

Report to:	TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Lisa Arnold, Head of Community and Wellbeing Services
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022

LEISURE SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To review the performance of Leisure Services, with an emphasis on service delivery across leisure facilities and community delivery, performance in key areas and recovery of the service following the COVID-19 pandemic. The report provides an update on performance for the 2021/22 financial year compared to the 2019/20 financial year, the last full year ahead of the Covid outbreak.

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:

None

4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council priority is
- The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
 - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing 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 under the following headings:

- Overview of Service
- Service Performance and Engagement
- Challenges and Future Priorities

5.2 Overview of Service

The overall aim of Leisure Services is to increase physical activity levels amongst the local population. Leisure Services deliver a broad range of activities and programmes from within the three main leisure facilities and in community settings to support local residents to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. The service has two sections – the Leisure Facilities Team and the Active Lives Development Team. The scope of this report includes all programmes, activities and projects within Leisure delivered by these two teams.

5.2.1 A background paper providing a detailed overview of the scope of leisure services and more information about each of its programmes can be found at Appendix 6(a).

5.2.2 Leisure Services provide 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.

5.3 Service Performance and Engagement

5.3.1 Leisure Services provide data to Sport England funded Moving Communities Platform to benchmark the recovery of public leisure facilities nationally. Overall recovery in participation in leisure centres in England has been steady but is yet to return to the levels recorded before the Covid-19 pandemic. Nationally, recovery in participation has been faster in more modern facilities, with facilities refurbished in the last 10 years showing a throughput recovery of 68%, compared to 62% for those last refurbished 20 or more years ago.

5.3.2 Overall leisure facility patronage for this service is 74% which is higher than the national average. Usage was hampered for the first half of the financial year due to

covid capacity restrictions. Moving Communities also reference consumer confidence being a factor in participation. Moving Communities warn that lower participation rates, alongside increases in the price of utilities and ageing facility stock, will cause significant challenges for the sector.

5.3.3 The slow easing of restrictions between March 2021 and August 2021 has meant that some activities have seen a faster recovery than other areas.

5.3.4 A Performance dashboard can be found in Appendix 6(b) giving a more detailed overview of patronage and memberships figures in key areas along with customer feedback statistics for 2021/22 compared to 2019/20.

5.4 **Health and Fitness**

5.4.1 In 2020/21 the gyms and exercise classes combined had over 152,000 visits across the three sites, which is 64% of the 2019 figures for the same period.

5.4.2 Gym Patronage for the year was at 66% of the 2019 patronage figures. The split between sites for the gym patronage year to date is at 98% of 2019 levels at Blackpool Sports Centre, Palatine Leisure Centre is at 68% (up from 54% YTD from the last report in August) and Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre is at 67% (up from 62% YTD from the last report in August). Sport England's Moving Communities benchmarking puts the gym recovery nationally at 72%.

5.4.3 The higher than average 'bounce-back' at Blackpool Sports Centre can be attributed to the engagement of customers on the EGYM equipment at Blackpool Sports Centre which was introduced in September 2019. If EGYM users are excluded, Blackpool's gym patronage would be at 56% of 2019 levels year to date.

5.4.4 Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre and Palatine Leisure Centre have suffered maintenance issues from the gym equipment reaching the end of life. Following the successful introduction of EGYM at Blackpool Sports Centre it is proposed to invest in EGYM at both Moor Park and Palatine Leisure Centre in the coming months to assist their gym patronage bounce back to similar levels to Blackpool Sports Centre.

5.4.5 It has been positive to see Palatine Leisure Centre's gym patronage recover in line with Moor Park as it was behind as of the last report in August having been closed due to a mixture of COVID and refurbishment work for over 12 months had resulted in a considerable number of users leaving the facility.

5.4.6 Exercise Classes remain a challenge for the leisure centres with class patronage for the financial year 57% of 2019 levels. Moving Communities benchmarking shows that the bounce-back for group exercise is at 56% nationally. The Leisure Centres

are investing in new Indoor Cycles, which allow all users to work out at the same relative intensity of each other. It is proposed to do a launch day and associated marketing to promote classes and try the new indoor cycles as well as other classes. This investment is combined with an Exercise Class Review which includes consulting leisure centre users to understand why they engage or are not currently engaging in group exercise and what changes they would like to see in order to encourage their participation. In addition the review will include engagement with other leisure facilities to understand which of their classes are seeing a stronger recovery in terms of participation and ongoing monitoring of the class performance to review performing and underperforming classes to ensure the timetable is cost effective for the current usage as well as creating a timetable which allows potential for growth.

5.5 **Feel Good Factory**

- 5.5.1 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 older adults who are inactive. The facilities offer a range of toning equipment that is easy to use and low impact in a friendly and social setting, providing a workout environment that is relaxing and informal.
- 5.5.2 At the end of 2021/22 there were 251 members at Palatine Leisure Centre and 325 members at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre compared to 289 members at Palatine Leisure Centre and 358 members at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre in 2019/20.
- 5.5.3 The recovery post covid has been positive and the Feel Good Factory re-opened at both sites as soon as restrictions allowed. The facility at Palatine Leisure Centre opened despite the pool development work. However, there has been a reduction in patronage, due to some members not returning or attending less frequently, In addition, many of the clients have underlying health conditions so may have been slow to return because of this.
- 5.5.4 The re-introduction of the 7-day pass and developing links with community groups and health partners to promote the Feel Good Factory will support the continued recovery following the pandemic.

