

## FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** THURSDAY, 10 JANUARY 2013  
**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING  
**SUBJECT:** LEISURE STRATEGY 2009 - 2014

### 1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise members of progress to date regarding the achievement of the three key strategic priorities identified in the County Council's Leisure Strategy 2009-14.

### 2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 On 1 April 2009, the then Executive endorsed Flintshire County Council's Leisure Strategy - *an actif future* - thereby providing the Authority with a sport and physical activity vision and strategic direction for the next five years.

2.02 The Leisure Strategy identified three key strategic priorities:

- Increasing participation in physical activity and enabling the Flintshire Community to develop its potential in sport;
- Quality management of leisure facilities; and
- Renewal of the County's leisure provision.

The Strategy was underpinned by a five-year work programme which supported progress towards the delivery of the three key strategic priorities.

2.03 The Leisure Strategy is aligned to other sport and physical activity-related County Council strategies that serve as a local response to the national agenda:

<b>LOCAL</b>	<b>NATIONAL</b>
Creating an Active Flintshire 2011-14	WG Creating an Active Wales 2009
Flintshire Sports Plan	Sport Wales's Vision for Sport in Wales
Flintshire Play Strategy 2011-14	WG Play Policy Implementation Plan 2006

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 In the four years since the Leisure Strategy was published, progress relating to the achievement of the three key strategic priorities has been as follows:

Increasing participation in physical activity and enabling the Flintshire Community to develop its potential in sport

- 3.02 The number of visits to our leisure centres, where the visitor has participated in physical activity, has increased from 1,239,666 in 2009/10 to 1,310,685 in 2010/11 to 1,357,751 in 2011/12.
- 3.03 The total number of recorded attendances at school-based and club Dragon Sport sessions (7-11 years of age) has increased from 11,107 in 2009/10 to 24,774 in 2011/12.
- 3.04 The total number of recorded attendances at leisure centre-based Dragon Sport summer camps has increased from 1,992 in 2010 to 4,731 in 2012.
- 3.05 *Active 8-16*, the physical activity on referral initiative for young people aged 8-16 years with social, emotional or physical difficulties, saw a 52.5% increase between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in the number of clients completing the referral period or taking up other activities.
- 3.06 Disability Sport in Flintshire grew significantly between 2010/11 to 2011/12, with the number of participatory opportunities increasing from 23,387 to 28,779; the number of clubs increasing from 16 to 19; the number of club members increasing from 254 to 449; and the number of active coaches increasing from 73 to 83.
- 3.07 Attendance figures for the Play Unit's free access Summer Play Scheme programme increased from 26,837 in 2009 to 26,920 in 2010 to 27,806 in 2011. During summer 2012, Play Scheme attendances exceeded 30,000 for the first time ever. 32,785 visits were recorded during the 5-week summer programme.
- 3.08 The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) has operated in its current format since 2008 and is funded by the Welsh Government in partnership with the Welsh Local Government Association, Local Authorities, Public Health Wales and Local Health Boards. Flintshire's NERS received 658 referrals in 2011/12 compared with 509 in 2010/11. This represents the Scheme's highest number of referrals to date since the current format commenced in 2008/9. The three main referring professionals to the Scheme are GPs, Physiotherapists and Practice Nurses, with GPs accounting for 44% of all referrals. In 2011/12, 53% of all referred clients completed the Scheme's 16-week programme.

- 3.09 During 2010/11, the administration of children's swimming lesson waiting lists was centralised with the Leisure Management System Team, thereby removing individual waiting lists at the five pool sites. Though parents wishing to add their child's name to the waiting list are still able to express a site preference for swimming lessons, the centralisation of the database has increased the promotion and awareness of available places at alternative sites. This option has proved acceptable to many parents and, as a consequence, waiting lists have been significantly reduced.

