

# TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 21 September 2023  
Times Not Specified

Present: Councillor H Cameron (Chair)

Councillors P Martin G Bennett  
P Jobson J Johnson  
T Laing M Redfern  
G McManus N Graham (for R  
K Stuart Molyneux)

## 27 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website.

## 28 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Craig McDonald  
Councillor Naomi Graham was in attendance as substitute

## 29 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest. No interests were declared.

## 30 MINUTES

The Chair requested an amendment be made to the minutes in relation to the Community Safety Strategy. It had been minuted that 'Wirral gets it's fair share' in relation to the re-distribution of assets and monies seized via the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, however the Chair requested that this be changed to 'Wirral will try to get its fair share'.

**Resolved – that subject to the above changes, the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 be approved and adopted as a correct record.**

## 31 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

There were no questions, statements or petitions from the public or Members.

## 32 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Chair informed Members that two public questions had been received.

Hannah Rapley asked a question regarding Disability swimming sessions at Guinea Gap, stating that they had been suspended over the school summer holidays. Hannah asked if consideration could be given to continuing disability sessions over the summer holidays.

The chair responded to say that officers from the Swim Wirral team, have taken on board this request and will endeavour to work with this user group to try and provide more swimming sessions during school holidays at Guinea Gap Leisure Centre, and to make sport and physical activity part of everyone's everyday life.

The Chair read out a question on behalf of Tigs Manley who had noted the temperature over a three-month period. Out of a possible 38 sessions 30 the temperature was reported higher than 23°C which is 79% of the time. The maximum temperature recorded was 28 degrees. The questioner asked if Leasowe Sports Hall could have better adaptability to heat temperatures and better air flow.

The Chair responded to say that during the summer, an automatic heating valve was stuck in the open position which resulted in the increased air temperature within the Sports Hall at Leasowe Leisure Centre. The fault has since been identified and the valve has been isolated.

Furthermore, during the exceptionally high temperatures in May and June, the fresh air supply fan was drawing in outside air during daylight hours which was as high as 29oC on some days, and therefore the sports hall was as hot as the outside ambient air temperature.

## 33 **TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE COMMITTEE BUDGET AND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the report which provided an update on the budgets in respect of the in-year position and the anticipated pressures for future years which were being considered within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Members were informed that the Medium-Term Financial Plan considered the future pressures and savings options that had been put forward as part of a

balanced budget position. The Council faced a challenging financial outlook due to inflationary and demand pressures alongside the previous significant reductions in Government funding and uncertainty around the future financial settlements. At the end of Quarter 1, there was a forecast adverse variance of £1.821m against the Committee's revised net revenue budget of £13.911m, which is equivalent to a variance of 13% from the annual budget.

Members queried the £1.44m overspend and asked if this took into account asset transfer and tennis centre. Members were assured that the Tennis Centre should break even, and the asset transfers costs are now reported to Policy and Resources Committee. Members noted that income profiles were subject to seasonality and delays to transfers. In terms of SEND transportation, Members requested that officers look at the Terms of Reference to ensure it is sitting within the right Committee. Members also raised the adverse variance in regard to the Floral Pavillion and queried plans in relation to this. Members were informed that work was being undertaken on the future options for the Floral Pavillion and Members will be consulted further at a future workshop.

**Resolved – that the report be noted.**

34 **FUTURE OPTIONS FOR THE SAIL LOFT COASTAL KITCHEN, WEST KIRBY.**

The Assistant Director for Libraries, Leisure and Customer Engagement presented a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services. The report provided members of the Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee (TCCL) with options and recommendations on the future operating model for the Sail Loft Coastal Kitchen, a Council owned venue, which was operated in house as a café / bistro that has its premises above the offices of the Wirral Watersports Centre in South Parade, West Kirby.

The facility was built between 2019 and 2021 and opened in July 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The venue had failed to operate at a surplus and had struggled in the current macro-economic environment, like many other establishments in the catering and hospitality sector. It was incurring losses for the Council. This report was intended to present a comprehensive evaluation of the performance and opportunities for the venue and to justify a closure decision.

Members queried if trade unions had been consulted regarding the closure and staffing implication and were assured that this would be undertaken once approval had been given by committee. A discussion was had on community wealth building, prioritising local businesses as potential leaseholders and the time scales for this.

On a motion by the Chair, Seconded by Councillor Johnson it was,

**Resolved – that,**

- 1. the closure of the Sail Loft Coastal Kitchen, on 31st October 2023 be supported.**
- 2. officers to identify and secure a commercial lease, to assume operation of the venue from Spring / Summer 2024, prioritising options for local organisations before expanding to a wider market and to assume operations as soon as practically possible.**

35 **SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Assistant Director for Leisure, Libraries and Engagement presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services. The report highlighted the annual progress (April 2022 to March 2023) that had been made since the launch of Creating an Active Wirral 2026, the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Wirral.

The Chair informed Committee that the Active Wirral Team had received an award for the 'Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative (including Social Care)' category at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Service Awards 2023, for its Active Wirral Wellbeing Weight Management Project. Members also commended the team for their work on upgrading Bidston Tennis Centre.

**Resolved – that the report be noted**

36 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Lead Consultant Lawyer presented the report of the Director of Law and Governance Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

Members asked to be updated by Briefing Note on the Community Asset Transfer process and also requested further information on the upcoming Borough of Culture. Members were informed that a report would be brought to a future committee on this.

**Resolved – that the report be noted.**

