

**Agenda for consultative meeting of the LED
Monitoring Forum
Tuesday, 25th January, 2022, 6.00 pm**



Members of LED Monitoring Forum

Councillors P Arnott, A Dent, B De Saram, S Hawkins
(Chair), P Hayward, N Hookway, J Loudoun,
G Jung, P Millar, G Pook, J Rowland.

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Venue: Online via zoom app

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517540

(or group number 01395 517546)
13 January 2022; republished 21 Jan 2022

**Important - this meeting will be conducted online and recorded by Zoom only.
Please do not attend Blackdown House.
Members are asked to follow the [Protocol for Remote Meetings](#)**

This meeting is being recorded by EDDC for subsequent publication on the Council's website and will be streamed live to the Council's Youtube Channel at
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNHQruge3LVl4hcgRnbwBw>

Public speakers are now required to register to speak – for more information please use the following link: <https://eastdevon.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say-at-meetings/all-other-public-meetings/#article-content>

Between 8th December 2021 to 11th May 2022, the Council has delegated much of the decision making to officers. Any officer decisions arising from recommendations from this consultative meeting will be published on the webpage for this meeting in due course. All meetings held can be found via the [Browse Meetings](#) webpage.

1 Public Speaking

Information on [public speaking is available online](#)

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 November 2021 (Pages 3 - 8)

3 Apologies

4 Declaration of interest

Guidance is available online to Councillors and co-opted members on making
[declarations of interest](#)

5 Matters of urgency

6 Confidential/exempt item(s)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the Press) have been excluded. There is **one** item which officers recommend should be dealt with in this way.

Part A

7 Update on Leisure Strategy

A verbal update will be provided from Strategic Leisure.

8 LED Dashboard December 2021 (Page 9)

9 LED Facilities and Activities December 2021 (Pages 10 - 13)

10 England Covid Impact Report Jan 2022 (Pages 14 - 18)

Part B

11 LED CEO's January 2022 Report (Page 19)

[Decision making and equalities](#)

For a copy of this agenda in large print, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01395 517546

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of LED Monitoring Forum held at Online via zoom app on 23 November 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.00 pm

79 Public Speaking

There were no public speakers registered to speak.

80 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021 were noted as a true and accurate record.

In discussion, the Forum recognised that there were legitimate reasons for items being included under Part B but expressed that in the interests of openness and transparency, they should endeavour to include as many items as possible under the Part A section of the meeting. Where possible, sensitive information could be removed from documents to move them into part A so that members of the public may read them.

81 Declaration of interest

Cllr Paul Arnott: Minutes 85 – 92; Personal Interest: Membership of LED Community Leisure

Cllr Geoff Jung: Minutes 85 – 92; Personal Interest: Membership of LED Community Leisure

Cllr Paul Millar: Minutes 85 – 92; Personal Interest: Membership of LED Community Leisure

82 Matters of urgency

None.

83 Confidential/exempt item(s)

Four items were agreed to be considered in private session.

84 Nominations for Vice Chair of the LED Monitoring Forum

On the invitation of the Chair, nominations were put forward for vice-chair of the Forum and following a vote of those present, Cllr Paul Millar was appointed to the position.

85 East Devon District Council Leisure & Built Facilities Strategy workscope

Charlie Plowden welcomed and introduced Rachel Fowler, from Strategic Leisure. Charlie Plowden and Rachel Fowler presented their report, highlighting the following points:

- The contract had been let for the Leisure and Built Facility Strategy. The work was underway and on track for the timeline that the Forum had set for itself, following the diagnostic work.
- Strategic Leisure had started a series of site audits on all existing indoor leisure facilities across East Devon, and all-weather pitches. The audits would be finished this week and would give an understanding of the quality of facilities.
- There were all-weather pitches in the joint use centres. Strategic Leisure's assessment and analysis of these would be shared with planning colleagues at East Devon DC so that they could reflect that detail in the Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Strategic Leisure had pulled together a list of stakeholders and would set up meetings with them.
- Surveys were drafted and had started to go out to schools, clubs and parish and town councils. Strategic Leisure had also started speaking to the national governing bodies and consultants who were doing the planning work at Cranbrook, to ensure they could link into that work. Additionally, a meeting would be set up imminently with Active Devon.
- Strategic Leisure would be looking to do some workshops with members as soon as possible to gather their views on vision and objectives on the strategy and what they saw as the local priorities.

