

FULL COUNCIL

5 JULY 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND LEISURE

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING COMMUNITIES AND LEISURE

1.1 Purpose of Report

1.1.1 To advise Members that a decision-making session was held on the 30 June 2022, covering CPH Communities and Leisure.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.2.2 Attached to this report is a list of decisions made.

1.3 Decisions

1.3.1 30 June 2022

1.3.2 I was presented with a report about community centre provision in Elmdon following the petition submitted at Full Council on 5 April 2022. I agreed that a response to the petition be considered after I have reviewed the evidence.

1.3.3 Council Plan and Priorities

1.3.4 We continue to develop our working arrangements with the public and voluntary sector partners to create the conditions for our communities to thrive. We are also continuing to extend and develop our localities framework to support problem solving in each of the three localities – North, East, and West - as well as supporting an improved early help offer for children, young people and adults with support needs.

1.4 Good News and Issues of Interest

VCSE Investment and Partnerships

1.4.1 **My Solihull Maps** - There have been over 7,500 visits to My Solihull Maps, with over 1,500 during May (an increase from 1,000 visits in April). New content has been added including the details of faith groups and institutions across Solihull, community events taking place during June and July, as well as Police support groups like Neighbourhood Watch and Streetwatch. We are running a lunch and learn session for staff in September.

1.4.2 **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAFP) – Easter** - During the Easter holidays 1,985 children participated in the Solihull HAFP. 1,733 children (87%) were eligible for benefit related free school meals, whilst the remaining 13% were provided with a place due to their potentially vulnerability. 80% of children were of primary school age with rest 11 years plus. 23% of funded places were provided for children who identified as having Special Educational Needs or a Disability.

- 1.4.3 **Wellbeing and Recovery Fund** - During May, two projects were awarded funding through the Wellbeing and Recovery Fund which is distributed through the Heart of England Community Foundation. Music Therapy Works and Seeds of Hope received just under £10,000 between them. The Music Therapy Works project aims to transform the lives of vulnerable people through music – music therapy. Seeds of Hope, based in Kingshurst for 20 years, required funding to support the community hub to stay open. They are currently looking at ways of diversifying their income streams to ensure they are sustainable during challenging times.

Community Development Team (CDT)

- 1.4.4 **Working with the Community** - On a day-to-day basis there are lots of little things that the CDT support local residents and communities with, which cumulatively make a big difference. A few current and recent examples include:

- Helping two residents in Smith's Wood to organise a coffee morning in their community garden, creating flyers, baking cakes, resourcing a gas cooker and providing drinks and food.
- Working with Go Girls to secure grant funding and commissioned work from Children's Services in support of mentoring to young women in Smith's Wood. This support has also helped the charity to access funding and commissioning opportunities more independently in the future.
- During a visit to a community event, a Community Development Worker met a local resident who loved to crochet blankets for babies and elderly residents. They had a supply of blankets but did not have anyone to give them to. We were able to link them up with residents at Saxon House whose residents were grateful for blankets.
- Helping a Morrisons' Community Champion to distribute a large donation of books and toys to the local community and schools.
- Fielding enquiries from local residents interested in volunteering and signposting nine people into local opportunities. The team also helped recruit 3 new volunteers delivery drivers for the Helping Hands foodbank.

- 1.4.5 The CDT has also continued to provide an important source of help and support for several Council initiatives and partnerships, including:

- Commonwealth Games – promoting and supporting applications to the Celebrating Communities Fund, as well as championing the Queen's Baton Relay and community engagement opportunities.
- Schools – the partnership with local schools continues to grow following alignment of community workers to their local schools. This is to better bridge school and community life and the wider community offer available around schools. The team has helped to set up a new coffee morning at Kingshurst Primary School for parents and carers of children with additional needs. It also provides mental health ambassador and peer listener training to representatives from 23 local schools.
- Social care and family support – the team continues to provide advice and support to family support and social workers to connect the people they are supporting to their communities and voluntary sector support. This includes connecting children and young people to the HAFP, promoting use of My Solihull Maps (which is evident in the high number of visits during April and May).

Refugees and New Communities

- 1.4.6 **Refugee week** - Refugee Week is a celebration of community, mutual care, and the human ability to start again. The 2022 theme is 'Healing', through creativity and conversations. On 22 June I attended 'Solihull Welcomes': local communities, groups and agencies came together at The Core to deliver a festival that celebrates and recognises our new communities through music, film, arts, and food. Coventry-

based Ukrainian folk music band Cov Kozak and Caribbean band Steel Regals kept us dancing throughout a thrilling day that involved contributions from newly arrived groups as well as a marketplace of voluntary and community sector organisations.

