

Report to:	TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Date of Meeting	9 September 2020

LEISURE SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To review the performance of Leisure Services with an emphasis on service delivery, statistics, performance indicators and customer satisfaction. The report provides an update on performance following on from the previous report presented in 2019.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 To scrutinise the performance of the service and identify any matters for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 To ensure effective scrutiny of Leisure Services.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Request Internal Audit to programme into the annual work plan.
Refer to external audit.

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 Leisure Services contribute to all three council priorities;
- Priority One 'The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool';
 - Priority Two 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'
 - Priority Three 'Organisational Resilience'

5.0 Report Information

5.1 Scope of the Report

- 5.1.1 The report provides an update on the performance of Leisure services with year end finance and key KPI figures for 2019/20.
- 5.1.2 Leisure Services deliver a broad range of activities and programmes from within the three main leisure facilities and in community settings to help local residents to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.
- 5.1.3 The scope of this report includes all service areas within Leisure, as set out below:
- 5.1.4
- Leisure facilities;
 - Palatine Leisure Centre
 - Blackpool Sports Centre
 - Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre
 - Outdoor Activities Service
 - School Games programme
 - Active Blackpool GP Referral programme
 - Family Weight Management programme – Making Changes
 - Community Outreach programmes.
- 5.1.5 A background paper providing a detailed overview of the structure of Leisure Services can be found at Appendix 7(a).
- 5.1.6 In 2019/20 Leisure Services received over 975,000 attendances to activities and facilities provided across Blackpool, with the three main leisure facilities seeing 943,000 attendances alone. In the previous two years, the service achieved in excess of 1 million visits, which would have also been achieved in 2019/20 had the service not had to close due to COVID-19. The leisure service provides a range of activities and programmes to meet the growing demand of supporting

people to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. The range of services include targeted programmes that are free at the point of delivery along with a broad range of universal activities, which are available at a subsidised rate. The leisure facilities offer a range of concessionary pricing options for targeted groups along with ‘pay as you go’, direct debit and annual membership options for those accessing the facilities on a regular basis.

5.2 **Budget Information**

5.2.1 Leisure Services has an annual expenditure budget of £4,359,000 and an annual income target of £3,548,000, resulting in a net annual cost of £810,000 to Blackpool Council for the provision of leisure services.

5.3 **Service Performance, Highlights and Challenges**

5.3.1 A Performance dashboard can be found in Appendix 7(b) giving a more detailed overview of patronage, member and retention performance in key areas along with customer feedback statistics for 2019/20 compared to 2018/19.

5.4 **Health and Fitness**

5.4.1 Leisure Services operate health and fitness facilities at all three of its leisure centres. The facilities include dedicated fitness studios, spinning studios and exercise class studios at each site. In 2019/20 the health and fitness facilities had over 238,000 visits across the three sites with Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre seeing the highest number of visits.

5.4.2 From the below table it can be seen that cumulative visits were consistent with the previous year, until a sharp drop in March following the closure of the centers on the 21st March due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overall Facility Patronage	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Cumulative 18/19	722,743	815,683	902,135	992,407
Cumulative 19/20	727,355	812,510	897,912	947,841
Cumulative 19/20 vs Last Year	101%	100%	100%	96%

5.4.3 At the time of closure on the 21st March 2020, memberships appear

down on the previous year, however this was due to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic causing an increase in cancellations in March, just before closure. Analysis of memberships in February, show that memberships had increased compared to the previous year by 3%.

Health and Fitness Memberships	Feb	Mar
2018/19	3143	3241
2019/20	3242	2838
Difference	3%	-12%

