

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Phill Brightmore
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Leisure and Recreation
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1 LEISURE & CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Our financial strategy is paying dividends for services and residents. This focus on being more efficient, finding more modern ways of delivering, and bringing new income to the Council is enabling us to invest in our leisure services – something no other council in the region can say.

In just the past few months, I have been able to make a series of announcements about new investments to improve the leisure services our residents can enjoy.

One such investment is the extensive renovation of the sports pavilion at the historic Leverhulme Playing Fields in Eastham. The venue is around 50 years old and this improvement work will see it renovated and modernised. The site includes six football and two rugby pitches as well as three cricket squares.

It is one of Wirral Council's largest football facilities. Once renovated the aim is to encourage more users to the site, and to enhance the reputation of Wirral's leisure facilities. Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

I was also delighted to be able to put forward a major investment into our libraries. More than £600,000 will be set aside as the first part of an investment into our library network and will be used to upgrade and modernise facilities. Work will include making buildings more accessible for those with disabilities and will provide updated IT and digital equipment for staff and library users.

It is also hoped the investment will improve libraries as learning environments and to ensure they are able to host more events for local communities. Despite vast and continuing cuts to our budgets, we are proud Wirral has protected this service and not shut any libraries.

This has been achieved often in partnership with the communities they serve. We should all be proud of that achievement and I want to thank the staff and volunteers who work so hard to ensure we retain a comprehensive library network.

Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

This year we have also been able to put forward a major investment into improving play areas throughout Wirral.

The upgrade works will improve existing play areas to make them more enjoyable to local children. Works will include painting equipment and furniture while replacing worn out, missing or damaged items and surfacing.

This is a welcome investment for children and their parents across Wirral, who can benefit from the improved and repaired play areas – many of which are located in our wonderful award-winning parks and green spaces.

Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

Over the next few months, residents will also benefit from new investment into our leisure centres. Initial work, planned for Leasowe, Guinea Gap and West Kirby leisure centres, will see the following improvements made to the fitness facilities.

- Complete replacement of all of the gym equipment at Leasowe
- Replacement of equipment and console upgrades at Guinea Gap
- Replacement of consoles at West Kirby Concourse
- Work with the community at Woodchurch to further improve the offer

Read more about this work in the [Wirral Globe](#). This is in addition to a major revamp of the Oval, with a £775,000 project ensuring improvements to reception and upgrades to the sports hall and the pool changing facilities. The aim is to create a 'stand out' site that is multi-functional and can be an affordable centre competing even more strongly with the ever-increasing number of private facilities.

The Oval's upgrade will also mean more people than ever will be able to take advantage of recent new and improved Invigor8 membership schemes which now offer access across the whole borough to seven gyms with earlier and extended opening hours, 10 pools and more than 350 exercise classes, six indoor tennis courts and a sailing centre.

Read more about this in the [Wirral Globe](#).

Finally, I want to highlight to Members a fantastic initiative which has been delivered at Birkenhead Central Library over the winter months. Working in conjunction with Wirral Ark and other community and church groups, Birkenhead Central library was opened for one night a week to provide shelter for the homeless.

Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).