

<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DATE</b> 31 October 2022	<b>ITEM NO.</b> 6
<b>TITLE</b> Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) Annual Performance 2022	<b>WARD (S)</b> All	
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b> Director of Communities, Environment and Central	<b>CABINET MEMBER</b> Culture, Communities and Equalities	
<b>DECISION CLASSIFICATION</b>  Non-exempt report  Non-exempt appendices	<b>IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING?</b>  Yes  Yes	

## 1. Decision required

1.1. To note the content of this report.

## 2. Links to the Royal Greenwich high level objectives

2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed high-level objectives as follows:

- A Healthier Greenwich
- A Safer Greenwich
- A Great Place to Grow Up
- A Great Place to Be

2.2 The leisure and library service encourage the health and wellbeing of residents and be physically active and provide support and signposting to services.

- 2.3 The service provides safe places for people to meet and socialize and provide free and fully accessible adventure play centres for young people.
- 2.4 Leisure and Libraries provide facilities and services for families to use within the borough which enhances Greenwich as a great place to grow up and enjoy the investments and improvements as great place to live, work or learn.

### **3. Purpose of the Report and Executive Summary**

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the performance of Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) as the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) contracted provider of sport, leisure, library services and adventure playgrounds from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2022.

### **4. Introduction and Background**

- 4.1. Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) was formed in 1993 and is the largest UK based charitable social enterprise delivering leisure, health, community services and children's centres, and have operated in Greenwich since inception.
- 4.2 In 2012, a new 15-year contract between GLL and RBG was agreed. It resulted in the seamless integration of 12 libraries, 5 adventure play centres, outreach sport development service, and 7 current leisure centres. This contract has been extended to 2031, through a new deed of variation, with a lower management fee and improved surplus share to RBG over the period.
- 4.3 The leisure service operates a host of activities for residents both young and not so young, from the outreach sport development service, Healthwise programme and GP referrals alongside the traditional activities of gym membership, exercise classes, swimming and local clubs hiring the facilities.
- 4.4 The library service is a tremendous asset for our local people with traditional borrowing services, home delivery service, but also facilities

offering children's learning and book clubs, free access to computers, as well as rooms for hire by community groups and organisations – all free of charge. In 2021/22 there were 1.1 million visits (2019 – there was 2.4million) to our libraries, with Woolwich library the second most visited library in the country.

#### Performance - Leisure, Sport, and Adventure Play

- 4.5 Leisure centres reopened in April 2021 at the end of the third national lockdown. During the previous year, they had only been permitted to open for 4 months. These restrictions had a significant impact on the performance of the centres, with a large reduction in usage and membership.
- 4.6 GLL launched a Recovery Plan with two aims – to encourage residents to become more physically active after lockdown, and to boost the performance of the service, all accompanied by a major marketing campaign to ensure all residents were well-informed. The plan included the following offers:
- Free access to Better at Home digital membership
  - Free fitness taster classes for all residents (whether members or not)
  - Free junior gym sessions for all young people with a paying adult
  - Thousands of free family swim vouchers for families entitled to free school meals
  - Hundreds of free family sports packs for those entitled to free school meals
  - Membership discount for existing concessionary members
  - First month from £5.50 offer for new customers
  - Give It a Go scheme pilot including membership discount for inactive residents
  - Hundreds of low-cost / free spaces on sport and activity sessions in parks, community centres and estates – including the Royal Borough's first Virtual Marathon
- 4.7 The Recovery Plan was extremely successful, with over 150,000 visits and 6,300 new or returning members joining in the first two months, with memberships returning to around 80% of pre-COVID levels.

4.8 Another key component of the Recovery Plan was to invest capital into the leisure centres, ensuring that they remain attractive and fit for purpose to encourage greater usage by residents.

4.9 Thamesmere Leisure Centre saw a number of improvements made.

- The gym was upgraded – new flooring and improvements to lighting, decoration, and motivational wall art.
- The studio received the same, along with upgraded air conditioning.
- The reception area has been refurbished, with improved lighting and decoration, and the removal of the traditional reception desk in favour of a more customer-friendly concierge station.

4.10 Sutcliffe Park Sports Centre refurbishments involved

- The reception area changed to concierge
- A highly popular soft play facility was expanded by 35%, adding a large and much-needed dedicated toddler play zone, plus other enhancements for older children.

4.11 The Eltham Centre saw improvements to the health and fitness offer.

- The gym and main studio had flooring replacements, decoration and upgrades to lighting and branding.
- In the hydrotherapy suite, the sauna and steam rooms were upgraded with luxurious modern replacements.
- A new and most advanced ‘immersive group cycle experience’ studio. The studio comes complete with 55 top-of-the-range Technogym spin bikes, immersive floor-to-ceiling lighting, an advanced sound system, and a range of class styles including virtual cycle.

