

Community and Wellbeing Committee

16 November 2020

SURREY YOUTH GAMES 2021

Head of Service: Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected: (All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No
If yes, reason urgent decision required: N/A
Appendices (attached):

Summary

This report sets out three options concerning the future of the Surrey Youth Games in 2021.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree one of the three options, set out in Section 3 of this report, for the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games currently scheduled in 2021.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 For the first time in over 20 years, Covid-19 prevented the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games (SYG) from taking place in 2020. As a result Active Surrey have proposed two options for the delivery of the SYG in 2021 and have requested support from the Districts and Boroughs.
- 1.2 In light of the landscape of uncertainty in which the Council is operating (i.e. coronavirus regulations, staff redeployment, workforce safety and financial constraints, the options that Active Surrey are proposing need to be carefully considered.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is the largest multi-sport youth event in the county. Spread over a single weekend every year, this unique event brings together 6-16 year olds (18 for disability sports Boccia and cage cricket if still in full time education) from all Surrey's boroughs and districts who have received up to 8 weeks' free local training.

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- 2.2 Last year a significant amount of preparation and planning was carried out by the Council's Community Sports Development Officer in partnership with Active Surrey, in order to deliver the Specsavers SYG in June 2020. Unfortunately as a result of the coronavirus pandemic the training sessions and the main event based in Guildford were cancelled.
- 2.3 The extensive preparations for the SYG typically includes a network of significant engagement activities carried out by both the Council and participating schools and clubs, which would begin in October in the preceding year.
- 2.4 In response to the threat of the pandemic the Council redeployed a number of existing staff away from the lower priority 'business as usual' activities to prepare and manage the Council's pandemic response.
- 2.5 In March 2020, all Leisure Development services and activities were suspended so as to provide resources to the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) and the Community Hub. This included both the Leisure Development Manager and Community Sports Development Officer posts.
- 2.6 With the increasing threat of a second wave of the pandemic, both these posts have continued to be redeployed to support high priority service areas as well as contributing to the Council's preparation to the response posed by the threat of a second wave.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Active Surrey have proposed two options for the SYG 2021, which are being considered for next years' event. Both these options are based on a leisure offer which will require significant staff resources from within the council.
- 3.2 There is another option, not proposed by Active Surrey, which is to not operate a SYG 2021 offer at all. This option is included below.
- 3.3 **Option 1 – A reduced Covid safe Games in its current format.** The Games and training sessions can only be planned based on current Government guidelines as it would be too resource intensive to keep implementing changes in Government Guidance. A Covid safe Games would be a reduced capacity programme with only seven outdoor activities subject to the National Governing Bodies' Return to Play status and guidance.

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- 3.4 However, Active Surrey has been informed that Surrey Sports Park (SSP) is unable to sign off hosting the event at present and any review of this decision would require the University of Surrey scrutiny. Furthermore, the sponsor Specsavers, has raised concerns about hosting a large-scale event, bringing together different communities during this time and the potential for resulting negative publicity and reputational risk. SSP has also flagged their operational concern around controlling the movement of parents and spectators on site. The additional risk assessments and resulting event adaptations will require considerable extra work and require immediate and ongoing attention.
- 3.5 **Option 2 – A more targeted and localised ‘Youth Games’ approach.** Active Surrey works with individual Boroughs and Districts (B&D’s) to run a localised ‘Youth Games’ in deprived wards. Working with B&Ds and local community groups, the Games would be place-based and would directly target priority groups. The proposal is to use 2021 as a pilot year to maintain the ‘Youth Games’ model and test and learn from a new approach, with the intention of either continuing this approach or reverting to the normal format (in a ‘post-Covid world’) for 2022.
- 3.6 Timeframes for this option are flexible and wouldn’t need to align to existing SYG timescales. The local offer would be co-produced with the Borough Council and, where relevant, linked to the Council’s Leisure Developments Plan (2020-2024), Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2023), and the Community Safety Partnership objectives which are currently being developed as well as, SSYG Development Plans and priorities.
- 3.7 This option will target areas of deprivation and youth as a universal starting point, but the opportunity to explore connections and additional target audiences (e.g. BAME, those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs), anti-social behaviour, SEND) that fit with our local strategies is also paramount.
- 3.8 **Option 3 – Defer the Surrey Youth Games in 2021 to 2022.** Organising the Surrey Youth Games requires a huge amount of preparation and lead-in from staff in B&Ds at a time when the Council’s focus is on responding to the pandemic and is likely to remain so for the next six months.

