

# Children, Sports and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Report of:** Cllr David Harvey

**Portfolio:** Cabinet Member for Sports and Leisure

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## 1. Sports and Leisure

### **The Active Queens Park Project - the redevelopment of Moberly & Jubilee Sports Centres**

- 1.1 Positive progress is being made with the Active Queens Park project. Works have commenced on site for both Moberly and Jubilee phase 1 and demolition works have been undertaken on time. The contractor is progressing communications activities to ensure local residents and stakeholders are informed.
- 1.2 The works to deliver the new Moberly Centre are planned to complete in February 2018. The existing Jubilee Centre will remain open until the new facility at Moberly is opened to the public.

### **Seymour and Queen Mother Re-Developments**

- 1.3 'Outline Business Cases' are being developed by Officers in Growth, Planning and Housing as part of the development of initial feasibility studies for these sites.
- 1.4 A key objective for any re-development project will be to deliver an enhanced sports and leisure offer for the local community.
- 1.5 A full public consultation programme will be implemented to ensure stakeholders are engaged as part of the development of proposals for these sites.

### **Outdoor Learning- the Sayers Croft Centre**

- 1.6 A new 'Forest School' outreach programme has been successfully launched at Paddington Recreation Ground. The externally funded programme provides an opportunity for local school children to experience a range of activities and learning opportunities in biodiversity and outdoor education. The programme will be delivered by qualified staff based at the Sayers Croft Centre.

- 1.7 Works to improve one of the residential blocks have been commissioned in response to feedback from customers. The works will ensure that en-suite accommodation is provided within the block (which is the only accommodation block not to provide these facilities).

#### **Leisure Centre contract re-let**

- 1.8 Officers are progressing with the procurement of the contract which is due to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016. It is a 10 year management contract and includes the management of the Council's entire sports and leisure centre portfolio which includes the following sites:

- Paddington Recreation Ground
- Queen Mother Sports Centre
- Marshall Street Leisure Centre
- Seymour Leisure Centre
- The Porchester Centre, Spa and Hall
- Little Venice Sports Centre
- The new Moberly Sports Centre
- The new Jubilee Sports Centre

- 1.9 Following a thorough evaluation process, Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) has been awarded the new leisure management contract. SLM was created in 1987 and is an established leisure management contractor. They currently manage over 110 leisure and cultural facilities across the UK and have partnership contracts with over 35 local authorities including Brent, Harrow, Ealing, Sutton and Southwark.

- 1.10 The new contract will not only realise significant savings for the Council to ensure that current and future Medium Term Planning commitments can be delivered but also ensure that investment in wider sports development can be maintained.

- 1.11 As part of the process, a number of new improvements have been secured which include:

- £9m capital investment in a number of improvements to facilities and new equipment across the centres
- 130 hours of 'free to access' sport and physical activities per week through the ActiveCommunities and Neighbourhood Sports Club programme
- Exercise referral as part of the base specification for the service
- New financial support for local talented athletes
- Improved marketing and communications activities
- Improved opportunities to promote local employment including new apprenticeships

- 1.12 The mobilisation of the new contract is progressing. All GLL staff who currently work in the Council's eight centres will be protected through the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) or TUPE regulations and will automatically transfer to the new contractor in July.

#### **Christ Church Bentinck and Greenhouse Sports**

- 1.13 Officers continue to work closely with Greenhouse Sports regarding the redevelopment of their new facility on the corner of Cosway and Bell St (Church St Ward).

- 1.14 The new facility will be used for table tennis, judo, multi sports and events and will also provide a variety of community based activities.

- 1.15 Planning permission for the new facility has now been approved and Officers continue to provide support to the club with funding submissions and operational considerations.

### **Westminster Mile**

- 1.16 The 2016 Vitality Westminster Mile will take place on 29<sup>th</sup> May and planning is progressing well. This flagship event is now in its fourth year and officers are involved in planning for the event alongside the London Marathon (LM) Team.
- 1.17 A new website has been launched based on the same platform as LMs other websites and events. As part of these improvements, a new registration system will be introduced which should improve the customer experience.
- 1.18 Over 4,500 registrations have been achieved to date and attendance numbers are on track to exceed the 2015 levels. The event will include a variety of races which will involve families, adult and elite races. Over 60 ex-Olympians will participate.

## **2 Libraries and Culture**

### **Victoria Library**

- 2.1 In 2009, Land Securities was granted planning permission for the Nova development, to include a new library expected by 2018. The new application was determined in January and the s106 has now been amended so that the community space will be delivered to the City Council at a peppercorn rent. All other terms remain the same.

### **Westminster Reference Library**

- 1.2 Damage to the library vaults below St Martin's Street was discovered just before Easter. Remedial work resulted in the closure of the street and the building from noon on 30<sup>th</sup> March until 10.00am on 4 April. Surveyors have yet to confirm whether the cause of the damage is related to the major development on the Odeon/ Radisson site opposite or to sewer works previously carried out by Thames Water. Westminster City Council Corporate Property is investigating.