- 5.4.4 Despite the early closure in March 2020, due to COVID-19, income for Health and Fitness was 99% of the previous year. The health and fitness income targets remain a challenge for the service, but a number of capital developments to improve and refresh the facilities to help attract a new market are being developed.
- 5.4.5 £130,000 was invested in the ground floor changing rooms and toilets at Blackpool Sports Centre in September 2019 to improve the customer experience. In addition, Leisure Services invested in EGYM machines for the same site which were opened under the name Express Fitness and housed as part of the current Fitness Studio. The machines make strength training accessible to everyone and guarantees results with just two 30-minute workouts per week. In February 2020, 696 unique users used Express Fitness which is 78% of the membership at Blackpool Sports Centre.
- 5.4.6 Leisure Services are working in partnership with EGYM and local health partners to develop a study focusing on health outcomes for diabetics and sedentary members of the local community, which is expected to commence in January 2021. The study involves demonstrating the health benefits of EGYM strength, flexibility and cardiovascular equipment and EGYM have committed to providing a number of new pieces of equipment free of charge to support the study, which will be installed in November 2020.
- #
- 5.4.7 Palatine Leisure Centre is currently closed for refurbishment work which will see significant investment in its ground floor facilities. The work includes a reconfiguration of the entrance and reception area to improve controlled access to the facilities and provide a more welcoming experience for customers. In addition, both the dry side and pool changing rooms will be redeveloped to provide improved changing spaces for customers.

5.4.8 A new exercise class timetable will be launched in October 2020 across Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre and Blackpool Sports Centre. The review was conducted with Exercise Class Instructors and will see a greater variety across the centres. The new classes will involve a mixture of freestyle classes and the introduction of further Les Mills classes (the world's largest exercise class brand).

5.4.9 As part of the exercise class timetable review, £23,500 was invested at Blackpool Sports Centre on new indoor cycles, which include inbuilt 'coach by colour' technology ensuring that each bike is calibrated to the fitness of each user, meaning that the intensity of the workout is relative for all participants regardless of their fitness, ensuring that they all get the same training benefits from the class. The instructor can also see that the class are all working out at the same relative intensity, which aids their coaching of the class.

5.5 **Health Referral Programme**

5.5.1 The health referral programme is aimed at individuals who would benefit from additional support to lead a more active lifestyle. The service works closely with a number of specialist health teams including stroke, cardiac, cancer, diabetes, bariatrics and MSK (musculoskeletal) as well as GP surgeries to support patients within these services to lead an active and health lifestyle through a range of activities and programmes.

5.5.2 The programme is open ended, allowing customers to access the service for life. There is an ongoing cost for customers from the start of the programme, giving them the opportunity to 'pay as you go' or pay for a membership via a monthly direct debit (£20/month).

5.5.3 The team have received 1,014 referrals (excluding cardiac) in the previous 12 months with customers being offered a broad range of activities including wellbeing circuits, chair-based exercise, cardiac rehabilitation classes, heart failure classes, swimming, gym, table tennis, cycling, walking netball, nutrition classes, pilates, respiratory classes, Swimtag, indoor cycling, golf, Nordic walking and a range of exercise classes.

5.5.4 The service continues to work with the Cardiac Rehabilitation Service at Blackpool Victoria Teaching Hospital, who work in partnership to deliver a cardiac rehabilitation programme for clients who have a cardiac condition, including heart failure, from the leisure facilities. In 2019/20 the health referral programme received 141 cardiac

rehabilitation referrals, this is an increase of 38% compared with 2018/19 when 102 referrals were received. Having invested in training staff to deliver specialist cardiac classes, the service are able to cater for the increased number of referrals.

5.5.5 Working in partnership with the stroke team at Blackpool Victoria Teaching Hospital in October 2019, the health referral team implemented a neuro referral pathway and pilot project engaging with 6 clients per week over a 12-week period. Since then the service has seen a total of 93 participants referred through this new pathway attend the neuro sessions and the feedback has been very positive. There has been a gradual increase in participants attending and specific sessions within the gym have also been introduced to offer variety to the clients. The service will continue to work with the stroke team at Blackpool Victoria Teaching Hospital to develop this specialized rehabilitation for patients with neurological conditions.

5.5.6 The health referral team will continue to work with local and national partners to develop the health referral programme including the introduction of an online Refer-ALL system that will enable the service to track all participants from initial referral through to activity engagement. The team are currently exploring the opportunity to develop post Covid rehabilitation programmes which may require additional staff training including the potential for employees to complete the respiratory rehabilitation level 4 qualification.

