



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15  
February 2022 at 5.00 pm.

**County Borough Councillors - Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-**

Councillor R Yeo (Chair)

Councillor S Evans	Councillor L De Vet
Councillor M Forey	Councillor M Griffiths
Councillor P Howe	Councillor G Jones
Councillor L Jones	Councillor S Powderhill
Councillor A Roberts	Councillor G Stacey
Councillor S Trask	Councillor J Williams

**Officers in attendance:-**

Mr D Batten, Head of Leisure Parks & Countryside  
Ms S Kochalski, Leisure Strategy Manager  
Mr K Nicholls, Leisure Operations Manager  
Mrs S Handy, Members' Researcher & Scrutiny Officer

**Guests:-**

Councillor A. Crimmings  
Councillor G. Caple

**22 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Members to the last meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee for the 2021-22 Municipal Year.

**23 Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

**24 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

**25 Consultation Links**

Members acknowledged the consultation links which were provided for their information and **RESOLVED** to note any consultations that are relevant to the remit of the Committee.

## 26 Leisure Medium Term Strategy

The Head of Leisure, Parks & Countryside provided Members with an overview of the Leisure Medium Term Strategy. Members were asked to consider the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-26 prior to a formal public and stakeholder consultation process.

The Leisure Operations Manager and Leisure Strategy Manager provided Members with a power point presentation, which outlined the aims of the strategy in further detail.

Following the overview, Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member referred to the virtual online classes and queried whether this was a service we were buying into from outside or whether it was being provided 'in house'. The Member also queried whether they were live classes or on demand and what kind of classes are being offered. The Member also sought clarification as to what the uptake figures were. The Leisure Strategy Manager advised Members that the scheme initially started through the GP referral scheme and was aimed at vulnerable patients who were unable to go out during the pandemic. Members were told that at the moment it's an in house provision but that there is an appetite for virtual classes and something they are looking to expand on. Members were advised that they have been able to deliver a virtual class across all of the schools in RCT at the same time, which meant that the Council were able to reach many more students much more effectively and efficiently. It was emphasised that this can be developed further in the future. The Leisure Operations Manager gave examples of classes that include Zumba and Pilates and that live streaming classes is something they would like to aim for. The Officer advised Members that they are looking to keep the cost of these classes as part of their Leisure for Life membership.

Discussions ensued and a Member informed Committee that she was in a meeting two years ago and there were plans to put an outdoor gym in Gelligaled park and sought clarification as to the progress of this project. The Head of Leisure, Parks & Countryside advised the Member that he would need to research this project and get back to her separately regarding progress.

Another Member queried whether figures were available as to the number of referrals from GP practices to the scheme and whether the number was higher from GP practices that are near leisure facilities. The Leisure Strategy Manager advised that the figures were not available to hand but that they can be emailed out to Committee Members separately. It was emphasised that all GP's across RCT are signed up to the scheme and that referral rates vary. Members were informed that the level of referrals very much depends on the personnel within the GP surgery. It was also emphasised that during the pandemic the number of referrals decreased considerably but that they are now starting to pick up again.

Discussion continued and a Member queried the transport facilities that are available to go to each leisure facility. The Member noted that transport can be a barrier to exercise for a lot of people. The Leisure Strategy Manager acknowledged that transport is an issue, particularly the cost of transport. Members were referred to the online services that are now available and it was

emphasised that this is being developed further. Members were advised that the GP referral scheme is a National scheme funded through Public Health Wales and that they are very prescriptive in terms of what they spend the grant on. Members were told that the grant has been static and that no uplift has been given in over 10 years, thus putting pressure on the finances of the scheme. The Leisure Strategy Manager acknowledged that this is an area that needs to be looked into more and to consult with people at the point of referral in terms of the barriers that they are facing.

Discussions ensued and a Member commented on the phenomenal improvement in the diverse range of facilities that the Council has to offer and praised the Cabinet Member's dedication to improve leisure facilities across the County Borough. The Member felt that in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic, we need to look at leisure for life in a wider context and to look at the opportunity to utilise the ability to exercise at home. The Member queried if Officers had any ideas how we can make the older age groups as active as possible in the future. The Leisure Strategy Manager thanked the Member for his comments and noted that there is an ongoing project that specifically looks at exercise for older people, which is a part of the Sports Wales funding, which was launched by Welsh Government during the pandemic. The Leisure Strategy Manager referenced the online classes but also acknowledged that there is more that can be developed to get the older age groups exercising. The Leisure Strategy Manager emphasised that this is the focus of the strategy in terms of supporting people of all age groups, particularly people who experience barriers.

Conversation continued and a Member recommended that instead of phrasing it as "150 minutes exercise per week" we break it down to minutes per day and that this may encourage people to do at least 20 minutes exercise every day. The Member also wished to commend the staff within the service and how they have adapted due to Covid.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor A. Crimmings, thanked the Committee for the comments and questions and thanked staff for providing a comprehensive strategy. The Cabinet Member thanked staff for being really proactive with projects such as online classes and online walks during the pandemic.

The Chair echoed these words and thanked staff for providing a comprehensive strategy. The Chair praised the online classes and noted that this will enable the Council to reach out to a lot more people. The Chair commented that we do not to develop the strategy more to reach out to the older age groups and commended the Cabinet Member and Officers for the engagement work done to date.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to note the draft Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022-26 and that the views of Members as outlined above be fed into the consultation process.

## 27 **Urgent Items**

There was no urgent business to report.

## 28 **Chair's Review and Close**

The Chair thanked everyone for their constructive feedback during the meeting

and wished to place on record his thanks to all Members and Officers for all their hard work throughout the 2021-22 Municipal Year. The Chair reminded Members of the Autism Working Group on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 3pm and that it will be on Microsoft Teams to accommodate the Autistic individual. The Chair also thanked the two Cabinet Members, Councillors Crimmings and Councillor Caple, for attending the meeting this evening.

**This meeting closed at 6.03 pm**

**CLLR R. YEO  
CHAIR.**