

Sports, Leisure and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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Briefing of: Councillor Steve Summers

Portfolio: Sports, Leisure and Customer Services

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1. Sports and Leisure

Sports and Leisure Performance- 2014/15

1.1 Overall performance 2014/15 was extremely positive and particular highlights include:

- 3,921,313 visits have been made to sports and leisure centres which surpasses the full year target and represent the highest figure ever recorded.
- 33,184 visits to the Sayers Croft Centre (surpassing the full year target).
- 145,000 swimming lessons delivered which exceeds the annual target and represents a 45% increase in uptake compared with the previous year. This is an extremely positive result and follows a change in the operational arrangements (lessons are now delivered directly by GLL).
- 7,269 ActiveWestminster Passport and Concession card holders across all facilities (full year target achieved).
- 8,110 participants in the exercise referral scheme.
- 120 registered athletes on the 'Champions of the Future Programme' (full year target achieved).
- 65 accredited sports clubs in Westminster through the 'ActiveWestminster Mark' programme (full year target achieved).

2014/15 Revenue and Capital Budgets

1.2 The sport and leisure revenue year end outturn is £10k under budget across all service areas and all risks have been mitigated and the planned budgeted savings have been achieved in full. Financial performance across the contracted sports and leisure facilities and the Council's 'in house' Sayers Croft Centre remains very strong with income exceeding £13m for the first time.

1.3 The overall capital outturn was £30k ahead of budget. All schemes have been delivered to budget with the exception of the 'Porchester Phase 3' development which was moved to 2015/16 (as reported to the Council's Capital Review Group earlier in 2014).

The Porchester Centre

1.4 A variety of improvement works are progressing at the Porchester Centre including:

- **New Office Accommodation and Meeting Space.** Works to improve the existing ground floor area of Bridgefield House (the building adjacent to the Porchester Centre) have completed. The new facility will provide a flexible office space for Contractor and will accommodate meetings and training events.
- **New Centre Signage.** The signage for the Porchester Centre, Hall and the Porchester Spa has been given a more traditional makeover. The dated plastic sign above The Porchester Centre and the blue neon signs above The Porchester Spa have been replaced with more appropriate and high quality Bronze lettered signage, this signage is also lit up in the evening to ensure everyone can identify the iconic and beautiful building. The Centre signage is much more in keeping with this historic building and gives the facility a new lease of life.
- **New Bar area in the Porchester Hall.** The old bar area in Porchester Hall has been completely renovated to provide a much more welcoming area to host small parties, meetings and other functions. All work was completed to preserve and enhance the look and feel of the building, restoring and embracing some of the existing period features. The original radiators have been reinstated and the decoration of the mouldings in the higher sections of the walls brings the room to life. All original woodwork has been varnished and a brand new floor laid ready to accommodate the variety of functions and events at the Porchester Hall.
- **New exercise studio.** Work will soon begin to transform the unused basement space under the new offices in Bridgefield House. This area will become a more functional space to increase the fitness provision of the centre and provide some much needed space for courses and training.

Sayers Croft

1.5 Works to extend and improve one of the accommodation blocks at the site have completed.

Queens Park Gardens

1.6 The improvement works to the 'free to access' Games Area (new fencing, floodlighting and improvements to the surface) and the provision of new outdoor gym equipment at Queens Park Gardens have completed.

Westminster Mile 2015 - Sunday 24th May 2015

1.7 Over 6,500 registrations were made to the Mile event which exceeded the 2014 registrations, again with huge interest in the family races which attracted 2,800 sign ups. Marcel Hug will also race alongside David Weir this year and organisers are considering an officially recognised world record attempt. Steve Cram will be the events special guest along with a host of Olympian athletes who will participate in a special race during the event.

Leisure Centre contract re-let

1.8 Officers are progressing with the procurement for the new sports and leisure facilities contract which is due to commence from 1st July 2016.

- 1.9 Five bidders, including all the key contractors operating LA contracts in the south-east, responded to the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and Four Bidders will be invited to submit 'detailed solutions' which will be evaluated in the Summer.

Summer competitions programme

- 1.10 The annual Athletics competition is one of the largest in the schools calendar attracting over 600 boys and girls from Westminster secondary schools to Battersea Park Athletics Stadium. St George's School and Grey Coat Hospital were finally crowned champions in the boys and girls comps respectively.
- 1.11 Three separate Tennis competitions took place in May at Paddington Recreation Ground and Regents Park, with young people being selected for talent development squads and the chance to represent the City of Westminster at this year's London Youth Games.