5.6 **Learn to Swim**

5.6.1 The learn to swim scheme which runs at both Palatine Leisure Centre and Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre provides an opportunity for children to learn to swim, develop their aquatic skills and ultimately progress into the local swimming club, Blackpool Aquatics. Leisure Services work in partnership with Blackpool Aquatics to provide a seamless progression pathway and competitive swimming opportunities for local people.

5.6.2 In 2018/19 learn to swim patronage was 77,120 across both sites, this was a 4% increase on the previous year. In 2019/20 learn to swim patronage has again increased by 3.8% to 80,066 across both sites. It is positive to see a consistent increase over the last 2 years and presents an opportunity for increased income generation and an increase in the number of children learning a vital life skill.

5.6.3

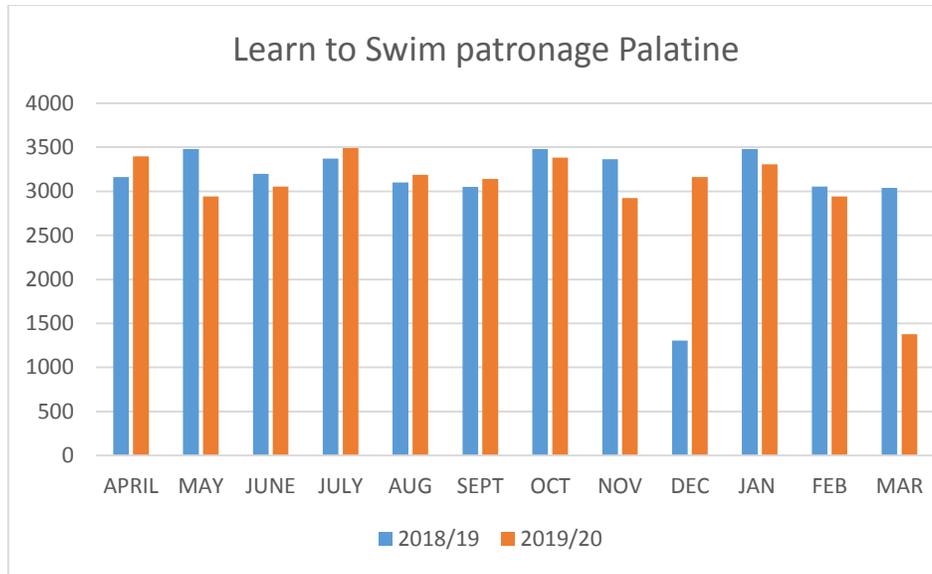


Figure 1 Learn to Swim patronage at Palatine

5.6.4

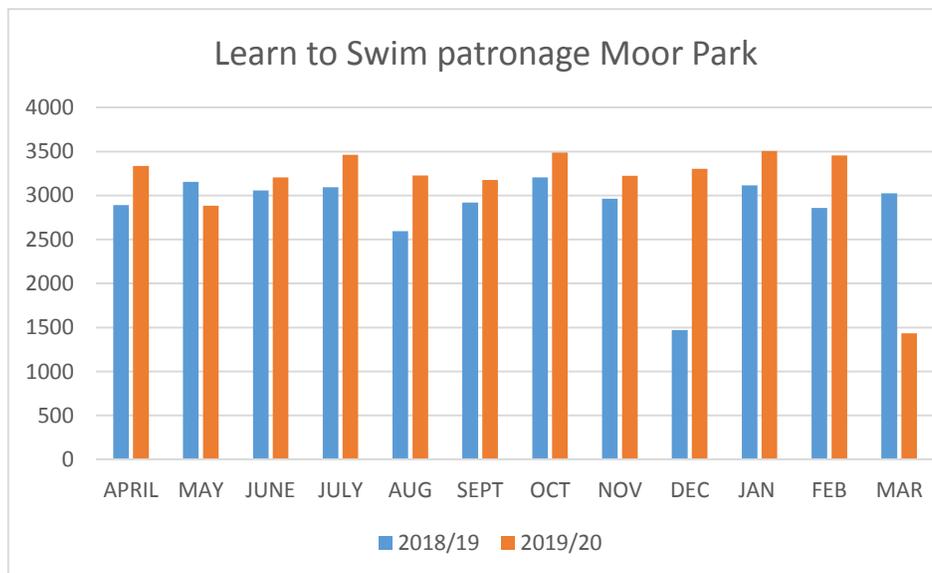


Figure 2 Learn to Swim patronage at Moor Park

5.6.5

The growth of the Learn to Swim scheme does present some challenges – increased pool time is required and the pool timetable is reviewed regularly to ensure optimum pool use. Leisure Services continue to develop the working relationship with Swim England and the Swimming Teachers Association to ensure the service have suitably qualified and experienced staff, which has traditionally been a challenge. In summer 2019 the service hosted a Level 1 and Level 2 Swim Teacher course which has led to the recruitment of new swimming teachers to help with the increased number of children on

