

FREEDOM LEISURE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Executive Summary

This report sets out the performance review of Freedom Leisure, including assessments on quality and performance management, KPIs and the priorities for year 2021/2022. Complaints, feedback and achievements are reviewed in the report as Freedom Leisure provide a wide range of services to the public.

Comparisons to previous year in many instances are difficult due to the periods of national lockdown.

This report will assist in identifying how Freedom Leisure is recovering from the period during which they had to close.

Recommendations

RESOLVE That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.
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Background Papers:	None
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Freedom Leisure Performance Review

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Leisure Partnership Agreement commenced on 1st December 2011. The Woking and Guildford partnerships were procured as part of a joint process that required a turnover threshold/scale of organisation that would have been challenging for Freedom Leisure to have met at the time on their own. Freedom Leisure therefore asked GLL to be the “principal” contractor, with Freedom Leisure delivering the contract, as a sub-contractor to them. The bid was written by Freedom Leisure who are fully responsible for its delivery. GLL receive an annual fee from Freedom Leisure for underwriting the original bid and holding the risk of Freedom Leisure failing to perform.
- 1.2 Since the original agreement the contract has had several major changes which include 3 new pavilions, the Sportsbox at Hoe Valley and Eastwood Leisure Centre.
- 1.3 The inclusion of Sportsbox also triggered the contract extension clause in the main contract which is for a further 4 years. Contract end is now 30th November 2025
- 1.4 Separate to the contract Freedom have also been successful in securing the contract to run the kiosk in Woking Park.
- 1.5 In September 2018, Woking Park Tennis Courts were removed from the Leisure Contract and returned to the management of Woking Borough Council.

