

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

27 MAY 2020

### COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport:

#### Outsourcing of Leisure and Greenwich Leisure Bailout

As part of the Labour Group's outsourcing of leisure - which Green Councillors opposed - the contract with Greenwich Leisure was meant to be signed in February 2020. Green Councillors have been informed that this contract has not been signed. We have also been made aware that Greenwich Leisure is asking councils for financial support. As the Leisure Contract has not been signed can the Council clarify its relationship with Greenwich Leisure with regards to Rivermead Leisure Centre and can the Council confirm if Greenwich Leisure have asked for a bailout ?

REPLY by Councillor Hoskin (Lead Councillor for Health, Wellbeing and Sport):

In the report taken at Policy Committee on 20 January 2020, a timetable was set out that indicated the new leisure contract would be signed in May 2020. As you can imagine the Council has rightly been focussed on dealing with the emergency response to Covid-19 and it is understandable that the crisis has had an impact in relation to the delivery of major projects, including the strategic leisure contract. Furthermore, it is clear that the current pandemic creates a huge amount of uncertainty over what the future form of indoor sport might take. Further scientific evidence in terms of the transmission of the virus as well as when or whether a vaccine is produced as well as its effectiveness will also determine the future of indoor sport and leisure.

The Council has an existing contractual relationship with GLL for the operation of Rivermead leisure centre. This contract runs to 31 December 2022.

The impact of centre closures on the leisure industry has been well documented, with many leisure operators facing financial challenges. As a result of the leisure centres being forced to close in response to covid-19, GLL have approached the Council requesting financial support. The Council is continuing to work closely with GLL to understand the implications of covid-19 on leisure centres and is being supported by the Local Government Association and Sport England in discussions.