the learn to swim programme. This will need to continue as the learn to swim scheme develops.

5.7 Feel Good Factory

5.7.1 Leisure Services have two Feel Good Factory facilities – one at Palatine Leisure Centre and the other at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre. The facilities are aimed at the older generation and adults who are inactive. The facilities offer a range of toning equipment that are easy to use and low impact in a friendly and social setting, providing a workout environment that is relaxing and informal.

5.7.2 During 2019/20 there have been 66,698 attendances across the two sites compared with 72,913 in 2018/19, an overall decrease of 8.5%.

5.7.3

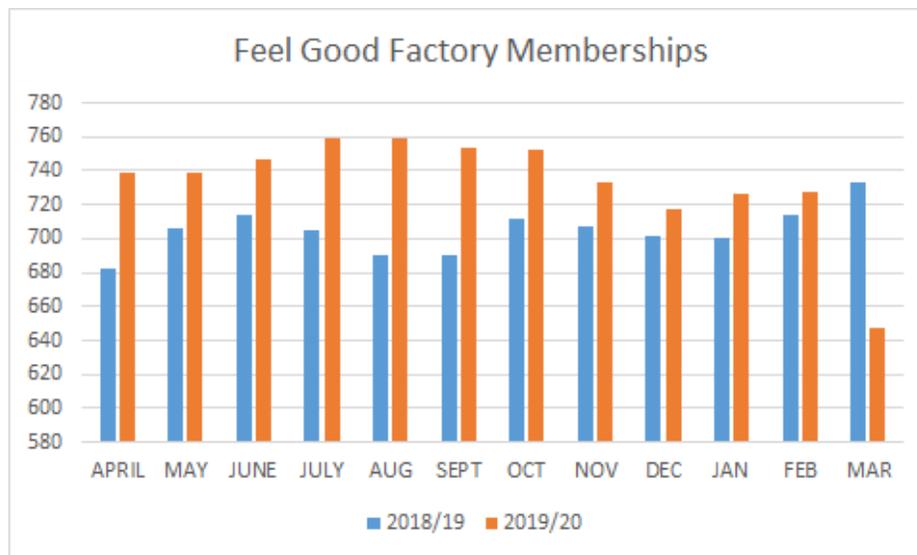


Figure 3 shows the Feel Good Factory Memberships

5.7.4 Whilst the patronage has reduced, the number of members using the facilities has grown in 2019/20 by 4% in comparison to 2018/19 and the retention has also improved demonstrating that customers are happy with the service they are receiving. The members reduced by 11% in March 2020 due to the Covid-19.

5.7.5 50% of customers attending the Feel Good Factory facilities have been referred from the health referral programme. As the health referral programme develops post-COVID we hope to see this referral pathway continue to develop and support with the growth of Feel Good Factory

membership base.

- 5.7.6 Customers are encouraged to be measured on a regular basis to record inch loss and whilst not all customers opt for this, the facility has seen 3,311 inches lost in 2019/20.

