

# Carlisle City Council

## Report to People Scrutiny Panel

### Report details

Meeting Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023  
Portfolio: Culture, Leisure and Heritage  
Key Decision: No  
Policy and Budget Framework: No  
Public / Private: Public

Title: Leisure Contract update  
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive  
Report Number: CS 06/23

### Purpose / Summary:

The report is designed to give the panel an update on the Leisure Contract with GLL, the Sands Centre redevelopment, future plans for the events centre and how leisure services might develop following the transition to Cumberland.

### Recommendations:

The panel are asked to provide feedback on the Sands Centre redevelopment and to provide suggestions to Cumberland Council on how leisure services may best meet the needs of Cumberland residents and visitors.

### Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	23 02 23
Council:	

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Council entered into a new Leisure Contract in 2017 with Greenwich Leisure Limited, who trade as Better. The contract is for 15 years.
- 1.2. Integral to the new Leisure contract was the upgrading of the Sands Centre to form a single site for dry and wet leisure alongside the existing events programme.
- 1.3. The new contract provided an immediate reduction in the leisure contract subsidy which then becomes a payment to the Council later on the 15-year term.

## **2. Sands Centre Redevelopment**

2.1 The Sands Centre Redevelopment (SCR) project is a £27m capital investment into facilities to provide health and wellbeing opportunities for our residents. A key part of the project is the colocation of NHS physiotherapy facilities. The project has provided:

- Main Pool Hall (25m x 17m, 8 lane) & Learner Pool with a moveable floor (20m x 8m) with Pool Store, Timing Room, and a Spectator Seating Gallery.
- Four Court Sports Hall with a Spectator Gallery.
- 120 station Fitness Suite with an office.
- Two Dance Studios.
- Spinning Studio.
- Wet and Dry Change facilities.
- Changing Places Facility.
- Dementia friendly design.
- NHS Physiotherapy Suite.
- First Aid.
- General Meeting Room/Office (10 persons).
- Reception Desk with offices.
- Vending facilities.
- Staff facilities (including Kitchen & Social).
- Environmental measurers to support more efficient use of energy and photovoltaic panels and combined heat and power energy generation.

2.2 The capital project contract with Wates Construction Ltd (WCL) was signed in November 2020 and work on the main project commenced on site in January 2021.

2.3 As part of the project the existing leisure and events services were able to function (Covid restrictions withstanding). This was enabled through the existing events

centre with temporary portacabins with reception, box office, bar and toilets, and temporary leisure facilities provided in the former Newman School.

2.4 The SCR opened for events on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2022 and for leisure on 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2022.

2.5 The construction contract was formally completed (“Practical Completion”) on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022. The contractor remains on site carrying out “snagging” and there is a 12 month defects period for them to return and deal with any issues that arise.

### **3. GLL contract update**

3.1 GLL to present an update on other sites and work within the contract including the work of the Community Team.

### **4. Sands Events Centre**

4.1 The SCR project also provided benefits to the existing Events space through:

- Provision of a new entrance, circulation space, bars, and toilets for customers
- Linking events centre to the new Combined Power and Heat plant
- Linking the events centre to the new Building Management System

4.2 The events centre is still due for further improvements:

- Re-instatement and reconfiguration of the Back of House area to make up for the loss of changing space when the emergency exits were altered to allow for the new build
- Upgrading of lighting to LEDs
- Replacement of retractable seating

4.3 Officers are scoping out a “Phase 2” for the Sands Centre to focus on the events centre.

### **5. The future of Leisure Services in Cumberland**

5.1 There are currently three separate leisure contracts in the Cumberland area; Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland. The Allerdale and Copeland contracts are both due to finish in March 2024 and an assessment of the procurement/extension options are taking place through the LGR process. Carlisle’s leisure contract runs through to 2032. All three contracts are with GLL.

5.2 Leisure service have longstanding links to providing opportunities for improvements of residents' health and wellbeing, which is a core theme to the Cumberland Plan, and therefore leisure services will be a key delivering mechanism.

5.3 Sport England have recently published a document on the [Future of Public Sector Leisure](#) (appendix 3) and a meeting of Cumberland stakeholders has been arranged in conjunction with the Cumberland Portfolio Holder on how this work can influence leisure provision across Cumberland.

## **6. Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities**

6.1 This project makes a significant contribution to the priority to *“Further develop sports, arts and cultural facilities to support the health and wellbeing of our residents”*.

### **Contact details:**

Contact Officer: Luke Leathers

Ext: 7481

### **Appendices attached to report:**

- GLL presentations/updates
- Sport England report; Future of Public Sector leisure

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

### **Corporate Implications:**

Legal -

Property Services -

Finance -

Equality -

Information Governance-

# CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL REPORT 2022

## HEADLINES

- Carlisle Pools and the Sands at Newman closed permanently on 14<sup>th</sup> November. (Carlisle Pools building handed back formally on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023).
- The Sands opened to leisure customers on 14<sup>th</sup> November and was formally opened on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022.
- The new centre has already attracted new clubs and activities including Feet4football, Boccia, Border Badminton, Wheelchair, Pickleball and Eden Badminton).
- Memberships have reached 2,331 throughout the city. An increase of 628 since December 2021.
- Swimming School reached 1,920 throughout the city. An increase of 196 since December 2021.
- The Sands Panto Aladdin hosted over 20,000 customers over the seasonal period.
- The 2022 HAF Programme has delivered funded sessions to 760 children.
- In 2022 the Community Team delivered to 24 primary schools across North Cumbria (Cumberland). Throughout the year we delivered to over 3,000 unique children.
- Partnering with local run / triathlon event specialists, Sport in Action, we delivered The Great Cumbrian Run on 2<sup>nd</sup> October with over 800 taking part in the event, the highest since Covid.



Sands External View



1<sup>st</sup> Event 30<sup>th</sup> Sept -Liverpool Legends

## THE SANDS CENTRE OPENING

### TIMELINE

- 30<sup>th</sup> Sept – “Take Over” Implemented to allow GLL to offer event only operations.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Oct – October Half Term. – Full service maintained at existing Centres
- 31<sup>st</sup> Oct – Reduced opening hours at both Pools and Newman for Core Hours, to enable essential training / building prep.

- 12<sup>th</sup> Nov – (Saturday) Newman closed at 12pm the Pools closed at 12:30 and remain closed on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>
- 14<sup>th</sup> Nov - New Centre Opens full service normal operating hours. 6:30am – 10pm
- 16<sup>th</sup> Nov – Formal opening by Chris Boardman (MBE) and local dignitaries.

	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
<b>Centre</b>																							
New Sands Centre																							
Sands @ Newman																							
Carlisle Pools																							

- Sectional and Practical Completion was achieved on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## CHALLENGES

- Dealing with changes to the timeline with minimal notice.
- Juggling part openings of the centre from 30<sup>th</sup> Sept whilst still working in a multi agency site.
- Taking due consideration of demobilisation of Newman and Carlisle Pools and coping with competing demands from partners.
- Taking due consideration of other external works and how that affects staff and customer (car park access).
- Maintaining the service whilst trying to mobilise and train staff.
- Communicating to customers once the timeline was assured.
- Introducing a new catering and bars provision.
- Ensuring continuing snags and defects are still prioritised post opening.
- Coping with the removal (or change) of items previously included in the project, but not completed.
- Developing and improving areas now the centre is in use.
- Focus on creating a stable programme whilst also developing new activities (but that's good)!

## NEXT STEPS (COUNCIL AND GLL)

- Project Team to complete consequential improvement works in the “old” building.
- Returning the Backstage to previous provision / upgrade to modern standards in line with current and future event needs.
- Consideration of the life span of the main hall roof whilst considering developments.
- Replace events seating.
- Decoration of the main hall roof.
- Consideration of the flooring of the main hall.
- Establishing further works required to bring the events space up to modern standards.

## MORE THAN A JOB

- The Sands Events Department welcomed 5 new members of the team in 2022, including an entirely new technical team, all recruited locally from other providers.
- Sue Baty runner up for Cumbria women of the year.
- Additional training to bring the team up the speed with new activities at the Sands Centre included:
  - Gymnastics Rise Training
  - ALT Pool View Training
  - Technogym Equipment Training
  - Site specific building training
  - STA Award training
- The Sands team Recruited 2 new Fitness Instructors , 1 with GP ref and one with Level 3 providing customers with increased level of knowledge and supervision within the gym environment.
- We have developed links with Carlisle College to enable their Entry 3 Skills for Independence and work course. This has been linked to the additional work via Events where we offer opportunities for their students to get real world experience in the industry with employment and work experience opportunities.
- The Sands Centre hosted the Regional Manager's conference on 24<sup>th</sup> November. The majority of General Managers from the North region were in attendance along with members of the GLL Directorate Team.

## A BETTER WAY OF DOING BUSINESS — FINANCIAL REVIEW 2022

- We continue to work with the Council to re-profile the financial support in line with the delayed Sands opening.
- Memberships have reached 2,331 throughout the city. An increase of 628 since December 2021.
- Swimming School reached 1,920 throughout the city. An increase of 196 since December 2021.
- The Sands Panto Aladdin hosted over 20,000 customers over the seasonal period.
- As part of the Sands development we have invested substantially into new internal and external Digital signage, located on the perimeter of the West Elevation, Main Entrance within the Street and within the Pool Hall.
- The Events programme was substantially affected in 2022 due to works to link the two building between January to March 2022 and additional project works in Summer 2022. That being said we have hosted . We also successfully presented 137 events in 2022 and welcomed over 90,000 people to events at The Sands Centre with 68 of those events happening after Take Over on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Highlights of the year include: Billionaire Boy, Paul Weller, Jason Manford, Alan Carr, Diversity, The Shires, Tony Hadley, Oti Mabuse, Russel Kane, Collabro, Aladdin, Sarah Millican, Rob Beckett, The Proclaimers, Blood Brothers and 10CC.





## PARTNER OF CHOICE

- The closure of Newman and Carlisle Pools was scheduled to provide as little impact to customers as possible. This meant that Staff members worked across their old centre and received training at the new centre over a two week period. This enabled both Newman and Carlisle pools to stay open through peak times and maintain key delivery programmes such as group exercise classes, jnr dry courses, the learn to swim programme and school swimming right up until the closure date.
- We have appointed a new catering Concessionary Partner , Hickory, based in Edinburgh. Initial feedback has been very positive with the restaurant and outside catering element of the business still to be developed early in 2023.
- The new centre has already attracted new clubs including Feet4football, Boccia, Border Badminton, Wheelchair Pickleball and Eden Badminton).
- Recognising the staff resource focus required to open the new Sands Centre, we partnered with local run / triathlon event specialists, Sport in Action, to deliver The Great Cumbrian Run on 2nd October with over 800 taking part in the event, the highest since Covid.. We think they offered an excellent addition to the delivery team.
- Catering tender was completed in July 2022 with new catering operator Hickory being selected for food and hospitality.
- The Sheepmount Grounds Team have got the whole estate up to a good specification. Pitches have a good amount of grass on for this time of year despite the heavy usage and latter wet weather.  
Harraby:
- Winter 3g use programme has been similar to previous years at around 80 % occupancy. Youth league usage is up on last year due to younger teams entering the leagues and the increase in Girls football continues. December usage was massively affected due to weather conditions .
- Harraby Sports Hall is now the main base for Carlisle Netball League. Fixtures are played from October through to December. Other strong users are the Rollerderby. This team is expanding so hopefully we can accommodate more sessions in the New Year.
- Cycle track- still heavily underused. We still have the main booking of Carlisle Cycling association who have around 40-50 participants every Tuesday. December usage was low due to weather conditions. We are in discussion with local partners (CCC, Active Cumbria)how this can be increased with their involvement in 2023.