Discussion of the report included:

- In response to a question about whether climate change considerations were being factored into the work being undertaken on existing built facilities, Rachel Fowler confirmed that the climate change agenda would be taken into account. Strategic Leisure were not doing intrusive surveys as part of the audit but would inform members of the benefits of green energy and newer technology when looking at an aging facility that was having a higher impact on the environment, if the supply and demand analysis showed that there was a case for investment or change in what was being provided.
- In response to a question about timescales for commissioning a national Facility Planning Model (FPM) run for swimming pools and sports halls, Rachel Fowler stated that a bespoke FPM run would take approximately 3 months and the national FPM run would be carried out next year based on 2021 data. She added that there was no FPM run carried out for 2020, due to the pandemic.
- It was clarified that the audit involved a qualitative assessment of each facility in East Devon including what facilities there were, their age and condition, whether they were well signposted, accessibility via public transport, and car parking arrangements. The assessments would be presented in an appendix to the report.
- Responding to a question about the involvement of the Planning Policy team in the relationship between the Playing Pitch Strategy and the Leisure and Built Facilities Strategy, the Planning Policy Manager stated that the previous strategy was done by the Planning Policy team, through discussion with Sport England, and this was being rolled forward. Representation was received from Sport England about the need for a Playing Pitch Strategy to support the local plan. It was a piece of work that was owned across the council but the Planning Policy team was taking the lead since it was critical for planning policy work. Sport England had expressed that they were happy with the previous Playing Pitch Strategy. Technical assessment of pitches was a challenge and the council might need to buy in some professional support in this respect. A further challenge was around getting partnership involvement to implement schemes and initiatives, to carry them forward.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet:

To approve the Scope of Work for producing the Leisure Strategy and Built Facilities Evidence Base as set out in the report to the LED Monitoring Forum on 23 November 2021.

86 **LED Community Engagement Programme**

Peter Gilpin invited questions on his quarterly update report.

Discussion included:

- There was a dialogue that would need to take place between the council and LED to produce a strategy which incorporated the council's strategic priorities on health, wellbeing, leisure and sport.
- The strategy should also link in with the council's anti-poverty strategy, as far as was possible.
- The LED Director of Finance confirmed that the community engagement programme already linked in with the council's published health and wellbeing strategy.

The Forum noted the report.

87 **LED Community support to Afghan Refugees**

The LED Director of Delivery presented his report, highlighting that further dialogue with refugee families had taken place and it was noted that:

- A priority for families had been to get their children into schools.
- Support was being provided concerning the use of booking systems to access the LED facilities, since these systems had been somewhat alien to refugee families.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- All school-age children of the Afghan refugee families were now in schools.
- In response to a question about progress with the government's resettlement scheme, John Golding reported that the home office had been slow on picking up on resettlement. However, East Devon DC had put forward a few properties to the home office, who were trying to match evacuees with accommodation.
- East Devon DC were working with colleagues at Devon County Council to support refugee families' mental health.
- The Forum expressed its gratitude to Cllr Joe Whibley for his work in driving forward the initiative for LED community support to the refugees. Further thanks were expressed to LED, Exmouth Town Council and all the officers who had worked to support the refugee families.

The Forum noted the report.

88 **Activities by Property and FM Team on LED Properties**

Tim Child introduced his report, highlighting the following points:

- LED properties accounted for upwards of 50% of the work of the facilities management team.
- The report included i) introductory guidance and context concerning East Devon DC's landlord obligations, and what this meant in practice; ii) a summary of the work and

activities over the past 3 months, with background papers; and iii) a summary of capital bids put forward for this year, amounting to £3 million for 12 LED properties.

Discussion included:

- There was an approximate ten-fold increase in the scale of bids for LED properties this year, reflecting the need to invest. The needs had been identified following work looking at stock condition data.
- Not all capital bids were expected to be approved at this stage but priorities were around energy efficiency measures, replacing kit and health and safety compliance. This was work that would need to be done this year or next, in order to keep leisure centres operating.
- It was recognised there had been underspending on maintenance of the buildings for some years with the consequence that some were now in suboptimal condition. Concern was expressed around affordability given what was coming forward in East Devon DC's financial projections.
- Views were expressed that capital bids which did not relate to health and safety or compliance should be deferred until such time as a leisure strategy was agreed, identifying priorities.
- Sites had a longstanding agreement going back to the 1980s whereby schools covered 40% of costs and East Devon DC 60%. This amounted to the council subsidising statutory education provision, and needed to be renegotiated to reduce East Devon DC's contribution and increase the contribution from schools.

The Forum noted the report.

The consultative meeting then went into private session.

89 **Facilities and Activities Update**

Peter Gilpin introduced the Facilities and Activities Update report, highlighting the following points:

- Confidential information would be removed from the report to enable it to be made public after the meeting.
- A free open event had been held at Exmouth Tennis Centre over the weekend in collaboration with the Lawn Tennis Association; this had been well received with 669 children attending. It was hoped that children and their families might come back to the Centre, going forward.
- The café at Exmouth Tennis Centre had reopened for full hours.

Following discussion the Forum:

- Noted that Exmouth Tennis Centre had used events to increase the footfall into the centre.
- Encouraged LED to host more similar events so that the Tennis Centre continued to thrive in a sustainable manner, particularly for the benefit of families on low income in East Devon.

90 **Exmouth Pavilion**

Peter Gilpin presented his report, highlighting the impact that the pandemic had had on Exmouth Pavilion. It was noted that the bulk of the Pavilion's income came from shows, the majority of which had been cancelled during 2020/21. He added that many shows

were rescheduled for 2022 and he was confident that, with investment in appropriate areas, the Pavilion would bounce back.