5.6 **Swimming**

- 5.6.1 Casual Swimming patronage at both sites for the year was at 77% of 2019 levels. Moving Communities benchmarking shows swimming nationally to be at 83% of 2019 levels.
- 5.6.2 Palatine Leisure Centre continues to perform strongly at 95% of 2019 levels. The

Swimming Pool at Palatine Leisure Centre re-opened following refurbishment in mid-May 2021. The feedback from staff, customers and visitors has been overwhelmingly positive, with the improvements to the reception and swimming pool areas now providing a much more modern and welcoming environment for all.

- 5.6.3 Almost immediately upon reopening swimming patronage rose above that of 2019/20, a trend which continued. The total number of swims during public session in 2021/22 was 39,775 a total greater than that of 2019/20 despite the delayed start to the financial year.
- 5.6.4 Swimming events and galas have now returned to pre-pandemic levels, the most recent Blackpool Rocks gala saw over 500 swimmers from 30 clubs across the Northwest compete over the weekend with many of them staying in the town for the duration.
- 5.6.5 Active Blackpool continues to have a strong working relationship with Blackpool Aquatics, working together to provide pathways and facilities for swimmers, water polo players and triathletes. A regular programme of training sessions and events ensure this relationship will continue to grow and thrive, providing aquatic opportunities for both children and adults in Blackpool.
- 5.6.6 Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre is at 71.4% of 2019 levels. The growth of the Learn 2 Swim programme has meant that there is reduced swimming capacity at the Centre, but the income is offset by growth of the swimming programme. The reduced number of pool hours available equates to 18 hours less due to the learn 2 swim lessons taking the whole pool instead of part of the pool for these hours.
- 5.6.7 During the development at Palatine Leisure Centre, Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre accommodated all the learn 2 swim lessons along with school swimming to ensure that as many children as possible had an opportunity to attend swimming lessons. It was anticipated that when Palatine Leisure Centre reopened in May 2021 there would be a drop off in Learn 2 numbers at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre, however this was not the case, lessons and waiting lists were still busy.
- 5.6.8 The operational team and swimming development team have been working closely to manage and review the pool timetable on-going to ensure there is the correct balance within the pool to satisfy all service users.
- 5.6.9 The opportunity to revise the pool timetable during closure has allowed us to create a more balanced timetable to allow for growth in the learn to swim programme whilst continuing to offer a good range of swimming opportunities for lane and family swimmers which is supported by the continued growth in

patronage.

5.7 **Learn to Swim**

5.7.1 Active Blackpool continues to deliver exclusive learn to swim lessons at both Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre and Palatine Leisure Centre and the number of children in the pool continues to be impressive.

5.7.2 There has been steady growth throughout 2021/22 following a positive return to the pool after the pandemic. At Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre there are currently 1,091 members and 865 members at Palatine Leisure Centre on the learn 2 Swim programme. This is an increase of 16% compared to 2019/20 pre-covid levels.

5.8 **Adult Learn 2 swim**

5.8.1 There has been increased popularity and demand for Adult Swimming Lessons, and throughout 2021/22 there have been 78 adults engaged in the programme.

5.9 **Blackpool Swim Academy**

5.9.1 Active Blackpool's Swim Academy launched in January 2021 in partnership with Swim England, the programme continues to develop Blackpool's swimming teacher workforce. The programme provides training and opportunities for employment within the service once participants have gained their swim teacher qualifications. The service will continue to work with Blackpool Council services and local organisations to recruit and upskill individuals interested in this profession.

5.10 **School Swimming**

5.10.1 Active Blackpool's School Swimming Service currently engages with 30 primary schools in Blackpool. Schools are aware of the impact of the pandemic on swimming ability and have taken a flexible approach to ensure children who missed swimming lessons are given an opportunity to get in the pool.

5.10.2 At the start of the school year in 2019/20 there were 56% non-Swimmers, by the end of the school year this had reduced to 11%. In September 2021/22 there was an increased number of non-swimmers at 84%, this increase was due to the lack of swimming during covid 2020/21. The school swimming service is currently at 23% non-swimmers, with an aspiration to reach the 11% non-swimmers by the end of the school year, which was achieved pre-covid in 2019/20.

5.10.4 The school swimming service offered intensive lessons during non-swimming weeks, which was taken up by Stanley Primary School and Gateway Academy.

Devonshire Primary started an after-school club and doubled their allocation of swimming to help reduce the number of children unable to swim. The service continues to work closely with the schools to address the increase in non-swimmers exploring innovative ways to engage and encourage children and families to access their local pool.