MCC Lords Schools Offer and Launch event – Monday, 27th April

- 1.12 A successful launch event took place in partnership with MCC, Middlesex, ActiveWestminster and GLL. The launch attracted significant interest from schools and families and generated numerous registrations from participants in the target age range of 9-11 and 11-13 year olds.
- 1.13 The development of this new club session is part of the wider cricket programme, which to date has attracted over 30 schools who are benefitting from coaching on school site, CPD for teachers and access to matches at Lords amongst much more.

2. Libraries and Culture

Pimlico Library

- 2.1 Property Services is in the process of installing a new passenger lift to replace the existing platform lift which has been persistently unreliable. The new lift will be much more suitable for high volume traffic and should provide much greater reliability.

Enabling works were completed in April 2015. There is further work which will be undertaken during the summer holiday period to avoid conflicts with users of the Westminster Adult Education Service.

Registration service

- 2.3 Westminster continues to be very popular for wedding ceremonies held at Mayfair Library, the new partner venue, Asia House and also at an extensive array of venues that are licensed for civil ceremonies across the City. The City Council has recently given approval to its 150th venue, the most approved venues of any registration district in the country. The service is getting ready for a busy summer with up to 20 venue weddings taking place on any given Saturday (as well as a potential for 8 at Mayfair Library and 6 at Asia House).

3. Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

Team Westminster Flagship Volunteering Service

- 3.1. Westminster City Council has awarded the contract for delivery of the Team Westminster Flagship Volunteering Service to the charity Groundwork London following a thorough procurement process. The three-year contract will begin on 1st August 2015 and marks an additional investment of £32,000 per year in volunteering.
- 3.2. The following services will be delivered through the flagship programme:
- **Team Westminster Community Action:** an innovative new addition to the volunteering offer involving a pool of volunteers who can be called on to take part in social action days across the city. We will work with communities to identify activities which matter to local people.
 - **Team Westminster Ambassadors:** the newly named Ambassadors will replace the City Guides and continue to volunteer at some of London's most exciting events. Volunteers will gain skills such as mentoring and team leadership.
 - **Team Westminster Active:** this sports volunteering service will replace 'A City Transformed through Sport.' Sports volunteers will be placed in sports clubs across the city and supported to gain coaching qualifications.
- 3.3. Groundwork London already has strong local partnerships in place, which combined with ambitious plans for the future and an innovative use of technology makes them the ideal organisation to help more people into volunteering. Groundwork London's local community work includes:
- **Westminster Youth Timebank** - Groundwork has been recently funded for the third time to run this programme. Young people have volunteered around the borough, e.g., at local community centres, hospices, and parks to help reduce isolation in older people.
 - **Westminster Community Gardening** - this has been running successfully since 2010, funded by City West Homes and Westminster Adult Education. It has encouraged local communities to get involved with estate improvements on its green spaces.
 - **Westminster Open Spaces Strategy** - Groundwork are currently undertaking a refresher of the Westminster Open Spaces Strategy for Westminster City Council, including surveying the spaces, community engagement and production of the strategy.
 - **Recycling awareness campaign** - in 2008, Groundwork delivered a recycling awareness campaign, covering seven estates in South Westminster. The project resulted in an increase in recycling tonnage and enhanced awareness of the benefits for recycling.

Team Westminster Volunteering Strategy Implementation

- 3.4. The Westminster Time Credits Programme will play a key part in achieving the objectives of the Strategy. The contract started 1st April 2015 and it will run for 3 years with a possible extension period of up to 2 years. Spice have begun to mobilise the Time Credits programme in South Westminster. The first step is to recruit a local facilitator who will be directly responsible for running the service, signing up local partners and liaising with officers and local Councillors where appropriate. It is expected that the first Westminster Time Credits will be available for members of the public to earn by July 2015.

4. Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries

Hanging Baskets

- 4.1. The 'summer planting' hanging baskets have now all been installed – a total of 2,500 baskets citywide. The baskets incorporate pink and red ivy leaf geraniums, pink and orange begonias, and blue and purple surfinia around a central planting of lemon yellow bidens aurea. This selection of plants can thrive even in shaded locations and does not produce any seed heads or retain dead flowers thereby reducing maintenance requirements. Excess foliage will be cut back throughout the summer to ensure parking and highways signs etc. are not obscured. The baskets will remain in place until October/November when they will be swapped for the winter evergreen shrub mix.

St George's Square Gardens

- 4.2. The refurbishment of the fountain and surrounding planting has now been completed.

Causton Street Play Area

- 4.3. The new interactive children's splash area has now opened and is proving highly popular.

Giant Chess Sets

- 4.4. Have been reintroduced in Norfolk Square and Victoria Embankment Gardens

Deckchairs

- 4.5. The Victoria and Northbank Business Improvement Districts have again sponsored deckchairs in Lower Grosvenor Gardens and Victoria Embankment Gardens for the summer period.