#### Quality management of leisure facilities

- 3.10 In December 2010, *Sport Flintshire*, the County's Sports Development Team, transferred from School Services to the Leisure Services section. The integration of the Sports Development Team within Leisure Services was a key recommendation in the Leisure Strategy and has been an extremely positive move in marrying the buildings and 'space' within leisure facilities with the client base and developmental instincts of the Sports Development Team.
- 3.11 During 2011/12, the Leisure Services' presence on the County Council website was reviewed with existing web pages revamped and new web pages introduced. The number of Leisure Centres' and Sports Development web pages has subsequently increased from 18 to 38. The new web pages, together with the customer on-line booking facility, were launched in mid-February 2012.

*SiteImprove* website analysis reports, utilised by Corporate I.T., state that the Leisure Services' web pages received **47,697** unique hits (new and returning users) during Quarter 2 2012/13 compared with **24,737** during Quarter 2 2011/12; a **92.82%** increase.

Net income from on-line bookings during Quarter 2 was £2,510.07, a **64.56%** increase on the figure of £889.53 recorded in the previous Quarter. At the end of Quarter 2, 105 unique customers had booked and paid on-line for a leisure centre activity; this compares with 51 unique customers at the end of Quarter 1.

#### Renewal of the County's leisure provision

- 3.12 In June 2010, following a robust procurement process, Flintshire County Council signed a four-year Partnering Agreement with *Alliance Leisure Services* for the re-development of some of its leisure centres. To date, circa £8 million has been invested in two leisure centre sites: Deeside (£5.5 million) and Jade Jones Pavilion, Flint (£2.5 million). Deeside Leisure Centre is now a sports facility of national significance and boasts an ice rink (National Centre for Ice Sports), Afon Spa (the first day spa in Wales), and Evolution Extreme

(the first indoor extreme sports arena in Wales and one of the largest of its type in Europe). The Jade Jones Pavilion is now a regional indoor bowling centre with an 8 lane ten pin bowling alley and a 4 lane flat green bowling rink.

The five-year income share agreements for the County Council's four fitness suites, which commenced in April 2011, and the extension of *Alliance Leisure Services'* sales and marketing training to all operational leisure centre employees, has produced significant results in terms of increased income.

Leisure Services' income increased by £220,000 (or 6.13%) in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11. This was largely due to a significant increase (79%) in fitness income, a key joint target area for growth for Leisure Services and *Alliance Leisure Services*. Total income in the re-developed areas of Deeside Leisure Centre increased by 54.39% in 2011/12 compared to 2010/11.

- 3.13 Commencing in 2010/11 and continuing in 2011/12 and 2012/13, an improvement scheme for children's play areas based upon a match-funding agreement between the County Council and Town & Community Councils has resulted in the County Council contributing £275k (a match-funded total of £550k) towards enhanced fixed play provision. By the end of 2012/13, 44 children's play areas, a quarter of the County's stock, will have benefited from upgrading works.

The match-funding scheme is a response to the Play Areas Survey conducted by *Play Safe & Space Consultancy* and completed in November 2010. The survey, commissioned by Leisure Services, assessed 172 fixed equipment play areas and 26 link sites for usage, quality, condition, access and wider strategic importance, and provides the County Council with a considerable evidence base to inform its future investment programme for children's play areas.

- 3.14 Leisure Services faces a number of ongoing challenges. The financial performance of the new facilities developed in partnership with Alliance Leisure Services, although encouraging, has not yet met the original income projections as presented to Executive in 2011. Projections are being revised based on actual trading data. There are a number of other financial pressures including increasing costs for goods and services, reduced income from the ice rink and a delayed staffing restructure which is being reviewed to achieve a sustainable staffing budget and structure.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to receive the progress report and note its contents.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 No direct implications as a result of this report.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 The initiative described at 3.07 provides free access to quality play provision throughout the County.

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 No direct implications as a result of this report.

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 The initiatives described at 3.05 and 3.06 improve access to leisure services for disabled people.

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 No direct implications as a result of this report.

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None required as a result of this report.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None in the production of this report.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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