

Item 12 - Leisure Provision in Sevenoaks District - External Review

The attached report was considered by the People & Places Advisory Committee on 15 June 2021. The relevant Minute extract is below.

People & Places Advisory Committee (15 June 2021 Minute, 11)

The Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for People & Places presented the report which provided an update on the work commissioned by the District Council and Sencio Community Leisure, and undertaken by Max Associates, an external leisure consultant, to review Sencio's operating model, recovery plan and financial appraisal.

The work would enable Members to make an informed decision around future options for supporting Council owned leisure facilities.

The Leisure sector across the country had been massively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was expected this impact would be felt not only in the short term, but also for the medium to long term nationally. Council's across the country were working hard to keep supporting leisure providers and facilities during the Coronavirus crisis.

Despite the Council's own finances being hit hard, the authority had supported Sencio with £376,950 in the past year with grants and paying its annual management fees up front. It also agreed to delay loan repayments from Sencio to the Council of £88,000 up to March 2021. Sencio had also benefited from a £235,000 grant from Sport England following a joint application with the Council and £144,362.29 from various business grants administered by the Council. It had also been assisted through the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Despite receiving over £756,300 of public money, the trust was currently facing a budget shortfall of £2 million, which included a pre-Covid trading deficit

It was moved by the Chairman and it was

Resolved: That under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting when considering Appendices A, B, C and D of the report, on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by Schedule 12A, paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Members considered and discussed the exempt information as set out in exempt appendices.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That

- a) The report and appendices be noted.
- b) taking into account the significant risk and recommendations summarised in section 6.4 of Max Associates report (Appendix A), no further financial support to Sencio, be considered;
- c) it be recommended to Cabinet that, in the event that Sencio ceases to trade, that members delegate authority to the Chief Officer - People & Places and Chief Officer - Finance & Trading to investigate an interim shorter term leisure operator for temporary leisure delivery to the community and enter into a contract subject to consultation with the Cabinet Member for People & Places and Cabinet Member for Finance & Investment.