# CUSTOMERS & COMMUNITIES AT OUR HEART

## Community Team – (see also the Annual Community Team Review)

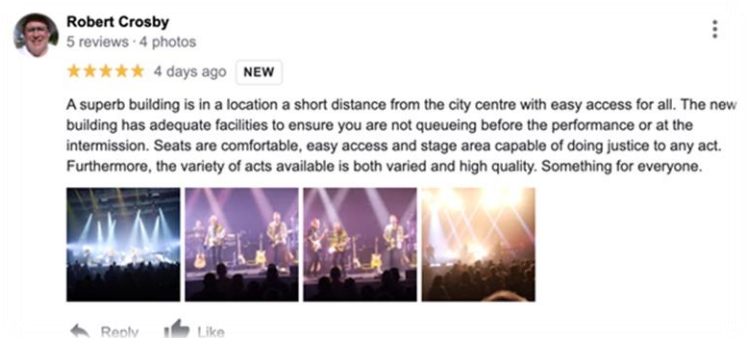
- The Community Team lost a key member of Staff with Guy Thompson moving over to the County Council, but Michael Barnes has picked up the solo lead of the team. The team is made up of 3 contracted and 3 flexible staff all working on average 25hrs each.
- In 2022 GLL applied for the government funding once again for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. This funding enables each local authority in England to coordinate free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities to targeted children.
- The programme covered the Easter, Summer and Winter / Christmas Holidays. The team were successful in their bid and were able to deliver 4 days at Easter, 24 days in the summer and 4 days during the winter festive period. These were delivered at Trinity Leisure Centre and the final one of the year at the new Sands Centre facility.
- Out of the 800 spaces we had available as part of HAF funding, 760 spaces were booked by eligible children. In addition 150 spaces were booked and paid for places so the team ended catering to 910 children.
- In 2022 we delivered to 24 primary schools across Cumbria, these are located in the following areas: Carlisle – 18 Schools, Copeland – 3 Schools, Allerdale – 3 Schools. Throughout the year we delivered to over 3,000 unique children which is an increase of approximately 300 children on 2021 figures.
- The team continue to work in partnership with Rural Parish Councils to deliver a programme called “Rural Summer Fun Time” catering to children aged 5 – 12 years old. In 2022 the team delivered 25 sessions across 8 parishes. Out of a total of 850 spaces, 810 were filled.
- Our temporary facilities at Newman also helped create strong links with Carlisle College which resulted in us utilising their sports hall in the evenings and weekends. As part of the college partnership we introduced college gym / PE sessions under supervision with our FI's and the college tutors.
- On opening the new centre we managed to engage with the Cumbrian Wheelchair Basketball Club (Mohawks) to move the club to The Sands and agreed for national tournaments to be held at The Sands
- Fitness class programme grew from 30 classes a week to over 60 classes. A contributor of the growth of the health and fitness membership.
- Mini Athletics courses continued to perform well at Sheepmount, introduced originally to help meet demand and provide feeder participants to local clubs. We introduced athletic morning camps during the first Monday of Half Term with an additional 10 participants. We will reintroduce these sessions in February Half Term alongside with the Saturday morning club.

## Other Activities

- The football provision saw very little disruption from September until the big freeze in December. The provision of We have in place: 5 x Junior 9v9 pitch season tickets, 17 x junior 11v11 season tickets, 3 adult 11v11 season tickets and Sheepmount is the main home base for the City Sunday league which had 60 matches played from September to December (equivalent to 6 season

tickets). We also accommodate other teams as temporary pitches if possible such as Carlisle City reserves, Aspatria, Wigton, and Cotehill.

- The school football programme has been relatively quiet in comparison to pre covid and will be a focus of growth in the New Year.
- We held the Junior Cross Country Championship which has 12 different primary schools participate in and we also hosted the Secondary School's Cross Country trials event for those who succeed to qualify for the regionals.
- Athletics has ticked over. We have seen an increase in independent users rather than club base which is compensated for club member reduction.
- We have started to build a warm up area for athletes in the outdoor store at the Sheepmount. It is near completion and should be open for use by the end of the month. This is adding great value to our athletics community members.



## TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

- The Sands at Newman hosted the NHS Physio team before moving into the new centre which led to strengthening our relationship while supporting them with facility management. Shortly after opening the New Sands Centre we created a bespoke arrangements with the MSK department to allow access to the Gym and Studio so that escape pain classes could be run.
- We are in discussions with the NHS team to introduce new classes to further improve our joint approach to enable effective exits routes from those patients leaving the MSK Clinical programme.
- We have partnered with People First as point of referral for Patient on Referral Memberships.
- GLLs Better Health Strategy focuses on a life course approach linked to the aims and objectives of Local authority, Public Health and NHS aims and objectives across the life course starting well, living well, aging well. Our centre programmes will reflect the life course approach with a stronger focus on starting well
- In 2023 we will increase our involvement in the Local Integrated Care System (ICS) with actions agreed with the Local Authority accordingly to ensure we meet the local system demand
- Colocation and partnership work with the NHS will be a feature across the larger centres where this can be agreed (in place at the Sands and Kendal Leisure Centres, discussing future opportunities at Penrith, Workington and Whitehaven.

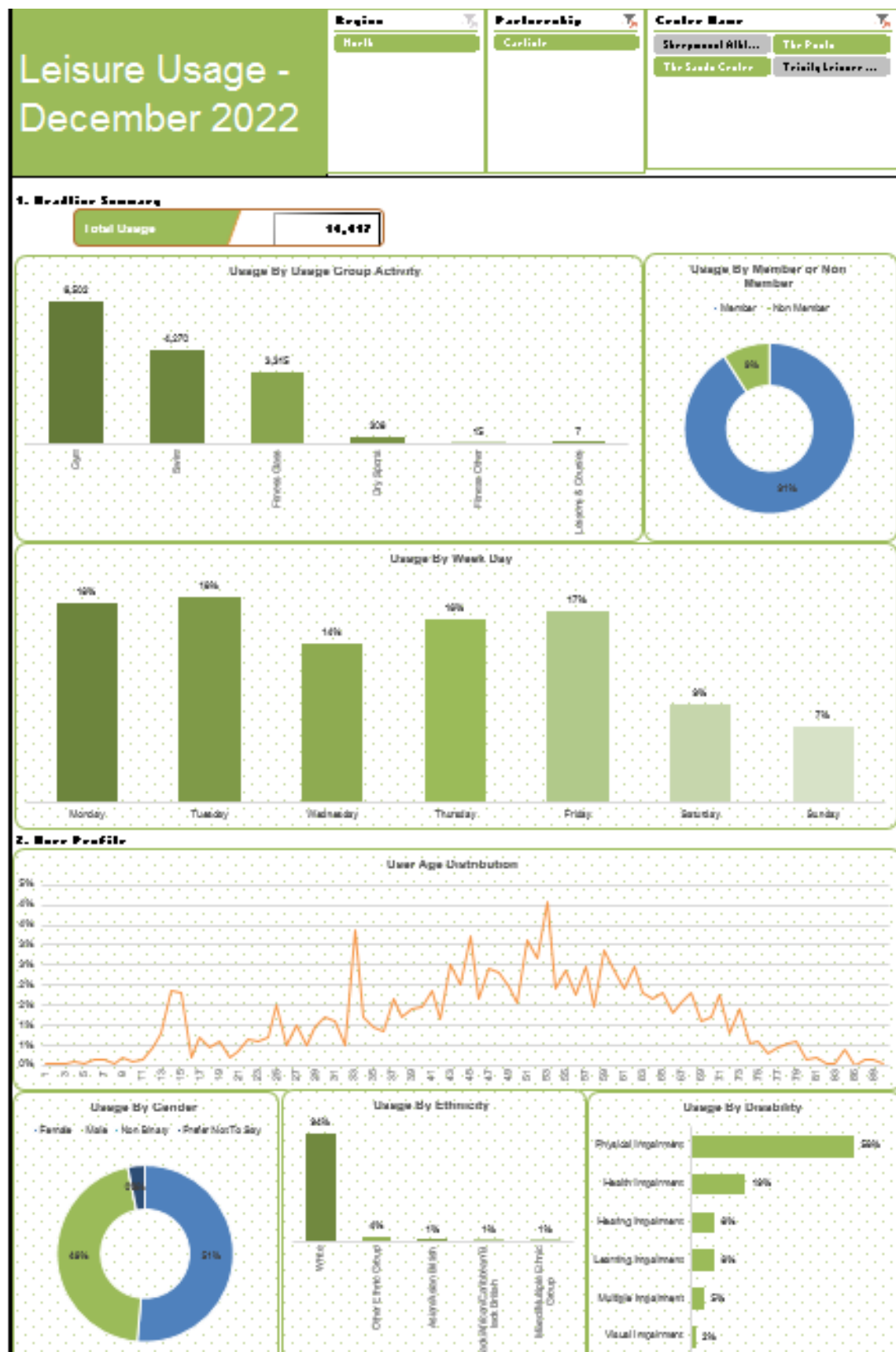
- Colocation of Health services and the creation of our centres as Health and Wellbeing hubs will bring Health services closer to where people live and work whilst improving access through increased opening hours etc.
- Upskilling of our Better Health Teams will allow for Public Health screening support services for example Point of care testing and early cancer screening. Training is being delivered to our teams now.
- Mapping of GLL existing services is happening now both locally and nationally including what we offer in terms of library services and children's services. These will also become part of the wider colocation agenda
- Better Health for Me programme which includes Healthwise GP referral and links with social prescribing services will now be a standard feature in the GLL offer across all centres.
- See the outline diagram of how we see Local Authority Leisure services becoming part of the wider system – Aligning Health with Economic Regrowth. Jointly working with the NHS, Local Authority and the Business sector to develop a Local Social Value Charter & Network to tackle inequalities.