4.12 Waterfront Leisure Centre has begun further developments to improve the facilities on offer and ensure they continue to provide a great service to residents until the new Woolwich Leisure Centre opens in 2025

- Works include repairs to the roof and squash courts,

- The former café will be refreshed as a comfortable customer lounge
- In the fitness suites, gyms and studios will see enhanced lighting, improved decoration and new, top of the range gym equipment. A dedicated HIIT (high intensity interval training) studio will also be created.

#### 4.13 The adventure play centres have also seen improvements

- In Woolwich, the toilet block was fully refurbished including provision of accessible toilets to meet the needs of service users.
- At Plumstead, significant investment was made to replace the giant swing set and zip line.

#### 4.14 Royal Borough of Greenwich Holiday Food & Fun scheme launched in summer 2021 and GLL partnered to deliver free 'Holiday Camps to children entitled to free school meals at four leisure centres. The camps offered:

- A range of physical activity from athletics to performing arts, plus enrichment activities and nutritional education.
- Hot and healthy meals were provided daily to every attendee.
- 8,000 attendances recorded since summer 2021.
- This summer to further encourage attendance at the free camps, children who regularly attended were given a Greenwich One Card with a leisure centre credit of £10 and their parents/guardians were given a £15 shopping voucher.
- Summer 2022 - 400 individuals, 2447 attendances at 82% of capacity compared to 61% in 2021

#### 4.15 Leisure Centres, together with adventure playgrounds and libraries, continue to support the Council's holiday meals scheme throughout the year. During every school holiday, thousands of meals were provided from the GLL venues to residents.

4.16 The Council and GLL relaunched the Greenwich One Card during 2021/22 with a revamped design, upgraded website and a range of new offers from both businesses and leisure centres. The latest offers to launch in leisure centres include, to also assist with the cost-of-living crisis

- Adult ‘swim for a quid’ sessions every weekday afternoon,
- Family ‘swim for a fiver’ sessions weekly at every pool, whereby a family of six can swim for just £5.
- Free 6 week –‘Give it a go’ membership to try out numerous exercise classes and including gym induction

4.17 GLL implemented a workforce development plan including the upskilling of existing staff, attendance at numerous recruitment fairs, working alongside GLLab, and fully funded lifeguard and swimming teacher courses for residents. These measures have ensured that GLL has been able to continue offering a quality service to residents, whilst giving employment opportunities to local people – all of whom are paid at least the London Living Wage.

4.18 Rising utility costs pose a serious challenge to all swimming pool operators nationwide, given the high gas usage required to heat the pools and pool halls. In the calendar year to August 2022, fuel bills for the leisure centres were over £750,000 higher than the same period in 2019. GLL and the Council are working together to find a solution which will ensure the continued operation of all the borough’s pools throughout the crisis.

4.19 GLL has invested more in marketing the service over the past year than ever before. This has included regular advertising in Greenwich Info, plus a variety of indoor, outdoor, and online media opportunities including the big Screens. Each leisure centre is having a bespoke promotional video created to better showcase the excellent facilities that are available to residents.

4.20 As a result of this and the many improvements to leisure centres, usage once again topped 1 million visits in 2021, and to date in 2022 more than 1

million further visits have been received. Leisure centre usage by month is provided in appendix I, together with data for adventure playgrounds.

### Performance - Sport Development Service

- 4.21 During 2021/2022 the Sport Development service continued to ensure that the number of community sport and physical activity sessions developed as part of the new Physical Activity and Sports Strategy and associated Action Plan were growing in number and attendance.
- 4.22 From April 2021 to September 2022, 1,818 sessions were delivered, and 19,455 attendances at physical activity sessions. On a weekly basis we had over 250 participants taking part in our community sessions.
- 4.23 The majority of events and activities have returned to the sport development calendar after COVID-19 including Mini Marathon and London Youth Games. Since April 2020 1,730 young people have been involved in training, trials and competitions related to the events.
- 4.24 Sport Development provides opportunities for residents to participate in sports and physical activities at their point of need. Engagement and community sessions take place in various locations and settings including Community Centers, Church halls, Temples, Libraries and Parks and Open spaces. There are several highlights from the Sport Development Service in this period evidenced by the increasingly equal offer across the target groups.
- 4.25 During 2022 on average 46 sessions were offered each week. This resulted in the following number of target group sessions per week:
- 13 of sessions are targeted at people with disabilities
  - 10 sessions target residents in the Low Socio-Economic groups
  - 10 sessions target older adults
  - 13 sessions target women and girls

