

Meeting date: 14 March 2023

Report to: Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board

Report title: Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Priorities for 2023/24

Report from: Councillor Diane Howell

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood | Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle | Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South | Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 For Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board to note the Cabinet Member priorities for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The report includes priorities from the Communities Directorate and from the Public Health Directorate.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 For noting.

Report Title: Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Priorities for 2023/24

3. Matters for Consideration

3.1 This report sets out the priorities of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure for 2023/24. The priorities are aligned with two relevant directorates: Communities Directorate and Public Health.

3.2 With respect to priority areas aligned with **Communities**, these are set out below. These priorities support the following strategic themes in the Council Plan:

- Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres
- Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities
- Enable communities to thrive.

3.3 The following summarises the Cabinet Portfolio Holder priorities in Communities. This does not cover all of the work of the Communities Directorate; other areas of work fall into a different Cabinet member's portfolio.

3.4 Culture

We are currently increasing local neighbourhood engagement through involvement in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the Commonwealth Games. This work has been aided by the Celebrating Communities Grant Fund administered by Heart of England Community Foundation on behalf of SMBC. In the year ahead, this work will be further expanded to reach out to new arrivals and those populations who face barriers to accessing the arts.

The Council is taking on the role of enabler and facilitator of culture through the new post of Cultural Development Officer and the formation of the Solihull first cultural partnership and the emerging Cultural Education Partnership (CEP).

The Core is increasing its cultural offer, including cinema programming and micro-opportunities for local artists to use the core to showcase their craft and gain wider exposure. Entertainment spots and event spaces have been set up in Solihull Town centre to deliver a growing cultural offer. A key anchor date for the year ahead includes the Coronation.

3.5 Tourism and High Streets

The Solihull Borough attracted 3,860,000 visitors in 2021 (which is back to nearly 70% of the levels seen in 2019), showing strong signs of recovery post COVID. Demand for bedrooms is high and reasons to visit continue to be for business tourism (linked to the return of NEC conferences and events) and shopping.

Footfall in Solihull town centre is almost back to pre-pandemic levels with relatively

few vacant units compared to other centres and consistent new retail openings.

The retail and hospitality sector reported a positive trading period up to Christmas 2022 compared to previous years but continues to face rising costs and supply chain issues. The sector is finding it hard to recruit in certain areas.

In response to these challenges, there is a continued need to develop targeted business support interventions, working with partners including the West Midlands Growth Company, West Midlands Combined Authority, GBSLEP Growth Hub, Chamber of Commerce and FSB.

A new Economic Strategy for the Borough places emphasis on developing place-based strategies giving the visitor economy a key role to play.

3.6 **Communities**

Further development of the Council's approach to community development and community infrastructure will be subject to a report to the Cabinet Member in the summer. There will be a specific focus on introducing and/or increasing the investment in:

- Connecting communities and networking neighbourhoods, by facilitating regular stakeholder meetings across the borough's neighbourhoods
- Collecting better data about "places to go and things to do" across the borough, which will help inform the continuous development of the VCSE strategic assessment
- Physical spaces providing meeting points and places for no cost/low-cost community activities. This is ahead of some capital investment from the UKSPF in 24/25
- More formal recognition of "communities of interest" that form around shared issues, rather than places. Additionally, promoting a community development approach for working with communities of interest.

Continuing to develop the collaboration with stakeholders in Education, Adult Social Care, Health and Children's Services to promote a shared approach to community inclusion, prevention and early help. This is particularly developing a directed, evidenced based approach to ensure that there is a relevant and accessible community offer for everyone.

Development and delivery of VCSE projects and funding programmes including the HAFFP, introduction of the Fairer Futures Fund supporting community-based health and wellbeing, VCSE Resilience Fund, Household Support Fund, as well as shaping the community infrastructure investment plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2024/25.

Shaping a new Council policy and partnerships concerning universal youth services, specifically the breadth and depth of youth work and safe spaces available to young people across the borough.