4 Implications for options

- 4.1 It is clear based on the advice of Active Surrey that it would not be viable to run the SYG in its full scale for 2021 and that the scope of any alternative option would be significantly curtailed.
- 4.2 At the Surrey Senior Leisure Officers Group (SCCLG) meeting on 21 October 2020 all the above proposals were discussed and considered by 10 of 11 boroughs and districts who were represented.

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- 4.3 The outcome was that Option 1 was deemed not viable due to the uncertainty of the venue and that the sponsor was concerned backing an event that encouraged so many participants and their families to attend one venue. For this reason option 1 was rejected.
- 4.4 Three of the other B&Ds suggested that there should be an Option 3 which was to defer all SYG activity to 2022
- 4.5 **Option 2** - Due to this approach having a new format, considerable work would be required, first in building up relationships with services and organisations that support targeted groups. Since Surrey County Council withdrew their Universal, Outreach and Intervention youth service offers, the Leisure Developments Team have had to rely on their relationships with the local schools, clubs and Surrey Police to reach targeted groups, which has not been as effective as it used to be when SCC Youth Services were involved.
- 4.6 Secondly, Active Surrey are proposing to undertake considerable consultation with targeted groups to ensure the sports on offer as part of the SYG, are attractive and engaging to them. At the recent SSLC meeting Active Surrey were unsure how they would deliver the consultation and said that they would need time to prepare this approach as it was something they had not undertaken before.
- 4.7 Active Surrey has requested an expression of interest from all B&Ds by 1st November 2020 if they wish to be involved in Option 2. This is not considered to be a realistic timeframe and this report is the first opportunity to present these matters before members of this Committee.
- 4.8 Active Surrey suggested that after this time , Active Surrey will then work up a programme of activity with each B&D involved, looking to have 6-8 weeks of free training before culminating in some form of sporting event. This will not be a mass participation event but a smaller scale event targeting less young people from priority groups.
- 4.9 Given that the current coronavirus pandemic is set to continue for at least another six months, officers are concerned that there would not be enough time and capacity to plan and prepare an event as proposed in option 2, to deliver effectively during the Summer 2021.
- 4.10 In addition, Active Surrey are requesting that B&Ds all pay £3.5k towards the costs of option 2. This is the same cost as running a full SYG event and when challenged on this, Active Surrey has confirmed that they would be carrying a lot of risk and if the current sponsor withdrew their support, then Active Surrey would need to underwrite the deficit if another local sponsor was not found.

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- 4.11 **Option 3** – As there is still so much uncertainty around the current coronavirus pandemic, the option to defer the SYG for another year would seem sensible. This would allow officers to continue to support the Council's response to the pandemic whilst still providing some ongoing support to the local leisure and sporting community.
- 4.12 While option 3 would mean there will be a reduced opportunity for some young people to be able to participate in their chosen sport as part of the SYG, there are a significant number of grass roots clubs and organisations that are still operating taster courses and regular coaching sessions within the current climate, and would welcome new participants and members.
- 4.13 The Leisure Developments Team will continue to promote activities and opportunities to the local community, including signposting to COVID safe clubs and activities.

