

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE		
Title:	Leisure Contracts Update	
Key decision:	No	Item No: 6
Ward:	All	
Contributors:	Executive Director for Community Services	
Class:		Date: 9 July 2013

1. Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report invites comments from the Healthier Communities Select Committee on progress made with the two leisure contracts, Leisure Connection for the Downham Health & Leisure Centre; and Fusion for the other leisure facilities across the borough.
- 1.2 Set out within the report are updates on the contracts against four strategic objectives: improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities; contribute to community cohesion; contribute to the regeneration of the borough; and employment for local people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note and comment on the contents of the report.

3. Background and History

- 3.1 The borough's leisure facilities are managed on behalf of the Council by two contractors, Fusion Lifestyle and Leisure Connections.
- 3.2 On 1 June 2011, Mayor & Cabinet (Contracts) approved the award of the Leisure Services Contract to Fusion Lifestyle for a period of fifteen years. The contract commenced on 15 October 2011 with immediate transfer of The Bridge Leisure Centre, Ladywell Arena, Ladywell Leisure Centre, Forest Hill School Sports Centre and Wavelengths Leisure Centre.
- 3.3 In addition to these leisure centres previously managed by Parkwood Leisure, the contract has since included the new centre on Loampit Vale (Glass Mill), Forest Hill Pools, Forest Hill School Sports Centre and Warren Avenue playing field. Bellingham Leisure and Lifestyles Centre will transfer to Fusion during 2013.
- 3.4 Fusion Lifestyle is a registered charity and as such is required to demonstrate charitable objectives, with the company's mission being "to provide inclusive and accessible sport & leisure for a healthier lifestyle".
- 3.5 Downham Health & Leisure Centre opened in March 2007, and is managed by Leisure Connection Ltd operating through an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) or trust, Downham Lifestyles Limited. The centre includes health care facilities, library, community hall, and leisure services (including a 25m

swimming pool, teaching pool, gym, studios, floodlit Astro turf and multi use games area, and playing fields).

4. Policy Context

- 4.1 Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy '*Shaping our Future*' reflects the many individual strategies and plans endorsed by different agencies and partnerships in Lewisham. All are working with our citizens to build a successful and sustainable future. The key principles of this strategy are reflected throughout the new leisure contract to ensure regular delivery to local residents over the life of the contract.

These key principles are:

- Ambitious and achieving – where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential
- Safer – where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse
- Empowered and responsible – where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities
- Clean, green and liveable – where people live in high quality housing and can care for and enjoy their environment
- Healthy, active and enjoyable – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being
- Dynamic and prosperous – where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond.

- 4.2 The Council's Cultural Strategy highlights health as a key theme with the objective to '*Build healthy and health conscious communities through culture, sport and leisure*' by:

- maximising opportunities for disabled and older people to participate in culture and leisure
- reducing inequalities in health outcomes by developing appropriate cultural and leisure programmes
- encouraging healthy lifestyles by improved working with partners increasing the number of children and young people and their families using culture and leisure to support a healthy lifestyle.

5. Leisure Contracts Update

- 5.1 The key strategic areas of influence for the leisure contracts are as follows:

- to improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities
- to contribute to community cohesion
- to contribute to the regeneration of the borough
- employment for local people

Progress against each of these are set out below.

