

Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board

CPH Leisure, Tourism & Sport – Priorities

What we are currently seeing

Culture:

- Negligible levels of activity in relation to the council's own cultural offer (primarily The Core).
- Planning for programme to resume in earnest from September.
- Huge reduction in cultural activity regionally and nationally.

Leisure & Sport:

- Prolonged closure of leisure centre and other sports and physical activity locations with impacts on financial position of the service.
- Solihull Active continuing to support people to be active in lockdown (on-line support, advice to people shielding).
- Decline in physical activity and sports but wider appreciation of out-door space?
 - The pandemic has seen the number of adults being active fall by 7% and the number of inactive people increase by the same amount, so there is yet more work to encourage people back to regular exercise, attract inactive populations into physical activity and capitalise on the interest in outdoor activity.
 - The evidence shows that those that have found it hardest to be active through the pandemic have been:
 - People with long term conditions and with a disability;
 - People from the lower social economic groups;
 - Women;
 - 16-34 age group;
 - The 55 plus; and
 - Black, Asian and other ethnic groups.
 - With reductions in children's physical activity as well, although not by the same extent, further work is needed across the system to increase activity levels accepting for some a return to school will be a great help in this.
 - Leisure centre closures and restricted opening has limited activity severely and meant the Authority has had to deal with the financial impacts of these closures. This has had a wider impact with our long term condition rehabilitation and condition management programmes that had to stop along with our GP referral programme, DocSpot. The health impacts of COVID-19 will be reflected upon as these services recommence.
 - In addition to these direct leisure centre services, the community and voluntary sector organisations that use our facilities have been significantly affected i.e. the Borough's swimming clubs have loss members, so re-

opening leisure centres will need to take account of the wider range of users.

- In addition to the leisure centres, the Public Health physical activity programme run by Solihull Active has equally been curtailed with our walking for health programme suspended, eat well move more family weight management programme significantly reduced, community programming stopped, for example. Restarting these services at the right time will be crucial.
- With rising unemployment and some parts of the community potentially being reluctant to return to some activity or facilities in the shorter term which will have to be factored into service planning and marketing.

What we might see in the future

Culture:

- Gradual recovery of cultural sector.
- Additional impetus and opportunities from City of Culture and Commonwealth Games.
- People will return to live performances.
- Opportunities offered by town centre regeneration, including potential new civic/cultural centre.

Leisure & Sport

- Pent up demand to be more active after lockdown creating opportunities for Solihull on the Move across all age groups:
 - Children and young people: part of recovery from 'lost real': physical, mental and social benefits of being out and active over the summer
 - Helping those whose physical activity has been most affected by the pandemic regaining confidence to be out and about and regain lost fitness
 - All-ages: return to outdoor activity, better use of green spaces and active travel.

What we need to do to respond

Culture:

- Develop The Core offer (Art at the Heart residency, cinema offer)
- Develop role as an enabler and facilitator of culture
- Plan for the longer term: what is the council's cultural role and offer through town centre regeneration

Leisure & Sport

- Reprogramming of Solihull on the Move, tailored to meet gradual lift of lockdown measures and connecting into Commonwealth Games 'vibe'.

- Re-galvanise our leisure & physical activity offer on a phased basis to improve and rebuild health and well-being including support for Long COVID and financial recovery of the service.
 - Planning work on new Solihull on the move initiatives such as cycling, table tennis and running has continued and we'll start to see these initiatives land as lockdown lifts. In light of the evidence a priority will be to review the Solihull on the move plans and take account of these factors as existing plans are rolled out.
 - Plans to refurbish the Tudor Grange Leisure Centre artificial grass pitch will be brought forward and a feasibility about the future of the outdoor facilities at North Solihull Sports Centre is proposed to follow on from this work.
 - Service and financial recovery as we come out of lockdown and the wider restrictions will be key focus and priority.
 - With the Commonwealth Games taking place in 2022 in Birmingham, the wider region and in Solihull at the NEC, there is an opportunity to use the Games as a catalyst to address our physical activity and sports participation priorities. Developing a Commonwealth Games programme that supports and embellishes the Solihull on the move programme will be a priority for 21/22, 22/23 and beyond.
 - With the extension of the Active Communities programme there is an opportunity to work with the local voluntary and community sector (VCS) to widen this programme out and pick up on the inactive populations hit hard by the pandemic.

Potential areas of Scrutiny interest for 2021/22

Culture:

- Recovery programme for The Core.
- Solihull's Commonwealth Games culture programme.
- Response to the recent review of cultural activity in the borough.

Leisure & Sport

- Leisure centre operations and recovery for November 2021.
- Solihull on the Move progress for March 2022.