

Cheshire East Strategic Leisure Review (possible closure of Poynton Leisure Centre)

Here are some hints and tips on responding to the consultation and completing the online survey from the Leisure Centre Working Group. The Working Group is made up of residents with knowledge and expertise from the sporting and leisure sectors and Poynton Town councillors. It was formed in response to the proposed closure of the Leisure Centre.

Background

Poynton Leisure Centre (PLC) is owned by Cheshire East Council (CEC) but is managed by Everybody Health and Leisure (ELH) on behalf of CEC under an operating agreement.

The consultation

CEC launched a Strategic Leisure Review on the 23rd November. Residents have until the 7th of January to respond to the consultation. You can respond to the consultation either by completing the online survey [https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/Strategic Leisure Review Consultation 2023/](https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/Strategic_Leisure_Review_Consultation_2023/), the paper survey or by emailing randc@cheshireeast.gov.uk. The Working Group believes that the consultation is flawed and designed to prompt responses unfavorable to saving Poynton Leisure Centre. **We would strongly recommend that you respond by email where you can state your views without being forced to answer specific questions unrelated to Poynton.** The guidance to help you with this will be issued shortly and will be available on the Town Council website www.poyntontowncouncil.gov.uk. However if you want to respond to the questionnaire please read on.

Previous correspondence sent by residents will not be considered as part of this consultation. You **must** respond to this consultation.



Alternative leisure service delivery approaches – (7 least preferred – 1 most preferred).

Site closure is the least preferred option (and answers are numbered accordingly).

Option	suggested response	Impact (Notes) *Guidance only
Focus on providing a smaller number of core larger leisure sites, with-drawing funding from those sites less well attended	7	Site closure It is unclear how attendance will be measured as the previous report was flawed (it didn't account for school or club use). As a dual use site (school and community) PLC is unavailable for the community at times during the day. Attendance should be measured by how well the facility is utilised.
Focus on providing leisure services in the area of greatest need	6	Site closure The data used to assess greatest need is out of date (between 5-18 years old) it has been superseded and the "in house" assessment cannot accurately reflect the differing needs of all communities. All communities should have access to leisure provision.
Implement a differential pricing policy (gold, silver and bronze)	2	Unknown If differential pricing generates additional income for CEC we would support this. However, from the operating model we cannot see how additional income would benefit CEC and not Everybody Health and Leisure.
Increase prices across all activities	3	Price increases but preferable to closing sites.
Reduce opening hours across all sites	4	Reduction in services but preferable to closing sites
Reduce scope of high cost services such as swimming	5	Pool closure but preferable to closing sites.
Transfer ownership of third party operators	1	Change of operator would require a thorough investigation of the site's usage, condition, investment potential and involvement of the many potential stakeholders.

Suggestions for funding to retain current level of provision:

- ◆ Make energy efficiencies to reduce costs:
 - ◇ Refurbish buildings, improve insulation, improve energy efficiency, install solar panels/heat pumps
- ◆ Why did it take so long to commission the solar panels at Poynton Leisure Centre. Why is the Heat pump still not working
- ◆ The capital funding earmarked for Poynton should be used for the refurbishment including energy saving measures

Changes to concessionary membership scheme (Options)

Option	suggested response	Impact (and notes)
Reduce the maximum discount offered to 20%	Tend to oppose	Savings unknown
Reduce the maximum discount offered to 15%	Strongly oppose	Savings unknown
Only offer the scheme to residents of CE	Strongly agree	Remove subsidy for non residents
Amend the eligibility criteria	Neither support nor oppose	Savings unknown

Other comments

This is a vital concession for many users of the Centre. Cheshire East as a community should be able to provide leisure provision to those who have lower incomes.

Proposed changes to out of borough users

Option	Suggested response	Impact (and notes)
Strongly support	X	From the operating model it appears any additional income would go to EHL, and not benefit CEC
Tend to support		
Neither support nor oppose		
Tend to oppose		
Strongly oppose		
Don't know / Not sure		

Focusing future council investment on Leisure Services

Option – Focus Leisure Services	Suggested response	Impact (and notes)
In locations where the health of residents is the poorest	Strongly disagree	The Tartan Rug health data is historic and should not be used to determine health needs. Census data and Active life data (Sports England) is more up to date. Health in all communities is variable and there will be pockets of ill health in all communities There should be equal access to leisure provision for all communities
On the leisure centres where usage is highest	Strongly disagree	
Where the actual cost to operate sites per user is lowest	Strongly disagree	

What should the council take into consideration when deciding where to focus its leisure services resources.

- Community leisure services should be provided for the population of Cheshire East. CEC's strategy states ...“These are a vital asset to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents. They help people to achieve a good quality of life, to be health and happy”.
- Equal access for all communities.
- Closing local facilities is not an effective way to improve overall health. The needs of young people, residents aged 65+ and other vulnerable groups e.g. disabled should be considered.
- What other provision is available locally?
- Can provision in neighbouring areas be accessed by public transport during the day, evenings and weekends?
- Is there capacity in neighbouring leisure centres, particularly for swimming?
- The Council's commitment to net zero and CEC's carbon commitment.