5.8 **Outdoor Activities**

- 5.8.1 The Outdoor Activity Service renewed its Adventure Activities Licensing Authority license in March 2019, enabling them to continue providing a range of watersports activities including kayaking, canoeing and raft building on Stanley Park Lake to children and young people across Blackpool. In addition, the service offers a range of outdoor activity packages, including high ropes activities, team building, den building and ecological activities, rock climbing and bouldering.
- 5.8.2 The service is continuing to increase the range of groups and organisations it works with including an ongoing partnership arrangement with the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) who now include 20 hours/ week of outdoor activities as part of their curriculum offering to all of their pupils. Furthermore, a number of primary and secondary schools have purchased education packages to enable local children to develop their skills and experiences through outdoor activities.
- 5.8.3 An ongoing challenge for this service remains the unpredictable nature of British weather, which impacts particularly on 'pay on the day' customers to both the high ropes course and watersports activities. The service has focused on developing the number of groups and schools who purchase longer term packages over several weeks or months as these are less impacted by the weather.

5.9 **Swimming**

- 5.9.1 Swimming is offered at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre and Palatine Leisure Centre. The programme offers a range of opportunities to enjoy the pools from family fun sessions to fitness swimming. The pools are also utilised for adult and children's swimming lessons, school swimming, swimming clubs and events and competitions which can place conflicting demands on the space available and present a challenge for public swimming space.

5.9.2 Public swimming patronage saw a slight decline of 5% up to February 2020 compared to the previous year as demonstrated in the table below. The reduction is largely due to a reduction in the number of free swims in 2019/20 compared to last year. There was a further decline in March 2020 due to the Centres closing on the 21st March as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.9.3

Swimming Patronage	Feb	Mar
Cumulative 18/19	101611	110269
Cumulative 19/20	96790	101532
Cumulative 19/20 vs Last Year	95%	92%

5.9.4 In spite of the early closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic reducing the number of visits to 92% of the previous year, income was 96% of the previous year. Cumulative to February before the early closure in March, swimming income was at 101% of the previous year.

5.10 **Free Swimming Under 16s**

5.10.1 Active Blackpool continue to offer free swimming to under 16s during school holidays, in 2018/19 there were 13,432 free attendances compared with 2019/20 where there were 8,973 attendances. In the previous 12 months there have been some changes to the free swimming session times. Previously children could attend for the full day, however this caused a number of operational challenges and often resulted in a lower quality swimming experience for different users accessing the space, therefore both pools changed the timetable to allow a 2 hour morning and 2 hour afternoon session for children and young people to attend for free.

5.11 **Community Outreach Programmes**

5.11.1 Active Blackpool continue to develop the community provision and have worked with a number of ward councilors to deliver holiday programmes to engage with young people and promote physical activity. There has been a reduction in patronage in 2019/20 due to changes in the programmes delivered (FA Skills and Better Start Volunteer Programme ceased) and reduced school buy in. There were also a number of events cancelled in March 2020 due to Covid 19.

5.11.2 Working with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), local tennis clubs and community courts the Tennis for Free programme was launched in

September 2019 in 2 Blackpool parks (Cavendish and Highfield Road park). The aim of the programme is to engage with families to increase tennis participation. The service intends to develop the programme further in 2021 at Anchorsholme park and Claremont park. The Table Tennis- Ping! programme continues, and 20 tables remain out in community locations in Blackpool.

5.11.3 In 2019 Active Blackpool delivered a number community sports sessions during the summer weeks due to successful funding bids with a range of partners. The main programme of delivery throughout the summer was the Holiday Hunger Programme which engaged children and young people across Blackpool who would ordinarily go without a meal. Several sports sessions were delivered each week by the Active Blackpool Sports Coaching Team and food and refreshments provided at the end of each session through Blackpool Catering Services. The programme was a huge success and played a significant part in the well-being of many children and young people over a time of year that can often be problematic and stressful for some families.

5.11.4 Active Blackpool have been involved with the Blackpool Summer of Fun initiative delivered in Summer 2020. This year the programme involved online provision as well as face to face delivery within socially distanced bubbles.

5.11.5 The community programmes will continue to develop over the next 3 years and will link well with the Get Out Get Active programme.

5.12 **MAN v FAT Football**

5.12.1 MAN v FAT Football continues to be a popular programme delivered by Active Blackpool on the 3G pitches at Blackpool Sports Centre. In 2018/19 the patronage was 1502 (7 months) and in 2019/20 the patronage was 1618. Season 5 is due to start in September 2020.