## RESPECTING THE PLANET

- Over the last year GLL has invested in a number of spend to save initiatives to help reduce our carbon footprint.
- Staff have undergone energy specific training and are focused on reducing consumption by 5 % year on year.
- A full review of the Sands systems has led to a number of efficiency savings in normal operation (lighting levels, AHU controls).
- The current utility crisis is expected to increase Carlisle facilities utility costs by £300k, without further spend to save initiatives or operational savings. Without the Sands investment this would have been much higher.
- We have made huge strides towards cutting down on our reliance on paper stock with a huge push in 2022 to digital ticketing only for all our venues with over 70 % of all tickets now delivered digitally.
- We have also worked hand in hand with our Catering partners to ensure we are using compostable or recyclable containers only and cutting down on unnecessary usage of plastic.



## EXAMPLE USAGE REPORTS



# January Leisure Usage

Region	Partnership	Usage Centre Name	Usage Type
North	Carlisle	The Greenwich Cen...	Fitness Group Exercise
		The Hive Leisure C...	Fitness Gym
		The Plumstead Cen...	Fitness Other
		The Pools	Lessons & Courses
		The Queen's Diamo...	Pools Swimming
		The Sands Centre	Sports Dry Sports
		The Wave Centre	

## Section 1: Headline Summary

Total Usage

20,142

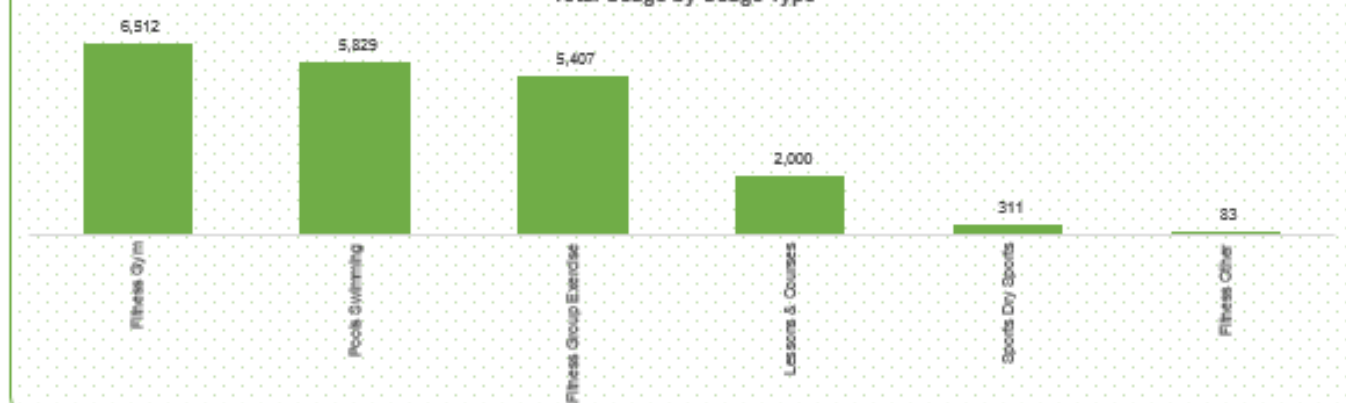
Total Unique Users

2,837

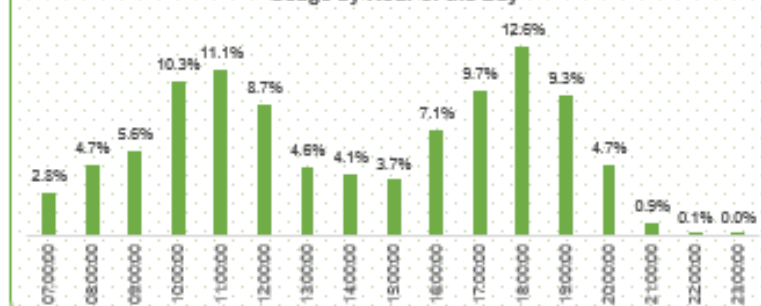
Average Usage

7.1

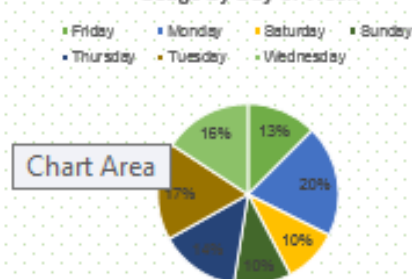
Total Usage by Usage Type



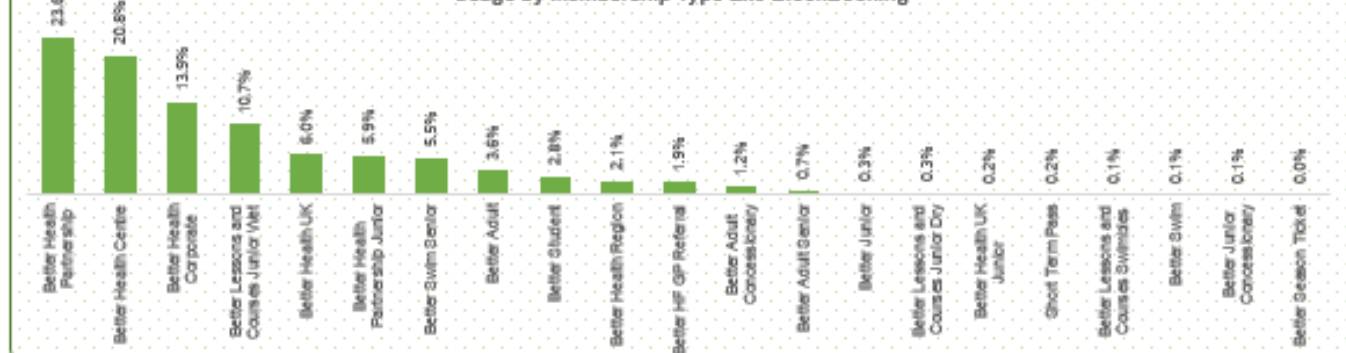
Usage by Hour of the Day



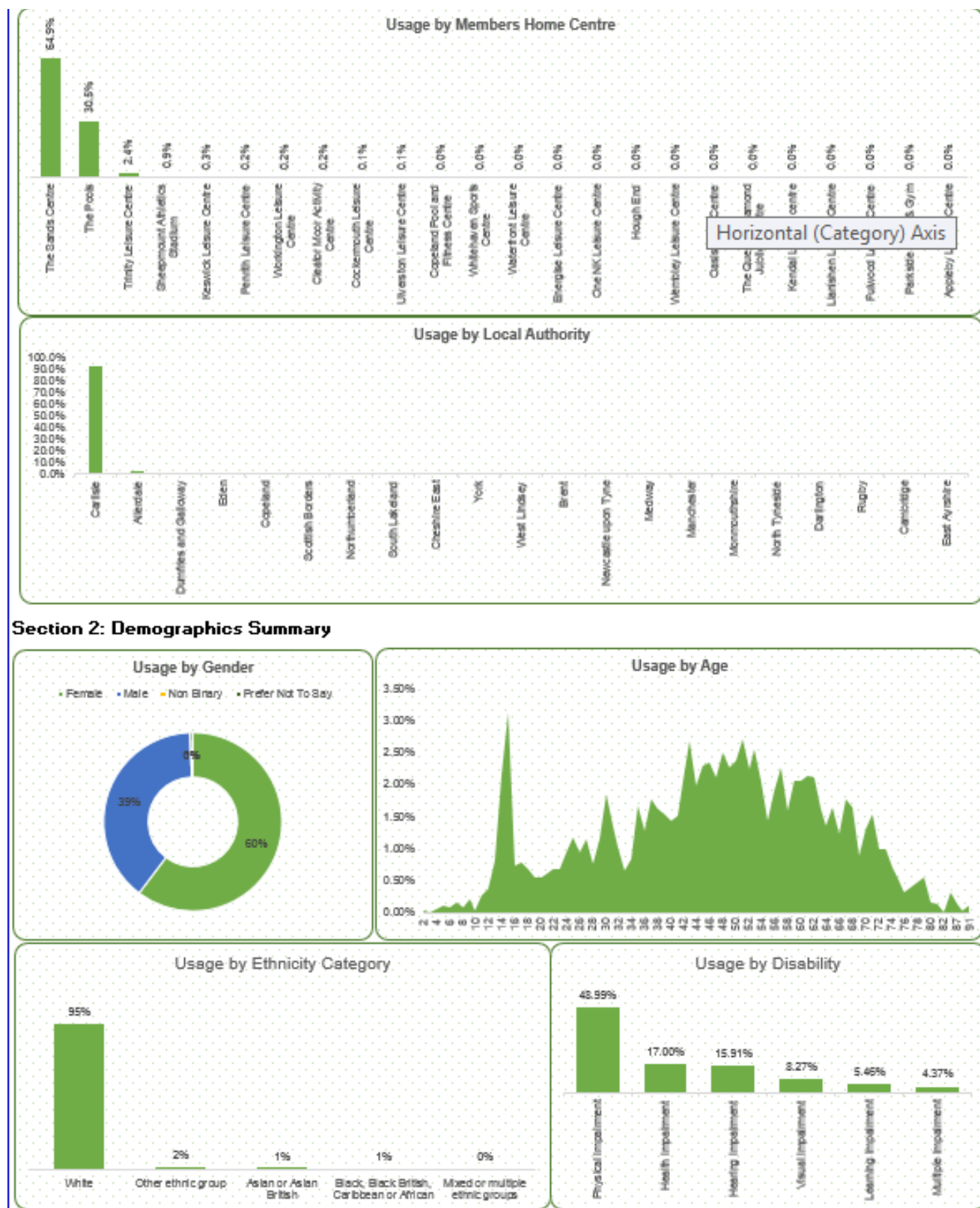
Usage by Day of Week



Usage by Membership Type Excl BlockBooking







## TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

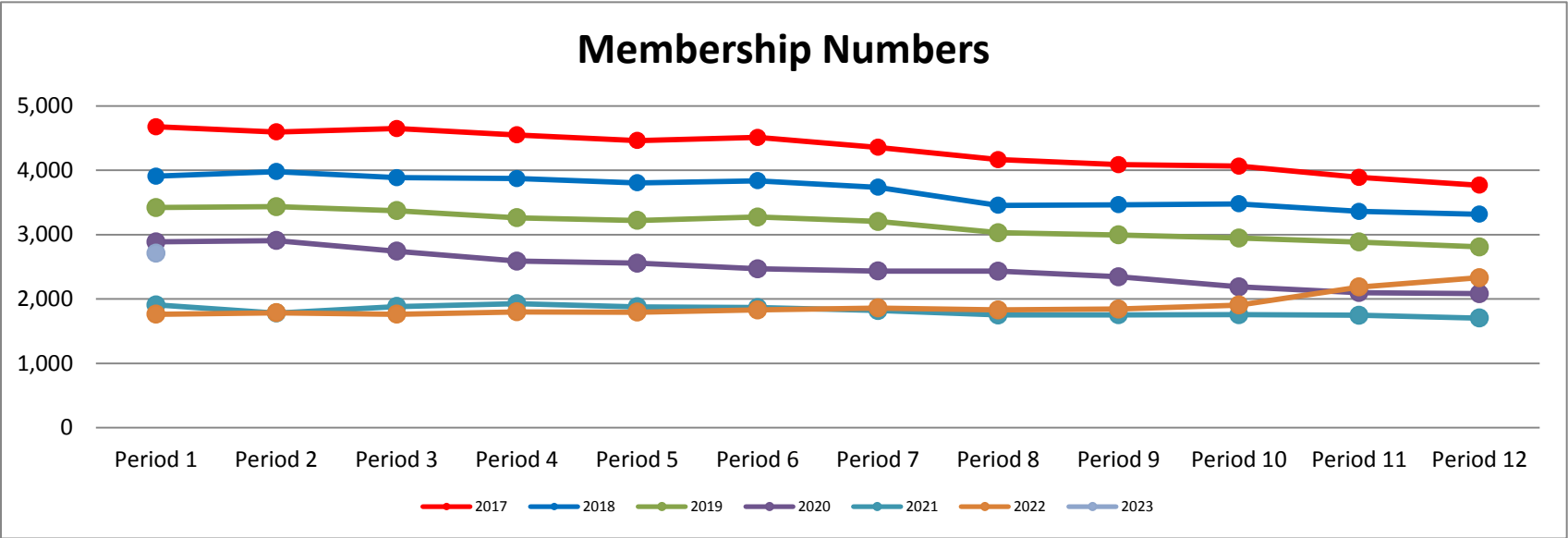
### Reframing Local Authority Leisure 2023