5.2 Improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities

- 5.2.1 A key objective of the two leisure contracts and the borough Sports Plan is to increase participation in sport and physical activity by local residents, through the use of the leisure facilities.
- 5.2.2 **Free swimming:** Free swimming is available for residents aged 16 and under and 60+ with a Lewisham library card. Across the Fusion contract there were 38,189 free swims during 2012-13; and at Downham 2012-13 usage has increased from the previous year.
- 5.2.3 **Be Active:** The Be Active card replaced the Lewisham Plus card in October 2012 with concessions and free access to leisure activities across the borough. Across the Fusion sites 414 new members joined since October 2012 with 12,128 activities taking place, of which over 8,600 were gym visits. In Downham the number of Be Active members grows month on month, with 1,700 users making 5,700 visits to the centre since it started.
- 5.2.4 **Exercise on Referral and Active Heart:** These two schemes are run jointly with NHS Lewisham and allow eligible residents experiencing health issues to be referred into tailored exercise courses by their GP or cardiac staff at the hospital. Fusion received 2,455 referrals across 4 centres in 2012-13 with approximately 56% attending an initial group assessment. Completion of the courses drops and work is being undertaken by Public Health to increase the percentage that complete.
- 5.2.5 **Participation:** General participation of the Fusion leisure centres has increased during the 2012-13 period: the number of people using all the facilities increased by 46% during these 12 months. The number (111,034 people) using the facilities in May 2013 was 53% higher than May 2012: 29% of this increase is due to the opening of Forest Hill pools and Warren Avenue in the interim, and 24% is a like for like increase. Swim school has seen a 37% uplift between April 2012 and March 2013 (over 100,000 swimming lessons were taught), and classes a 32% uplift. Participation across target groups has also been positive during this 12 month period, with 22% increase by over 60s; 907% increase by disabled users; 143% increase by BME users; 14% increase of under-16s; and 76% of women users.
- 5.2.5.1 During 2012-13 a total of 384,557 visits were made to the Downham Centre; a drop from around 443,000 the previous year. This is in part due to the opening of Forest Hill pools, and in particular a number of schools moving their swimming classes. Whilst this is a drop for Downham it does mean a more even distribution of school swimming across the borough. Leisure Connection is working towards improving participation figures through a number of initiatives, including refurbishing the gym, an improved Be Active offer, free swimming lessons for years 5 & 6 in the holidays, and a new community liaison manager whose role it is to increase participation. The Downham contract provides a range of activities geared towards participation of certain groups. Young people can take part in street dance, Millwall holiday football camps and 'fit for sport' camps. BME groups are targeted via the Community Liaison Manager. Adult swimming lessons were very popular and the 60+ Legacy programme had tai chi and line dancing. Particular activities are delivered specifically for women, such as girls football, women's netball and ladies only swim sessions.

- 5.2.6 **Health promotion & activities:** Leisure Connection work with their partners in the Downham Health & Leisure Centre to promote healthy lifestyles. For example, free NHS health checks, Love Yourself event in February, National Depression Awareness week activities, Shape Up weight management programme, and Check and Change programme.
- 5.2.7 **Healthy eating:** Within both contracts there is a requirement for healthy food and healthy vending. Downham has recently installed school compliant drinks vending machines which are 80% water based; and the café has started to use local fruit & vegetable and meat suppliers. Leisure Connection work closely with Downham Nutrition Partnership and Delicious Nutritious to provide cooking classes and healthy eating events within the centre for free.
- 5.2.8 **Pricing:** Working with the Council, Fusion provide subsidised fees and charges for Lewisham residents (with a Lewisham library card) and have a pricing strategy that is highly competitive within the industry. The reduced economic circumstances of some residents is addressed particularly through the Be Active card.
- 5.2.9 **Inclusivity:** Access for all is a cornerstone of both contracts. The Bridge and Ladywell Arena both have the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accreditation; with Forest Hill Pools and Forest Hill school expected to receive theirs very shortly. Wavelengths will be audited on completion of the refurbishment works, and Glass Mill will also be submitted. At Downham the Seals swimming club use the pool for disabled swimming sessions, and the MS Society have two targeted weekly exercise sessions.
- 5.3 Contribute to community cohesion
- 5.3.1 Both contracts undertake a number of activities and initiatives which encourage participation, bring communities together and provide opportunities. Examples include the following.
- 5.3.2 Fusion support the development of a number of sports clubs; including Lewisham Thunder Basketball Club at Forest Hill School Sports Centre; Lewisham Football Club and Kent Athletics Club at Ladywell Arena; Park Langley Tennis Club at the Bridge; and Saxon Crown at Glass Mill.
- 5.3.3 Fusion made the most of the excitement in the lead up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games by hosting and supporting a number of events. For example, the Bridge hosted a Line the Streets workshop to make flags for the torch relay; and Ladywell Arena and S-factor Athletics Club held 100 and 50 days to go events. They feel this contributed to the growth in usage.
- 5.3.4 Fusion actively participates in the Time Credits scheme, providing swim, gym and selected classes in exchange for credits earned through volunteering. By supporting the scheme Fusion are widening the offer range for spending credits, encourage residents who may not normally use the centres and encourage more people to volunteer and support their local economy.
- 5.3.5 Fusion centres have offered additional activities through external funding to the tune of £33,599, including purchasing softball equipment with NHS funding and working with the Positive Ageing Council on delivering more over 60s activities. Fusion directly sponsored a football day at the Olympic Live Site, disability sports day, and Lewisham schools cross country championships.

