

**REPORT TO:** Employment, Learning and Skills, and  
Community Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 18 September 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director – Environment &  
Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Employment, Learning and Skills and  
Community

**SUBJECT:** Leisure Centre Workforce and Operations

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide members with a report on the Council’s Leisure Centre operations, including recruitment, and to update members on construction of the Councils New Leisure Centre.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

**i) The report is noted.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The service provided an update on Leisure Centre operations at the January 2023 Board meeting. Recruitment at that time was proving difficult.

3.2 The service had appointed to all vacant posts in May (apart from the swim team). As is the nature of the service, resignations were received in June and July from 5 post holders. The Councils Resourcing team have worked hard to support the service and there has been a significant improvement in the time taken to recruit to vacant posts. All vacant posts have been advertised and appointed to. Pre employment check process simplified, no requirement for references with risk assessments in place, inductions can commence. There can still be a delay with start dates, but this is in the main due to the appointed person not presenting their basic documentation.

3.3 The Swim Team - 12 fully funded Level 1 course places advertised, all allocated, all attendees completed the course and recruited as Assistant Swim Instructors. Level 2 course places advertised and allocated. 12 completed the course in May and 11 have been placed in a casual seat. The remaining attendee has not committed to working for the Council and has been asked to repay course fees.

Once inductions and training has been completed it is hoped that the learn to swim programme can be permanently expanded.

3.4 Shortages of staff within the leisure business was a regional problem, being experienced by neighbouring authorities; in August the service hosted a NPLQ course at Kingsway, this was oversubscribed, course numbers were double that experienced 12 months ago.

3.5 Below are figures for Leisure Centre for 22/23. Going forward we will be able to present these figures as a comparison from one year to another, to show any increases for the services.

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Kingsway</b>                            | Total attendance figures |
| Fitness                                    | 44,466                   |
| Swim (general, LTS, School)                | 103,575                  |
| Dry side activity                          | 57,483                   |
|  |                          |
| <b>Brookvale</b>                           | Total attendance figures |
| Fitness                                    | 31,642                   |
| Swim (general)                             | 48,819                   |
| Dry side activity (including 3G)           | 108,476                  |
|  |                          |
| Cumulative visits – Kingsway and Brookvale | 394,461                  |
| Go Live Members                            | 2,613                    |
| Swim members                               | 1,387                    |

3.6 Work on constructing the new Leisure is progressing in a clean, safe, tidy, and co-ordinated manner and site have not had any accidents, incidents, or dangerous occurrences to report. 25 August Topping out event. The Active Halton website has a section dedicated to the new build, with pictures and updates regularly posted. <https://activehalton.co.uk/new-leisure-centre/>

3.7 Community engagement is ongoing, Wates have delivered many activities including.

- School engagement with Ashley High School, welcome to Wates, mock interviews, and personal safety sessions.
- St Peter & Paul Catholic High School work experience students attended site for one week placement with Commercial Team.
- Careers fair at Riverside College as part of National Careers Week. Green Technology talk at Riverside College.
- Pop up event at Cronton Sixth Form College and Riverside College attended.
- Community & Conservation Week volunteering event at

Simonsfield Care Home was a great success. 8 Site team members attended to help with tidying the gardens in time for their Summer Fete.

T Level Assessment Day planned for 18th September with Riverside College.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Leisure Centre Service is a non-statutory service, which supports statutory deliver, such as, school swimming and public health objectives, it also supports the Council's priorities.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The current programme provides opportunity for children and young people to engage in a wide range of leisure activities. The service engages with thousands of young people through a variety of coached activities, learn to swim programme, signposting to sports clubs and activity to support and increase participation.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The service provides volunteer opportunities and skill development for all ages, in coaching, administration, fundraising and access to resources for those learning new skills. Support adult and lifelong learning, through fitness referral programmes. Lifeguard training will continue to be hosted at site and free or reduced places, for residents, will remain a feature of service delivery. The new workforce development model resulted in recruitment to all vacant positions.

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Sport and Physical Activity links directly with priorities in Halton's Health and Wellbeing strategy, prevention being the key. Physical activity links with prevention of certain cancers, mental health problems and falls. We need to put the customer first, focus on those least active and transform how activity is provided. The service will continue to promote and support local and National campaigns.

#### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Sports activities and competitions, sports volunteering, sports leadership, sports training help develop individuals and communities, encourage healthier and more productive lifestyles and create inclusive communities and neighbourhoods that provide a shared identity and sense of place. The service will continue to work with partner agencies to deliver intervention programmes.

#### 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The New Leisure Centre on Moor Lane is a flagship project, which will regenerate the site area. The service supports groups looking to improve the areas where they live/work.

#### 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Council leisure centre stock is old and of poor quality, mechanical failures can lead to service delays. As a result of utility price increases, operating cost have risen significantly.

#### 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Sport and Recreation service is open and accessible. The service supports groups and individuals to be and stay active. Flexible spaces can accommodate diverse customer needs/requests. Changing Places facility is being installed in the new Leisure Centre.

#### 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications as part of this report.

#### 10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.