Align Health with Economic Growth and place Local Authority Leisure Trusts within it





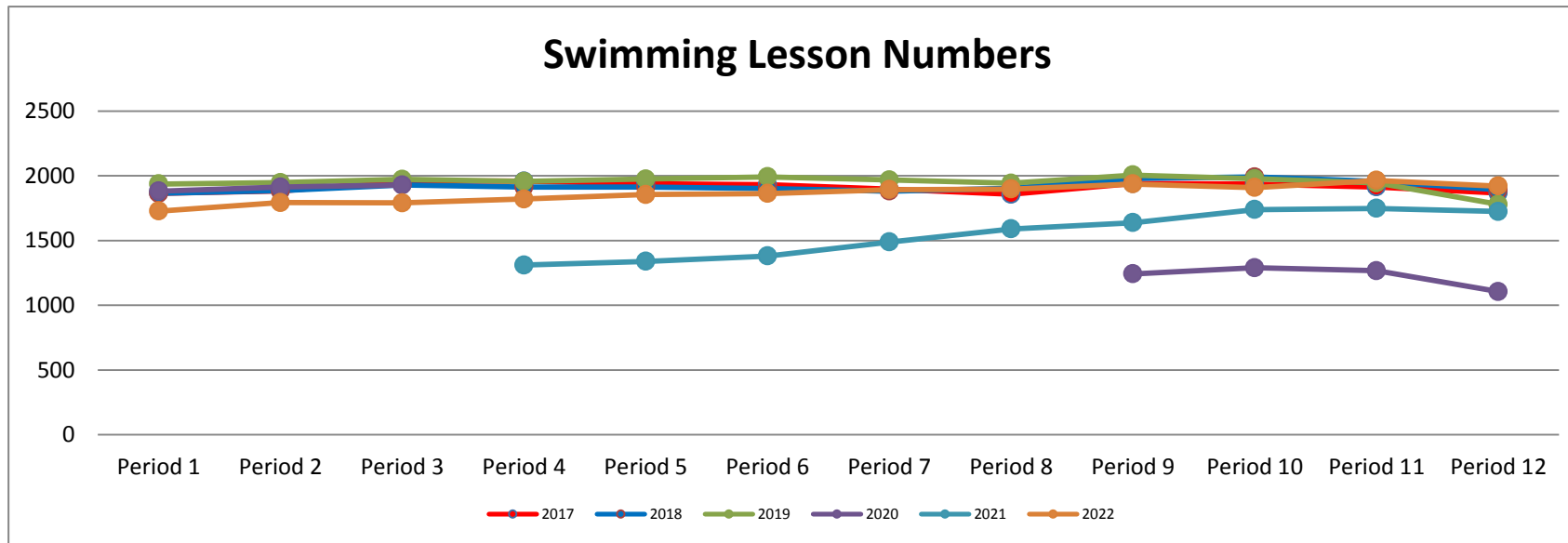
CITY WIDE MEMBERSHIP



Membership Numbers

Year	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8	Period 9	Period 10	Period 11	Period 12
2017	4,676	4,596	4,648	4,550	4,461	4,510	4,355	4,164	4,087	4,065	3,890	3,768
2018	3,907	3,979	3,885	3,872	3,805	3,836	3,735	3,454	3,464	3,477	3,361	3,318
2019	3,421	3,435	3,372	3,261	3,221	3,273	3,205	3,030	2,996	2,948	2,884	2,808
2020	2,888	2,907	2,742	2,588	2,555	2,469	2,435	2,432	2,345	2,189	2,098	2,082
2021	1,909	1,781	1,882	1,927	1,879	1,867	1,820	1,751	1,753	1,756	1,748	1,703
2022	1,764	1,787	1,762	1,801	1,796	1,829	1,860	1,830	1,844	1,905	2,185	2,331
2023	2,709											

## CITY WIDE SWIMMING LESSONS



**Swimming Lesson Numbers**

Year	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8	Period 9	Period 10	Period 11	Period 12
2017	1865	1884	1959	1959	1939	1931	1896	1857	1940	1936	1914	1866
2018	1864	1886	1930	1914	1914	1902	1881	1905	1980	1991	1957	1892
2019	1937	1947	1972	1956	1974	1992	1968	1942	2006	1977	1945	1779
2020	1881	1913	1928						1242	1289	1266	1106
2021				1310	1339	1380	1488	1589	1638	1739	1748	1724
2022	1727	1793	1791	1821	1855	1863	1893	1898	1937	1909	1964	1920

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2022

## INTRODUCTION

GLL's contract to operate Carlisle City Council's leisure centres commenced in December 2017 for the duration of 15 years. As part of this contract, GLL recognises that delivering leisure activities in a rural region is not all about the delivery within leisure centres but also to consider how the outlining areas can benefit. The centres provide an excellent hub in which successful outreach programmes can be developed and grown throughout the region, thus enabling those participants without transport the opportunity to take part in instructor led sessions.

Within the Carlisle Partnership GLL have developed a dedicated Community Development Team which deliver activity sessions within Community Centres, provide a Primary School delivery programme based within the schools themselves and provide activities programmes within the leisure centres. This helps extend the outreach of quality leisure activities throughout the region.

## MORE THAN A JOB — TEAM OVERVIEW

During 2022 13 members of staff delivered/coached on a variety of programmes, events, schemes of work and activity days during curriculum term times, holiday periods, evening sessions and at weekends.

The team consists of a number of contracted and flexible workers all of which are very committed, well organised and love working in various settings in Carlisle and North Cumbria.

Towards the end of 2022 we lost a valuable member of the Management Team, Guy Thompson. He had worked within our coaching set up for many years in coaching and development roles. His knowledge and understanding will be missed but the team has continued to grow and has had a very successful year. Guy has started a new role within Cumbria County Council working as the Holiday and Activities Food Programme (HAF) Lead. We do still keep in touch as we work alongside the Council as we participant in the HAF scheme as an organisation. Michael Barnes, who has worked alongside Guy for a number of years, is now the Lead Staff member in co-ordinating the Community Team Programme across the North of the County.

Looking ahead we hope to recruit additional team members to increase the number of sessions we are able to offer across the new local authority area, particularly in Copeland.

# CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY AT OUR HEART

## OUTREACH HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

### COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Community Team continue to work in partnership with local Community Centres to assist them with their delivery of their holiday schemes. Each programme is designed to help meet the specific requests of each Community Centre's needs. For example:

- **Morton Community Centre:** In 2022 the team have delivered programmes during Easter Hols, Queens Jubilee Day, Summer Hols, and Winter Hols. These were delivered as a HAF (Healthy Activity Programme/Funded) and through normal delivered sessions. The agreement is that GLL provide coaches and resources to deliver their programme which includes; games, sports and arts & crafts. The holiday camps will operate from 10am – 3pm and target those aged 5 to 11. The majority of sessions were at capacity attracting 24 children per day. In 2023 GLL will continue to support Morton Community Centre in a HAF and non HAF capacity.
- **Currock Community Centre:** - The team delivered the Summer Holiday Programme in Currock Community Centre. This took place over 4 days working with over 40 children.
- In 2023 GLL aim to work alongside more Community Centres targeting in areas we have not yet been able to develop.

### COMMUNITY CENTRES RURAL PARISHES – RURAL SUMMER FUN TIME

The team continue to work in partnership with Rural Parish Councils to deliver a programme called "Rural Summer Fun Time" catering to children aged 5 – 12 years old. In 2022 the team delivered 25 sessions across 8 parishes. This was an increase on last year of 3 sessions and 1 additional Parish (Dalston).

Out of a total of 850 spaces, 810 were filled.

- Beaumont – 6 days of delivery
- Houghton – 3 days of delivery
- Crosby on Eden – 3 days of delivery
- Rockcliffe- 2 Days of delivery
- Walton & Lees Hill – 4 days of delivery
- Scaleby – 3 days of delivery
- Castle Carrock – 1 day of delivery
- Dalston – 3 days of delivery.



The team have been delivering the programme for a few years now and it is a highlight of our summer programme. The Parish Councils cover the cost of delivery with GLL providing coaches, resources and organising all bookings. On conclusion of the programme each Parish is provided with a report reviewing the performance of their programme. This partnership that has grown over the last 7 years, the team is the preferred delivery partner because we can provide experienced and reliable coaches.

During the school holiday periods, the team coached the community based Summer Splash Scheme. Sporting activities were delivered at Brampton Community Fields, Botcherby's Melbourne Park, Belah Community Centre and at Morton Chances Park.

## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)



## WINTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME

### TRINITY LEISURE CENTRE

Our Christmas event is designed for a wide variety of ages, parents are welcome, but this is a family only day. Also there is a special offer for children, who can enjoy a special Christmas meal, including a drink and a hot range of party food for physical activity. All children will be entered in a raffle for a special prize.

**Monday 18th - Thursday 23rd December**  
**10am - 12pm**  
**Adm: 3.15**  
**Child: 1.50**  
**Free school children**

For more details please contact us for more information.  
 Tel: 01472 541111 ext 300 or email: [trinity.leisure@nhs.uk](mailto:trinity.leisure@nhs.uk)  
 Or visit our website: [www.southsea.gov.uk](http://www.southsea.gov.uk)

 [southsealeisure community](https://www.facebook.com/southsealeisure)

Out of the 800 spaces we had available as part of HAF funding, 760 spaces were booked by eligible children. In addition 150 spaces were booked and paid for places so the team ended catering to 910 children.