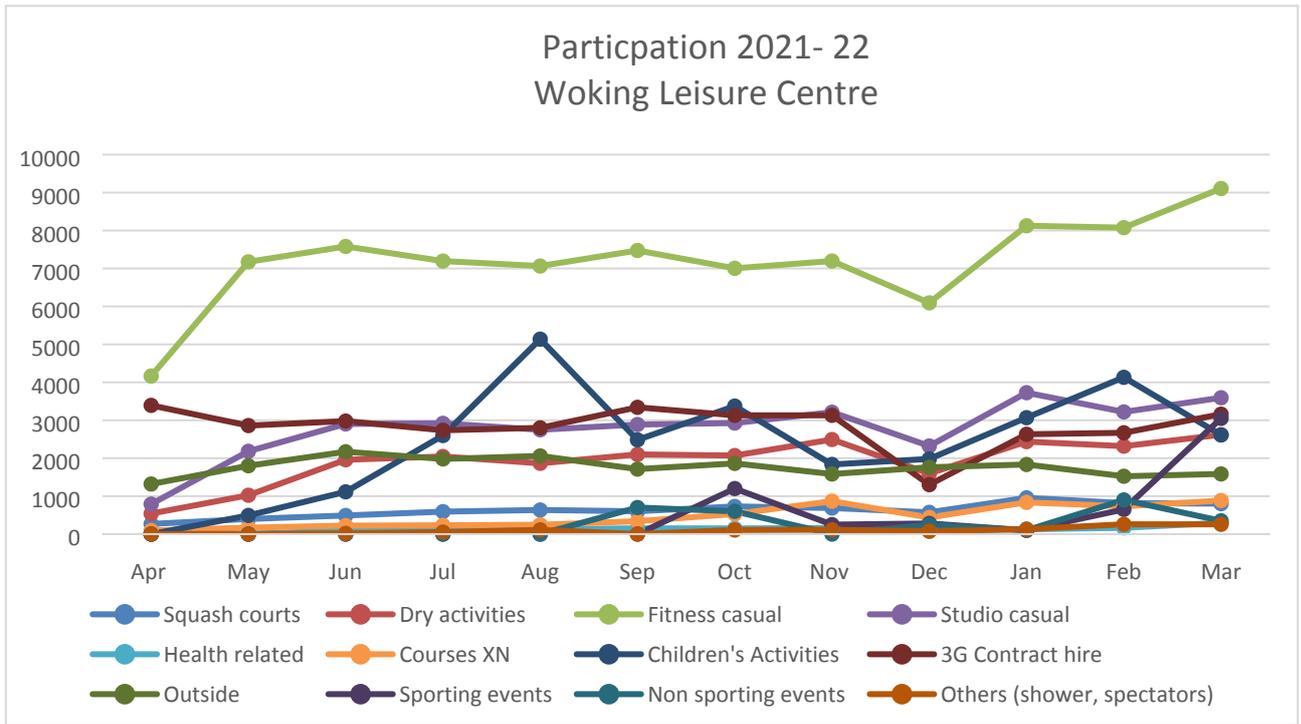
2.0 Priorities for 2021-2022

- 2.1 Freedom Leisure, in consultation with Officers and their customers, set a list of key priorities for 2021-2022. These were presented to the Leisure Partnership Board at the end of 2020 and agreed by this Board.

3.0 Performance during the 2021-2022

- 3.1 Following the periods of closures and restrictions enforced by the pandemic it was a period of rebuilding the customer base and customer confidence that leisure centres were safe places to return too. Full unrestricted opening started on April 12th 2021 and gradually customers returned.
- 3.2 Some areas of business recovered far more quickly than others with Swimming lessons leading the way and returning to 94% of pre-pandemic levels. Memberships, unfortunately, have been slower to recover and got back to 70% of pre-pandemic levels.
- 3.3 It is believed that swimming has returned so strongly due to the national campaigns through schools on how important learning to swim is
- 3.4 Woking return to normal vs the national averages given by Sport England has been far stronger than most areas of the country but the figures are very skewed by the opening of Eastwood Leisure Centre in October 2021 which started very strongly.
- 3.5 Overall the Leisure Contract has had some very good attendance considering the above:

