

LIFE LEISURE: ANNUAL REPORT 2022/3

Report of the Director of Regeneration & Development

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report outlines Life Leisure's performance during its first year of operation as a Community Interest Company (CIC) wholly owned by the Council.
- 1.2 The report also details how Life Leisure has re-positioned itself to align its objectives to the strategic aims of the Council and pivot from being a facility operator with an associated active communities service, to become a community wellness organisation which exists to improve the lives of others.
- 1.3 The report also describes the challenges and successes it has experienced within its first 12 months of trading, which commenced post-pandemic and at the onset of a global energy crisis.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 New governance arrangements were put in place from 1st April 2022 for the delivery of active communities programmes in Stockport and the operation of Council-owned and leased leisure centres. Stockport Active CIC, a wholly-owned Council company, took over responsibility for these functions from Stockport Sports Trust and has continued to use the Life Leisure brand.
- 2.2 At the inception of the new arrangements and to provide appropriate oversight of the new arrangements, it was agreed that a retrospective annual report would be provided through the June Scrutiny cycle.

3. STRATEGIC AMBITION

- 3.1 To ensure the organisation remains visible and relevant as a substantial contributor to population health in the borough, Life Leisure has focused concerted efforts this past year in building and strengthening collaborations with multiple organisations across the integrated health care system.
- 3.2 They have simplified their customer-facing messaging around Purpose & Mission with a new strap-line 'Live well, live life' and have embedded three pillars:

Life Leisure **promote** daily activity.

- All marketing and branding has been softened, with welcoming and caring language used across all campaigns. The emotional and social benefits of being active are at the forefront of messaging to support the organisation to be seen as a holistic and preventative health service.
- Improvements have been made across all digital platforms to ensure accessibility.
- The membership package has been re-structured and streamlined to ensure affordability and transparency.
- Customer feedback has been welcomed and encouraged via a variety of channels and including the national industry recognised measure Net Promoter Score (NPS).

Life Leisure **connect** across the system with health, social care, education, and other partners, and deliver health interventions and preventative programmes.

- A vital part of the organisation, the highly decorated Active Communities Team ensures the organisation delivers the right activity, at the right time, in the right environment out in the heart of our neighbourhoods.
- The Physical Activity Referral in Stockport (PARiS) and Stay Steady schemes continue to go from strength to strength, offering expert, evidence based physical activity support to inactive people living with chronic health conditions.
- A real commitment to invest in the health and wellbeing of the workforce to overcome the challenge of recruitment into critical roles. A series of actions have already been implemented including enhanced employee engagement, a commitment to training and development, an extension to the complimentary staff membership and the appointment of internal mental health first aiders.
- Life Leisure continues to take strides, and in some cases the lead, in working collaboratively in a multi-disciplinary setting, to improve the lives of the people of Stockport.

Life Leisure **provide** facilities and activity programmes that enable communities to take charge of their own health.

- Life Leisure continues to work closely with the Council to prioritise planned preventative maintenance (PPM) and facility improvement. This extends towards meeting challenging targets linked to Stockport Climate Action Now (CAN).
- Swimming continues to be a significant part of the organisations core business which is reflected in all business planning, programming and investment.
- As the main driver of income, health & fitness remains a priority. As well as the introduction of a new training product across multiple sites, new roles have been introduced, providing additional career pathways for gym staff.

4. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

- 4.1 Life Leisure have faced unprecedented challenges in relation the cost of utilities during 2022/23, although action has been undertaken to reduce consumption across the estate. This has had a severe impact on the financial position of the organisation during the year and has increased the financial support required from the Council.
- 4.2 Much of the estate from which Life Leisure operate is aging with inefficient plant and insulation. This impacts on the financial and operational performance of the organisation. Life Leisure and the Council are working collaboratively to plan future investment in the estate to ensure it meets neighbourhood needs, contributes to improved financial performance and contributes to the decarbonisation of the estate.

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The annual report is consistent with Life Leisure's obligations under the Services Contract and Members Agreement which exist between the Council and Life Leisure.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 6.1 There is no human resources impact on the Council in relation to the annual report..

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 Addressing health inequalities is a key strategic ambition of Life Leisure and runs through the key priorities and objectives of the annual report.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 Contribution to Stockport's Climate Action Now strategy and limiting Life Leisure's impact upon the environment has been an important priority during 2022/3. Life Leisure are taking action to build upon energy consumption savings of 12% already achieved on 2021/22 levels by embedding energy consumption awareness across the organisation and working with the Council to install more climate efficient infrastructure and plant across the leisure estate.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Scrutiny Committee are requested to comment on Life Leisure's annual report for 2022/3.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Peter Ashworth on 0161 474 2392 or by email on peter.ashworth@stockport.gov.uk