5 Responses across Surrey Districts and Boroughs

- 5.1 At the Surrey Senior Leisure Officers Group (SCCLG) meeting on 21 October 2020, 10 of 11 boroughs and districts were represented. There was a consensus to drop Option 1 and three other B&Ds suggested that there should be an Option 3 which was to defer all SYG activity to 2022.
- 5.2 Seven of the B&Ds suggested that they may be interested in exploring Option 2 in more detail however a number of them suggested that their interest would be dependent upon budget constraints and would not be in a position to commit until early next year. They also needed to understand just how much was expected of their Sports Development Officers in order to deliver Option 2.
- 5.3 There were concerns around value for money given the cost to deliver Option 2 is the same cost to delivering Option 1 but without a main event and given there would be much more work expected for B&Ds to host events in their own localities.
- 5.4 There was also concern that Option 2 shouldn't just target inactivity in deprived wards as there are many inactive children and young people living outside of deprived wards.
- 5.5 Finally, there was a general issue around the consultation process with B&Ds expressing concern over how difficult it will be to reach and engage with targeted groups. Each area will want to target different groups so the consultation will need to be tailored accordingly. Consultation will be resource intensive and will require significant support from Active Surrey.

6 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

6.1 Impact Assessment

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- 6.1.1 The Council is facing unprecedented challenges from the pandemic which has required an organisational shift of resources towards sustaining the pandemic response.
- 6.1.2 Whilst many statutory services have had to continue, other non-statutory service areas, such as Leisure Developments, have continued to be suspended.
- 6.1.3 It is recognised that Option 2 would target priority groups and therefore support equality and inclusion. However, given the resource issues the impact of not supporting Option 2 would result in the whole community not benefiting from the SYG.

6.2 Crime & Disorder

- 6.2.1 No implications for Crime and Disorder have been identified.

6.3 Safeguarding

- 6.3.1 No implications for Safeguarding have been identified.

6.4 Dependencies

- 6.4.1 No implications for dependencies have been identified.

6.5 Other

- 6.5.1 The approach for the Surrey Youth Games 2021 will be dependent on staffing levels being sustained, effective partnerships and positive engagement.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 **Option 1 – A reduced Covid Safe Games in its current format.** Each B&D would need to make the normal contribution of £3.5k. This Games budget is also contingent on the preparedness of Specsavers and Surrey Sports Park to continue as full sponsors of a reduced capacity Games which, at present, would seem to be challenging. If any subsequent decision was made to cancel the 2021 Games the Management Group will agree a fair reimbursement of B&D investment depending on timing of the cancellation within the Games year.
- 7.2 **Option 2 – A more targeted and localised ‘Youth Games’ approach.** Active Surrey request the same contribution of £3.5k but there are likely to be efficiencies if multiple B&Ds take part. However, costs could be increased if only a few B&Ds get involved as the overall costs would still need to be shared. Local sponsorship would be explored to fund the programme. If the Government Guidance changes then Active Surrey will work with B&Ds to identify suitable timeframes. Therefore, no reimbursement would be offered.

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7.3 **Option 3 – Not to run any form of Surrey Youth Games in 2021.** There will be no financial commitment for this approach.

7.4 **Section 151 Officer's comments:**

There is an annual budget of £9,356 for the Surrey Youth Games. This covers the payment of £3,500 to Active Surrey, with the remainder funding planning, training and hosting costs. If option 2 were adopted this budget would be fully utilised; there is no budget available for any additional staff resources.

Option 3 would result in an in year saving for 2021/22 of £9,356.

8 Legal Implications

8.1 None arising from the content of this report.

8.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

9 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

9.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Safe and Well.

9.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

9.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

9.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

9.5 **Partnerships:** The Council has an annual partnership agreement with Active Surrey to support the delivery of sports and leisure activities within the borough. This partnership will continue regardless of the outcome of this report. In addition, the Leisure Developments Team have good relationships with the local schools and local sports clubs as well as Surrey Police and other key community partners.

10 Background papers

10.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- N/A

Other papers:

- Active Surrey's SSYG Paper for B&Ds