Discussion included:

- Members acknowledged the difficulties of the past 18 months for the Pavilion, and thanked LED for getting it back operating and putting on shows outside.
- The Forum recognised that the building was in need of investment, and noted that some works were essential and must be undertaken this year or next so that the facility could continue to operate.
- Members discussed alternative options and aspirations for the future of the Pavilion and noted that the Arts and Culture Forum would be discussing the relationship between the Pavilion, Ocean and the Queens Drive space.

The Forum asked for a report detailing options for the future of the Pavilion.

91 **Ways to Wellbeing Programme**

Peter Gilpin presented his report which highlighted that the Ways to Wellbeing Programme (W2W), a social prescribing scheme, would be finishing at the end of the year. The following points were highlighted:

- The W2W was a highly successful scheme and a Social Value report previously seen by the Forum had outlined the considerable benefits that the scheme generated.
- The decision to close the scheme had been taken by the lead GP within the local primary care network.
- It was understood there would be a new focus on mental health but the rationale for losing the highly successful W2W scheme was unclear.
- The Forum's support for retaining the scheme was sought.

Following discussion on the programme:

- John Golding agreed to write to the lead GP on behalf of the Forum, as a priority, expressing the Forum's views in favour of retaining the scheme.
- Cllr Rowland would ask the Leader to raise the matter with the local MPs; and seek agreement to discuss the issue as an urgent item at the next meeting of Cabinet.

92 **KPI Performance Dashboard**

The Forum received and noted the details of the key performance indicators for LED Community Leisure for October 2021.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

P Arnott
B De Saram
S Hawkins (Chair)
G Jung
P Millar
J Rowland

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

Purchase
Fowler
E Rylance

LED Community Leisure representatives:

Peter Gilpin, CEO
Bridgette Jones, Director of Finance
Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery
Richard Purchase, Chairman of LED Board

Strategic Leisure representative:

Rachel Sutcliffe

Officers in attendance:

Charlie Plowden, Service Lead Countryside and Leisure
Tim Child, Service Lead - Place, Assets & Commercialisation
Simon Davey, Strategic Lead Finance
Matthew Dickins, Planning Policy Manager
John Golding, Strategic Lead Housing, Health and Environment
Sarah Helman, Democratic Services Officer
Susan Howl, Democratic Services Manager
Jorge Pineda-Langford, Principal Building Surveyor, Property & FM

Councillor apologies:

N Hookway

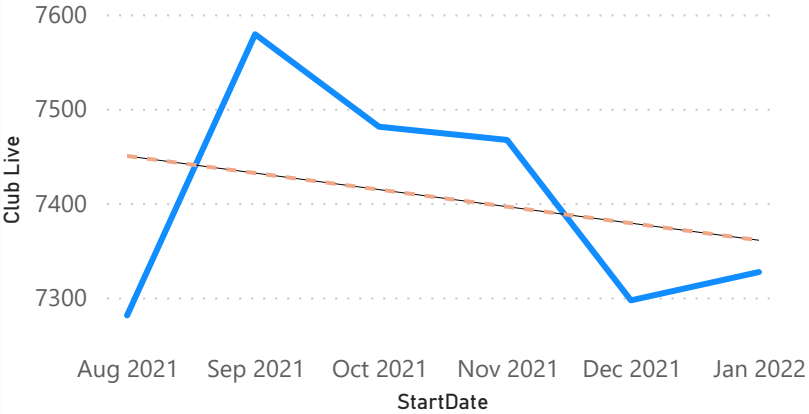
Chairman

Date:

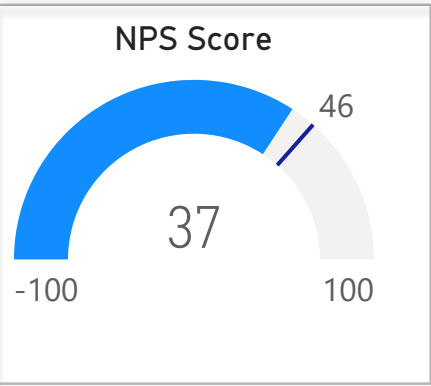
Axminster Leisure Centre	Broadclyst Leisure Centre	Colyton Leisure Centre	Exmouth Leisure Centre	Exmouth Tennis Centre	Honiton Leisure Centre	Ottery Leisure Centre	Sidmouth Leisure Centre	Sidmouth Swimming Pool
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	Actual	% Change Monthly
Club Live	7297	-2.28%
Joiners	206	-46.35%
Leavers	349	-14.25%