### **Marylebone Library**

- 2.2 I continue to be in regular contact with Ward Members to brief them about the Marylebone Library development.

## **3 Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries**

### **Park Events**

- 3.1 On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April Councillor Robert Davis unveiled the Charlie Chaplin statue which has been reinstated back to Leicester Square.

### **Rough Sleeping**

- 3.2 The number of rough sleepers using the parks and gardens has continued to increase to a significant number with warmer weather conditions, mainly in Lisson Gardens, Cavendish Square, Hanover Square, Whitehall Gardens and Marble Arch. The parks team are working

with a number of agencies to try to resolve the problems and offer support to the homeless groups.

### **Pathways Deep Cleaning**

- 3.3 The grounds maintenance contractor has carried out a significant programme of 'deep clean' pressure washing to improve the surface of pathways mainly in St Johns Wood Church Grounds and the Victoria Embankment Gardens.

### **Play areas**

- 3.4 Several play areas were refurbished during the relatively quiet winter period. New play equipment has been installed in Violet Hill, Causton Street, Paddington Street, Broadley Street, Lisson Gardens and Westbourne Green.

### **Re-turfing**

- 3.5 The large shrub area on the boundary of Paddington Street South has been reduced by 70% to improve maintenance and reduce unsociable behaviour. The area has been turfed and will be a valuable addition for park users.
- 3.6 Mount Street Gardens has also had a large area of a poor quality grass re-turfed.
- 3.7 The dog area at St Georges Square Gardens has had 50% of the grass area re-turfed when this area is established then the remaining 50% will be re-turfed.
- 3.8 The large shrub area on the boundary of Westbourne Green adjacent to the Harrow Road has been removed; the new seeded grass area has germinated with great success. All of the recently planted new hedging has also successfully become established.

## **4 Volunteering and Voluntary Sector**

### **Do-It local website**

- 4.1 The Council commissioned Do-It to build a local version of the national Do-It website (Do-It Westminster) which went live mid-February 2016 (<https://do-it.westminster.gov.uk/>).
- 4.2 The Do-It Westminster site is now running successfully and is being used. As at 30<sup>th</sup> March, there were 464 live opportunities in Westminster. In the week prior to that, 162 people registered their interest, 30 opportunities and 124 organisations were added. Overall, 672 hours have now been logged by volunteers for opportunities in Westminster.

### **Volunteer Outreach & Development**

- 4.3 The Council has commissioned One Westminster to provide a targeted outreach and development service designed (amongst other things) to provide initial support and advice for those organisations or individuals who need help using the Do-It Westminster website.
- 4.4 One Westminster is also responsible for promoting the website and held a formal launch event to their work on 16<sup>th</sup> March at the Paddington Arts Centre. The event was very well attended (by 48 different voluntary organisations and community groups). It successfully promoted the Do-It Team Westminster website, One Westminster's role in promoting volunteering amongst harder to reach groups and the Team Westminster Flagship programme, with presentations from Groundwork and Time Credits to promote their work

around volunteering. There was also a workshop to discuss how organisations can develop suitable volunteering opportunities for the hard to reach groups.

- 4.5 One Westminster also delivered a total of 33 ad-hoc or regular outreach sessions in the first quarter. 30 volunteers attended the March monthly “Introduction to Volunteering Workshop” run in partnership with Westminster Adult Education Service. A high proportion of attendees were unemployed and new to volunteering but homeless clients and people with mental health issues also attended the course. They also have bi-weekly drop services at it Chapel Street office to work with clients with higher support needs.

### **Volunteering at the Council**

- 4.6 Volunteering is a key pledge in City for All and as part of our volunteering strategy to ‘lead by example’, Council staff are encouraged to volunteer for up to 16 hours per year. The most recent volunteering session involved 46 staff members from the Policy, Performance & Communications department who took part in a half day volunteering session from 1-6 April 2016 on a variety of projects from running employability workshops to painting/decorating a community centre as well as gardening project at any home for the elderly. Opportunities were provided by Time & Talents which is a service run by One Westminster on an annual subscription.
- 4.7 We are looking at ways to encourage more staff to get involved in further volunteering & the internal communications team will increase publicity through the Wire and plan to showcase tailored opportunities via a drop-in stand (in a prominent location during peak periods) at City Hall for the summer and in the run up to Christmas.

## **5 Community Engagement**

### **Open Forum Website**

- 5.1 Response to the new Open Forum website continues to be positive. Over 3,000 people have now visited the Open Forum website and nearly 900 people have taken part in a consultation or left a comment.
- 5.2 The website has been used to help gather views on the Baker Street Two-way proposals, cycling, mental health and the City Save scheme.
- 5.3 We are in discussions with individual services, and CityWestHomes, about how we can use the Open Forum approach to help engage with the public.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Lucy Hoyte x5729 [lhoyte@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:lhoyte@westminster.gov.uk)**