

UPDATE ON LIFE LEISURE CRECHE PROVISION

Report of the Director of Development and Regeneration

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on the provision of creches by Life Leisure across their leisure offer across the Borough.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Stockport Active CIC t/a Life Leisure has operated the Council's leisure provision across the Borough since 2022.
- 2.2 The previous provider, Stockport Sports Trust, had traditionally provided a free creche facility across six of the centres but these were running at an annual loss of over £128,000.
- 2.3 Following the re-opening of the centres after the pandemic and the significant financial pressure on the CIC (and by extension the Council) created by a national loss in membership numbers and the increase in utility costs, together with a reduction in usage of the creches to 18% of the capacity, a decision was taken to close the creches from 1st April 2022.
- 2.4 There remains a creche service at Cheadle run by a third party operator with free space being given to them for this although Life Leisure have been advised that the usage is below the levels required to make it sustainable.

3. CHALLENGES FOR RE-INTRODUCING THE CRECHES

- 3.1 It is worth noting that no other local authorities in Greater Manchester and very few private providers provide any creche service (free or paid) as part of their gym offer due to the financial challenges.
- 3.2 Life Leisure have undertaken work to look at the cost of re-introducing the free service and they have estimated that this would cost £150,000 pa and lead to further unsustainable financial pressure on the CIC.

- 3.3 They have also investigated whether there would be a viable commercial model and their experience plus the current provision at Cheadle leads them to believe that this could only be run at a loss.
- 3.4 As a result, there are no current plans from Life Leisure to re-introduce the service.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Paul Richards on Tel: 07710 149670 or by email on paul.richards@stockport.gov.uk