

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 15 October 2018
SUBJECT:	Culture, Leisure & Sport update
LEAD OFFICER:	Shifa Mustafa, Executive Director - Place Hazel Simmonds, Director of District Centres & Regeneration
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Oliver Lewis – Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The proposals included in this report contribute to achieving the key outcome: We value the arts, culture, sports and activities from Croydon's newly adopted Corporate Plan. The proposals contained in this report also support the delivery of Croydon's Community Strategy 2013-18 and the aim to create 'a stronger, fairer borough where no community is held back' from Croydon's Opportunity & Fairness Plan (2016-2020)	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: There are no direct costs arising from this report.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO. This is not a Key Decision	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the contents of this report

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an update relating to Croydon's Culture, Leisure & Sport offer. This report details recent progress and future strategic plans for development in line with the most recent Corporate Plan.

3. DETAIL

3.1 Culture, leisure and sport within the borough are fundamental to creating a place where everybody wants to live and work through encouraging the use of local assets to contribute to wider outcomes. One of the key thematic priorities of the recently agreed Corporate Plan is **valuing arts, culture, sports and activities**. Croydon has a good range of assets and provision to build on in these areas:

- Croydon benefits from over 127 parks and open spaces including a number of water features and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Croydon's leisure offer includes 2 in-house facilities, 5 contractor-operated sites and facilities within parks and open spaces such as tennis courts, sports pitches and hardcourt areas.
- Further sports provision including: Croydon's participation in the London Youth Games, RAP, a sports programme for young people with disabilities and additional needs, Walking for Health and Ping, borough-wide table tennis provision.
- Croydon has a growing and diverse cultural sector, events calendar and the Fairfield Halls under refurbishment as well as a range of smaller venues, galleries and studio provision across the borough
- Croydon Museum and Archive Service in the Croydon Clocktower
- Croydon's library service comprises of 13 libraries, a home library service and a range of e-resources available online to members.

3.2 Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), took over the running of the council's leisure centres and Ashburton Hall in April 2018. The new leisure contract includes the introduction of Ourparks and Silver Fit programmes along with supporting and managing a comprehensive Tennis programme in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association and partners.

The new leisure provider is intended to maximise the use of leisure assets, parks and green spaces to increase participation. Added value that the new contract is projected to bring includes:

- **Capital Investment:** Over the life of the contract £3million will be invested which will include refurbishments to leisure facilities, outdoor hardcourt facilities and open space activity.
- **Outdoor activation programme:** GLL will coordinate a programme of outdoor activity to facilitate increased usage of Croydon's parks and green spaces.
- **Ashburton Hall:** The inclusion of Ashburton Hall provides an opportunity to create a community hub within Ashburton Park, providing a day nursery, community hall, performance arts hub, training and development and revitalisation of outdoor sporting facilities.
- **GLL Sport Foundation:** Forty eight talented young athletes from Croydon have benefited from a £27,900 fund to date and athletes will continue to be supported through the GLL Sport Foundation (GSF) awards, the largest independent athlete support programme in the UK.
- **The London Youth Games:** GLL has contributed sponsorship to support the Croydon Squad for the 2018 London Youth Games
- **Apprenticeships:** Through the GLL Academy 9 apprenticeships will be offered each year along with Recruitment fairs. This will be launched from September

2018 and will provide pathways through to Leisure Management positions within GLL and beyond.

The leisure contract with GLL aims to achieve a cost-neutral position over the term of the contract. There will be a significantly reduced revenue subsidy from the Council in years 2018/19 to 2020/21, saving £1m by 2021 and resulting in a zero contribution from 2021/22 until the end of the contract.

