

# **Hartlepool Sport and Recreation In House Operation 3 Years On**

**Sport England – Leisure Management  
Options Guidance – September 2017**

**Case Study – Hartlepool Borough  
Council In-House Management**

Ian Gray – Leisure Operations And Development Manager  
Hartlepool Borough Council





**LOVE**  
HARTLEPOOL

# Introduction

Hartlepool Borough Council operates three leisure facilities on an in-house basis; Mill House Leisure Centre, Headland Sports Hall and Brierton Sports Centre. In 2012/13 the Council was faced with a budget reduction requirement of 40% over 4 years until 2015/16. The sport and recreation service, whilst highly valued, was subject to increasing pressure as a non-statutory service and so the Council developed a facilities strategy and undertook an options appraisal process.

The Council decided to retain the service in-house and developed a strategy for achieving its aims which involved (amongst other things):

Creating two new posts to drive additional income and improve efficiency - a business development manager and -marketing post.

Making staffing expenditure savings through natural wastage by recycling roles and responsibilities rather than redundancies.

Adding a boom into Mill House Leisure Centre to turn an L-shaped pool into 3 separate swimming pools to improve programming flexibility and income generation.

Move the services into the Council's Public Health Department, embedding core services such as the GP Referral team and sport & activity participation teams with Health Improvement services.

Widening the breadth of services offered to include recreation grounds, links to wider physical activity schemes and taking on the management of an outdoor activity centre;



Pooling section 106 funds to realise the required investments for a new swimming pool for Brierton and a new leisure facility to replace Mill House LC.

# At The Time Of The Case Study

The Council has to date achieved its required revenue savings target and has made it's learn to swim school and the outdoor activity centre operate at a cost neutral position. This continues to be the case.

# At The Time Of The Case Study

A third generation pitch has been added to one of the leisure centre sites as a result of a £600k grant from the Football Foundation and the Council still continues to work towards the development of other facilities. This is embedded in the overall Hartlepool Vision for the redevelopment of core areas of the town including new leisure centre provision as part of the main shopping centre redevelopment.

# At The Time Of The Case Study

## Learning

Some key learning points from this project included:  
The outcome of an options appraisal is not inevitable – if the in-house team widens the breadth of services it can offer ('don't put all your eggs in one basket'), keeps an open mind and believes in itself then it is possible to achieve its goals without changing the management model.

# At The Time Of The Case Study

## Learning

In-house teams should recognise what their staff have achieved and have faith in what they can still achieve. The team should believe in their products and services and the difference they can make to people's lives.

# Update 2018

Creating two new posts two drive additional income and improve efficiency - a business development manager and -marketing post.

The Two New Posts Fixed Term Posts Came To An End

# Update 2018

Making staffing expenditure savings through natural wastage by recycling roles and responsibilities rather than redundancies.

Followed Through, But Terms And Conditions Are Challenging To Make Facilities Efficient

# Update 2018

Adding a boom into Mill House Leisure Centre to turn an L-shaped pool into 3 separate swimming pools to improve programming flexibility and income generation.





# Update 2018

Move the services into the Council's Public Health Department, embedding core services such as the GP Referral team and sport & activity participation teams with Health Improvement services.

Services No Longer Within The Council's Public Health Department, Now In A Newly Created "Adult and Community Based Services, But Retaining All The Links And Close Working Relationship

# Update 2018

Widening the breadth of services offered to include recreation grounds, links to wider physical activity schemes and taking on the management of an outdoor activity centre;

New Department Includes Libraries /  
Community Hubs So Stronger Links

# Update 2018

Pooling section 106 funds to realise the required investments for a new swimming pool for Brierton and a new leisure facility to replace Mill House LC.

Time Dependant, Delay In Final Indoor Sports Strategy But The Drive Is Still To Do This Where Possible

Any Questions