## SCHOOL DELIVERY PROGRAMME

**BETTER SCHOOLS  
DELIVERY PROGRAMME**

Find out more at  
**better.org.uk**

**BETTER**

- Carlisle – 18 Schools
- Copeland – 3 Schools
- Allerdale – 3 Schools

Throughout the year we delivered to over 3,000 unique children which is an increase of approximately 300 children on 2021 figures.



The team deliver a wide range of activities design to interest and inspire the widest range of children. Activities include:

Football  
Lacrosse  
Hockey  
Athletics  
Netball

Tri Golf  
Volleyball  
Badminton  
Handball  
Dodgeball

TAG Rugby  
Fencing  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Fun & Games  
Gymnastics & Dance

Tennis,  
Basketball  
Multi Skills (Early Moves)  
Multi Skills (Basic Moves)  
General Fitness/Circuits.

## LEISURE CENTRE HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

### TRINITY LEISURE CENTRE & THE SANDS LEISURE CENTRE

The team deliver centre based activity programmes during the school holidays. The multi-sport holiday camp caters to children aged 5-12. The programme operated between 9:00am – 3:00pm and consisted of a wide range of activities – in line with the curriculum programme delivered in a fun and relaxed environment.

Due to attaining the HAF funding the make up of the programme has evolved with many of the participants making use of the funded places. This funding has directly helped a number of children to be able to attend these sessions. The programmes operate during the educational holiday periods of, February, May/June, October Half Terms, and Easter, Summer and Winter School main holidays periods. Not including HAF participants (760) we had over 560 paid customers over the 12 months.



### SHEEPMOUNT ATHLETICS STADIUM

The team delivered 4 Monday morning Athletics Sessions from 9:00am-13:00pm during the first Monday in each Holiday period.

In total 64 children attended the 4 mornings. We intend to deliver similar programmes in 2023. One is already planned for the February Half Term.



## CENTRE BASED PROGRAMMES

### SCHOOL ACTIVITY DAYS

The team also programme and deliver the School Activity Day programme. Historically this was always based at The Sands Centre but again in 2022 due to the Sands redevelopment the decision was made to keep the programme to The Sheepmount. Activity Days are designed in such a way that schools book in advance to visit a centre and take part in a range of sports and games, delivered by centre-based staff. Schools select what sports they would like delivered; because 2022 was a Commonwealth year many schools requested Athletic based events. Several of the schools who attended used the activity day as their school sport day.



In 2022 we delivered 23 activity days to 14 different primary schools and over 1,500 children



these were split as follows:

- Carlisle – 7
- Allerdale – 5
- Eden – 1
- Barrow – 1

### MINI ATHLETICS

The team continue to deliver Mini Athletics sessions that are based at The Sheepmount Athletics Stadium for children aged 5 to 11.

The sessions run over two days, during Monday and Wednesday evening's from 5:30pm – 6:30pm. In 2022 we have introduced this additional Monday session as we felt two sessions gave children another option.

Numbers were good and had increased from the previous year. Children who attend are introduced to a variety of athletics disciplines with a view to children progressing to club sessions for one of the two Athletics clubs that hire the Sheepmount. Some even ended up coming to two sessions a week.





In 2022 we delivered 55 Mini Athletics sessions averaging 20/25 children per session.

Mini Athletics will relaunch in 2023 after February Half Term.

### **SATURDAY SPORTS CLUB**

Saturday Sports Club has continued from 2021. Initially numbers were lower than hoped so the team looked at ways of increasing participation with success.

We delivered 23 clubs when the facility was available. Over 200 children attended.





# **Future of public sector leisure**

December 2022

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# 1. Foreword



**Public leisure facilities and services have a vital and unique role to play in our sport and**

**activity ecosystem because of their value to the people who use them most.**

For decades, they have fed the next generation's love of sport and being active, supported those with health conditions through good days and bad, and connected us all to our communities in a friendly and local space.

However, months after the pandemic restrictions were lifted, participation levels at public leisure facilities have only partially recovered. Facilities have also had to battle rising energy costs, chemical shortages and challenges in maintaining the right levels of recruitment and retention of the workforce. However, the sector has come together to meet these challenges and, where possible, turn them into opportunities.

For Sport England, the public leisure sector also has a central role to play in the delivery of our Uniting the Movement strategy, as it is a core element of each of the five Big Issues we have identified as having the greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity.

The pandemic has accelerated the appetite for local authorities to look at leisure services and re-examine the purpose of their provision, assess whether they are delivering local community outcomes and consider their alignment with broader strategic outcomes, particularly health.

In the lead-up to this report, we supported and led workshops with a range of sector stakeholders to create a shared vision for the medium term. That group concluded that change is needed, and that collectively the focus should be on repositioning the traditional offer of public leisure into an active wellbeing service, doing more to create healthier and more active communities. The sector has already seen good examples of the shift in approach across the country but also recognises the need for national momentum.



The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the current landscape and summarise the conversations we have had with all our relevant partners in this space and our wider work engaging in this sector. This evidence has helped us map out the following shared medium-term goals for the public leisure sector:

- To transition from a traditional leisure service to one which is far more focused on active wellbeing.
- To move to a model that focuses on added value and supporting the delivery of key local priorities, and with that enable the delivery of wider government priorities around Levelling Up, net zero and health inequalities.

The report highlights the extensive support and resources deployed by a range of stakeholders that are already helping to evolve the service. It then discusses how these tools can deliver change on the ground and the importance of stakeholder collaboration in making progress.

The report also builds on 'Unlocking the Potential', another important report recently published by the National Sector Partners Group, which calls for reform and government action to support the growth and development of the sector.

We know the sector is in a fragile place and Sport England is committed to bringing together key stakeholders to promote increased partnership working that will provide cohesion and coordination of resources, with groups such as the Local Government Physical Activity Partnership already providing significant value in this space.

By providing this common agenda, we will help the sector move forward in a sustainable way with a service that meets the needs of modern users. Mutual accountability across partners will provide the culture required to safeguard the future of public leisure and provide it with a renewed sense of purpose.

Although Sport England is not a direct funder of public leisure services, it works closely with the sector in areas such as capital and revenue funding, by offering resources and guidance, and through investment in partners who rely on these spaces to deliver.

This report is the result of an excellent collaborative approach and forms the basis of a robust plan to unite these vital parts of our ecosystem. It sets out the first steps that must be taken to shift the sector's approach, and we look forward to continuing to support this important work.

**Tim Hollingsworth OBE**

Chief executive

## 2. Impact of Covid-19

**For many people sport and physical activity is not part of everyday life. Fewer than two-thirds of adults and less than 50% of children and young people meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for physical activity.**

Even more so now than before the pandemic, opportunities to get involved in sport and activity – and reap the rewards of being active – depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance and postcode.

The public leisure sector plays a critical role in the delivery of sport and leisure across England. It provides vital community assets, such as swimming pools, sports halls and pitches, that are part of the fabric of our villages, towns and cities. They provide widely accessible opportunities for local communities to get involved in sport and physical activity, meeting the needs of the people in the places where they live.





## Size of the public leisure sector

Before the Covid-19 pandemic there were:



**2,727**

leisure centres in the UK

Which includes:



**33%**

of all swimming pools



**20%**

of all health and fitness facilities



**13%**

of all sports halls<sup>1</sup>.



**17%**

of these were owned and operated by **61 local authorities**.



**83%**

were run by **84 different external operators**, with different contracts in place with their respective **267 local authorities**.



**10**

largest providers deliver services to **168 local authorities**, which make up **55% of all local authorities with leisure responsibilities**. The majority are not-for-profit organisations who operate on small margins and low liquidity ratios.



**68%**

of sports halls and swimming pools were **built more than 20 years ago**. Although more than **£150m was invested in the opening of new public leisure and swimming facilities in 2018/19<sup>2</sup>**, with another **£200m worth of assets in construction or planning** there remains significant levels of ageing public leisure stock.



**72%**

of all school swimming lessons took place in a public leisure facility, which included both the statutory learn to swim programme and the water safety curriculum across primary schools. Swimming club usage was also predominately based from public leisure facilities.

Covid-19 had a significant impact on the public leisure sector. Lockdown closures and significant social distancing measures stretched the sector almost to breaking point, threatening many providers with service reduction, or indeed closure.

<sup>1</sup> Securing the Future of Public Sport and Leisure Services. A Report on Behalf of APSE, the LGA and CLOA; 2021. Accessed January 5, 2022. [https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/assets/File/Securing the future of public sport and leisure services Summary Report NEW\(1\).pdf](https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/assets/File/Securing%20the%20future%20of%20public%20sport%20and%20leisure%20services%20Summary%20Report%20NEW(1).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Mintel Report on Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools (September 2019)



## Impact on participation

Between April 2019 and January 2020, Sport England's Moving Communities service recorded the following engagement levels from a sample (793 providers) of all leisure centres across England:



**8.9**

million participants



**165**

million unique visits

However, participation between April 2021 and January 2022 showed the following reduction post pandemic across the same 793 leisure centres in England:



**5.8**

million participants,  
a reduction of 35%



**112**

million unique visits,  
a reduction of 32%

Even at its peak in October 2021, throughput was still lower than the monthly average in 2019 (13.2 million in October 2021 vs an average of 17.8 million in 2019).

- Recovery of participation levels across different activities has been imbalanced and has understandably leant towards those activities which deliver a faster return to pre-pandemic revenue levels.

However, the demographic profile of those participants remained relatively stable, with more public leisure facility users being female and from less deprived communities.



**53%**

were female



**29%**

were under 16



**8%**

were over 65



**17%**

were from the most deprived parts of the country (IMD 1&2).

Importantly, the 35% reduction in participation between April 2021 and January 2022 has been significant in terms of the wider social value experienced by individuals and communities..

Research commissioned by the Government and conducted by the [Sheffield Hallam University Sport Industry Research Group](#) confirms that being physically active has a positive effect on physical and mental wellbeing, subjective wellbeing, social and community development and individual development.

A total of £549 million of social value was generated by participants undertaking consistent activity at leisure facilities reporting to Moving Communities between April 2021 and January 2022<sup>3</sup>; this is significantly less than the £910 million recorded by the same centres for the same period pre-pandemic.

3 Sport England (2021) Moving Communities – based on data from 642 leisure centres

The research shows that this social value is attributable across the outcome areas shown in the table below:

Category	Apr–Jan 19/20 (Pre Covid–19)	Apr–Jan 21/22 (Post Covid–19)
Improved health	£153,570,440	£85,819,133
Improved subject wellbeing	£514,919,164	£314,741,639
Individual development	£7,156,249	£4,796,128
Community and social development	£235,163,770	£143,779,102

These lower participation rates were due in part to capacity restrictions imposed by social distancing measures, but also to lower consumer confidence in using these facilities post pandemic. However, there is also a positive correlation between the years since the last refurbishment of a site and its recovery, which should be taken into consideration.

Those sites refurbished in the last 10 years are seeing a throughput recovery of 68% compared with a recovery of 62% for those last refurbished 20 or more years ago, suggesting that investment in newer facilities creates spaces that have greater appeal, increase user confidence levels and provide a more relevant offer to meet current customer demands.