- 3.3 In 2016, 'Ambitious for Parks' highlighted the importance of Croydon's parks and open spaces. 'Croydon Talks Parks', a large scale consultation, engaged over 1500 residents and over the last two years the council has listened to resident views and progressed a number of work streams including:
- **Community Small Grants:** funds were disbursed to community groups for projects that addressed the themes of health and well-being, the cultural offer, community stewardship and environmental sustainability and biodiversity across parks, open spaces, woodlands and allotments. Projects delivered included: a wayfinding project by Croydon Striders to encourage more people to exercise independently, a new composting toilet for Surrey Beekeepers Association and local community events as well as numerous projects to improve signage and interpretation.
 - **Outdoor Active Spaces:** £470k was invested by S106, the Matt Palmer Trust and councillor ward budgets to support the design and installation of five innovative and unique 'spaces' in local parks that are free, accessible and encourage physical activity. To date four spaces have been installed and an activation programme is due to launch in 2019.
 - **Croydon Parks Vision:** six 'masterplans' have been developed to support the regeneration of six parks and open spaces (Ashburton Park, Park Hill Park, Lloyd Park, South Norwood Lake & Grounds, Norbury Park and Happy Valley). Elements of these plans will be delivered in the year ahead with key deliverables including but not limited to the regeneration of South Norwood's fishing platforms and improved signage and interpretation.
 - **Play spaces review:** in the past two years the Council has worked with local Friends groups to regenerate Grange Park and South Norwood Lake & Grounds play spaces and the Council is undertaking a review of the current play offer across its 55 parks playgrounds with a view to informing capital investment in the year ahead.

Parks play an important role as cultural spaces where communities can come together to celebrate and enjoy performance, activities and events. Larger scale events held in parks this summer have included the Butterfly Festival at Lloyd Park, Croydon Pride and the Croydon Mela in Wandle Park. Smaller scale events have also taken place across other parks including the Environmental Fair and Summer of Love Festival in Wandle Park for example.

- 3.4 A detailed report on cultural provision came to Cabinet in June of this year with an update on activity, an indication of future direction and outlined intention to develop a Cultural Strategy for Croydon. Since June there has been progress in a number of areas worth highlighting. Work on the Cultural Strategy has begun, building on the consultation and engagement undertaken as part of developing the Borough of Culture bid.

The events in Croydon over the later summer period have been successful with increased numbers on 2017 for both Croydon Pride up to attendance of 6,000 and the Croydon Mela up to an estimated 10,000. The Rise Festival of Urban Art took place over the first two weeks in September which brought new street art commissions to the town centre, launched The Croydon Collection and has reached millions of people online. LIP, Croydon's first festival of poetry and spoken work, lead by Well Versed Ink based in Thornton Heath has been successful in gaining Arts Council funding as first time applicants and the London Open House tours of Fairfield Halls were booked out fully in the first few days of advertising.

Elsewhere on this Cabinet Agenda in the report on Growth Zone, there are updates on the large scale cultural programmes **Croydon-Lit** and **Music City**. The Music City ambitions have been endorsed by Croydon artists such as Nadio Rose and Krept and Konan. The roundtable sessions being led for Croydon by Sound Diplomacy have been very successful so far and well attended. These will feed into the next stage of development of the future of Croydon Music City. The ideas for Croydon-Lit are under development with several strategic sites in the pipeline for lighting treatment.

- 3.5 Sport and physical activity is delivered by an integrated service that works across parks and open spaces, district centres and areas of deprivation. Croydon's Facilities Strategy (2018 – 2023) published in September 2018, highlights supply and demand for a variety of sports. Primarily focusing on five sports (Bowls, Cricket, Football, Hockey and Tennis), the Strategy supports future planning, providing a framework for investment from partners such as Sport England, National Governing Bodies and GLL.

One particularly notable recent success is the plans for two new state-of-the-art football 'hub' facilities proposed for Ashburton Playing Fields and Purley Way Playing Fields. Funded by Sport England and the Football Foundation, planning applications for these are due for submission in October this year.

- 3.6 Croydon operates thirteen libraries - a large central library and twelve branch libraries - and a home library service for those residents who have difficulties leaving their homes. There will be in the region of 2 million physical visits this year to the service – with almost half to central library - and approximately 87,000 people will be active users of the service including the virtual library offer. Libraries offer residents an opportunity to come together thereby addressing social isolation and supporting community cohesion.

Over the coming years the council will embark upon a programme of library refurbishments that aim to ensure that our libraries are modern and relevant to community needs. Our libraries will be seen as inspiring local community and cultural hubs where communities can access information and get involved with a range of activities. Within the wider context of Croydon's growing cultural offer, libraries will focus on the spoken and written word.

Due to open in 2019, the new library at South Norwood will showcase a modern library facility which encompasses modern IT and facilities for visitors and flexible space that can be made available for events or meetings when not in use for library activities.

