



Authority type: District Council

Service Area: Leisure and sport

Savings identified: £196,000 per annum

Introduction

APSE was successful in its bid to help a District Council shape the provision of their future leisure services in the area. The APSE Associate carried out a review that identified the requirements the leisure service needed to meet, and a methodology to provide it that also considered the pressures to deliver cost savings and the authority's corporate priorities.

Objectives:

- Analyse the operational effectiveness of the current leisure operations
- Establish current and future demand
- Assess the options for future service delivery

Outputs:

- Consultation, market research and demand analysis were carried out with users and non users of the current facilities.
- Financial and operational analysis undertaken to establish the effectiveness of the current service.
- An action plan and long and short term recommendations developed in light of the study's findings.

Benefits:

- Better understanding of the demand of the service and how the service could be improved to meet it.
- Potential to reduce revenue costs by up to £196,000 per annum dependant on the options agreed by the Council.

Project summary:

The scope was to analyse the operational effectiveness of the current leisure operations, establish current and future demand and assess the options for future service delivery. The council have been effective at attracting users to their gym facilities and fitness classes as

they were operating close to capacity especially at peak times. The GP exercise on prescription, Fit Kids and Healthy Walks programmes were extremely successful with take up on the GP referrals exceeding that of the rest of the County.

The associate observed that more attention was required by the council to create greater strategic direction, avoid duplication of services across the council and community groups and enhance the understanding of the real costs of delivering leisure activities to the council. With a clearer vision of how the authority would like to move forward it would allow them to manage the maintenance and arrangements of sites more effectively, and grasp a strong understanding of the impact leisure activities could have on corporate priorities.

Consultation, market research and demand analysis were carried out with users and non users of the current facilities. Strategic partners were keen to work together to support leisure activities in the district in order to deliver their own and joint priority outcomes.

A detailed financial and operational analysis was undertaken to establish the effectiveness of the current service using APSE Performance Networks benchmarking information, Sport England research and financial budgeting.

Recommendations:

The outcomes of the detailed study highlighted a number of service improvements and potential cost savings for the council. Both long and short term recommendations were made. The short term recommendations included:-

- Development of an up to date Leisure Strategy
- Areas of potential capital investment in the leisure facilities and the impact of that on revenue budgets
- Renegotiation of the current leisure contract
- Changes to the management of the joint user sites and identification of options for the changes including more community involvement.
- That the council ensures representation of a leisure professional in key negotiations of future planning needs.

Longer term recommendations included:-

- Proactive involvement of a leisure professional in negotiations and other project work around central Lincolnshire developments.
- Potential to look at redevelopments and/or new developments linked to the forecasted increase in population of the area.

An action plan was developed and is currently being considered by the council, and within the recommendations there are suggested capital investment schemes. There is also the potential to reduce revenue costs by up to £196,000 per annum dependant on the options agreed by the Council.

Following on from the initial review, APSE have now been asked to develop an up to date Leisure Strategy, bringing together strategic partners to support the process.