Freedom Leisure Performance Review

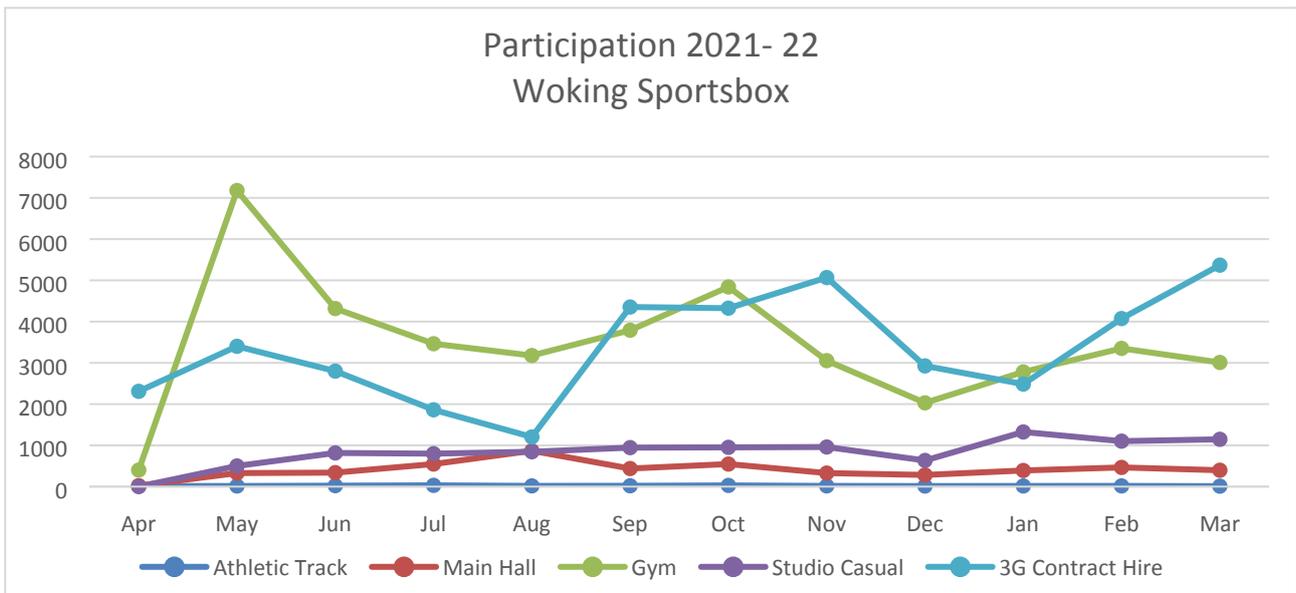


In total Woking Leisure Centre had 248,226 visitors

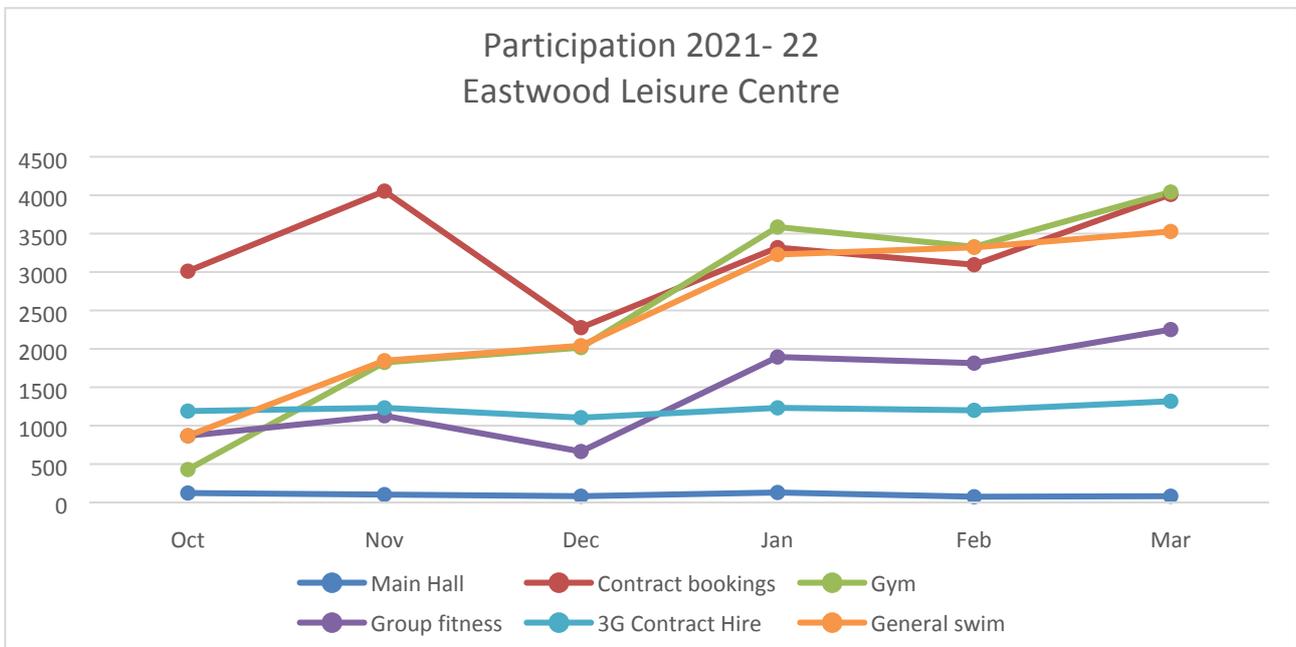


In Total Pool in the Park had 195,856 visitors

Freedom Leisure Performance Review



In Total Woking Sports Box had 96,783 visitors



In Total Eastwood Leisure centre in just 5 months had 66,310 visitors

- 3.6 The estimated usage on the sports pitches managed by Freedom Leisure is 32,000 based on number of pitches booked with an average of 20 users per booking allowing for a mixture of junior and senior football and training sessions.
- 3.7 Therefore, total usage was 639,172.
- 3.8 Freedom Leisure are also tasked with outreach into the local community through the Active Communities Team. Following national lockdown this was more important than ever before. The Active Communities team re-introduced a large range of courses to those most in need very quickly following the April opening, these included: Women's Football, Swim Fit and Swim Buddies, Walking Basketball, Netball and Football, Football for the home educators, Friday Night Project and Sheerwater Youth Project and many more.

Freedom Leisure Performance Review

3.9 Freedom and WBC also led the way on the Holiday Activity and Food Club. This was a national scheme following the calls from Marcus Rashford to feed the children most in need during the school holidays. Freedom was utilised as a case study for the whole of Surrey based on the delivery of the scheme to over 768 young people.

