

| Date | Item | Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions: | Response/Comments |
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| 05-Sep-2018 | Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions | <p>Members were disappointed that the decision to proceed with the consultation of the fees of Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions to prompt a greater uptake in Community Asset Transfers had already been made. Scrutiny Members stated that this should have come to Scrutiny sooner and with greater detail on the forthcoming proposals in the consultation.</p> | <p>The Cabinet Member and officers explained at the meeting that this was the earliest opportunity to present anything to scrutiny as we were currently at the beginning of the process and the timescales relating to making budget savings in the Council's MTFs meant that a consultation exercise was required asap to inform future Cabinet decisions. Any further delay in progressing the consultation exercise while additional information was gathered would inevitably result in less time for clubs to respond to the situation prior to the proposed implementation date for a new charging regime of April 2020, should Cabinet ultimately determine that this was something they would be prepared to support.</p> |
| | | <p>Members were concerned that the current process of managing the facilities was too fragmented as they were currently managed by different directorates and departments. Members recommended that all Directorates work more holistically and adopt a One Council approach to enable them to access all available funding streams.</p> | <p>Officers in the Communities Directorate work closely with officers in the Children's Directorate to ensure that so far as is possible the provision and management of outdoor sports facilities is co-ordinated and that service users have greater choice. The use of assets controlled by schools is however, not always possible due to local management of schools and additionally sometimes the layout constraints or the requirements of the sporting governing bodies means that the facilities in some schools is sometimes inappropriate for some competitive sports fixtures. However, in parallel with the proposed consultation exercise it is intended that work will continue looking at the opportunities presented by schools facilities although as explained at the meeting this will not be a total solution for the financial issues that we are seeking to address.</p> |
| | | <p>Members were concerned about the fragmentation of the management of the facilities and the potential loss of control the authority faced if the facilities were transferred under the Community Asset Transfer Scheme. Members therefore recommended that the Authority explore the possibility of a charitable organisation being established to manage the Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions so they are managed under one organisation, similar to the Awen model.</p> | <p>This option has been explored on a number of separate occasions. Due to the low level of revenue recovery from the hire and use of the facilities, it would be extremely challenging to establish the financial business case to support such an approach and achieve the required level of savings. The Directorate remains committed however, to securing the most sustainable outcome for the Council's outdoor leisure facilities and continues to explore all possible options.</p> |

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| | | <p>Members recommended engaging with third sector organisations such as BAVO, Play Wales, Disability Sport Wales, Chwarae Teg including bodies representing minority groups to encourage development and growth and encourage the use of facilities by all members of the public.</p> | <p>The Councils outdoor leisure facilities have been in place for many years and have well established patterns of use. While some assets are used more than others and some capacity exists for further use, which would be welcomed, it would not be possible under the existing charging regime to make any significant inroads into the subsidy provided by the Council to maintain the assets and to address the proposed savings identified under the Councils MTFS.</p> |
| | | <p>Members recommended the Authority engage with schools on the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act to encourage the use of Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions as there was a fear amongst members if they were not used they could potentially close due to lack of interest and investment. Members asked if there was opportunity for schools to undertake a Community Asset Transfer as part of this process.</p> | <p>The Council's outdoor leisure facilities are used primarily by sports clubs and associations who promote their use locally within the community. While exact figures are not available, it is recognised that use of the facilities for football and in particular rugby at the more senior levels is in decline. While more use and engagement with children through the schools would be welcome, it is again unlikely that this would materially alter the overall direction of travel and address the current financial shortfall facing the Council and the levels of subsidy being provided to this service. The option of schools potentially CAT transferring assets will be followed up but it is worth noting that over the last few years we have not had a single expression of interest relating to this matter from a school. The local management of schools issues mentioned earlier may in any case be a potential barrier to the continued use by local clubs unless appropriate arrangements could be negotiated with the relevant school.</p> |
| | | <p>Members were concerned at the complexity of the CAT process and recommended that the role of the CAT Officer be developed to include providing organisations greater support during the application and transfer process.</p> | <p>The CAT officer currently provides extensive support to clubs and organisations wishing to engage with community asset transfer, this includes a measure of technical, legal and financial support to assist them in structuring their expression of interest and business case. A Task and Finish group chaired by the Deputy Leader Cllr Williams and attended by the Cabinet Member for Communities Cllr Young has also been established to oversee and provide support and governance to the CAT process, including looking at processes and procedure adopted by the Council when undertaking a CAT with the aim, where possible, of simplifying and speeding up the process.</p> |
| | | <p>Further Information requested</p> | |