5.3.6 Downham Health and Leisure Centre supported a number of activities as well, including:

- Swimathon for Marie Curie Cancer Care and Sport Relief
- Marathon spinathon for WheelPower
- 100 days to the Olympics celebrated with free sessions and taster classes
- The annual 'Downham Celebrates' event
- World's largest coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support
- Diversity Day

5.3.7 Leisure Connection awarded funding to five groups during 2012-13 including £3000 towards the purchase of a trampoline in order to start a local trampoline club.

5.4 Regeneration of the Borough

5.4.1 Overall, the Council has viewed investment in leisure facilities as a way of regenerating town centres and offering community based facilities in densely populated and poorer neighbourhoods. These in themselves offer opportunities to promote community engagement, cohesion and healthy lifestyles.

5.4.2 **Glass Mill:** Glass Mill opened to the public at the beginning of June 2013 and is the culmination of several years of major investment in the borough's leisure facilities. Forming part of the new Barratt's Renaissance development, the leisure centre has state of the art facilities, including a 25m competition pool, 20m learner pool, 100 station gym, two studios, health suite, climbing wall, crèche, meeting room and café.

5.4.3 **Forest Hill Pools:** Forest Hill pools opened in September 2012; a brand new facility retaining its original façade. Over 1,200 people came through the doors on its opening weekend.

5.4.4 **Wavelengths:** The £1.5m redevelopment of Wavelengths is shortly coming to an end and transforms the building into a modern facility. A new fitness gym, opened in January, has replaced the old library area. A new health suite, soft play and studio opened in May 2013, and the remaining works, notably the leisure pool, will be completed in July.

5.4.5 **The Bridge:** Fusion and the Council successfully secured funding from the London Marathon Trust, Sport England and Viridor to redevelop the cricket nets and purchase outdoor cricket sight screens to offer a higher standard of cricket at the Bridge.

5.4.6 **Bellingham Lifestyles Centre:** Final negotiations to enable the integration of Bellingham Leisure & Lifestyle Centre into the Fusion contract are currently underway.

5.4.7 **Downham Health & Leisure Centre:** Via the lifecycle plan Leisure Connection have replaced the floor and redecorated the multi-purpose and fitness studios. A refurbished gym very recently opened.

5.5 Employment for local people

- 5.5.1 The two leisure contracts provide opportunities for employment and training for local residents.
- 5.5.2 65% of Fusion staff working in the borough's centres are Lewisham residents, and 11 apprentices are studying leisure related NVQs. A range of training is provided to all staff, and a number of the courses are available to local residents where space permits.
- 5.5.3 The Council worked closely with Fusion to choose a local café provider for the new Glass Mill centre. Local café, Rhubarb and Custard won the contract, and are now also the Wavelengths café provider.
- 5.5.4 Leisure Connection work with training provider, Life Time, to employ apprentices, followed by permanent contracts. Two work experience students from Bromley College worked at the centre during 2012 to develop their knowledge of the industry.

6. **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 The combination of new contract and new, more efficient and attractive buildings, has allowed the Council to make savings on the leisure budget.

7. **Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Council's leisure services specification was conducted before both contracts were tendered. A number of the actions contained within the EIA aim to deliver a positive impact on equality in the Borough. Some highlights of this include:
- Free gym inductions have been offered for the Exercise on Referral and Active Heart programmes; and subsidised access for Be Active members.
 - Specific single sex sessions are being programmed including the continuation of the successful 'women's only' evening at Forest Hill pools.
 - Free access to facilities for national sportsmen and women of all ages is being provided for the duration of the contract (FANS scheme).
 - 50 hours of free access per year is being utilised by the Council's sports & Leisure Service. Emphasis will be placed on delivery of activities for the equalities groups listed within the EIA.

8. **Legal Implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9. **Conclusion**

- 9.1 Through the borough's two leisure providers, Fusion and Leisure Connection, the Council can provide many benefits to local people such as; employment, state of the art facilities, subsidised and free activities for those most in need,

and health improvements. Continuous monitoring and working in partnership with the two contractors will ensure continued benefit for local people.

If there are any queries on this report please contact Petra Marshall, Community Resources Manager on 020 8314 7034.