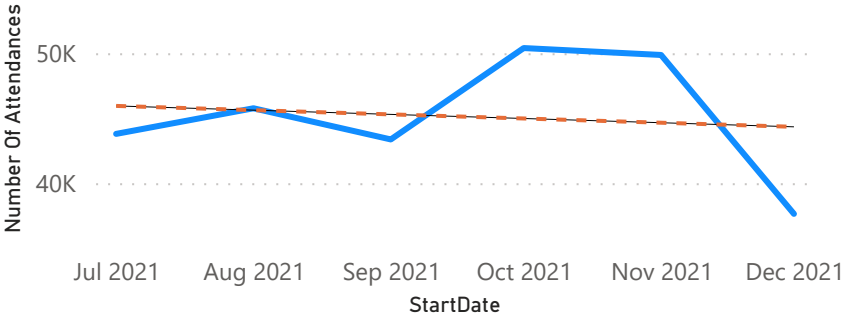
Club Live by Month



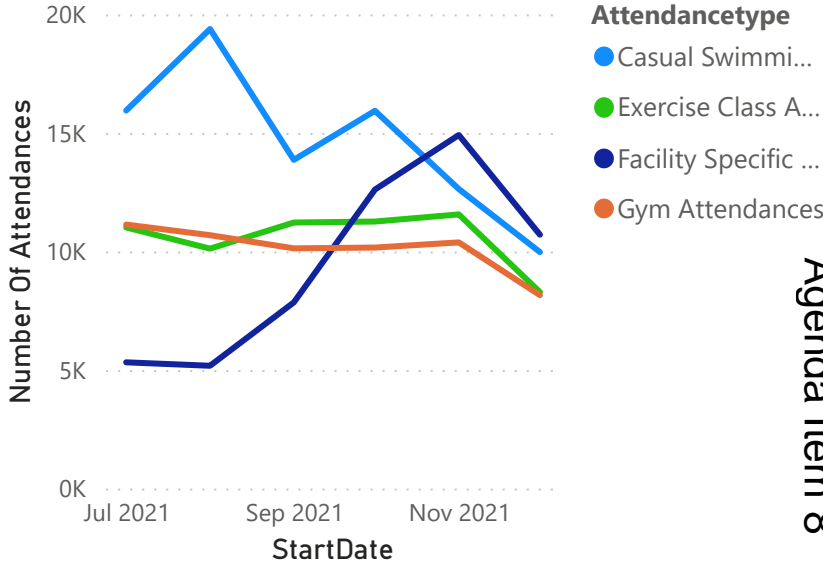
Swimming	Gym	Group Exercise	Sports
Total Attendances			
12,851	8158	8286	10708
% Change since last month			
-21.05%	-21.43%	-28.35%	-28.19%



Total Attendance Trend over Previous 6 Months



Attendance by type Previous 6 Months



Report to: EDDC Monitoring Forum January 2022

Subject: Facilities and Activities Update to December 2021

From: Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery, LED Community Leisure

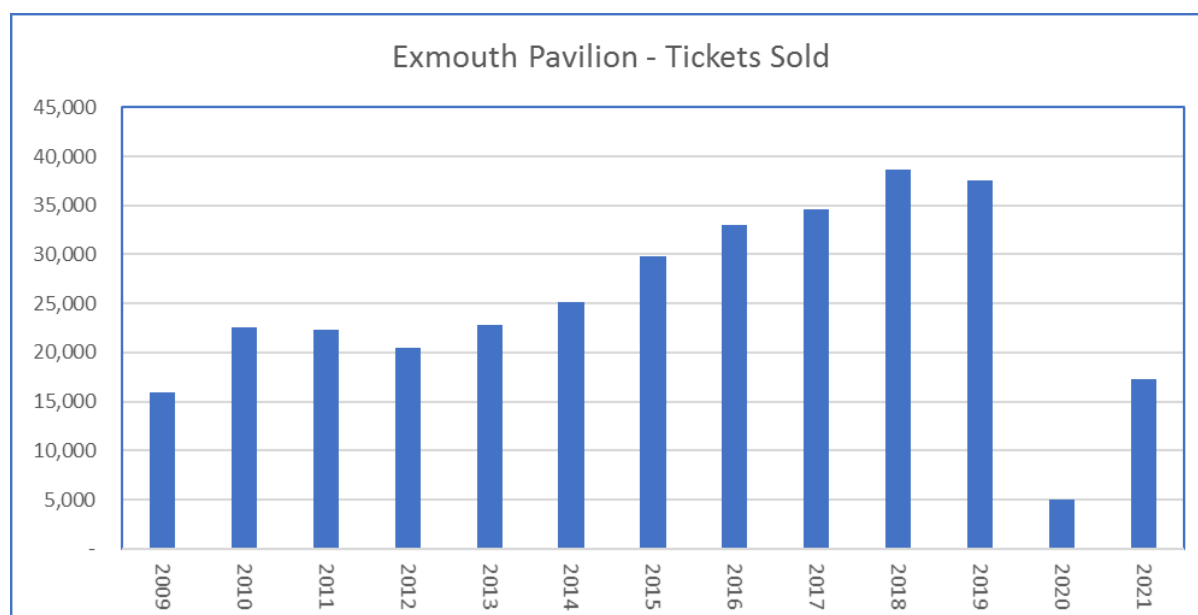
Date: 13th January 2022

Re-opening Progress

Unfortunately, the rise in the spread of the COVID Omicron variant was felt across the leisure contract during November and December with a number of colleagues across the business either testing positive or having to self-isolate. Some team members were unwell, whilst others were asymptomatic.

This also saw a decrease in patronage and customer usage due to the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the “Plan B” Government COVID announcement. The Exmouth Pavilion was particularly badly hit with a number of shows cancelling or postponing, and those that did go ahead saw significantly reduced attendances. The site has also suffered with high numbers of positive covid tests for team members, although service was maintained through good leadership, colleagues returning from leave early and redeploying office colleagues to support the front-line operation.