5.12.2



Figure 5 shows an infographic of Season 1, 2 and 3.

5.12.3

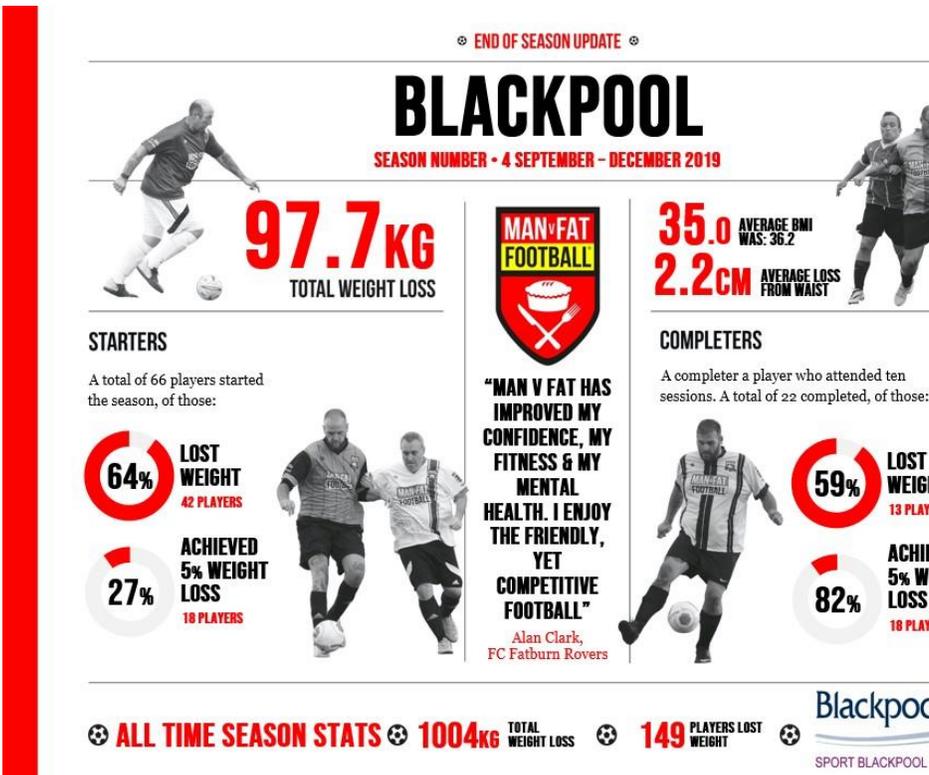


Figure 6 Shows an infographic of Season 4

5.13 **Customer Engagement**

- 5.13.1 Leisure Services take a proactive approach to engaging with customers and encourage them to provide feedback on their visitor experience to enable the service to make informed decisions on how to improve the service.
- 5.13.2 Leisure Services uses an internationally recognised system for proactively measuring satisfaction amongst service users. A more detailed overview and performance information taken from the system can be found at Appendix 7(c).
- 5.13.3 Net Promoter Score®, or NPS®, measures customer experience across a number of business sectors internationally. Customers are asked ‘On a scale of 0 - 10 how likely are you to recommend Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre to friends and family?’ Appendix 7(b) shows that between May 2019 and March 2020 (due to service closure) over 15,000 feedback questionnaires were sent to customers with over 2,600 responding. Both the number of questionnaires sent was an increase on the previous year by 178% and the number of responses were an increase of 217% over the previous year, which demonstrates that our customers are actively engaged with the service enabling us to develop and improve the service based on the most recent feedback. The service achieved a Net Promoter score over the period of 51, which is two points higher than the UK average and is higher than the previous year.

6.0 **Key achievements in 2019/20**

- 6.0.1 The service has seen a number of key achievements in the previous year:
- 6.0.2 Active Blackpool secured £280,000 of external funding from Activity Alliance to deliver a Get Out Get Active Programme from April 2020 to March 2023. The programme supports the least-active disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy being active together.
- 6.0.3 The programme is being delivered in partnership Blackpool Coastal Housing. It aims to highlight the benefits of physical activity and increase the number of people who are able to access and enjoy local opportunities.
- 6.0.4 Sport England Funding of £75,000 to work with Adult Social Care to deliver a pilot and test a new approach to engage with inactive people with long term health conditions (LTHCs) to be more active. The pilot

aims to provide education, improve awareness of physical activity opportunities within the community and get people with LTHCs more physically active. The main target audience for this pilot will be those who are referred onto the reablement programme delivered by Adult Social Care.