- 4.26 During the Easter and summer holiday periods (2022) activity sessions were held on estates, in Parks, at Adventure Play Centres and in Libraries. Additionally, table tennis activities were offered at three of the Fun Friday events held on General Gordon Square: 1,137 people attended the 2022 holiday activities.
- 4.27 The Greenwich Get Active (GGA) sport zone area on 2 June 2022 at the Queens Jubilee celebration was organised and managed in partnership with Royal Borough of Greenwich Sport and Leisure team and GLL Sport Development team, in total 1,894 participants enjoyed all the sport and physical activity offers.
- 4.28 To encourage physical activity amongst families, 600 sport activity bags were given away, for free. The bags contained bats, ball, frisbee, marker cones and a skipping rope: 1,369 people benefitted.
- 4.29 As well as the direct sport development provision, the team also works in collaboration with stakeholders and partner organisations including Oxleas, Peabody, Berkeley Homes, and Parkrun enhancing the activities available to our target audiences.
- 4.30 Sport Development have five target groups, four are mentioned above in 4.25, and the fifth target group is minority ethnic communities, which spans across the other four. Further growth and development has been evidenced over this period by not only increased numbers at sessions, but also by successfully working with groups such as Unique Cycling to successfully apply for funding (£5,000) to increase the cycling resource, and therefore offer their club members varied cycling experiences: over 20 people each week attend the session.
- 4.31 The Fun and Fitness with colleagues from Oxleas run sessions targeted at people living with learning difficulties and has been very successful:
- the sessions have increased from 1 to 4 sessions (weekly)
  - height and weight are checked, healthy eating awareness classes provided, and some clients have progressed to attending gym session with a fitness instructor

- One of the group is now a qualified multi-sport coach and assists with the sessions
- Funding secured for a part-time Psychiatrist
- On average 44 participants attend each week

4.32 Older adult sessions are offered in Abbey Wood, Glyndon Kidbrooke, and Woolwich and include chair-based exercise, Pilates, and Yoga. These sessions are run in the community, two zoom sessions are also available for participants that aren't yet comfortable to return to community sessions, with an average of 86 people joining in per week.

4.33 Residents have also been participating in Parkrun at three sites across Greenwich at Avery Hill Park, Charlton Park, and Sutcliffe Park, with an average of 580 adults, and 95 young people per week.

4.34 The GLL Sport Development service continues to deliver sessions and programmes, across RBG and continues to expand with local partners on a regular basis.

#### Performance - Library Services

4.35 The library service national data shows that visits are currently at 60-65% of pre – Pandemic levels. However, in Greenwich we are currently at 70% with visits averaging 140,000 per month

4.36 The number of issues/borrowings are 12% higher than 2019 at currently 90,000 per month across the 12 sites.

4.37 The use of the People's Network PCs was extremely low in the post pandemic months, with customers having found alternative IT resources. In April 2021 usage was at 1,698 per month, and in June 2022, 10,659, (pre-COVID average per month 15,000.)

4.38 During 2021 GLL Libraries has invested heavily in new ICT. Virtual reality goggles were purchased, and Libraries are running virtual reality education and fun sessions for families. GLL has launched a project of lending tablets

to families and to mentors working with children to combat, in a small way, this digital divide.

- 4.39 GLL and Royal Borough of Greenwich partnership for business support continued 2021/22 with the Startup in London Libraries (SiLL) project, a partnership between Greenwich Libraries and the British Library – with 340 clients registered in the Woolwich library.
- 4.40 The Feed and Read programme providing lunches to local families takes place each holiday at Woolwich, Eltham, Thamesmere, Plumstead and Greenwich Centre Libraries, and Adventure Play Centre. Over 8,770 lunches were distributed over the Summer Holidays. This summer Woolwich Library increased lunches from 120 to 200 a day to meet increased demand.
- 4.41 The 2022 Summer Reading Challenge theme was Gadgeteers, created in partnership with Science Museum Group and illustrated by top children’s writer and illustrator Julian Beresford. This year’s theme ‘Gadgeteers’ sparked children’s curiosity about the world around them. The number of starters increased from 1,460 in 2021 to 1,975 in 2022, and the number of finishers increased from 934 in 2021 to 1,070 in 2022.
- 4.42 Greenwich Library Service is extremely proud of the high number of diverse and creative programmes of weekly events and activities. Greenwich Library Service runs 150 plus core events a week across its 12 branches, including
- Scrabble/Games Clubs
  - Baby Rhyme times – also in Spanish in Abbeywood
  - Mini Makers Under 5’s Mega Blocks Session
  - School class visits
  - Knit and Natter
  - Art Meets Book
  - Busy Builders (Lego Club)
  - Children’s Yoga
  - Reading Groups
  - Writers Group

4.43 Greenwich Libraries on average runs six author events each month and spread across the sites . These can be a selected author for a new book, or as part of a larger programme such as Black History Month.

