response to Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommendations on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives published on the 4th June 2024.

This was a timely report as the council insourced its seven leisure centres on the 1st May 2024 offering many opportunities to improve the lives of residents through new targeted leisure initiatives with a focus on inclusivity.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to

1. Consider the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee's Review Report (Appendix 1) on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives.
2. Agree the Service Action Plan (Appendix 2) in response to the scrutiny report recommendations.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To provide a formal response to the HASSC report and an action plan to cover any recommendations in line with council constitution requirements.
- 1.2 The attached report is the Executive's response to the scrutiny recommendations arising from the HASSC scrutiny review on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny challenge session provides recommendations for tackling barriers experienced people with disabilities and long-term conditions experienced when trying to access sports and exercise provisions in the borough. Residents with disabilities or those living with long-term ill health conditions are significantly less likely to take part in sport than abled people and taking no actions would risk to further exacerbates those existing inequalities.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Research findings from national organisations and groups such as Sport England, UK Active and Activity Alliance suggest and agree that people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions are much less likely to take part in sports and exercise than able people.
- 3.2 Research also indicates that disability is a complex sector with enormous variations in peoples' needs and preferences. It is recognised that a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to work if the goal or ambition is to be more inclusive and enable more people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions to lead a more active lifestyle.
- 3.3 At a borough wide level, HASSC also recognised the environmental pull factors, such as, the intensity of the Covid-19 pandemic impacting adversely people with disabilities and those living with long-term ill health conditions. The sub-

committee also accepted that a lack of access may also create further challenges such as isolation, loneliness and poor emotional wellbeing.

3.4 As the council begins to insource leisure, it opens up an opportunity for this sub-committee to review and strengthen on how the leisure centres and other community facilities can be more inclusive to these group of residents of the borough.

3.5 The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee held two scrutiny review - sessions on the 15th February 2024 and the 4th March 2024 chaired by Cllr Ahmodur Khan to examine and understand barriers and challenges that people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions face when trying to access sports and exercise provisions in the borough.

3.6 The scrutiny review aims to improve the following:

- Level of active participation from people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions with sports and exercise
- Generate greater awareness and education through campaigns
- Policy improvements
- Representation and empowerment of disabled people within the leisure industry
- This scrutiny review also considers the council's strategic priorities such as 'Investing in Public Services' and 'A council that listens and works for everyone' as these are linked to the review topic.

3.7 The scrutiny review was underpinned by the following activities:

- Site visits to Better Leisure Centres (operated by GLL) and community gym facilities in the borough between December 2023 and January 2024
- A community resident engagement workshop on 13th February 2024 with residents from the Disabled Peoples' Network and Older People Reference Group
- Two scrutiny review session discussing the barriers faced by people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions, (15th Feb 2024) followed by a session on solutions, (4th March 2024)

3.8 The scrutiny review involved a range of stakeholders including:

- Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care and for Culture and Recreation
- Chief exec REAL, Disability Sport Coach and Ability Bow

- SEN Engagement Manager, Vallance Community Sports Association
- Head Coach and Founder of Alternative Movement
- LBTH Leisure insourcing team and
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members.

3.9 The challenge session resulted in the committee making the following six 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 and organisations to co-design robust campaigns that actively promote sports and exercise initiatives for people with disabilities and or those living with 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, healthcare partners, park services, 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 challenge session examined the barriers and challenges that people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions face when trying to access sports and exercise provisions in the borough. It is evident that sports and fitness initiatives and leisure centres in the borough are a real asset and a community driven need to support social inclusion and the populations overall health and wellbeing. However, the review identified that there is real opportunity to strengthen the local offer, to be more inclusive and deliver targeted interventions that will meet the needs of our residents with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions.

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.
- 5.1 The revenue budget for the service has been developed using a zero-base approach and modelled over a 10-year period showing income growth and an operating surplus from year four.
- 5.2 The impact and performance of recommendations from the Action Plan will be carefully monitored and analysed using membership and usage data on a site-by-site basis. The scheme will be reviewed after 12 months and amendments made where required.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report provides a set of recommendations to empower disabled residents and improve lives, through new targeted leisure initiatives with a focus on inclusivity.
- 6.2 Recommendations 1 to 4 will be funded from within existing resources.
- 6.3 Recommendation 5 consists of proposal for members with disability to receive an enhanced concessionary offer by reducing membership fees from £25 per month to £15 per month. There are currently 200 members on the concessionary membership rate of £25 per month which equates to £0.06m of income per annum.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that the reduction of membership fee to £15 per month could increase take up of new memberships and make up for the lost income from reduction in proposed membership fees. It is estimated that an additional 134 memberships would be required to result in recovery of income.
- 6.5 Any proposed changes to membership fees would be undertaken through the Cabinet approval governance process for fees and charges.
- 6.6 Recommendation 6 consists of investment in environmental and gym equipment, this will be subject to funding availability and will be reviewed through capital investment governance process.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 requires each local authority to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area. These steps may include providing information and advice, and providing services or facilities designed to promote healthy living.
 - 7.2 The Public Sector Duty, set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires local authorities to have due regard in the exercise of their functions to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
 - 7.3 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Report on Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiative
- Appendix 2: Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiative- Action Plan.

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None.

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