6.0.5 The installation of EGYM as Express Fitness in September at Blackpool Sports Centre, has resulted in 163% increase in the number of fitness studio sessions recorded in the months September – February compared to the previous year. By contrast, April to August (prior to install) had 99.6% of fitness studio sessions compared to the previous year.

6.1 **Future Priorities**

6.1.1 **Active Lives Strategy**

6.1.2 Active Blackpool are currently working with consultants on an 'Active Lives' strategy with initial consultation with key stakeholders being completed in Spring 2020 and the intention of a draft Strategy being shared with stakeholders, members and the public in the June/July 2020. This work was delayed as a result of COVID-19 and the new timetable will see the draft strategy go out to consultation in September 2020, with the intention of a final strategy being signed off and adopted in late Autumn 2020. The strategy will interact with a number of other strategies particularly the council's Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

6.1.3 **Blackpool Sports Centre Second 3G Pitch**

6.1.4 Leisure Services continue to work with Lancashire FA and the Football Foundation to secure funding for two new 4G playing facilities within Blackpool. The proposals are for one to be located within the new Enterprise Zone on Common Edge and a second pitch to replace the current sand dressed pitch on Stanley Park. These proposals are based on the demands identified in the recently refreshed Play Pitch Strategy.

6.1.5 A Blackpool Football Development Plan is in place, and the Football Development Steering Group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis to drive forward the objectives and actions within the plan.

6.1.6 Active Travel

6.1.7 Active Blackpool are working with colleagues in Highways and Transport to apply for funding from the Emergency Active Travel Fund. The objectives of the Emergency Active Travel Fund are to help local authorities implement measures to create an environment that is safer for both walking and cycling (both, not one or the other). This will allow cycling to replace journeys previously made by public transport and will have an essential role to play in the short term in helping avoid overcrowding on public transport systems. Longer term, it will also help deliver significant health, environmental and congestion benefits.

6.1.8 If successful in the bid, some of the funding will be used to support the recruitment of an Active Travel Officer who will lead on a local Cycling and Walking strategy and develop active travel in Blackpool.

6.1.9 Covid-19 Response

6.1.10 Active Blackpool have been heavily involved in the Blackpool Council Covid-19 response, the Sports Halls at Blackpool Sports Centre were set up as a food distribution centre, staff have been re-deployed to work in community food hubs and other various services including building cleaning, Bristol Avenue HWRC, ARC Rehabilitation Centre, and ENVECO.

6.1.11 This response has provided an opportunity for Active Blackpool to promote the importance of Physical Activity, Health and Well-being to the Blackpool Community, and rethink the approach to engage with the community. Active Blackpool are keen to develop the community engagement, and the funding received from Activity Alliance to deliver Get Out Get Active will facilitate this approach in some of the most deprived areas of Blackpool. Throughout Covid the service has distributed 220 Get Out Get Active booklets and 120 Table Tennis Bats and Balls.

6.1.12 The Active Blackpool team conducted welfare visits to those who were shielding, these visits provided an opportunity to engage and talk to residents about their activity levels. Further information has been sent out to each resident (6,000) who received a shielding letter with further information about Active Blackpool and the services that are available to support post Covid/lockdown.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

9.0 List of Appendices:

Appendix 7(a) – Leisure Services Background Paper

Appendix 7(b) – Leisure Services Performance dashboard

Appendix 7(c) – Net Promoter Score (NPS) Overview

10.0 Legal considerations:

None

11.0 Human Resources considerations:

None

12.0 Equalities considerations:

None

13.0 Financial considerations:

None

14.0 Risk management considerations:

None

15.0 Ethical considerations:

None

16.0 Internal/External Consultation undertaken:

None

17.0 Background papers:

None