- October 2021 saw six author events as part of BHM. Stella Oni, author of debut crime fiction *Deadly Sacrifice* a police procedural, was shortlisted for the SI Leeds Literary Prize in 2016.
- Rachel Beckles, a local Greenwich resident, conducted a story time. Rachel started to write stories and poetry when studying at the University of Greenwich to be a teacher. Her passion for children's stories grew when she taught at a primary school. She has written and self-published 4 books and ghost written many for other authors.

4.44 Libraries in Greenwich hold exhibitions throughout the year, whether it's a book exhibition or of the borough's rich cultural diversity. During June 2021 Greenwich Libraries launched "100 Tales of Greenwich" asking people to share their tale of Greenwich through a single photo and line of text

4.45 Woolwich Library continues to be the busiest of all and lots of activities and events take place including

- February 2022 saw the installation of an Exhibition by the Caribbean Social Forum, entitled "Food for Thought." The exhibition has had many library users positively comment and tell stories about how they cook their food, and it seems to have reignited some fond memories amongst people.
- Woolwich Library celebrated LGBTQ History Month by having the Woolwich Creative Writers Group focusing on LGBT fiction stories and characters. The Adult Creator Space focused on themed collages exploring LGBTQ history in the local community.
- The Library of Things kiosk was installed at Woolwich Library on the February 2022. This project aims to "restore, repair, reduce, reuse, and recycle. March to June 2022, there have been 153 items borrowed.
- Woolwich Library welcomed author Olajumoke Champion to host a motivational talk about her book, 'Twenty Nothing to Twenty

Something', written to help young people achieve success and fulfilment earlier in life.

4.46 Eltham Library underwent a large refurbishment during the third lockdown and was well received by customer and remains popular and some highlights include:

- In May the Library held its community 1950s Tea Party, with residents dressing up in period costume, with tea, cake, and quizzes.
- During Dementia Action Week (15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> May), staff were joined by Dementia Inclusive Greenwich and different organisations providing dementia support in Greenwich.
- As part of Her late Majesty`s Platinum Jubilee celebration, children in the library created giant stamps of Queen Elizabeth II.
- Eltham Library is a Foodbank collection point. Greenwich Food Bank have provided us with new signage and bookmarks with a QR code so people can keep up to date with what the foodbank needs each week.

4.47 Greenwich Centre Library continues to attract 12,000 visits per month and some of the activities and offers include:

- A new monthly Creative Writing workshop for local Primary Schools, with writer Carinya Sharples.
- In April 2022 Greenwich Centre Library launched a hugely popular Yoga for under 3's and their parents and guardians.
- Created a brand-new collection of Ukrainian children`s books and all libraries are handing out English/Ukrainian Information sheets on library resources available.
- All immigration applications made from inside the UK are handled through the UK Visa Citizenship Application Service (UKVCAS). UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has authorised a private company called Sopra Steria to run this. The Greenwich Centre has become one of the UKCAS centres and Library staff are processing up to 65 appointments a week.

4.48 The library service continues to try and expand the offers/activities, and this is happening all the sites examples include:

- West Greenwich Library 5<sup>th</sup> May – 4<sup>th</sup> June West Greenwich held an exhibition based on Environmental Art and its impact on the local community. An array of art from established artists and art from inspired young people.
- Blackheath Library On 28<sup>th</sup> February the author, Wendy Moore, talked about her latest book Endell Street which tells the story of the incredible women who ran a military hospital in London during World War One.
- Slade Library runs a highly attended Chatter books Reading Group for children aged 7-11 every second Monday of the month.
- Thamesmere Library - March saw Thamesmere Library hold three workshops, Parent Power. This programme positively promoted African parenting incorporating British values for better community cohesion. Through the use of creative arts, the programme celebrated parenting culture, history, and narratives within the African community.
- Plumstead Centre Three pop-up blackout sensory dens are based in the library. The sensory dens multi- coloured objects and interactive equipment. These dens are designed to assist and interact with families in the local community with children diagnosed with autism.
- Charlton Library – In June library staff attended the Together 22 at Charlton Park, the team were located in Greenwich Get Active section with the sport and physical activity area. In total they face-painted over 150 children and chatted to over 550 people promoting the library service.
- New Eltham Library in March 70 adults and children came to spend baby Rhyme time to celebrate World Book Day.

