

Appendix 2

Heathfield Leisure Centre: Summary of Equality Impacts

The council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) to pay 'due regard' to the impact of proposals where these may disproportionately affect people because of their legally protected characteristics¹. In order to identify any such impacts and to assess whether negative impacts can be avoided or reduced, an initial assessment of equality impacts was undertaken and as a result two specific questions were asked in the consultation to invite perspectives on this to further inform the assessment². In making a final decision on the options proposed, the Lead Member is required to pay rigorous and proportionate attention to the duties set out in of the Equality Act and this equality information, and to consider it alongside all the other factors and information related to these proposals.

The following equality impacts were identified in the council assessment and by respondents:

- Problems with transport to other facilities:
 - Buses too expensive or infrequent service, potentially disproportionately impacting on younger and older people, disabled people and carers.
 - Lewes Leisure Centre (as an alternate venue) was identified as not being close to a public transport route.
 - Barriers for non-drivers, with potential disproportionate impacts as above, on younger and older people and disabled people.
- Potential impacts of closure on physical and emotional well-being, arising from inability to access the leisure centre facilities or alternatives, with specific potential impacts on disabled people (both in relation to physical and mental health), older people and younger people (especially those with SEN and/or who are neurodivergent).
- Potential negative impacts of increasing loneliness and isolation (specifically older and disabled people, but potentially for people sharing all characteristics, especially after the increased pressures of Covid-19).
- Specific impacts were noted as possible for women who may have more caring responsibilities and limited time and/or income to access alternate venues.
- A GP exercise referral service to Heathfield facilities (of 6 months discounted membership), particularly used by older and disabled people.

Impacts are identified in relation to some of the legally protected characteristics and for some people sharing these characteristics.

Mitigations identified if the Centre is closed include the following:

- Other clubs, sports and activities are available to improve health and alleviate isolation.
- Potential use of the GP referral service in alternate venues.

Respondents also proposed better provision/subsidising of bus routes or a shuttle bus to alternate venues, replicating classes in another venue, better advertising of the Centre and its offer, or simply keeping the Centre open. However, it is not proposed to implement any of these proposals.

In terms of consultation responses, more women responded to both consultations than men: 60% women, 34% men; no one identifying as transgender responded. Most responses came from people aged 30+ years, being fairly evenly distributed in the given age ranges. Of those who answered the question, 3% said they were disabled, which is lower than the wider population statistics (of approx. 20%). 2% of respondents identified as being lesbian, gay or bisexual: slightly lower than the estimate for the county of 4%. In relation to ethnicity, 7% identified as being from an ethnic group other than White British.

¹ The legally protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.

² The two questions were: "Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the Pool, or the two other options identified above, would or might particularly affect persons with any of the following 'protected characteristics' [they were then listed]" and "If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse impact in relation to persons with a particular protected characteristic, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to mitigate such impact?"