5.10.5 Over the last 12 months there has been increased partnership working within the Blackpool Community to talk about swimming ability and continue to raise the awareness of the importance of learning to swim and developing this life skill from an early age.

5.11 **Community Swimming Offer**

5.11.1 Active Blackpool introduced a Learn 2 Swim offer as part of the Claremont Project. The targeted approach aimed to engage with reception children and their families at Westminster Academy. Sessions started in May 2022 and so far Active Blackpool have engaged with 14 families who have been supported to attend parent and toddler swimming lessons at Moor Park, Health and Leisure Centre. These families had many barriers and were apprehensive about attending. There has been lots of learning from this multi-agency approach, and the sustainability of the project is being explored so that the offer can continue and expand to other areas.

5.11.2 Active Blackpool are developing a proposal to submit to Sport England's 'Together Fund' which will see a targeted approach to support 90 children with free swimming lessons and engage in the Learn to Swim programme. If successful, this initiative is due to be launched over the summer.

5.11.3 As part of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, Active Blackpool have developed an offer which included Learn to Swim. This was delivered at Palatine Leisure Centre over the Easter holidays and there were 23 attendances.

5.12 **Athletics Track**

5.12.1 Athletics Track Patronage in 2021/22 compared to 2019/20 is at 75%. The Athletics track at Blackpool Sports Centre has been operational for over 30 years, is home to Blackpool and Fylde Athletics Club, and hosts a wide range of School, Community, County, Regional and National athletic meets.

5.12.2 The most recent UK Athletics track inspection had several recommendations which are scheduled to be completed by April 2023. The proposed works include a full resurfacing of the track, improved throwing area and cosmetic improvements to the stands. The track is currently certified to Level 1 competition standard; however, the works could raise the quality of the track to Level 2 competition standard which would widen the scope of events that can be attracted to and held

at the venue.

5.13 **Outdoor Activities**

- 5.13.1 The Outdoor Activity Service have their Adventure Activities Licensing Authority license until April 2023, enabling them to provide 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.
- 5.13.2 Patronage on the high ropes for individual bookings is up by 12% compared to 2019/20. The High Ropes area has engaged with 20 schools participating in outdoor activities with delivery to 1,577 school pupils. The service also provided sessions with the following groups Headstart, Street Life, Lancaster boys and Girls Club, Stanley Community Centre, HAF Programme (Public Health), School Standards Safeguarding and Inclusion, Making changes (Active Blackpool) and Ministry of Defense cadets. The High Ropes was also used for filming part of a reality TV episode of At Home with the Nolans, for Sky TV. Woodlands School also took part in outdoor sessions between April and July 2021 allowing wheelchair users to access the low ropes provision.
- 5.13.3 Casual climbing wall patronage for the year was at 50% compared to 2019. This is compared to moving communities benchmarking for “other activities” at 36%. Indoor climbing is traditionally more popular through the winter months, which have been more significantly impacted by covid compared to the summer months when many people prefer to climb outdoors, which is why the recovery is lower than other areas of the service.
- 5.13.4 A number of groups have taken part in coach led climbing sessions including Crooky Hall school from Lancaster, Staining School, Revoe Academy and Fleetwood Nautical College.
- 5.13.5 Climbing course participation for the year was at 62% of 2019 levels, however this has recovered to 86% of 2019 levels as of February 2022. Climbing is traditionally more popular through the winter months
- 5.13.6 Patronage for lake activities for 2021/22 was 110% of 2019/20, with St. John Vianney school and Crooky Hall (pupil referral unit) engaging in kayaking and canoeing. The number of lake activities is currently limited due to the significant presence of pondweed. If the plan to dredge the lake is successful, this will present an opportunity to increase the watersports available to include activities such as stand up paddle boarding, sailing, windsurfing and open water swimming.

5.14 **Other Facility Based Activities**

- 5.14.1 Sports Hall patronage is at 63% of 2019 levels. This is compared to a Moving Communities national average of 58%. The lower 'bounce-back' is in part due to a number of groups and activities moving outdoors when covid restrictions remained on indoor sports facilities.
- 5.14.2 The 3G and All Weather Pitches at Stanley Park are at 107% of the 2019 figures. This was due to Fylde Coast Futsal moving outside due to restrictions in the Sports Halls in early 2021, however the group are now back in the Sports Halls with an increased number of bookings as their club continues to grow. Fylde coast Futsal also booked a summer camp for 6 weeks, which will continue this year.
- 5.14.3 The Stanley Park netball courts were at 73% of 2019 levels, this is due to a delay in the leagues restarting post Covid however the netball courts are now back to pre-pandemic levels.
- 5.14.4 The Cycle Track at Palatine is at 186% of 2019 levels at 4202 users over the year. This is due to Blackpool Aquatics Triathlon Section continuing to make use of the track. In addition the North West Triathlon club had more bookings than previously as Palatine Leisure Centre was open and accommodating for their needs resulting in more bookings being made compared to other centres in the North West. The Centre has also made the track bookable via the mobile app which has led to some casual usage.
- 5.14.5 The gymnastics coaching course patronage was at 54% of 2019 levels, however as of February 2022 this had exceeded pre-pandemic levels at 120%.