The following graph demonstrates how the Pavilion has been badly hit by the pandemic, following a period of steady growth.



For the large part the leisure centre-based service was maintained, although a reduced service was offered over the Christmas and New Year Period, partly due to covid absences, but also to support colleagues in getting some rest and recovery ahead of what is expected (and hoped) to be a very busy January.

Support from all levels of the business kept the service running with some Head Office managers basing themselves at sites to support the operational delivery teams. I am pleased to say that the time of writing (13th January) we only have 1 team member off with a positive test.

Customers and team members are still being strongly encouraged to follow COVID measures, albeit it is now personal preference. Strong communications and management plans remain in place to support all sites should COVID issues arise again. For the moment, Plan B remains in place.

Resourcing across the contract is improving with a flurry of recruitment activity in the build up to and during the festive period. Credit must be given again to the operational team who along with all the COVID issues have supported colleagues taking some much-needed leave and maintaining a level of service for our customers.

A change to the delivery structure in December at Exmouth Leisure Centre has seen the promotion of a long-standing Duty Manager to a Senior Duty Manager role, and the appointment of the new General Manager for Exmouth Leisure Centre is imminent, following the Area Manager's move to a new job in Dorset. Both new team members are local Exmouth people.

A new head coach has been appointed at Exmouth Tennis Centre to support the growing programme following the success of the recent LTA supported grass roots tennis development weekend.

Swimming lessons across all 3 pools finished the year with just under 2,200 children learning to swim every week, showing continued growth.

Membership numbers have grown throughout 2021, to 75% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of December 2021. Membership dropped in March 2020 from just under 10,000 to around 1,500, so a steady growth back over the last 18 months has been realised. A membership pricing review in early 2021, a change to the people structure that supports membership, and a focused marketing approach all supported this growth. Further growth is predicted and targeted for 2022, subject to no return to lockdowns or material COVID restrictions.

Membership attrition continues to be higher than in previous years, running at around 5% month on month. This is in line with what the industry is seeing across the UK; the team is working to reduce this number.

Community

'Walking for Health' is becoming 'Wellbeing Walks' following the change by the Primary Health Care network, as reported previously, and is currently moving across by April 2022 to the new national brand. This is requiring lots of work with new systems, marketing and training.

A new relationship with First Response Physio across East Devon and the Mental Wellbeing Team are now being developed.

The free leisure access scheme for the Afghan refugees housed in Exmouth has continued into 2022. Whilst take up continues to be lower than we would like, it is improving. The team working on this project are planning to meet in January with some further sporting opportunities being discussed.

Fitness and Group Exercise

Attendance across all activities was down in December against previous months. In December numbers do always drop off and with the Government's 'Plan B' announcement this effected numbers pre-Christmas. Nevertheless, 999 indoor classes (including 60 virtual) were offered in December with an average 44% uptake, considerably higher during peak times, and "Virtual group exercise" classes are being launched across a number EDDC leisure sites to support the expected growing demand.

Good feedback has been received for both the virtual classes and the LED “at home” App option, both working hand in hand to support customers who may not be able to attend the leisure centres for any reason.

All gyms across the EDDC contract received over 8,000 visits in December, lower than previous months, for the same reasons as the group exercise classes, namely the seasonal and Plan B effects.

Following customer feedback, a couple of pieces of new equipment were installed in both Sidmouth and Exmouth Leisure Centres to support customers health and fitness programmes.

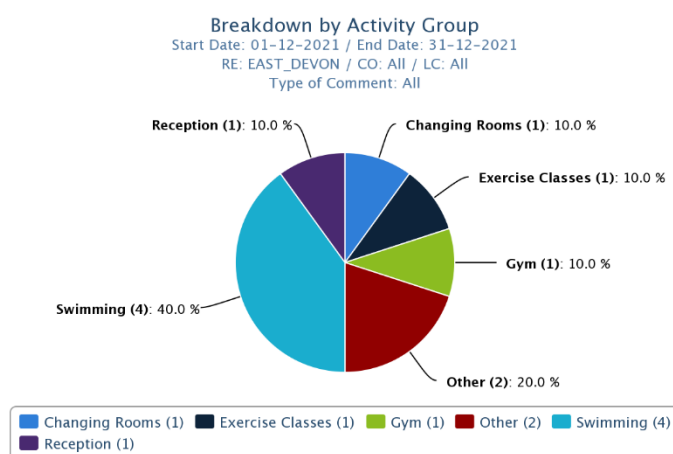
We continue to offer a hybrid model of booking in advance or simply just turning up for the activity programme, based on customer feedback, although this is constantly being reviewed.

Get Active Gym (junior offering) has developed its offering to allow 11+ year olds to come into our sites with a supervised adult (was previously 14). This decision was taken following appropriate advice from governing bodies and relevant experts and supports LED getting an even wider section of the community to get more active. This will be promoted as we move further into the New Year. We continue to offer challenges to our members and in 2022 are planning the ‘LED Mover Challenge’.

LED ran its first ever swim gala just before Christmas at Exmouth Leisure Centre, supporting hundreds of young swimmers (and parents). LED works with local swim clubs to support a talent pathway, ensuring that talented swimmers have the opportunity to move through to competitive swimming in local clubs.

Customer Feedback / Service

During December we recorded 10 comments in total: 8 complaints, 2 suggestions. The majority of complaints concern the condition and availability of the pool changing at Honiton and Sidmouth pools.



The key measure for our customer satisfaction is through NPS (Net Promoter Score). The results from December were 52 from relational surveys sent out, and a score of 62 for all other surveys (the industry benchmark is a score above 46).

We used the NPS survey when we launched our first Swim Gala at Exmouth Leisure Centre with an exceptional NPS score of 87.

There were 187 surveys returned out of 1015 sent out (18% return, historically returns would be around 14%-15%). Really great positive feedback from customers about the teams and the COVID procedures we have in place.

The 'Mystery Visit' programme continued during December with mixed results based on online enquiries; all data and insight from the programme is used to support continuous improvement.

Facilities

A Health & Safety audit schedule is now in place and will commence in February 2022, using an independent specialist leisure-based H&S consultancy.

There were 20 recorded incidents / accidents in November / December, with the majority being slips, trips and falls in wet areas.

There were no reportable (RIDDOR) incidents in November / December.

Projects Update

The refurbishment project for Honiton Swimming Pool changing rooms is now on site running through to mid-February 2022. Honiton Pool will remain open throughout with a temporary solution for changing and access. An LED / EDDC / contractor project Team is established with good communications in place.

The COVID Booster clinic operating out of Exmouth Leisure Centre finished in December, although dialogue is ongoing with various parties as to how LED can support future initiatives such as this.

There is ongoing dialogue with EDDC colleagues around building lifecycle / H&S works over the next 24 months following submission of the capital bid from EDDC officers (see separate agenda item).

Summary

A quieter period for the team, allowing for some much-needed rest for many members of the team who have consistently delivered a valuable, and to many a vital front line service providing leisure facilities over what has been a challenging 9 months since re-opening after the most recent lockdown.

Whilst recovery continues to be fragile, and somewhat stop-start due to the ever changing COVID environment, the key business drivers for the contract are starting to move in the right direction. The team are now full into January and helping hundreds of residents on their journey to a healthier lifestyle. January has started well with new membership numbers tracking ahead of target currently, long may this continue....!

Jamie Bryant, Director of Delivery, LED



A Challenging Landscape for Community Leisure UK Members

Further to our December 2021 report highlighting the fragile landscape for public leisure and culture, our latest insight shows that the threat of a delayed recovery is becoming reality. This report, focusing on England, pulls together insights from member responses¹ to a survey conducted in early January 2022 in addition to qualitative member responses as collected via email and member check ins.

Public leisure and culture trusts are still excluded from most support packages and additional grants, with the exception of the Culture Recovery Fund. The lack of recognition, for public leisure in particular, is wholly unacceptable. Throughout the pandemic public leisure and culture have shown their value more than ever, yet are receiving very limited support and no recognition from Government.

This report highlights:

- ★ **Leisure and culture trusts are witnessing and projecting significant reductions in income due to reduced customer footfall at a traditionally key time for trading.**
- ★ **Energy costs are soaring to unprecedented levels and, combined with the increase in National Living Wage and National Insurance contributions, are adding unsustainable additional costs.**
- ★ **The employment crisis continues, with an average of 486 unfilled hours each week. Members also report an average of 142 unfilled hours per week as a result of staff members self-isolating.**
- ★ **A fifth of members anticipate that, in 6 to 9 months' from now, their business will be insecure or non-viable. This increases to more than a third of members in 9 to 12 months' time.**
- ★ **Two thirds of members anticipate that it will take at least one to three years from now (January 2022) until their business will be operating normally, though 'normal' may look different to pre-pandemic.**
- ★ **Single sites are in a stronger financial position than the average within the membership, yet still half of them expect recovery will take another 2-3 years.**

Business viability and customer confidence

While the full impact of Omicron is not yet known, there are early indications of a significant income reduction for leisure and culture trusts following lower customer footfall. The projected recovery period for members will therefore be severely impacted as December and January are key trading months for culture and leisure respectively.

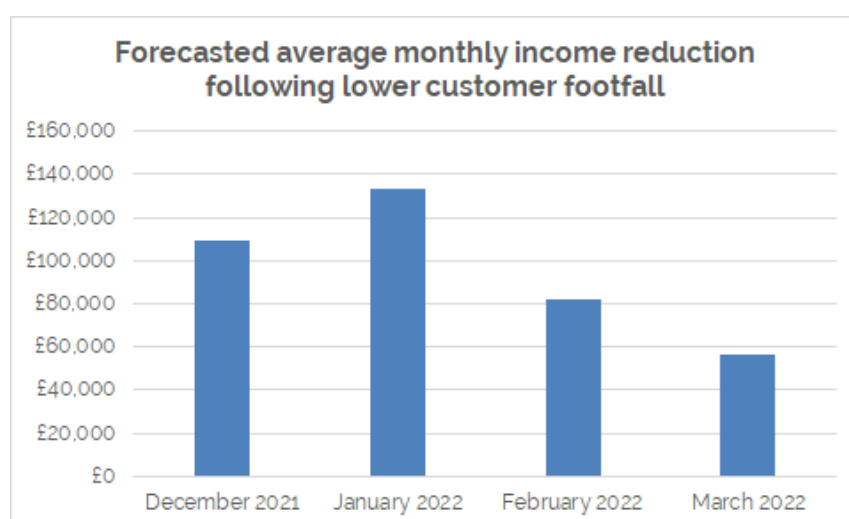
Most members are in a stable position at the moment yet, as a result of forthcoming financial pressures and continuing insecurity, leisure and culture trusts anticipate a difficult period in about 6 to 9 months' time from now, with a fifth of members indicating