## Impact on financial performance

The pandemic also highlighted the financial fragility of the sector.

Virtually all of its income (94%) comes from customer fees and charges relating to the use of facilities, so Covid-19 closures followed by a reduced use of reopened leisure centres inevitably had a significant financial impact on operators. Data collected in order to administer the National Leisure Recovery Fund suggests that Covid-19 created a £505 million gap between income and expenditure for leisure operators<sup>4</sup>, with the subsequent 'Plan B' restrictions in December 2021 and January 2022 increasing this gap by £30 million.

Three significant parties reacted to help close this funding gap.

1. Local authorities invested a further £160 million to support the sector. On average this extra support has covered 40% of the additional costs of operating the service, although the average figure hides considerable variation between different authorities, with 38% of the support covering less than 25% of the deficit faced by operators and 18% covering more than 75%.
2. The National Leisure Recovery Fund provided by DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) and DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, formerly Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) invested £100 million to support the reopening of leisure services in 266 local authorities after the pandemic. This support provided vital stimulus to the market, reducing the deficit and boosting confidence while also encouraging the reopening of services that deliver the greatest community benefit.
3. Leisure operators drew on £171 million of reserves to ensure that facilities and services could remain operational.

The major contributions outlined above, alongside further relief measures such as the Government's furlough scheme, helped to avert significant damage to the sector and enabled the additional costs of maintaining public assets and reopening services to be met.

However, these funding sources were finite and have now been virtually exhausted, and the sector is emerging from the pandemic in a particularly fragile state. At best, financial pressures risk limiting the ability of stakeholders to deliver against their commitments; at worst they may result in the permanent closure of some services or facilities.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this does not include the 19% of local authorities that deliver leisure services 'in-house'. Income for these services will have also fallen at a similar scale, although this will have been largely mitigated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

# 3. Why does the public leisure facility sector matter?

**Public leisure facilities give local people access to vital community facilities and tackle inequalities in an affordable and accessible way. Put simply, the sector fulfils a vital public service that the free market is not incentivised to offer.**

Public leisure facilities, when designed well, provide an essential part of the ‘fabric of place’ and an important enabler for local communities to not just be physically active but to access a suite of co-located, broader public, social and health services – maximising the impact and value for money of service delivery and forming a core part of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept<sup>5</sup> that is gaining growing interest.

There will be a growing importance for local health collaboration, and the introduction of the integrated care systems (ICSs) to reduce health inequalities and maximise prevention is vital. As part of this, the role of social prescribing has increased, which highlights the role of other sectors in delivering services that promote wellbeing.

The profile and prominence that has been given to health and wellbeing will also be integral to positioning a service that is relevant to individuals. From the Government’s guidance around amounts of exercise that should be taken in lockdown to broader discussions on workplace wellbeing, this focus will have important implications for customer demand and how public leisure facilities can support the wider population’s health and wellbeing.

The decision-making process which drives consumer behaviour is complex and rarely driven by one single issue, but rather by the interplay between factors such as value, price, health and convenience. Issues such as sustainability and climate change are drivers of behaviour, but factors such as price and value are likely to remain the strongest drivers of consumers’ capabilities and motivations to take part in physical activity.

Marrying environmental considerations with these practical factors will be vital to the emergence and adoption of green initiatives. The public leisure sector has the potential to remedy a wide range of societal issues, making it uniquely placed to connect into and work alongside a range of other sectors to drive and influence positive action.

<sup>5</sup> See [The 20-minute neighbourhood – Town and Country Planning Association \(tcpa.org.uk\)](https://www.tcpa.org.uk)

## Why does the public leisure facility sector matter to wider agendas?

- Activity taking place in public leisure facilities makes a significant contribution to the participation theme of the DCMS's Single Departmental Plan<sup>6</sup>, as it plays a critical role in "[increasing] participation in, engagement with and access to sport and physical activity". It also plays – through its focus on ensuring equality of access and a broad geographical spread of provision – an important role in the delivery of 'priority outcome 4'<sup>7</sup>: "[enhancing] the cohesiveness of our communities and nations including through major events and ceremonial occasions, and reduc[ing] inequalities of participation in society, particularly among young people."
- The public leisure facility sector also positively contributes towards the Government's overarching agenda to 'build back better' in response to Covid-19, not only by protecting jobs and supporting local economic activity, productivity and social value, but through the activities it delivers as a key component of the Covid-19 response in terms of enabling and supporting policy interventions focused on healthy and active lifestyles<sup>8</sup>.
- Public leisure facilities provide a place-based infrastructure through which services and support can be delivered across the most deprived communities in England to support the Levelling Up agenda. In addition, health inequalities often underpin the deprivation that affects people (including future generations) and places. Sport and physical activity also have a vital role in addressing a broad range of physical and mental conditions, and in doing so positively contributing to individual health and wellbeing by helping to deliver local health and care priorities. There is also a growing body of evidence that the quality of physical infrastructure – of which sport and leisure facilities are a key part – is a significant factor in determining a local community's prosperity, sense of belonging and pride of place<sup>9</sup>. The public leisure sector can therefore make a positive contribution to four of the six capitals (physical, human, social and institutional) that the Levelling Up White Paper has identified as important factors to address in order to reduce inequalities and restore local pride<sup>10</sup>.

6 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-digital-culture-media-and-sport-single-departmental-plan/dcms-single-departmental-plan-2019>

7 See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport-outcome-delivery-plan/dcms-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-to-2022>

8 See Professor Chris Whitty calls for physical activity to play key role in nation's recovery and future | ukactive

9 See '[Left behind' areas missing out on community facilities and places to meet – Local Trust](#)

10 See [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1052706/Levelling\\_Up\\_WP\\_HRES.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052706/Levelling_Up_WP_HRES.pdf)



- Public sector leisure facilities and services help the NHS to focus on reducing health inequalities, and maximise prevention<sup>11</sup> by enabling people to stay healthy while also moderating demand on the NHS. More generally, the public leisure sector has begun to demonstrate the critical preventative role it can play across a range of health conditions including diabetes, cancer and mental wellbeing. Physical activity can also support secondary prevention for people with different acute and complex needs. And most importantly, it can play a role in rehabilitation and recovery, which further alleviates pressures across the NHS.
- For Sport England, the public leisure facility sector also has a central role to play in the delivery of its Uniting the Movement strategy, as it is a core element of each of the five Big Issues. These issues have been identified by Sport England as those where the greatest potential lies for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity: recover and reinvent; connecting communities; positive experiences for children and young people; connecting with physical health and wellbeing; and active environments.



<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/>

## 4. A shared vision for the public leisure facility sector

**This report is being published at a critical time. The pandemic has driven the public leisure facility sector to a crossroads.**

While the immediate pressure created by the Covid-19 pandemic has been alleviated through a concerted, sector-wide effort, the reduced revenues resulting from the plateau in participation levels along with increasing expenditure around utilities and staffing have put pressure on both sides of the sector's profit and loss statements. The resulting fragility of the sector increases the risk of service reductions and closures.

This has stimulated important questions about what the scale, nature and approach should be to make future service delivery better placed to meet the needs of communities. Multiple stakeholders have come together to debate this and agreed that change is required.

There is consensus that competition for contracts needs to focus on outcomes rather than costs to create a sustainable model that achieves the sector's full potential to deliver economic and social value to the local economy.





## Why does the public leisure facility sector matter locally?

This report shares our common agenda, one that will provide a direction of travel for the sector to move forwards.

**// We will evolve the sector, transitioning from traditional leisure services into an active wellbeing service.**

This vision is built on four inter-related foundations:



The commitments coalesce around seven broad themes:



There is already strong stakeholder support to enable change. This report compiles commitments from a range of stakeholders within the sector as to how they are, and will be, working to build these foundations in order to facilitate and foster the change. This report will support local communities and, in turn, help deliver against key government priorities.

Mobilising and realising this ambition in the context of rising energy prices, plateauing participation and recovery levels, the impact of rising payroll and supply chain costs and ongoing financial constraints across local authorities is a serious challenge.

A balance will need to be struck between a concerted effort to enact this change and enabling the required investment and resources to move beyond short-term financial pressures to a more sustainable footing. Innovation of the scale required will therefore need collaboration at both a national and local government level, as well as from the myriad of stakeholders working across the sector to assess how investment could be stimulated. Sport England will undertake work in this area.

However, this new approach will develop new products and services that, coupled with investment in a physical estate that delivers against the dual goals of energy efficiency and creating community hubs that enable wider service provision, have the potential to ensure that the sector is more resilient and effective than ever before. These new products and services will also make a significantly positive contribution to the Government's economic, societal and environmental priorities.

The sector has articulated its shared ambition. Now is the time to turn this ambition into action.



## Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care

Given the existing alignment of priorities and desired outcomes between leisure, physical health, mental health and social care, there is a clear opportunity to establish a new model that helps to formalise this relationship. This could be defined by elements such as:

- Co-location – with refurbished or new leisure centres providing community hubs that combine traditional leisure services with other health and social care services and facilities. This is vital in areas of deprivation where a lack of access to services can significantly reduce activity levels.
- Consolidation of the sector's role as deliverer of preventative activity – by ensuring that people are fit and healthy enough to participate fully in work. Those that are physically active have lower levels of absenteeism, greater efficiency, are less likely to suffer from stress or depression and are more productive<sup>12</sup>.



- Social prescribing and supporting local health and care priorities – with leisure services acting as a key delivery partner supporting general practice, pharmacies, multi-disciplinary teams, hospital discharge teams, allied health professionals, fire services, police, job centres, social care services, housing associations and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations<sup>13</sup> in the delivery of accessible and sustainable activities that support health and wellbeing. Of particular importance will be the role that prescribing leisure and physical activity can play in supporting the treatment of people with more complex needs.

To create an effective active wellbeing service, it will be vital that provision is not limited to physical assets and facilities, and that users are closely involved in the design and planning of both programmes and services.

To be truly effective, the service will need to play a key role in creating active environments within a place. This starts with dedicated sport and physical activity facilities, but it also includes utilising local assets (such as parks and green space, community centres and villages that, while not the focus of this report, are vital) as well as the wider built environment, with a particular focus on encouraging active travel.

An effective active wellbeing service will therefore provide front-line provision that will directly narrow health inequalities between places – particularly when combined with a truly place-based agenda.

<sup>12</sup> Nuffield white paper report commissioned by Sport England in 2018

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>



The introduction of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) in April 2021 has provided an ideal opportunity to progress this placed-based conversation at pace. ICSs have a remit to act as “partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services and to plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups”<sup>14</sup>. A public leisure sector that is fit for the 21st century will not only be ‘at the table’ for these local conversations but will play a key role in delivery and providing activities and services that help to reduce health inequalities and positively contribute to the Levelling Up agenda and the NHS Core20PLUS5 approach to reducing health inequalities<sup>15</sup>.