5.15 **Customer Engagement**

- 5.15.1 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.
- 5.15.2 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 6(c).

- 5.15.3 Appendix 6(b) shows that between April and August the leisure centres have improved their NPS scores from 51 in 2019/20 to 54 in 2021/22. The score of 54 is 7 points higher than the UK average with many positive comments on staff and cleaning.

5.16 **'Making Moves' Tier II programme**

5.16.1 Active Blackpool started delivering the Adult Weight Management programme in September 2021 and have received over 200 referrals onto the programme. Funding from Public Health has been extended which will allow the programme to continue until August 2023. The 12-week programme is the traditional face to face Tier II weight management programme for overweight and obese adults with a BMI (Body Mass Index) between 25- 39.9 and is delivered within the leisure centres and community venues.

5.17 **Making Changes**

5.17.1 Making Changes continues to be delivered within leisure centres, community centres and schools. Working alongside the School nurses the aim of the 12-week programme is to improve knowledge and skills around healthy eating and physical activity, to enable them to use these skills to make and sustain healthy lifestyle choices. Throughout 2021/22 there were 129 referrals compared with 102 in 2020/21.

5.18 **Exercise Referral**

5.18.1 The Exercise Referral team continues to support individuals to change behaviour and lead a more active and healthier lifestyle. There are several activities and programmes available. As part of the Live Longer Better pilot delivered at Moor Park activities such as boccia, kurling and archery have been introduced.

5.18.2 The traditional referral pathway continues to develop, working with specialist health teams including stroke, cancer, diabetes and more recently the Long Covid Service at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. The service received 18 long-Covid referrals throughout 2021/22.

5.18.3 During 2021/22 there have been 609 referrals received compared to a pre-covid referral rate of 943. This generated a total of 7,460 attendances (Swim, Gym, and Circuits) in comparison to 8,827 attendances in 2019/20.

5.18.4 The service continues to work with health partners to pilot innovative ideas and approaches to engage with residents to promote the 'move more' concept. This approach has been evident at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre, working alongside the GPs surgeries and Social Prescribers to promote the Exercise Referral service has driven the number of referrals onto the programme. This learning will now be put into practice at Palatine Leisure Centre and Blackpool Sports Centre.

5.18.5 The service continues to recover following the pandemic, due to the nature of the

clients who are referred there is still some nervousness about returning. The team are involved with several new pilots and co-production work with health partners which will support this recovery and growth of the service.

5.18.6 The programme focuses on physical activity at present; however, the service is aware that they are getting an increased number of referrals from health professionals for support with mental health and well-being, therefore the service is keen to introduce this element to the programme and will be working with NHS colleagues (Blackpool Healthier Minds) to implement this in the coming months.

5.19 **Adult Social Care - 'Move a bit, Move a bit more'**

5.19.1 Following on from the success and learning from the We Are Undefeatable Campaign, which engaged inactive people with Long Term Health Conditions (LTHCs) to be more active, Active Blackpool have continued to work with colleagues in Adult Social Care to understand their policies and procedures to embed elements of 'physical activity, health and well-being' into everyday life.

5.19.2 Working alongside colleagues at the Phoenix Centre, we have provided the service with equipment for patients to be active, introduced 'Active' questions to current questionnaires. We hope to create an iPool training module which staff can complete to develop their knowledge about the benefits of being 'Active,' we have had a positive response so far and we hope that we can work with other teams within Adult Social Care to embed into the system.

5.20 **Steps to Health Walking Programme**

5.20.1 The Wellbeing walks- Blackpool re-launched in May 2022, formally known as Steps to Health. Throughout 2021/22 there have been a total of 98 health walks delivered by Active Blackpool and 988 attendances. In 2019/20, pre-covid there were 5,316 attendances.

5.20.2 Unfortunately, Active Blackpool lost several walk leaders during the pandemic and due to the age of many walkers there are some who have still not returned. Health walks continue to be a popular activity following the pandemic due to them taking place outdoors and people feeling safer in an outdoor environment.

5.20.3 The focus now is for the service to recruit and train new volunteers and review the current walks timetable to ensure we have walks within all community settings at various times and days.

5.21 **Business Health Matters (BHM)**

5.21.1 Since Business Health Matters launched in September 2021 Active Blackpool have

engaged with several local businesses, including Blackpool Transport and Adcroft Hilton where Health Screenings were completed. Workplace Health Champion training is taking place throughout the year, so far Blackpool Coastal Housing and UR Potential have engaged in the training. Over the next 12 months the focus will be to increase the engagement with local SMEs and an event is due to take place in July 2022 to promote the BHM initiative and physical activity, health, and well-being within the workplace. The BHM workforce continues to develop, Active Blackpool has six instructors qualified to carry out health screening and two tutors qualified to deliver the workplace health champion training.