4.0 Improvements and significant changes to the service provision

4.1 A great deal of refurbishment work was completed during the lockdown period, so the jobs done this year were less significant with the focus being mainly on recovering the business. However, the following a list with short description of the works completed:

- Woking Leisure Centre Spa Pool Retiled
- Woking Leisure Centre - Ceiling tile replacement in Heatwaves
- Woking Leisure Centre - Several areas of minor redecoration
- All Sites - Gym equipment upholstery repairs.
- Pool in the Park – Refurbishment of meeting room and reception seating areas.
- Pool in the Park – Lift overhaul
- Sportsbox – Major Outdoor Works completed, relining of athletics track and drainage works.
- Eastwood – Tennis Court Refurbishment to allow community use of the school tennis courts improving the facilities for both the local community and the school.

4.2 The work to develop the links with the NHS continued. The physio service from St Peters is now established and further discussions are being undertaken to work collaboratively to enhance patient recovery. Alongside this other wellbeing projects with the NHS are being explored such as a development of the GP referral scheme and cardiac rehab programmes further expanded.

5.0 Financial position

5.1 What normal looked like prior to the pandemic:

For context the Leisure Partnership Agreement is normally a payment from Freedom Leisure to Woking Borough Council. This payment has changed throughout the term of the contract linked to additions to the contract. The payment expected for this financial year was £689,809

5.2 There is an allowance in the contract for major events that may affect the financial position of the contract. An open book process as suggested in Sport England guidance was adopted.

5.3 In the financial year 2021-2022 Freedom made a management fee payment of £246,827 plus VAT. This was an improvement of £1.65M on the previous year where the council funded the Leisure Management Agreement but also utilised its staff for Covid support.

6.0 Key Performance Indicators

6.1 Freedom Leisure reports a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Leisure Partnership Board twice a year.

Customer Satisfaction:

6.2 The Annual Feedback Summary is attached elsewhere on this agenda.

Audits:

6.3 Freedom undergoes a range of audits each year. These include pool safety, health and safety and quality assessments:

6.4 Health and Safety Audits were conducted at all sites all achieving a good standard with a particular focus on opening in a COVID safe way.

6.5 Accident statistics are monitored monthly as follows:

Woking Leisure Centre: 188 accidents (0.07%)

Pool in the Park: 81 accidents (0.04%)

Sportsbox: 25 (0.02%)

Eastwood Leisure Centre: 20 (0.02%)

6.6 The percentage relates to against users and anything over 0.10% would require further investigation. It is worth noting that Woking Leisure Centres is slightly higher than the other sites due to the nature of its activities. Having a very well subscribed set of youth activities does lead by the nature of the activity to more "low" level accidents.

6.7 Environmental Health Audits (Conducted by the Borough) on food safety. All Sites achieve the highest 5-star rating. And Costa also won audits with all sites passing with above average scores.

6.8 Finally, Freedom has its own internal auditing process named "Area Manager Audits" which is a rigorous process of checking all its own internal Quality Manager Processes and Statutory compliance. This is an unannounced spot check that takes up-to a day to complete and the results were as follows:

Woking LC: 88.25%

Pool: 88.56%

Sportsbox: 82.46%

Eastwood: 91.87%

7.0 Moving forward

7.1 Freedom have presented a business plan to Leisure Partnership Board for 2022-2023. LPB requested some amendments that will be discussed at the next Board meeting but fundamentally were happy with the progress. Much more focus is being moved towards health and wellbeing rather than activity and fitness. Whilst a minor change it encompasses the really positive links that have been made with health professionals at St Peters, and the GP practices. This starts to differentiate the leisure offering in Borough owned facilities to the private facilities and breaks down perceived barriers to access with issue specific treatment taking place in the facilities leading to health membership.

7.2 The focus on commerciality remains. Bringing the contract back to the management fee position is the number one priority and generating more surplus to assist in the ever-rising utility bills and staffing costs.

7.3 Eastwood will be a year old in October and a celebratory party will be planned with the new users of this facility. The year has been fabulous seeing so many people new to fitness and

Freedom Leisure Performance Review

those coming back after a year away throughout the pandemic. Continuing to grow the user base and develop a long term community in this centre is part of the plan ahead.

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