The District Council Network’s [Fit for the Future report](#) evidences the health economic value of leisure and wellbeing services, and the further impact they could potentially have on reducing health inequalities. The results show that improving physical activity, especially among the most deprived, should lead to a reduction in diseases (thereby saving the healthcare system the cost that would have been incurred in treating the diseases), improved quality of life and the associated economic returns (improved health means people can be more productive for longer), and a reduction in health inequalities (by reducing the gap in healthy life expectancy between the lower and higher social economic groups). It also estimates the potential reduction in NHS expenditure as a result. The report summarises that if the leisure sector can leverage its existing infrastructure and services to develop the skills and communication tools needed to engage inactive members of their communities, they can be the catalysts for this reduction of inequalities.



<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/>

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/core20plus5/>

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care system, working in partnership with GM Active, used a community leisure centre-based approach to deliver Prehab4Cancer, the first UK system-wide, multi-modal prehabilitation and recovery programme for cancer patients. It was designed to improve post-operative outcomes for patients across Greater Manchester (GM).

The evaluation shows that P4C is benefitting patients, providers, and systems:

- Patients are optimised prior to surgery and have long-lasting health benefits following post-operative rehabilitation. This reduces demands on healthcare services throughout the cancer pathway.
- Quality of life and physical activity improvements indicate long-term behaviour change and health improvement, with patients taking control of their care.
- Improvements are seen in both ward and critical care bed day usage, resulting in improved elective care capacity and effective use of resources. Additional positive impacts on 30- and 90-day re-admission and emergency department admissions have been observed.
- Efficiency improvements to pathways are visible which support delivery of elective care and cancer recovery plans, and achievement of cancer performance standards.
- Evidence that supports improved survival in patients who complete prehab. The colorectal patients who completed prehab were the largest cohort.

Headline results include:

- 1.5-day reduction in length of hospital stay per prehab patient
- 0.4-day reduction in critical care length of stay per prehab patient
- 550 ward bed days 'released'
- 146 critical care bed days 'released'
- Bed days 'released' from 1,000 colorectal prehab patients enable 179 additional patients to access timely surgical pathways.

The evaluation confirmed that the cost savings associated with the early release of beds per prehab patient cover the costs involved in setting up and delivering P4C for a year. Therefore, the programme has been recommissioned given it is sustainable on a recurrent basis.



## Strong sector leadership

The introduction of a new approach that brings forward new thinking, products and services will require proactive, skilled and diverse leadership at both local and national levels. The scale and nature of many of the challenges that sit at the heart of the Levelling Up agenda cannot and will not be fixed through traditional approaches and delivery models. Therefore, there is a clear need to develop leaders within the public leisure sector, broaden their diversity and hone the skills of those already playing a leadership role. This can be achieved through building on the work of the current local leadership programme with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the wider work of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA), particularly through its Chartered Managers process. The CIMSPA process awards a badge of excellence to those who have demonstrated a real commitment and contribution to the sport and physical activity sector and have the leadership skills to drive and create positive change.

Leaders will need to invest time and energy in developing new skills and capabilities in the critical areas below to achieve the change and transformation we seek:

- data, insight and learning
- the practical application of innovation and digital to improve the experience of getting active
- translating good governance processes into delivery models and focusing attention on specific aspects of leadership such as diversity
- inclusion and putting distributed leadership concepts into practice.

Public leisure sector leadership will need to focus on two core areas initially:

1. Addressing the fragmented nature of the leisure sector. Fragmentation has limited the sector's ability to unite behind a common purpose, and hindered the sharing of best practice and innovation. Leaders need to address the transactional approach (particularly in the bidding for new contracts) which has stimulated a 'race to the bottom' and a focus on cost saving as opposed to added value and the delivery of outcomes. Creating and agreeing a common purpose for public sector leisure will help enable a move to a more relationship-led approach, which will in turn enable synergies, prevent agendas being overridden by other objectives, foster innovation and ensure that best practice is shared and implemented across the country – ultimately delivering greater value and improved quality of provision. This requires coordinated and committed cross-sector collaboration and shared leadership.
2. Building strong working relationships across multiple stakeholders. If the sector is to play a critical place-leadership role and create an active wellbeing service then leaders will need to effectively engage with multiple stakeholders, including public, private and third sector. This engagement will require leaders to: articulate a compelling vision at a local level; be clear about the costs and benefits, the provision in its entirety and the case for investment; persuade stakeholders to change existing behaviours and models; and show resilience, as change will take time. This will also require a commitment from stakeholders across the sector to help deliver change and a consistent measurement framework to understand that impact against local needs.

## Provision is place-based

The services of the leisure sector have predominately been provided via physical assets so it already has a widespread geographical footprint with a number of core community facilities. These facilities are spread over rural, urban and coastal areas, providing a variety of opportunities and challenges. The thinking behind this new model must therefore be based on this footprint and driven by two priorities.

The first is ensuring that health and wellbeing services are at the heart of local communities, and that the facilities and services provided contribute to fulfilling the needs of those communities. Any new investment in infrastructure must be considered and planned in this context to ensure the right interventions are delivered in each community. Recent work by the Town and Country Planning Association on “20-minute neighbourhoods”<sup>16</sup> and how to create “healthier, active, prosperous communities” is an important starting point. This work sees “community health and wellbeing facilities” as a core feature of the 20-minute neighbourhood where the objective is to create “places that include most of the things that most people need for their everyday lives within a short and pleasant walk or cycle ride”. It is an approach that is seen to deliver a range of economic, environmental, health and social benefits.

The opportunity therefore is to align both planned and new investment in leisure facilities to this broader agenda. To make leisure centres genuine neighbourhood hubs. To combine existing leisure facilities with broader health, cultural and community facilities. And to consider how they strategically complement wider assets, such as school and private facilities, to shape that place.

Warrington Borough Council and its provider of leisure, library and lifestyle services, LiveWire, worked closely with local stakeholders to transform the existing Great Sankey Leisure Centre into the Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, encompassing leisure, library, health and culture facilities. The Hub specifically focuses on providing services that support the area’s changing demographic with an increasing number of young families alongside the fastest-aging population in Warrington (for example, the Hub has been designed to ensure it is dementia-friendly).

16 TCPA (2021) 20-minute neighbourhoods

The second is the need to ensure that provision is aligned to the needs of the people that live in the immediate and surrounding communities and is both designed and ultimately provided in ways that seek to reduce inequalities and improve overall quality of life. This means taking more user-led approaches to understanding needs, co-designing elements of the provision, and ensuring that flexibility and agility are built in, so it can adapt and change with local needs. This approach will see provision both located where it is needed most and tailored to the specific needs of the local community – particularly in the alignment of services and other community-based facilities. User needs and feedback must drive the

provision, and data, insight and learning must be shared and used to adapt the model and experiences provided on a regular basis. A model that can deliver in this way will better meet the needs of those people and communities that will benefit from physical activity most. This approach will also require an increase in skills and capabilities to apply innovation, digital, data and learning, all critical factors required to deliver local community objectives and align with the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Together these aspects of the new approach will place leisure at the heart of local communities.



## Provision that is low carbon

Alongside a place-based approach there is also an ambition to deliver a step change in carbon emissions at the local authority level. Estimates suggest that leisure assets currently account for between 10% and 40% of a local authority's direct carbon emissions<sup>17</sup>. Investment in and improvements to England's leisure estate therefore have the potential to make a notable contribution to the achievement of local targets and make a positive contribution at national level.

The efforts already being made by local authorities, via the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, to invest in leisure facilities are starting to make this ambition a reality, but faster progress and increased investment are required to realise this in a timeframe that will make a notable contribution towards national and local net zero targets.



Giving people the confidence and ability to participate in active travel and connecting public leisure facilities up to cycle lanes and public transport will support wider strategic priorities in a place.

The challenges are the speed and scale with which this needs to occur and that it will increase energy costs in the short term, but in the long term this is an invest-to-save solution.

Exeter City Council has built the first super-energy-efficient centre (to Passivhaus standard), replacing a more-than-50-year-old swimming pool. This change is expected to save up to 70% on annual energy costs, use 50% less water, significantly reduce running costs and lower maintenance costs. Furthermore, it does not use chemicals which have been forcing facilities to close temporarily due to the lack of supply.

<sup>17</sup> APSE, LGA and CLOA (2021) Securing the future of public sport and leisure services



# 5. Cross-sector commitment to support change

**This report reflects the sector's ambition to realise a shared vision via a new direction of travel.**

Stakeholders have shared a number of commitments to show how they are, and will be, working collaboratively to build the foundations for change and facilitate and foster the transformation.

The commitments coalesce around seven broad themes and cover a range of activities that will:

- provide support to services on the ground;
- strengthen the sector's leadership;
- facilitate innovation; and
- help to share best practice.

The commitments listed below detail the first steps on our journey for change. Stakeholders have made commitments to the timescales and reviewed alignment to the vision presented above. However, this is not a comprehensive list and will need to be refined and added to as implementation develops. The commitments will be tracked through regular communication and feedback.







### ✓ **High-quality data and insight**

A commitment to build the evidence base and intelligence around what works, why and the difference it makes to communities.

### ✓ **Coordination and partnerships**

A commitment to coordinate stakeholders and share information across organisations and geographical boundaries.

### ✓ **Leadership and workforce development**

A commitment to develop and deliver programmes to support the workforce at all levels both within local authorities and providers.

### ✓ **Champion equality, diversity and inclusion**

A commitment to training and change to embed diversity and inclusion across the full range of activities, services and communications — for both communities and the workforce.

### ✓ **Digital transformation**

A commitment to support the digital transformation of the sector through the development of a white paper, partnering options and maturity assessment.

### ✓ **Strengthen the connection to health**

A commitment to building partnerships at all levels including ICS and providing materials to support engagement (e.g. social prescribing handbook).

### ✓ **Environmental sustainability**

A commitment to improving awareness, owning good practice and supporting the transition to zero carbon facilities.