3.7 **Resettlement and Newly Arrived Communities**

Continue to develop and embed the new refugees and new communities team and functions across the Council and the borough in general.

Development of relevant partnerships and networks to build the local capacity and capability needed to successfully welcome and integrate people from refugee and migrant communities over the long-term, as well as to enable Solihull to contribute to regional policy and partnerships.

Start to shape a strategy that promotes successful resettlement, inclusion, integration and community cohesion. This is with an initial focus on English language learning opportunities.

Working within the parameters of government policy and funding, develop Solihull's reputation as a welcoming place for all newly arrived communities.

3.8 **Community Safety Partnership**

A key priority for the coming year is to work with partners to respond to the new Serious Violence Duty to ensure there are the means and arrangements in place to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Working with the Home Office, further develop the Council's assurance concerning its counter terrorism duties, specifically concerning "prevent", "protect" and "prepare".

Publish and implement the recommendations from the annual Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment.

Further collaboration with the Exploitation Reduction Board, Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Safeguarding Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board to bring together shared areas of interest and business. This includes working with representatives from these boards to shape the 2023/24 Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment.

3.9 With respect to priority areas aligned with **Public Health**, these are set out below. Please note that this does not include all the Public Health activity. There are additional elements that are overseen by other portfolio holders.

3.10 The Directorate Plan focuses on progressing partnership work to deliver the goals of the Health and Well-being Strategy and Health Inequalities Strategy:

3.11 **Leisure and Physical Activity**

The team continue to provide targeted services focused on the least active individuals in the Borough, delivered via working in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, local organisations, and through the leisure contract.

Highlights include:

- Over 1200* participants accessing long term condition classes which are continuing to recover post-COVID
- Over 110,000* participants from targeted groups accessing the leisure centres (includes females, 0-15 years, 65 years plus, ethnically diverse communities, and people with disabilities)
- 865,099* the number of unique visits to both centres steadily increasing post-COVID
- Renegotiated financial model of the Leisure Centre Management contract which will end the open book arrangement from 1 April 2023 for 12 months whilst negotiating the remaining term of the contract whereby a share of utility price risk and a share of the benefit of reduced utility consumption can be agreed
- Playing Pitch Strategy commissioned in January 2023 due to be completed in October 2023
- Development of the Physical Activity Partnership in collaboration with Think Active, looking to develop a Physical Activity Framework/Strategy in 2023-24
- Following a feasibility study, working in partnership with WMCA and Think Active to implement the DfT Capability and Ambition Fund for a North Solihull Social Prescribing project (encouraging more patients with MSK conditions to walk and cycle).
- Undertake a feasibility and options appraisal study for the development of a replacement outdoor leisure facility at North Solihull Sports Centre, due for completion in June 2023.

* as of Quarter 3 2022-23

3.12 Commonwealth Games

The team developed a programme to extend the Solihull on the Move framework and maximise the opportunity of the games. Investment focused on removing barriers by providing a universal and low-cost offer to communities, and included:

- Five new Sensory Walks are now in place on the back of a partnership with Sense and the Ordnance Survey
- £28,834 investment via small grants to help community clubs and organisations in Solihull to capitalise on the momentum of the Games
- Eighteen table tennis tables are located in parks and open spaces and other local indoor facilities across Solihull including a Ping Pong Parlour in Mell Square
- 1600 runners participating in the Solihull Half Marathon raising over £85,000 for charities
- £22,724 investment in to four fully equipped cycling hubs, 50% of this investment met by British Cycling Places to Ride Fund
- Launch of So Go on 26th September 2022, a year-long campaign encouraging borough residents to increase their activity levels and be 'on the move'
- Over 23,600* visits to our Solihull on the Move programming (Bike It Solihull, Ping! Solihull, Walk Solihull, Swim Solihull and Run Solihull) were registered

- The programme manager for Solihull Active Minds (SAM) was appointed in April 2022, as part of the grant awarded from Sport England of £436,732 to deliver a 'community wellness programme that is seeking to use the inspiration of the Commonwealth Games to help people with poorer mental health to be more active through an integrated mental health and physical activity pathway'.
- Solihull on the Move (Commonwealth Games) surplus (currently forecast at £75k), to be carried forward to fund planned Solihull on the Move activities in 2023/24.