- 1.4.7 The Resettlement Team continue to provide and co-ordinate support to new communities in the Borough, including English Language learning, wellbeing support, advice on housing and developing employment skills. These include Hong Kongers on the BNO Welcome Programme and Afghan Refugees in the local 'bridging hotel'.
- 1.4.8 **Ukraine Refugee Resettlement** - Solihull is continuing to see new applications and arrivals via the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as well as ongoing arrivals via other routes to the UK. As of 13 June there are 88 sponsors participating in the Homes for Ukraine
- 1.4.9 The Council has been growing its capacity with Refugee Action to be able to support hosts and guests, as well as homelessness and crises emerging from arrivals outside of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- 1.4.10 Outside of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, there is intensive work taking place to support Ukrainians who have arrived and are homeless or in crisis. A local charity, Entraide, has been commissioned by the Council to provide support to refugees whilst they are homeless. The aim is to find local sponsors for all homeless households.
- 1.4.11 Having a national port of entry in the Borough, via Birmingham Airport, means that the Council (via the Emergency and Resilience Team) are also providing a welcome desk and one-stop point of help for people on their way to sponsors and other local authorities. This has included several safeguarding interventions.

Solihull Active

- 1.4.12 Solihull Commonwealth Active Communities programme, a Sport England grant funded 'Community wellness programme', is in the process of engaging focus groups to better understand their needs and barriers in terms of mental health and physical activity. This will help shape the programme approach and we are establishing a group of residents to help form a community panel which will provide insight and help influence progression.
- 1.4.13 Work is underway to celebrate sport and physical activity during the two weeks of the Commonwealth Games in Solihull town centre. Working in partnership with Touchwood and Solihull BID, we are inviting local clubs and organisations to get involved in the celebrations by hosting an interactive stall showcasing their sport and/or physical activity, offering residents and visitors to Solihull a chance to try something new!
- 1.4.14 For frequently asked questions in relation to sport, leisure and physical activity in Solihull during the Commonwealth Games, such as 'what free activities can I take part in' take a look on our website at <https://www.solihullactive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/FAQ-CWG.pdf>

Walking for All

- 1.4.15 In preparation for the Games, a walking orienteering programme will be launched with two permanent park routes, a suite of orienteering resources and packs for communities to use. Park locations of Babbs Mill and Elmdon have been chosen to host permanent orienteering courses. Local orienteering club Octavian Droobers have designed the routes. The courses will consist of three routes and will be accessible for all.

Ping! Solihull

1.4.16 Level the Table grants have been awarded to:

- The Hive at Parkview;
- Evergreen Community Centre at Yorkswood Primary School to be used by pupils (e.g. pre-school and after-school clubs), but also wider community sessions as well).

1.4.17 Solihull's very own Ping Pong Parlour was launched in Mell Square on 5 May 2022.

Kingfisher Foodbank at North Solihull Sports Centre

1.4.18 Everyone Active and North Solihull Sports Centre are supporting Kingfisher Foodbanks in North Solihull. There is a donation trolley at reception during the Centres opening hours. Kingfisher Foodbanks is a project founded by local churches and community groups, working together towards stopping hunger in our local area through providing emergency food parcels, plus offering a listening ear and signposting to helpful agencies. With a dedicated team of over 30 volunteers, the foodbank relies on food and monetary donation. More information can be found at: <https://kingfisher.foodbank.org.uk/>

Everyone Active partnership with Parkinson's UK, link to SA Docspot programme and current Parkinson's Exercise Classes

1.4.19 Leisure centres in Solihull are set to offer free membership to people living with Parkinson's. North Solihull Sports Centre and Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, run by award-winning operator Everyone Active in partnership with Solihull Council, are taking part in the new initiative alongside charity Parkinson's UK. Available now, the free membership will give access to gym, swim and group exercise classes, plus, all members will be offered a personalised exercise programme through EXi, the easy-to-use online platform, with Synergy Dance online classes also available. Free carer membership will be available, if required. For further information, visit <https://www.everyoneactive.com/promotion/parkinsons/>

1.4.20 In addition to the free Parkinson's membership offer, specialist exercise classes for people with Parkinson's are on offer at Tudor Grange Leisure Centre. These specialist classes are designed to provide the most effective exercise sessions to support self-management of Parkinson's and are led by exercise referral specialist instructors. For more details visit: <https://www.solihullactive.co.uk/ms-parkinsons-exercise/>.

Wheelchair Treadmill Installation at North Solihull Sports Centre, Everyone Active

1.4.21 North Solihull Sports Centre is revolutionising fitness for wheelchair users by introducing state-of-the-art equipment. Managed by Everyone Active in partnership with Solihull Council, the sports centre will see a wheelchair treadmill and wheelchair scales introduced this month, making it the only leisure centre in Solihull to host this equipment. Driving accessible fitness forward, the wheelchair treadmill provides a full cardio workout, as well as building muscle strength and improving balance, supporting wheelchair users to achieve their fitness goals. In addition, the new wheelchair scales will help to relieve any of the stress involved with standing during the weighing process – another great benefit for wheelchair users. The equipment was funded by The Eveson Trust, an independent funder which awards grants to support people with disabilities, older people, children in need and many more, across the West Midlands region.

1.5 Future Decisions

1.5.1 At my future decision-making session on the 25 July 2022, I will be considering the following report:

- Funding allocation options for the Neighbourhood proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy