

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2025

Report Title	Leisure Service Performance Update			
Purpose of Report	The purpose of this report is to update committee on the progress made within the Leisure Service in the four months since bringing Active Lifestyles Stroud I house to join the existing Dursley centre.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to note the contents of this report			
Consultation and Feedback	The contents of this report have been presented to the Leisure Oversight board and Senior Leadership team for comment prior to this committee meeting.			
Report Author	Darren Young, Leisure Services Manager Tel: 01453766321 Email: darren.young@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	No options have been considered as part of this report			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A – Leisure Service Performance Update			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update committee members on the progress made in the Leisure Service since the insourcing of Active Lifestyles Stroud on the 1st November 2024. This report aims to cover the overall status of the leisure service, key achievements and challenges faced, and several service metrics which are starting to emerge and provide a baseline for future service enhancements.
- 1.2 Numerous metrics are available showing the progress of the leisure service. Not all are included in this report. Further discussions can be organised if there are areas of interest not covered here.

2. Achievements and Challenges

- 2.1 Customer feedback at the Stroud site has been consistent but varied with similar themes appearing both as positive and negatives. Below I list some of the main themes:

2.2 Table one

	Positive	Negative
Dursley	Excellent Facilities	New booking system – App issues
	Good variety of classes	Late cancellations and no shows
	High quality swimming teachers	Not enough changing cubicles for lessons
	High quality fitness class delivery	Old gym equipment
	Friendly and helpful frontline team	Facility is too small for the population
	Good Value for money	Not enough parking
Stroud	Happy pre-booking for lane swimming has been removed	Unhappy with the 4-lane set up in the pool
	Enjoying the 4-lane trial and want it to continue	Waiting lists are too big
	Appreciating the extra classes in the programme	There are not enough Pilates classes
	Cleanliness in the centre has improved	Public swimming is busy, like it when you ran at reduced numbers
	Like the new café	The showers in the health suite are horrible
	Happy to see inflatable fun in the programme	The phones not being answered in a timely fashion
	Been impressed since the council took over	

2.3 We currently encourage customer comments on site in a number of ways. Verbal and written comments are received at reception and via email we then have weekly surveys which aim to gain feedback on specific topics. As you will read below, we are also procuring customer feedback solutions which will be fully integrated into our website and mobile application.

2.4 Stratford Perk

2.5 Stratford Perk is the new Café within Active Lifestyles Stroud the operation of a food and beverage service is an area where little expertise within Stroud District Council, so the last four months have been challenging. Whilst considerable improvements have been made to the area within a short period of time, there remain service challenges that we are working hard to resolve. These include

2.6 Table two

Challenge	Resolution
When the product is good it's great, but consistency of delivery is poor.	We are investing in a café manager to lead and support the area, we are also building a training plan for café staff to ensure they are given the tools to deliver.
Cleanliness has been a challenge due to increased footfall.	The site is employing a full time cleaner and the Centre Manager is increasing staffing on shift to address cleanliness
The site and central service have a management knowledge gap when it comes to food and beverage delivery.	Several of the central service team have now completed Level 2 food hygiene qualifications and worked busy shifts in the café to gain valuable experience
A food hygiene visit in January resulted in a 5* award but with large action plan which is being worked on as a matter of urgency.	A 16 point action plan was developed and 14 items have been completed. The final actions will be complete following a complete refit of the kitchen area in March
A lack of training and development was inherited from SLM, we are working on a plan to change this.	We are working on a training needs analysis which will lead to individual training plans
Customer service, like the menu, is inconsistent so we are working on the language and smiles.	We are working with a specialist customer experience contractor and employing a dedicated Customer Experience Manager within the service to support the development of service standards in the Café.
There is no eye for detail in the café, tables are often left dirty which is unacceptable.	It is hard to train passion but we feel by increasing staffing we will relieve pressure points allowing for finer details to be focussed on.

3. Financial Overview

- 3.1 The full financial outturn forecast for the Leisure service will be separately reported to you by colleagues in finance. However, as a high-level summary, we expect a small surplus on overall income and an underspend on expenditure. This currently translates to a forecasted positive outturn position for the service of £180k, subject to change as we work hard to achieve results in the final months of the financial year.
- 3.2 The graph shown as **chart one** in appendix A shows the overall position forecast at the end of January:

4. Service metrics

- 4.1 In December 2024, this committee approved the Be Active leisure discount scheme. The service has organically grown the scheme through existing customers to ensure all new systems are working effectively. **Chart two** appendix one, demonstrates the number of

customers who have either registered or taken up membership through the new scheme. Now that we have assurance that all systems and processes are working, we are planning to launch a marketing plan to increase the uptake of the scheme.

- 4.2 Net promoter score (NPS) is a market research metric that is based on a single survey question asking respondents to rate the likelihood that they would recommend a company, product, or a service to a friend or colleague.
- 4.3 Active Lifestyles Dursley conducted a Net Promoter Score (NPS) survey among all its customers and the results are shown in appendix one, **Chart Three**. Dursley scored an impressive 47 as the NPS UK leisure industry average is 27. NPS is used across the UK leisure Industry as a measure of customer loyalty and satisfaction.
- 4.4 A survey will be sent to all users of Active Lifestyles Stroud during March to establish a baseline loyalty as our starting place for service development.
- 4.5 As predicted, memberships experienced a slight decline immediately following the insourcing of Stroud. However, I am pleased to report that numbers have rebounded following a successful campaign in December and January. We are targeting 6000 members within 18 months, and I am happy to report a positive start to this journey. Details shown in appendix one, **Chart Four**.
- 4.6 Age profile - The age distribution of our users is fairly balanced with the exception of the under 16s, which is higher due to swimming lesson attendance. Whilst the current data does not provide sufficient analysis, we are actively working to integrate multiple data streams. This will enable us to better understand customer profiles and enhance or targeted marketing efforts. Details shown in appendix one, **Chart Five**

5. Future Plans and Objectives

- 5.1 The Management teams at both sites have recently collaborated with our partners at TA6 to develop a comprehensive marketing, promotion, and sales plan for the upcoming twelve months. This plan provides a balanced approach to membership targeting and sales, alongside a rigorous strategy for retaining our valued customers. Centre Managers are currently in the process of creating and embedding service development plans to enhance the delivery of service at both centres

5.2 Key Projects in the Planning Stage

5.2.1 Lido Development

The service team has assembled a team of consultant specialists to drive the project forward. Meetings and surveys have commenced, and a detailed specification of project deliverables is being developed. The goal is to put this project out to tender in mid-April, with work scheduled to begin on 1st October 2025. This intentional delay is to ensure the 2025 swimming season is fully protected.

Preparations are underway to prepare the Lido for its May opening. This includes a specialist cleaning of all concrete surfaces to restore their appearance to as close to new' as possible, painting of outbuildings and the pool tank, and the earliest possible filling of the pool. The Centre Manager at Stroud is also developing a new and varied programme of activities for the summer to engage a wider section of the community, though the success of the season will always be influenced by the weather.

5.2.2 **Fitness Gym Refresh**

We are in the early stages of a project aimed at completely refresh the somewhat dated fitness gyms at our Stroud and Dursley sites. The Leisure team has held numerous meetings with national and international equipment providers, who are now in the process of surveying floors and creating plans for the new gym layouts.

Consultation and Engagement has started and includes:

- Instructors and Managers at both centres
- Online customer surveys
- Face to face customer engagement
- Senior manager discussions.

The intention is to have the two new fitness gym's fully fitted and operational prior to Christmas 2025.

6. **Community Engagement and Partnerships**

6.1 The leisure service has been working diligently to form partnerships with local community groups and businesses. Regular meetings are now held with the following groups as we look to expand our reach into the community:

- Friends of Stratford Park Lido
- Stratford Park Working Group
- SGS College School or Art and Facilities team
- Gloucestershire constabulary

7. **Upcoming Event**

7.1 The Leisure team and the wider community services team are collaborating with Gloucestershire Constabulary to host an emergency services day at Stratford Park on the 1st June 2025. This date also coincides with the Centres 50th Birthday. A programme of events and details will be circulated for members to view.

8. **Customer Interaction Management**

8.1 To improve how we manage the volume of customer interactions we have purchased access to three new computer systems that will be linked to our website and mobile application. These systems will provide 100% visibility of feedback, membership enquiries

and requests to leave us allowing for appropriate management of requests and importantly improved reporting of response time and outcomes.

- 8.2 Recognising the key importance of engagement in our success, we are currently advertising for a senior manager to lead this area. The new Leisure Customer Experience Manager will be responsible for building and developing strategic partners within the community and making engagement a cornerstone of our service

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 I believe this report demonstrates a structured approach to operating our leisure service, highlighting our commitment to careful planning, customer engagement, and a vision of success.

10. Implications

10.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this decision. Financial performance of the service will be included in future budget monitoring reports.

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10.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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10.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

10.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.