¹ We received 28 responses from our membership in England, indicating a 35% response rate from the membership. While the data is not representative, it does give a strong indication of where the public leisure and culture sector is heading.

their business to be insecure or non-viable. This increases to more than a third of members in 9 to 12 months' time.

Leisure and culture trusts have, on average, lost 48% of their unrestricted reserves during the pandemic so far, and are expected to have lost 56% of their reserves by the end of this financial year (March 2022). In addition, they are forecasting an average deficit of £337k per organisation by March 2022. While this figure is lower than predicted in our earlier reports, it is still significant and, when combined with a continued reduction in unrestricted reserve levels, indicates that trusts' recovery continues to be incredibly fragile.

With regard to customer confidence, the greatest impact on footfall and income is expected to be in January 2022 with an average loss of income of £133,665 per organisation. However, in December 2021, leisure and culture trusts had already witnessed a decreased average income for the month of £109k. While it is anticipated that customers will return in the next few months, recovery will be significantly delayed as current projections for March 2022 still show a forecast of an average loss of £56k in income, as compared with projections pre-Omicron.



Members commented on the impact that Omicron has had on their customer footfall, and consequent insecurities for recovery:

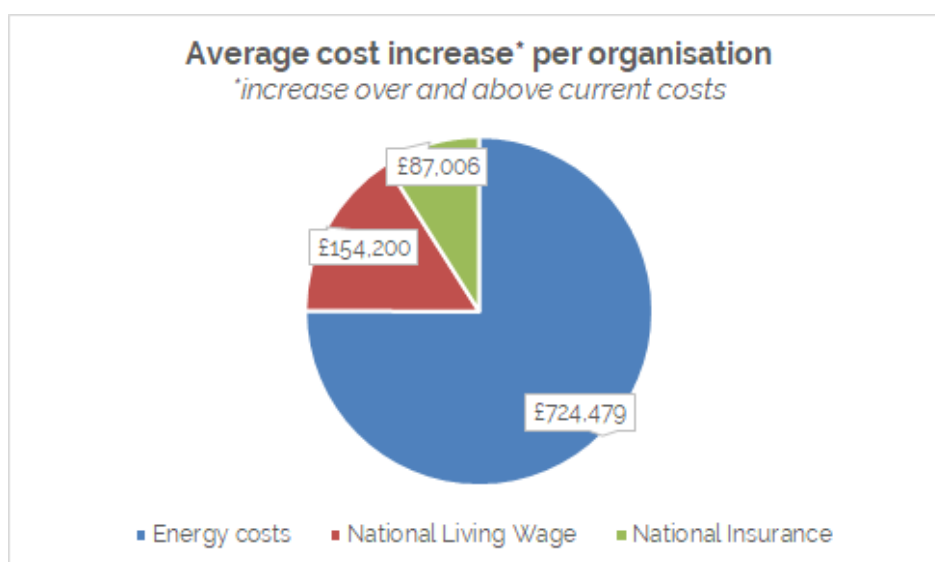
"Prior to this new variant, Omicron, our recovery was going really well with some areas of the business exceeding numbers pre COVID, however with the uncertainty and people's hesitation and fear, numbers and income have started to reduce again. We are operating at about 80% pre COVID levels."

"It remains challenging, particularly as 30% of our income comes from hospitality and entertainment, which has been significantly impacted as a result of Omicron. [...] We are very reliant on meeting our target for fitness membership sales throughout January to maintain positive cash balances in line with our projections."

Financial and employment pressures

As we progress through the turbulent recovery period, the fragile landscape for leisure and culture trusts will face significant, and potentially catastrophic, financial challenges resulting from energy costs soaring to unprecedented levels, a 6.6% increase to the rate of the National Living Wage from April 2022, and increases in National Insurance contributions.

These additional costs will add an average of £965,685² per organisation over and above current costs. Previously the forecast rise in National Living Wage was one of the single largest pressures facing our members, however, this has undoubtedly been overshadowed by the hike in energy costs. This is particularly acute as many of our members operate venues and spaces that are expensive to run, notably swimming pools and ice rinks, large sports halls, heritage buildings and vast museum and theatre spaces. This is illustrated by a member commenting: *"I fear energy prices are now going to become as great a challenge as the pandemic."*



The employment crisis affecting many sectors across the UK is continuing to impact across public leisure and culture. There is an average of 486 unfilled hours across our membership. Our members are also reporting 142 unfilled hours as a result of staff members self-isolating. Some members are managing to fill hours resulting from sickness absence by relying on casual workers or other staff members, but this is not always possible.