5.22 **Bikeability**

5.22.1 The Bikeability programme sees the delivery of a 2-day life skill development programme where children from local primary schools participate in a series of cycling related activities designed to improve their cycling skills and increase their confidence in cycling on roads close to their school and promote active travel. All schools are given the opportunity to participate in the programme however not all schools take up this opportunity due to factors such as children not having their own bikes and/or helmets.

5.22.2 In 2021/22 the Level 1 and Level 2 bikeability programme was delivered in 24 schools to 1,253 participants and in 2019/20 delivered to 32 schools and 613 participants. The way spaces were allocated to schools has changed, the data in 2021/22 is the actual number of participants attending the programme.

5.22.3 Balance Bikes and Wheels 4 All sessions are also delivered to schools. The Balance Bikes sessions are offered to schools utilising funding from Department for Transport as part of the wider Bikeability Programme. Wheels 4 All sessions are funded by schools themselves through their PE (Physical Education) Premium. Delivery in 2021/22 increased to three schools and total engagement was 1,672. Compared to 2019/20 delivering in six schools and engaging with 2,227 participants.

5.22.4 Wheels for All community sessions take place on the athletics track at Blackpool Sports Centre and the cycle track at Palatine Leisure Centre. In 2019/20 there were 1,760 compared to 757 in 2021/22. The sessions continue to recover following the pandemic, working with partners to promote the community sessions should see patronage return to pre-pandemic levels.

5.23 **Sport4Champions**

5.23.1 The Sport4Champions programme is delivered to Year 6 students in partnership with Blackpool Catering Services, over recent years the number of schools engaged in the programme has increased. In 2021/22 there were 24 schools engaged and

3,196 children engaged in the programme, compared to 14 schools and engagement of 1,785 in 2019/20.

5.24 **School Games**

- 5.24.1 The School Games Programme is a national initiative aimed at improving physical activity levels and providing competitive sporting opportunities in educational settings.
- 5.24.2 Throughout 2021/22 there were 398 events organised and a total engagement of 10,774, in comparison to pre-pandemic engagement in 2019/20 there were 564 events and 24,844.
- 5.24.3 The reduced engagement is due to the impact of Covid, in 2020/21 the usual school competitions and league were not delivered. Active Blackpool were also delivering to more schools in 2019/20 which gave increased engagements compared to 2021/22, the service is slowly getting back to more familiar figures.
- 5.24.4 The School Games delivered a wide range of activities, in 2021/22 there were 30 different sports/activities delivered, including football, netball and athletics and some new events including quidditch, glowfit and foot-golf.
- 5.24.5 The Lancashire School Games is once again heading back to Blackpool and will see 1500 talented children and young people from across the county come together for a sporting spectacle that will feature 8 different events for both primary and secondly school aged participants. Qualifying events have been taking place throughout the spring and summer terms to determine who will represent Team Blackpool to go head-to-head against their Lancashire counterparts on Tuesday 5 July. The event will be the culmination of another wonderful year of PE, School Sport and Physical Activity for Blackpool Schools and we cannot wait to cheer them all on.

5.25 **Active Communities Programmes**

Active Blackpool continues to develop the community provision and works with several ward councilors to deliver activity programmes to engage young people and promote physical activity.

- 5.25.1 The Active Communities Service provides opportunities for children, young people, and adults of all abilities in a host of programmes including Man V Fat, Multi-Sports, Street Games, Rounders, Wheels 4 All, Balance Bikes, Cycling, Walking Sports, and Tennis. The audiences for these programmes come from local community groups including Warren Manor, Bristol Avenue and Headway along with open access programmes where engagement is encouraged from all

community areas.

5.25.2 Active Blackpool have been working with partners in the Talbot and Brunswick area to deliver diversional activities to young people, aged 6-18 years. The box fit and multi-sport sessions take place on a weekly basis with the support from the Boys and Girls Club, this multi-agency approach aims to target and reduce ASB in the area. Since July 2021, Active Blackpool have delivered 62 sessions and a total engagement of 1,040. The programme will continue, and we will be looking to secure external funding for this.

5.26 **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)**

5.26.1 The Holiday Activity and Food programme aims to deliver a range of activity sessions within the community and accompanied by the provision of a packed lunch for those attending with a particular focus of engaging children and young people who are in receipt of free school meals.

5.26.2 Active Blackpool delivered multi-sports sessions within several community locations, including Kingscote Park, Anchorsholme Park, Solaris Park, Cavendish Road Recreation Park, and Highfield Road Park, in 2020/21 there were 722 engagements and in 2021/22 there were 643. Funding has been confirmed for 3 years from 2022/23 and the aspiration is to expand the offer and reach more children. Active Blackpool will be looking to work with community sports clubs, organisations, and schools to support with the delivery of the programme.

5.27 **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Work**

5.27.1 In Summer 2021 Active Blackpool began the delivery of a 3-year Inclusion Programme funded by Blackpool Council SEND team. The programme offers opportunities for children and young people with mild/moderate additional needs to participate in a range of sports and activities both during school time, school holidays and weekends.

