

**Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 15 July 2025 at 7:00 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors D. Smith (Chairman); D. Bragg; Y. Edwards; M. Firmager; K. Gilder;*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk; E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager*

**Also present:** *Councillors V. Lewis; C. Jewell (virtual attendance)  
1 member of the public*

13. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Errawalla, Kennedy and Lewis. Councillor Lewis and Jewell attended the meeting virtually.

Councillor Jewell and Edwards were not present at the start of the meeting.

14. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

15. **YOUTH SERVICE OPTIONS**

- 15.1 Councillor Gilder, as Chairman of the Youth Support Services task & finish working group, presented Report No. LS 18/25 of their meeting, held on 1 July 2025.

Members noted that four organisations had presented the working group with youth service options. Following a query, it was confirmed the three options selected were based on specific quotes which had been provided, totalling £15k, which matched the available budget for 2025/26. It was also noted that there had only been £15k budgeted for the year as, at the time budgets were set, it had been expected the youth service options would not commence until halfway through the year.

Councillor Gilder explained that the proposed leadership course would also be a wonderful addition, but that, as additional budget would be needed, the working group recommended that additional budget be allocated by the Strategy & Resources Committee to fund this.

**RESOLVED:**

- ♦ To note Report No. LS 18/25.
- ♦ To approve the activities to be provided as the Council's Youth Service offering for 2025/26 from within the available £15k budget, as set out in Report No. LS 18/25.

Voting: For: 3    Against: 0    Abstain: 0    No Vote: 1

**RECOMMENDED:**

- ♦ That the Strategy & Resources Committee approves an additional £5,030 funding be allocated from the general reserve to fund the running of a Leadership Training Course, as set out in Report No. LS 18/25.

Voting: For: 3    Against: 0    Abstain: 0    No Vote: 1

- 15.2 Members considered the proposal to convert the Youth Support Service task & finish working group to become the Youth Service sub committee in order to support the ongoing work required to monitor Council's youth service provision, as well as to advise on future provision.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve that the Youth Support Service task & finish working group be converted to the Youth Service Sub Committee, with the associated terms of reference set out at **Appendix A.**

Voting: For: 3    Against: 0    Abstain: 0    No Vote: 1

16. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 19/25. Members agreed that, whilst a potential full redevelopment of the leisure centre had been estimated to cost in excess of £10m, at this stage no option should be discounted, and the Council should remain aspirational. It was also commented that costs would only increase in future, and a long-term approach should be taken to ensure the longevity of the site.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, currently, the repayment on a Public Works Loans Board loan of £2.5m would be around £100k a year, with repayment on a loan of over £10m likely to be nearer £400k a year. He suggested Officers deemed it unlikely this could be covered by additional income, but a business plan would be developed and presented as part of any proposals. A comment was made that, with loan payments linked to the Oakwood Centre due to finish this year, the Council would no longer be paying back around £108k a year. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, whilst this was true, for the last few years the Council had been benefitting from around £100k investment income a year due to raising the total capital repayment amount early, which would now cease.

Councillor Jewell joined the meeting virtually.

Members noted that any decision relating to the approval of funding for undertaking surveys would not restrict the approach the Council takes in future with regards to the redevelopment, with the surveys needed to progress towards formulating costed options to be presented to the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Development task & finish working group for consideration. Members also noted that additional surveys would be needed in future, with requests for funding presented to the Committee when known.

Councillor Edwards joined the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 19/25.
- ◆ To approve the use of funds held in the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Buildings & Facilities earmarked reserve to fund the following works in relation to progressing the redevelopment of the leisure centre:
  - Measured survey – estimated at £6,000
  - M&E (mechanical & electrical) condition survey – estimated at £6,000
  - Structural Engineering Assessment – estimated at £4,000

Voting: For: 4    Against: 0    Abstain: 0    No Vote: 1

The meeting closed at 7:27 pm