To illustrate this challenge, they comment: *"Staff absences are starting to hit and we certainly had some spikes of infections and isolations over the festive period. [...] Swimming Teachers is still a huge pressure in the region and this is causing major problems with delivery of lessons. We are working with other Local Authorities and Swim England to try and find ways to attract, train and employ more teachers."*

² Of the £965,865, million increase in cost 75% comes from increased energy costs, 16% from National Living Wage increases, and 9% from increased National Insurance contributions.

The impact of the employment crisis and unfilled hours goes beyond the operational challenges of running services, but significantly impacts on the wellbeing of the workforce, as illustrated by a member stating: *"What is affecting us the most is the uncertainty around customer and staff confidence. We are already running the staff team as lean as possible and trying to recover from COVID. This means that when we have staff illness plus COVID isolation it is putting huge pressures on the current team. As a manager I'm concerned about burnout followed by the impact on the service we offer."*

Recovery

While in the short-term leisure and culture trusts are feeling relatively secure, the current rate of recovery is still masked by significant uncertainties as members' comments illustrate:

"we have already seen a reduction in footfall (Especially in December) since the Omicron variant. One issue that has stretched us is that a number of individual staff have tested positive (some with or without symptoms) and staff have had to go above and beyond just to keep the centre open. [...] We are expecting energy prices to be at least 40% higher in 2022 which will stretch us to the limit."

"Footfall across the arts centre and museum has been low since mid December, 30% of previous covid levels."

"Swimming Teachers is still a huge pressure [...] and this is causing major problems with delivery of lessons. We are working with other Local Authorities and Swim England to try and find ways to attract, train and employ more teachers."

These continued insecurities, combined with the increased costs and delayed recovery as explained earlier in this report, will have an impact on service delivery :

"We have increased our prices with effect from 1st Jan to help mitigate the reduced footfall - this is the first increase for some time."

"Library use is very low and people tend to visit monthly and borrow 20 books rather than visit weekly and borrow 5. A real challenge for getting people back into the buildings for events and activities, despite a massive outreach and engagement campaign for libraries delivered in November and December to increase footfall."

Consequently, two thirds of members anticipate that it will take at least one to three years from now (January 2022) until their business will be operating as normal again, with the understanding that 'normal' may look different to pre-pandemic.

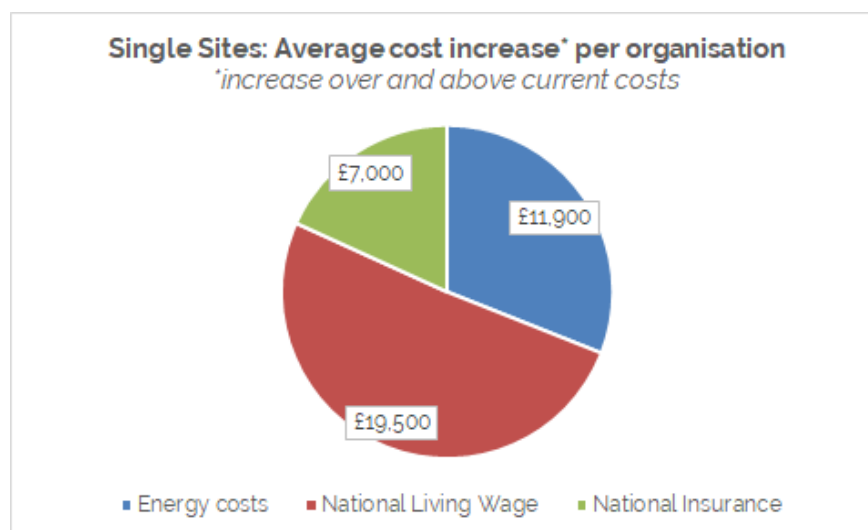
Single sites

Similar to larger trusts, single sites³ have seen a significant income reduction, particularly in December 2021 and January 2022, due to reduced footfall following the spread of the Omicron variant. In December 2021, they lost an average of c. £15,400 monthly income. While the reduction in income is expected to level off in the next few months, by March 2022, forecasts are for income to be, on average, £6.5k lower than pre-Omicron forecasts.

However, currently, single sites are indicating a more secure position than the medium to large sized members. By the end of the current financial year, average reserves are expected to be c. £286k, having lost 12% compared to pre-Covid-19 levels. The average anticipated deficit by this point is predicted to be £258,400.

While their current financial position may provide some short-term security, half of single sites who responded to our Covid-19 survey in January 2022, expect to be in an insecure position in 12-24 months' time. Consequently, their recovery outlook is divided too. Half of single sites anticipate that they may be able to recover within the next year, whereas others believe it will take another two to three years.

Single sites are also facing challenges with increased financial pressures, with the increase to the National Living Wage posing the biggest challenge, accounting for over 50% of additional costs. They further report an average 68 unfilled hours at present, with a further 51 hours as a result of Covid-19 illness or self-isolation.



January 2022.

³ Single sites within the Community Leisure UK membership are independent non-profit operators who operate without a Council contract and manage no more than two community facilities.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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