5.27.2 The service delivers a SEND Inclusion Sports Camp during school holidays and there have been 35 sessions and 508 engagements during 2021/22. The SEND Inclusion Schools Programme was delivered throughout 2021/22 in 20 schools and there has been 5,367 engagements. The SEND weekend Inclusion Camp started in September 2021 at Blackpool Sports Centre and throughout 2021/22 there have been 12 sessions and 159 attendances.

5.27.3 Active Blackpool continue to be at the forefront of inclusive school sports events throughout the 2021/2022 school year and have delivered a wide range of competitions, festivals and events that have seen lots of talented participants engage in activities in their own school through to competitive events on a North

West scale. The events programme has been delivered throughout the whole of the school year as we have a commitment to providing opportunities on a continuous schedule that allows schools to identify the events that best meet the needs of their students rather than being limited on what they can engage in and seeing their students miss out.

- 5.27.4 Active Blackpool has delivered highly successful football leagues that have taken place as part of the Lancashire School Games Ability Counts Programme throughout the year and has seen leagues being contested for U16 Girls, U16 Boys, U14 Boys and U12 Mixed with schools from across Lancashire coming together every term to go head to head in the fiercely contested fixtures which culminated in a hugely successful season for Park Community Academy who came top in 3 of the 4 leagues and claim the runner-up spot in the other.
- 5.27.5 Park Community Academy have seen further success to add to their football victories as they came runners up in the Lancashire Special Schools Key Stage 3 Tag Rugby Competition as well as being crowned champions at the Lancashire Key Stage 2 Swimming Gala.
- 5.27.6 Active Blackpool have also been working collaboratively with Special Olympics for the Motor Activity Training Programme (MATP) that provides opportunities for participants who profound additional needs to be physically active. Students from Blackpool Sixth were only the second cohort nationally to receive MATP Young Leaders Training which will now enable them to support the delivery of MATP lessons at Highfurlong School and allow more children and young people in Blackpool and across Lancashire to be more physically active throughout their time at school and through to their adult lives as Active Blackpool are soon to be launching its MATP session for adults.

5.28 **Early Years Provision**

- 5.28.1 Active Blackpool have developed a 6-week Early Years programme and this programme has been piloted in 3 nurseries Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Anchorsholme and Norbreck, there Throughout 2021/22 there were 1,097 engagements across the 3 nurseries. The feedback has been positive, and conversations have started with partners to roll this out within the Children's centres at Revoe, Grange and TAB during the school holidays. Weekly sessions will be delivered to under 5's and over 5's.

5.29 **Get Out Get Active**

- 5.29.1 We have moved into the final year of the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme and the focus how now moved to ensuring sustainability of the programme.

5.29.2 The Get Out Get Active programme has something for everyone, and a range of activities have been delivered within the local community including:

- 5.29.3
- Monthly Story time Stroll – Revue Hub with Blackpool Libraries;
 - Health Walks Kincaig Lake;
 - Ping and Table Tennis at Blackpool Coastal Housing Roadshows;
 - Multi-sports and Gym Session with William Lyons House;
 - Wheels for All with the Stroke Association;
 - Monthly session with N-Vision;
 - Recovery multi-sports session.

5.29.4 There has been a gradual increase in activity interventions and engagements since the programme launched in 2019/20. In Year 1 there were 14 activity interventions and 617 attendances. In Year 2 there were 42 activity interventions and 3524 attendances and in year 3 to date there have been 4 activity interventions and 761 attendances, the reason for this reduction is the shift to a sustainable model where we have provided training and qualifications to volunteers and partners to deliver and manage their own activity session within the community setting. A total of 470 individuals have registered since the start of the programme and over 50% of those registered have declared that they have a long-term health conditions, impairment or illness that has a substantial effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

5.30 **Active Travel**

5.30.1 As part of the Capability Fund, Active Blackpool have been working in partnership with National organisations Living Streets and Cycling UK on behaviour change initiatives within the Blackpool community.

5.30.2 Living Streets have been delivering 3 programmes, WOW Walk to School challenge, Next steps for Secondary schools and Walking Works for businesses. Living Streets have been working with 18 Primary schools and there have been 6000 engagements and 1 secondary school with 175 engagements. There has been a 30% reduction in car journeys made and a 23% increase in walking rates.

5.30.3 Walking Works is the programme for embedding the culture of walking into workplaces and so far, has successfully been rolled out at 5 businesses including Blackpool Council, Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Blackpool Clifton Hospital, Department for Workplace and Pensions and Blackpool Transport.

