

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23rd FEBRUARY 2010

Report of the Director of Leisure and Environment

ITEM 7 UPDATE ON FREE SWIMMING FOR THOSE AGED 60 AND OVER AND 16 AND UNDER

Purpose of Report

To Provide an update on the uptake of free swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under.

Action Requested

That the content of the report be noted

Policy Context

To deliver the Corporate Plan Aims, Values and Ambitions of :-

- To support the Local Area Agreement target to achieve NI8
- To improve the wellbeing of residents
- To ensure people have healthier lifestyles
- To improve customer satisfaction
- To deliver services more efficiently and effectively
- To deliver high quality leisure provision
- To help deliver the Free Swim Programme

Background

Cabinet at its meeting on the 4th September 2008 considered a report on the proposed DCMS free swimming scheme for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under. At that meeting Cabinet resolved:

1. That approval be given to offer free swimming for those aged 60 or over at all Council leisure facilities from 1st April 2009 and that the grant of £45,905 from DCMS to enable free swimming for those aged 60 or over for 2009/10 and 2010/11 be accepted;
2. That an expression of interest is submitted to DCMS in relation to free swimming for those aged 16 and under and authority delegated to the Director of Leisure and Environment to determine whether any subsequent grant offer should be accepted;
3. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Leisure and Environment to determine whether free swimming for those aged 16 and

under at all council leisure facilities should be introduced subject to receipt of a grant from DCMS;

4. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Leisure and Environment to enter into agreements with the Council's Leisure Management Contractor in relation to a package of activities for free swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under; and
5. That a bid for the DCMS Capital Modernisation Pot for swimming pools is submitted for South Charnwood Swimming Pool and if successful that delegated authority be given to the Director of Leisure and Environment to accept the grant.

The proposals for free swimming were developed by Government as the centre-piece of the Government's plan to ensure a lasting sporting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, with the help of the Amateur Swimming Association, the LGA (supported by CLOA) and Sport England. The Legacy Action Plan, comprised of five chapters, which build on the Government's five promises to: make the UK a world-leading sporting nation; transform the heart of East London; inspire a generation of young people; make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living; to demonstrate the UK is a creative, inclusive and welcoming place to live in, visit and for business.

Free Swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under

The issue of free swimming and ensuring a county wide consistent offer was taken up by the County Cultural Services Officer Group. It was identified that whilst sufficient monies were being offered to Leicestershire local authorities by DCMS to provide free swimming for those aged 60 and over, insufficient funding was being offered to ensure all authorities within the County were in a position to potentially offer free swimming for those aged 16 and under. As a result of negotiations additional monies were put into the overall pot by both Leicestershire County Council (LCC) and Leicestershire, County and Rutland NHS (LCR NHS), which enabled all Leicestershire local authorities to be in a position to offer free swimming for those aged 16 and under and accept the grant.

Charnwood received a grant offer of £45,905 per annum for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 from DCMS to provide free swimming for those aged 60 and over.

A grant offer of £73,125 per annum for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 was received from DCMS to provide free swimming for those aged 16 and under. Further funding of £28,500 per annum for 2009/10 and 2010/11 was received from LCC and LCR NHS as part of the negotiated County wide package, in addition the borough Council contributed £9,500 from existing resources that had previously been identified for a more limited county wide free swimming offer. DCMS subsequently increased the grant offer by £15,122 to £88,247, as a result a county wide agreement was made that the additional monies in both 2009/10 and 2010/11 would be ring fenced by local authorities to use towards free swimming activities in

2011/12. £15,122 in both 2009/10 and 2010/11 (£30,244 in total) will be ringfenced towards continuation of free swimming in some form in 2011/12.

As a result the Director of Leisure and Environment entered into negotiations with the Council's Leisure Management Contractor, Serco Ltd, and agreed a fixed price package of activities associated with free swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under that would be offered for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11. The monies available were apportioned between Loughborough Leisure Centre, Soar Valley Leisure Centre and South Charnwood Leisure Centre.

Free swimming for both of these age groups commenced on 1st April 2009 until 31st March 2011 at all three Council owned leisure facilities.

The uptake for free swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under are detailed below:

All Facilities (Loughborough Leisure Centre, Soar Valley leisure Centre and South Charnwood Leisure Centre)						
	16 and Under			60 and Over		
	2008/09 16 & Under	DCMS 2009/10 16 & Under	Plus/ Minus 2008/09	2008/09 60+	DCMS 2009/10 Free 60+	Plus/ Minus 2008/09
April	4711	7162	2451	1761	2641	880
May	4265	5691	1426	1339	2240	901
June	3271	3061	-210	1546	2146	600
July	5486	5487	1	1930	2356	426
Aug	7407	7306	-101	1762	2200	438
Sept	2760	2763	3	1649	2262	613
Oct	3375	4512	1137	1686	3100	1414
Nov	2173	3256	1083	1552	3223	1671
Dec	1663	1938	275	1124	2155	1031
Jan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	35111	41176	6065	14349	22323	7974

There has been an increase of 6065 16 and under swimming attendances and an increase of 7974 in 60+ swimming attendances across the three council facilities between April to December 2009. An overall total of 14,039 increase in swimming attendances over the period. These figures have been achieved despite South

Charnwood Leisure Centre being closed for refurbishment during this period from May 24th reopening in 19 September 2009 (17 weeks closure period).

There is ongoing promotion of the free swimming offer through various mechanisms. The Charnwood free swimming scheme has also applied for and been successful in achieving the London 2012 Inspire Mark, which is a scheme which recognises outstanding non-commercial projects and events inspired by the Games.

Way Forward

It needs to be noted that funding from DCMS is still only available for financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11. Further funding from DCMS to local authorities to deliver the free swimming programmes in financial year 2011/12 and subsequent years will be subject to the outcome of the next Spending Review. The evidence from financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 will be used to inform future funding and delivery arrangements. There is no guarantee that further funding from DCMS will be available beyond 2010/11.

The only monies available to date are £30,244 (ring fenced monies) to continue some free swimming provision. Therefore from April 2011 the authority could be placed in a position where it would need to either withdraw from the full free swimming offer or find additional revenue funding to enable the free swimming offer to continue.

DCMS Capital Modernisation Pot

DCMS as part of the free swimming programme made available two capital pots of money.

Pot 3 : Modernising Pool Provision – Capital Reward Fund

£60million for capital projects designed to modernise pool provision was made available to reward those authorities which signed up to free swimming for those aged 60 and over and those aged 16 and under. Charnwood Borough Council were allocated £49,226 which was utilised towards the redevelopment of South Charnwood Leisure Centre.

Pot 4 : Modernising Pool Provision – Capital Challenge Fund

£25million per annum was made available in financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 to modernise pool provision. The vision for the use of these monies was that it would be utilised to improve school and community based swimming sports facilities, for individuals and for clubs and local communities.

The Council submitted a bid in October 2008 for £362,208 towards the swimming elements of the redevelopment of South Charnwood Swimming Pool. The Council found out in late March 2009 that we had been successful with the bid. Subsequently DCMS identified an under spend in allocated funds and invited additional bids, a further bid for £38,250 was submitted and secured towards the project.