Since coming back into the council, the libraries service has moved quickly to develop a strong offer that is aligned to the council's priorities, including:

- establishing a family digital zone in Central Library by working in partnership with Best Start Croydon with plans to roll out digital zones in all Croydon libraries within the next two years
- a successful bid to become one of ten partners with the British Library to deliver ERDF funded business start up support within Croydon libraries over the coming year
- developing an artist in residence arrangement from September to October 2018 with local poetry performance and writing organisation, Well Versed Ink, at Thornton Heath library. Further residencies are being planned for 2019.
- developing stronger partnership working arrangements with a range of services and organisations such as Croydon Museum and the Croydon BME forum to deliver joint events

The council is currently developing its library strategy based on an analysis of needs within the borough and best practice elsewhere. This strategy will be presented to cabinet for approval in early 2019.

3.7 Croydon's work in supporting land management and biodiversity is delivered across a range of key partnerships including:

- **Great North Wood:** the London Wildlife Trust secured £699,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund for a 4 year project (2017-21). The project will see more residents involved in the revival of the remnants of the Great North Wood, learn new skills, and take part in community events/ citizen science projects and will also fund small scale woodland management interventions on some of the sites, which include Beaulieu Heights, Biggin Wood, Spa Wood/The Lawns, Grangewood Park and Long Lane Wood. To date, sites have greatly benefited from increased public access and invasive species removal.
- **The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)** continue to deliver a 2-day mid-week conservation volunteer project, carrying out valuable nature conservation work. TCV has recently been successful in its £80,000 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a 2 year Croydon Pond project, which aims to document the history of, record and survey all open water bodies in Croydon. In addition, volunteers will continue to support their ongoing management.
- **Downlands Partnership Project** delivers conservation grazing in Happy Valley, Sanderstead to Whyteleafe, Hutchinson's Bank and Foxley Wood. It also hosts the Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area (SWCA) Warden, who delivers educational session for school, volunteer conservation opportunities, manages the countryside area and surveys for wildlife – the site has a very healthy population of dormice, a nationally rare species.
- **London Bat Group** carried out its annual bat box check at both South Norwood Lake and Addington Hills. Regular surveys confirm good numbers. Plans are underway to continue the work started on an international Nathusius Pippistrell survey programme, which involves trapping and ringing of the species to track its migration routes to Eastern Europe.

The Council is currently working with Natural England and the City of London to achieve National Nature Reserve status for Happy Valley, SWCA, Riddlesdown (CBC area) and possibly Hawkshirst Wood, in addition to the surrounding City of London land.

There are currently six directly leased allotments sites in the borough and a commitment to work with the Federation of Allotment Societies to protect and support all of our allotment sites. The Council will look to invest in allotments capital infrastructure, digitally enhance the service, work with allotment holders to scope the potential for sites to become devolved, review fees and charges and actively seek out allotment opportunities in the north of the borough.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There is a strong commitment to a continued engagement with tenants and leaseholders, schools, and residents across all projects.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 This report has no direct financial implications. As a result of Cabinet's previous decision to appoint a new leisure operator, the award of the contract will offer financial benefits to the Council. The operator contract will be on the basis of no long-term ongoing revenue subsidy from the Council.

Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Deputy S151 Officer

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The Solicitor to the Council comments that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law for and on behalf of Jacqueline Harris Baker Director of Law and Monitoring Officer

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 This report contains no implications for HR all implications have been covered in previous reports.

Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Interim Head of HR Places on behalf of the Sue Moorman Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 Projects detailed and future developments, will consider Equalities Impact Assessments as part of the project planning process.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 No specific adverse environmental impacts have been identified resulting from the proposals contained in this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires at section 17: It shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. There are no specific recommendations in the report that impact on the prevention of crime and disorder.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 11.1 The basis for the recommendations set out in this report are to simply review progress across the portfolio of Culture, Leisure & Sport.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 No options have been presented at this time

CONTACT OFFICER: Hazel Simmonds, Director of District Centres and Regeneration, Ext. 63344

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT: None

BACKGROUND PAPERS: [Ambitious for Parks \(March 2016\)](#)
[Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure Services Operator – Appointment of Preferred Bidder \(Novemer 2017\)](#)