5.30.4 Cycling UK have been supporting the community to deliver events, the events are split into 4 types that are made up of the following: Fix Events (basic services to repair broken bikes and essential checks to ensure bikes are safe to ride), Learn to fix (provide instruction, training or skills for people to maintain their bike), Learn to ride (Teach cycle skills and improve confidence, and Led rides (provide led rides for

- people to practice cycling locally and learn new routes in a social environment).
- 5.30.5 Active Blackpool have delivered 5 events so far consisting of Fix and Learn to ride events engaging with 10 participants. A further 10 events are planned throughout Summer and Autumn 2022 with a goal of engaging with 60 further participants.
- 5.30.6 Alongside the behaviour change initiatives being delivered within local schools, colleges and businesses, Active Blackpool are looking to influence and develop the local infrastructure in Blackpool to make it easier and safer to promote active travel and encourage modal shift to increase walking, cycling and use of public transport.
- 5.30.7 It is an aspiration to develop the Blackpool Wheel, the project has been scoped as a tourism and active leisure and travel asset and it is proposed that the route will connect communities and provide a safe cycling and walking space for people to access schools, parks, and workplaces.
- 5.30.8 Lancashire County Council are developing A Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – termed an “LCWIP” - is an on-going process to define and prioritise walking and cycling infrastructure needs. The process should be guided by engagement with community and delivery partners to identify potential walking and cycling networks, and opportunities to deliver these. Beyond identifying infrastructure needs, a second key aim of the LCWIP is to prioritise projects.
- 5.30.9 Once the LCWIP in place which covers Blackpool, it will drive the conversations with colleagues in planning, and highways to shape the infrastructure in Blackpool to focus on Active Travel.
- 5.30.1 The service is also keen to work with local businesses to promote active travel and workplace health, small business grants will be available to purchase bikes, install bike storage and provide cycle training for employees. There is also an opportunity to link this with the Business Health Matters health screenings.

5.31 **Active Through Football**

- 5.31.1 Funded by the Football Foundation, Blackpool have secured Active Through Football funding of £616,075 over a 5-year period. The Active Through Football programme is lead by BFCCT, and Active Blackpool are identified as a key partner having supported with the funding application. The outcomes and outputs are challenging and currently the programme is delivering one female football session. There is a drive to increase this and Active Blackpool are supporting Blackpool Football Club Community Trust to achieve this.

5.32 **Work placements and Apprenticeship Opportunities**

- 5.32.1 Leisure Services have worked hard in recent years to establish a strong

apprenticeship programme across the service, providing apprenticeships in four different service areas. These apprenticeships are promoted in partnership with children's services to ensure the opportunities reach vulnerable young people looking for employment. The service always looks to recruit from the local area and has had several apprentices complete the programme and progress into permanent employment within the service. The Services recognises that there have been some challenges to recruit for the Leisure Apprentice position, it is therefore expected that a review of the current qualification will take place to ensure that the position is appealing.

5.33 Kick Start

5.33.1 Leisure Services have had remarkable success from the Kick Start programme. The programme has now ended, the service successfully recruited and retained 3 sports coaches and 2 swimming teachers who are now working for the service. Some of the young people who are engaged on the Kick Start programme will continue to work for Active Blackpool during school holidays and at weekends alongside their university studies.

5.32 Active Lives Strategy

5.32.1 There has been lots of progress made in several key areas identified from the Active Lives Strategy over the last 12 months, working groups have been established in 3 areas (Disability/Inclusion, Long Term Health Conditions and Active Travel) to ensure a collaborative approach is adopted. Active Blackpool have really focussed on developing strong working relationships with Blackpool Council services along with external organisations. This work is evident in the strong partnership approach between Active Blackpool and Adult Social Care and the pilot with The Phoenix Centre and the 'Move a bit, move a bit More' approach to embed physical activity, health, and wellbeing into existing policies.

5.32.2 This work and focussed approach will continue, with the addition of some new elements, including, supporting Public Health with the Healthy Weights Strategy, and continuing the work with Children Services around Anti-Social behaviour and Early Help.

6.0 Service wide challenges and Future Priorities

6.1 Leisure Facilities

6.1.1 The challenge for the Leisure Service is re-engaging the community to participate in activities post-covid, particularly in health and fitness, group exercise and swimming as these are significant income generating areas. Furthermore, the growth in private gym providers such as JD Gyms Blackpool, a budget gym close to

Palatine, is likely to present an ongoing 'price' challenge to the service.

- 6.1.2 Leisure Services believe the key to re-engaging customers is through a varied and targeted marketing approach, utilizing a mix of traditional and modern marketing techniques. The Service have developed a detailed marketing plan aimed at re-engaging previous customers and promoting the breadth of activities available, as well as targeting new customers who have not previously used our service. The first campaign runs from mid-June until the end of September. New EGYM equipment and Indoor Cycles will arrive in the Autumn. It is proposed to do a launch day for users to trial this equipment as well as a full exercise class launch. The equipment provides a unique selling point over the competition, particularly EGYM, as the equipment guides users through their workout and therefore targets new user groups into exercise who otherwise would not have used a gym.
- 6.1.3 The leisure facilities are facing a challenge with regards to the retention of staff, as staff have reassessed their circumstances post lockdown. Whilst recruitment is actively ongoing a key priority is further investment in staff training, and discussions have begun with the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to explore continuous professional development opportunities for staff through an industry recognised body to support the upskilling and retention of staff through their ongoing development. Management are currently engaged in CIMSPA membership combined with online CPD and the service are currently working with CIMSPA to provide front line training to frontline staff through Retrain to Retain Sport England funding.
- 6.1.4 The service has also set up three working groups for Service Improvement, Marketing and Health and Safety to improve staff engagement in these key areas and allow two-way communication between front line staff and management. The service is also reintroducing staff roadshows which will keep staff informed of key changes, news and information regarding Leisure Services and the wider industry, to help foster a team culture to tackle the challenges facing the service and drive performance.
- 6.1.5 Recruitment remains a challenge and the service is reviewing its apprenticeships to make them more enticing for future applicants. The service is creating a career section on their website which will contain details of the different career paths within leisure and testimonials of staff. The page will then link to Greater jobs where any vacancies are advertised. The webpage will make it easier to promote on social opportunities within leisure as well as giving greater context to seeing leisure as a career opportunity.
- 6.1.6 The service is experiencing low return rates for the NPS surveys that are sent out to gain valuable customer feedback, therefore the service is implementing a calendar of 'meet the manager' sessions and targeted customer surveys to supplement the