## High-quality data and insight

A successful and impactful sector requires a shared understanding of the people and systems that are part of it. It is only with rich insight that success and impact can be identified and communicated, opportunities for change identified and confident decisions about the future taken.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
Sport England will continue to support and develop our Moving Communities product to provide quality, consistent and comparable live data on participation, finance and customer experience. This will include dynamic calculations that articulate the wider impact of leisure centres on social outcomes and local priorities, including health and wellbeing, at a facility level and how they will positively impact the public purse and make a genuine difference in helping deliver against government's key priorities. This work includes a commitment to continuous improvement in both the quality and integrity of data gathered, as well as developing capabilities within the sector to better understand and use its own data.	In place currently with a commitment up to 2025	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
The District Council Network has commissioned a report that evidences the health economic benefits of leisure services and their potential to engage inactive community members in physical activity.	In place currently with an associated campaign to run to 2025	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
Sport England will collaborate with government on a national facility audit. This will: inform the extent of investment needs; shape thinking around the number, location and type of facilities that exist within places; and provide data on the scale of the net zero challenge. This information – alongside the Moving Communities data focusing on usage, service delivery, wider social impact and financial performance – will arm decision makers with the intelligence they need to make informed strategic decisions around future investment.	2022	Strong sector leadership



## High-quality data and insight

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
Community Leisure UK will carry out regular surveys with members to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the landscape for leisure trusts and emerging risks and challenges, and to support members by sharing best practice.	2022	Strong sector leadership
Sport England is encouraging partners to use best-practice open data standards where relevant, including publishing and using data according to these standards, as well as cooperating and collaborating in the development, adoption and maintenance of the data standards for the sport and physical activity sector. Relevant industry best-practice data standards include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. OpenActive data standards;</li><li>b. 360Giving data standards;</li><li>c. Active Places data standards;</li><li>d. OpenReferral data standards;</li><li>e. Any other industry standard data standards.</li></ul>	Included in system partner funding agreements to 2025	Strong sector leadership  Place-based
Activity Alliance will assist with content development and data capture in relation to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to ensure that inclusion is embedded within continuous improvement and strategic decision-making.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
The Association of Public Service Excellence's (APSE's) Performance Networks Benchmarking Service will engage with Moving Communities to align datasets	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
UK Active will introduce the Active Standard to apply and quality assure the appropriate standards necessary to support the continued professionalism of the physical activity sector.	2022-23	Strong sector leadership
UK Active's Research Institute will continue to provide high quality research, evaluation, and business intelligence services that achieve sector, policy, and academic impact through two key functions; Data and Insight, and Research and Evaluation.	2022-23	Strong sector leadership

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## Coordination and partnerships

By working collaboratively across places and organisations there are greater opportunities to share best practice, influence and shape policy priorities and articulate the benefits of the sector

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
The Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) will continue to share information and coordinate and chair the Local Government Physical Activity Partnership and in doing so empower local government agencies to work collaboratively to improve and articulate the social and economic value of the sector.	Ongoing	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care  Place-based
Activity Alliance will continue to support a wide range of national, regional and local partners and networks, enabling organisations to be more effective in enabling provision to be more accessible and inclusive.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
UK Active will deliver a broad range of reports and services that will help to drive thought leadership within the sector and raise its profile in relation to key initiatives.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
UK Active will utilise its networks to bring together key sector leaders locally to enhance relationships and partnerships, which will support a whole systems approach to physical activity. They will work with other key partners to develop clear deliverables to avoid duplication and drive efficiency and effectiveness.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership  Place-based
APSE will fund and deliver research into the sector and provide and facilitate regular sector events and networks to share best practice.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
Active Partnerships is developing a deep understanding of communities, especially in relation to tackling inequalities, and will connect leisure providers to the local community organisations working in these areas.	2022-2025	Place-based



## Coordination and partnerships

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
Sport England will explore and analyse the opportunities for attracting alternative investment into the sector and consider how service delivery requirements need to evolve so they can be both sustainable and community outcome focused.	2022/3	Place-based  Strong sector leadership
Sport England will continue to support local authorities through resources, guidance and access to consultancy via the Active Environment Framework to develop provision that's planned strategically, linking effectively across health and community issues, and has effective contract management in place to drive wider outcomes and positive behaviours.	2022-2025	Place-based  Strong sector leadership
Sport England will continue to support investment into facilities through place-based work into priority areas in line with Uniting the Movement.	2022-2025	Place-based  Strong sector leadership

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## Leadership and workforce development

Investing in the sector's workforce and leaders will provide the capability and capacity to deliver change at the scale and pace that is required.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
CLOA will facilitate a range of learning seminars with local authority sector leaders on key issues facing the sector as it transitions. It will also share good practice and innovation to promote a strategic approach.	Ongoing	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care  Strong sector leadership  Place-based  Low carbon
Activity Alliance's training workshops and resources will empower activity providers with practical tools and creative ideas to get more disabled people active.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
The LGA will develop and deliver a programme of high-quality leadership development to support senior officers and portfolio holders as they seek to support and champion the service and help align it to wider strategic objectives for health.	2022	Strong sector leadership  Place-based
Community Leisure UK will develop and deliver a bespoke leadership training course for members, with a focus on social business, place and partnerships, to complement existing leadership training offered within the sector.	2022	Strong sector leadership
CIMSPA will support the recruitment in the sector through tailored support packages and training opportunities, as well as working with employers to support and retain the existing workforce.	2022-2023	Strong sector leadership
Active Partnerships will work with local organisations to support workforce needs through strategic planning, connecting with education providers and developing bespoke workforce development programmes.	2022-2025	Strong sector leadership
UK Active will ensure its public sector members are engaged fully in this work and commit to working collaboratively with other key partners to avoid duplication.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership



## Champion equality, diversity and inclusion

The future sector needs to be one that champions diversity and inclusion and provides opportunities and access for all.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
Activity Alliance will share insight and expertise with leisure sector partners to increase understanding and focus resource on tackling inequalities. This will help to embed inclusive practices into organisations, change attitudes and close the fairness gap for disabled people in sport and activity.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
Community Leisure UK will deliver workshops on relevant EDI topics for members, identifying areas for more in-depth work in line with their EDI Action Plan. This will address issues of diversity both in the workforce and with regard to users and discuss solutions and best practice to remove existing barriers to participation.	2023	Strong sector leadership
Sport England will continue to deliver design guidance that promotes diversity and inclusion in line with its wider focus on championing inclusion and addressing inequalities.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership
UK Active will continue to develop campaigns and work programmes focusing on inclusion and tackling inequalities, such as their This Girl Can and Everyone Can programmes and taskforce.	Ongoing	Strong sector leadership

Digital transformation ▼

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## Digital transformation

Digital technologies are transforming all sectors of the economy, bringing forward new ways of working, new services and new insight. The public leisure sector of the future must be fully digitally enabled.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
UK Active's Digital Futures work will provide a range of reports and white papers to support the digital transformation of the sector including an assessment of digital maturity, consideration in relation to digital partnering and the development of a digital strategy and Digital Maturity Tool.	2022	Strong sector leadership
Sport England and CIMSPA have developed a Digital Marketing Hub, a free hub of information and resources aimed at improving digital marketing skills in the sport and physical activity sector.	2022-2023	Strong sector leadership Place-based

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## Strengthen the connection to health

Demonstrating the impact and alignment will be critical to building relationships between health and leisure sectors and will enable greater integration.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
The District Council Network will continue to share best practice on targeting leisure services to tackle health inequalities. Alongside this we will be sharing members' expertise and success in retrofitting and modernising centres, and pressing for the resources needed for others to follow suit.	Ongoing	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
The LGA will publish a Social Prescribing Handbook to share good-practice examples of local authorities working in partnership with the health sector to develop strong, locally led social-prescribing opportunities.	2022	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
Community Leisure UK will publish a report outlining the contribution of members to the wider public health agenda and alignment with key national strategic aims around health including social prescribing, skills development and a person-centred approach to health and wellbeing.	2022	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care  Place-based
Active Partnerships is developing relationships with Integrated Care Systems both at a 'systems layer' (sub-regional) and at 'place level' (districts) so it can support leisure providers in navigating the different systems and help build meaningful relationships with people involved.	2022-2025	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care  Place-based





## Strengthen the connection to health

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
The District Council Network will commission future research on how local services, including leisure, are paramount in shaping public health. This will evidence the effect of wider services, such as housing, VCS and economic regeneration, on changing the health of communities.	2022–2025	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
<p>UK Active will continue to develop its work relating to health and wellbeing. Specific examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• concluding a research project to investigate how to transform leisure facilities into musculoskeletal hubs;</li><li>• rolling out a Business Health Matters programme to support local businesses in improving the physical and mental health of their employees; and</li><li>• implementing the recommendations from the Leading the Change report relating to social prescribing within fitness and leisure centres.</li></ul>	Ongoing	Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care

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## Environmental sustainability

Supporting the sector to transition to one that has significantly reduced carbon emissions.

Commitment	Timescales	Alignment
Community Leisure UK has set up an environmental steering group to identify key areas for support in reducing carbon emissions and improving the environmental impact of facilities.	2022-2025	Low carbon  Strong sector leadership
Sport England will provide investment and resource for research-based planning guidance and advice that can help reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption.	2023	Low carbon
Swim England will publish reports highlighting the benefits of investing in facilities and sustainability issues, including leading research into the newest technologies that reduce the sport's carbon footprint and make swimming more sustainable both economically and environmentally.	Ongoing	Low carbon
Swim England will provide technical and strategic support to the public sector throughout the process of delivering aquatic venues, from strategic planning to technical design, commissioning and certification. This will include providing water wellbeing accreditation, so pools are optimally set up to support the health and wellbeing agenda.	Ongoing	Low carbon  Alignment of leisure, physical health, mental health and social care
APSE will continue its representation on the Sports, Environment and Climate Coalition. APSE Energy will continue to help local authorities transition their leisure services and facilities to a more carbon-friendly approach alongside APSE Training, which includes a three-year programme of carbon literacy training for senior employees.	Ongoing	Low carbon

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In isolation, no single commitment will deliver the scale of change required; however, as a collective, they provide a suite of activity that – alongside targeted and strategic investment – can build significant momentum on the road towards creating a new model for the public leisure facility sector.

This is a sector which is seeking to embrace change and create a more effective and resilient public sector provision. The extent of stakeholder support is significant and will be critical in meeting the challenges ahead.

Investment in infrastructure is needed to accelerate change, and this remains one of the biggest challenges for the sector. It is essential that stakeholders and government work together to assess opportunities and options to achieve investment and help realise the potential benefits of the sector. Creating an environment which stimulates and encourages investment will ensure social and health benefits can be realised across communities.





## 6. What happens next?

### **Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the public leisure facility sector is at a crossroads.**

This report has brought together key stakeholders to accelerate discussions that have stimulated this review into the sector's purpose and effectiveness.

It now provides a common agenda which creates the space to help the sector move forward together, working in partnership to provide cohesion and coordination of resources. Mutual accountability across partners will provide the culture required to safeguard the future of public leisure and provide it with a renewed sense of purpose.

Partners are committed to tracking the progress made to shift the sector in the short term through regular reviews and updates; this will ensure that the sector achieves its full potential and is better placed to meet the needs of communities.

Work will continue across the sector and through the efforts of stakeholders. There will be collaboration across various elements of work, not least to meet the immediate challenges of rising costs for operators and the cost of living crisis.

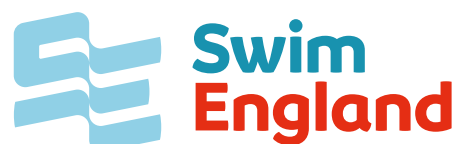
Sport England will continue to support the sector and is committed to bringing sector stakeholders together to further develop the approach to evolving public sector provision, identify the actions needed to achieve progress and understand the impact of current challenges.





# Partners

This report is produced in collaboration with the following partner companies and organisations.





[sportengland.org](https://sportengland.org)

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