*as of Quarter 3 2022-23

3.13 Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse (DA) has continued to have a high focus across the Council during 2022/23, which has led to improved partnership working as we seek to strengthen our overall approach.

Leads from the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, Adult Safeguarding Board and the Local Childrens Safeguarding Board have developed a domestic abuse assurance framework, which will shortly be shared with key agencies for completion. The purpose of this is to gather an informed insight of strengths and weaknesses across the system. The findings of the exercise will be used to inform priorities for 2023/24.

In the summer of 2022, a new domestic abuse children and young people (CYP) community service was commissioned. Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid (BSWA) were awarded the contract. This provides an offer of therapeutic support for CYP and reflects the recognition of them as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, as set out in the DA Act 2021.

This month BSWA were successfully awarded a contract to provide a refreshed specialist community service for all victims aged 16+. The service will commence 1st April 2023. The service model is expected to provide additional capacity, with a range of support.

Moving forward there will be a focus on:

- Improving our response to those who cause harm through domestic abuse
- Meeting the accommodation needs of victims.

3.14 Substance Abuse

The government published its 'From Harm to Hope' 10-year Drug Strategy 2021. The 2021 Drug Strategy aims to "change things for the better" in three main ways: Breaking drug supply chains; Achieving a generational shift in the demand for drugs; and delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system.

Alongside the strategy came 3 years of additional ring-fenced funding for treatment and recovery systems. Solihull was awarded £398,493 for 22/23,

- The Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTR) allocation for Solihull in 23/24 is outlined as £406,349, Public Health officers

and colleagues from the commissioned services and wider stakeholders have reviewed the efficacy of the previous years investments to agree where resources would be best placed in 23/24. Part of the terms of SSMTR grant is an expectation to increase the number of residents engaged in treatment and recovery, both adult and Young People, in addition to a target of achieving 75% engagement from prison to community by year 3 of this grant. The commissioned provider intend to employ many strategies to achieve these requirements including: the implementation of in-reach into prison, collaborative working across the health system, outreach to targeted communities, community events and bespoke support within education settings. The funding is intended to support the reduction of harms to vulnerable communities with particular focus on reducing drug and alcohol death, public health officers are working with University Hospital Birmingham colleagues in relation to the implementation of Alcohol Care Teams in local hospitals and are reviewing the options of adopting the 'Blue Light' approach in line with Birmingham to provide consistency and enhance provision for Solihull's most vulnerable drinkers. The grant will continue to facilitate the recruitment of additional capacity within the Public Health commissioning team to support and oversee this work, as well as additional posts within the commissioned provider to increase family support, hidden harm, treatment and recovery activity in addition to outreach capacity, planned innovative practice (the development of a recovery app) and proactive response to emerging trends such as increased Nitrous Oxide usage.

- The service is adopting trauma informed practice as part of its enhancement and has employed a psychologist from RESET recovery to ensure that this approach is embedded throughout the treatment and recovery journey.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 The priorities for the year ahead are listed above.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

5.1 See 3.4 -3.14 above.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
People and Communities: 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.	Improving access to the arts for groups who face barriers will enrich the lives of some of the most disadvantaged in our society. See main content of report See main content of report

Priority:	Contribution:
4. Enable communities to thrive.	
Economy: 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.	The work to enrich the cultural life in our town centres will encourage visitors and the tourism economy.
Environment: 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.	Not applicable
9. Promote employee wellbeing	Not applicable

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 N/A - not arising from this report.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 This work will be delivered from the Communities and Leisure budgets and the Public Health Grant. There are also some ringfenced funding sources for specific areas of work.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 N/A - not arising from this report.

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1 N/A - not arising from this report.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 As set out in 3.4-3.14 above.

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local

Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1 NA - not arising from this report

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 N/A

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 N/A

9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 N/A