ongoing NPS surveys.

- 6.1.7 The service is experiencing an issue with ongoing maintenance of the facilities, such as roof leaks, pool plant issues, automatic door failures and old boiler systems due to the age of the buildings and associated equipment. Bi-monthly meetings have been set up with Property Services to ensure a proactive approach to maintenance issues, highlighting problem areas.
- 6.1.8 The service will also come under pressure from rising energy costs and supply of pool chemicals. Pool chemicals supply is very limited nationally. So far, the service has been able to continue to operate, where other centres have had to close, however there remains a risk of temporary closure if the supply chain were to fail, affecting income.
- 6.1.9 The service has purchased Fast Track Kiosks which will help alleviate queuing at reception as the service recovers to pre-pandemic levels. This will allow users to check in and book activities, by-passing the receptionist.
- 6.1.10 Dovetailing the work of the Active Lives Development team with the leisure facilities team is key to ensuring a smooth and seamless transition pathway into the facilities programmes and activities for those that the service engage within the community that show an interest in what the facilities have to offer.
- 6.1.11 This working relationship between the Active Lives Development team and the leisure facilities team is positive, this is helped by regular service meetings to provide updates on programmes.

6.2 **3G Pitch Blackpool Sports Centre**

- 6.2.1 Working in partnership with the Football Foundation and Lancashire Football Association and following community engagement with grassroots football clubs in Blackpool, £250'000 of funding has been secured to develop a second 3G pitch in Stanley Park. Contractors have been appointed and it is expected that work will start during the summer.

6.3 **Parks Tennis Courts investment**

- 6.3.1 In October 2021, the Government announced it was investing £22m into public tennis courts across Britain. This funding, together with an investment from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) of £8.5m is aimed at bringing public park tennis courts in poor or unplayable condition back to life, for the benefit of their local community. The initiative is also aimed at engaging 1 million more players in tennis, supporting health and wellbeing outcomes. Active Blackpool are working with the LTA and have been approved at Stage 1 of the application.

6.3.2 The capital investment will see the development of four of the current unplayable courts in Stanley Park and renovations to the existing courts in Cavendish Road Park, Claremont Park and Anchorsholme Park. The £150'000 investment will also see the introduction of a gate system which will allow tennis courts to be booked and help monitor the usage and provide participation data.

6.4 **Common Edge 3G Development**

6.4.1 The new grass football pitches at Common Edge were brought into use in September 2021, at the start of the new football season. The response from the leagues and clubs was positive.

6.4.2 With the new and improved grass pitches at Common Edge, Blackpool were able to accommodate the return of the Blackpool Cup over Easter weekend and May Bank Holiday. The event organised by Euro-Sporting International Tournaments brought 10,000 visitors to Blackpool over two weekends. There were 440 games played over Easter weekend and 460 over the May Bank Holiday. We look forward to them returning in 2023.

6.4.3 Once the Common Edge development is complete the new facilities will consist of changing rooms, a community room and kitchen, an 11 a side 3G pitch and grass football pitches. The development will become part of the Palatine Leisure Centre portfolio within Leisure Services and an operational manager will be put in place to manage the facilities. We are currently working through the operational plans with support from the Growth and Prosperity team to ensure a smooth transition when the development is complete.

6.5 **Boundary Park**

6.5.1 Active Blackpool are working with the Football Foundation to secure funding to develop the existing changing facilities at Boundary Park. The Parks Development team are also investing in tennis courts and a multi-use games area which will create a great space for the local community to be active and engage with local initiatives. The local grassroots football club, FC Rangers, have also secured grass pitch maintenance funding which will see improvements in the quality of the grass pitches. Active Blackpool are working with consultants to lead on the community engagement, and we hope to submit an application in Autumn/October 2022.

7.0 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? **No**

8.0 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 6(a) – Leisure Services Background Paper

Appendix 6(b) – Leisure Services Performance dashboard

Appendix 6(c) – Net Promoter Score (NPS) Overview

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Details of investment and expenditure are set out in the main body of this report.

10.0 Legal considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Risk management considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Equalities considerations:

12.1 None

13.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

13.1 None

14.0 Internal/External Consultation undertaken:

14.1 None

15.0 Background papers:

15.1 None