- Coldharbour Library - adult games every Friday afternoon, offering board games, exciting quizzes and tea and coffee.
- Abbey Wood Library - runs two Lego sessions a week, a mixture of fun, engineering and learning through play. They are very popular – with 6-8 children per session

4.49 In summary, libraries are back to 70% of pre-COVID visitor numbers and the actual items borrowed has increased above pre-COVID levels by 12% averaging 90,000 items per month.

## **5 Available Options**

5.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of the report

## **6. Preferred Option**

6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of the report

## **7. Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 Not applicable to this report

## **8. Consultation Results**

8.1 No consultation was undertaken

## 9. Cross Cutting Issues and Implications

Issues	Implications	Sign Off
<b>Legal, including Human Rights Act</b>	The purpose of this report is to update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the performance of Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) as the Council's contracted provider of sport, leisure and library services and adventure playgrounds, in the period between 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.	Eleanor Penn, Assistant Head of Legal Services (Planning & Procurement), 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2022.
<b>Finance and other resources</b>	The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the performance of Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) as the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) contracted provider of sport, leisure, library services and adventure playgrounds from 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2022.  There are no decisions to be taken and therefore, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.	Joanne Stark Head of Accounting & Business Change 6.10.22
<b>Equalities</b>	The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users.  In relation to the Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equality Objectives 2020-2024 GLL have signed up to the Charter and are currently outlining specifics to their list of actions to the 8 pledges for the next 12 months and beyond. As an organisation GLL have pledged to	Tim Hetherington Head of Sport, Leisure, Libraries, 3rd October 2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in the services we offer</li> <li>• Understand the overall population characteristics and economic diversity in RBG, assessing the impact on the services we provide and reflecting them in accessible and inclusive programmes and literature</li> <li>• Recognise, value, and celebrate diversity with a calendar of services and events</li> <li>• Continue to support promising athletes and local community projects through our GLL Sports Foundation and Community Foundation projects</li> <li>• Review our equality, diversity, and inclusion policy, involving and sharing in our journey and networking with our people and partners</li> <li>• Strive for a representative workforce that reflects the active working population of Royal Borough of Greenwich</li> <li>• Ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion regarding recruitment &amp; selection, learning &amp; development, and career progression opportunities for our people</li> <li>• Review our education programmes regarding understanding the diverse and vibrant nature of the Royal Borough of Greenwich community and the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion as foundation principles.</li> </ul> <p>The services and activities resulting from this paper will ensure the opportunities available to all our residents, will continue and the widening of the programmes on offer</p>	
<b>Climate Change</b>	In relation to the objective in Section 3 of the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan of 18 November 2020: A 45% reduction in car use in the borough, due to modal shift to public transport and active travel. All projects encourage the use public	Tim Hetherington Head of Sport, Leisure, Libraries

	transport and active travel by residents and users including walking and cycling to contribute to lower emissions. In addition, any developments of any facilities will be in line with Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan.	3rd October 2022
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	<p>The facilities are available for all residents of the London Borough of Greenwich.</p> <p>The facilities provided for people of all ages, to increase participation in sport and physical activity and improve mental well-being.</p> <p>The service provided by RBG, through the Leisure and Libraries contract follows the Health and Well Being Strategy and the Greenwich Get Active Physical activity and Sport Strategy and Action plan and 4 key objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling Greenwich to Get Active and Stay Active</li> <li>• Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Greenwich Residents</li> <li>• Developing Greenwich People and Growing the Local Economy</li> <li>• Strengthening Greenwich Communities and Facilities Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p>Tim Hetherington  Head of Sport, Leisure, Libraries  3rd October 2022</p>

**10. Report Appendices**

10.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

- Appendix I – GLL Data information

## II. Background Papers

II.1 There are no background papers.

Report Author: Tim Hetherington, Head of Sport, Leisure, Libraries and  
Community Services

Tel No. 0208921 8290

Email [tim.hetherington@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:tim.hetherington@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Reporting to Dawn Squires – Interim Assistant Director, Environment and  
Leisure

Tel No. 020 8921 4133

Email: [Dawn.squires@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Dawn.squires@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

Chief Officer: Mirsad Bakalovic Director Communities, Environment and  
Central

Tel No.: 020 8921 6432

Email: [Mirsad.bakalovic@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Mirsad.bakalovic@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)