

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

Report by Director of Education

EAST RENFREWSHIRE CULTURE AND LEISURE END-YEAR REPORT 2023-2024

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of the end year performance of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL) for 2023-24.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet scrutinise and comment on the summary of ERCL end year performance for 2023-24.

BACKGROUND

3. On 2 July 2015, ERCL was established with the responsibility for the delivery of outcomes and improvements in culture and heritage, libraries, sports and community facilities.

4. On an annual basis a performance report is submitted by each department to the relevant committee or Cabinet. For ERCL, the Director of Education submits a report giving his opinion on the performance of ERCL along with a report prepared by the Chief Executive of ERCL.

5. In addition, monitoring of quality and standards of service, financial, equality and complaints information for ERCL is reported to, and monitored, by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and Council. This includes:

- a. ERCL's annual Business Plan – which is presented annually to Council for approval. The Business Plan demonstrates how ERCL will support the Council in delivering Best Value.
- b. ERCL provides Council with its quarterly report, which updates on its contribution to relevant outcomes in the Community Plan, Fairer East Ren Plan and Council's ODP.
- c. ERCL's contribution to the Community Plan is monitored by the CPP on a 6 monthly basis. ERCL's Chief Executive is a member of CPP's Performance and Accountability Review (PAR).

REPORT

6. This report sets out a high level summary of the performance of ERCL in 2023–24 for culture and heritage, sports, libraries and community facilities. Detailed performance results have been prepared by the Trust's Chief Executive, based on their performance monitoring

and are included in Appendix A. This was presented to and discussed at the last meeting of the ERCL Board on 4 June 2024.

7. The report takes account of performance information relating to the ODP, measures relating to % of adults participating in physical and cultural activity which are not highlighted in Appendix A are reported through Citizens Panel.

8 Last year's report to Cabinet on the performance of the services delivered by ERCL commented on the ongoing improvements that had been seen, particularly in terms of increased attendance across services such as gym memberships which were at a record high. 2023-24 has seen a continuation of the overall strong performance levels.

9. Achievements in 2023-24 include:

- Leisure Centres attendance increased by 17.2% (103.5k attendances) over the benchmark of 600.1k set in 2019/20, mostly due to gym Sessions, Fitness Classes and Casual Swimming;
- Gym memberships continued to increase, beating the previous year's all-time high with 3,573 members against a target of 3,104 members. In comparison the benchmark 2019/20 was 2,901 memberships – 81% of current level;
- Virtual and in-person Library visits increased to 542.3k representing 77.4% of the 2019/20 benchmark (700k attendances). In-person visits increased to 298.2.9k – 61.4% of year end numbers 2019/20. Virtual visits continued to exceed 2019/20 levels, reaching 113.4% of 2019/20 levels;
- Children and Family Learning Activities continued to increase with attendances for Bookbug, Family Learning Activities and Class Visits reaching 30.0k which is a 45.8% increase compared to 2022/23. In support of East Renfrewshire's Gaelic Development Plan, Gaelic and hybrid English / Gaelic Bookbug sessions were introduced;
- Swimming lessons numbers increased to 3,339 – an all-time high - which was an overall uptake of 90%. Inclusive swimming lessons took place in Barrhead and Eastwood High and were at capacity, with 65 participants;
- The management of outdoor sports pitches were successfully transferred from Council to ERCL Trust in August 2023.
- The EmpOUR Ambassadors Initiative has been developed by ERCL's Active Schools and is developing participation of females in sport through developing confidence, belonging and encouraging females to become more active in sport and physical activity.
- The theatre continued to build its reputation and profile with 35,783 attendees in 2023/24 compared to 23,693 in 2019/20. The pantomime was sold-out with over 18,000 attendances, achieving both a 4* trade-press review and a Net Promoter Score of 92[;
- Attendance for Vitality classes increased to 3,134 across all classes which is a 47% increase on 2022/23;
- Heritage volunteers contributed 65 hours to the Heritage & Local History service; Outreach talks were delivered to Barrhead & Neilston Historical Association,

Greenbank Guild, Burnfield Care Home and Westacres Care Home and 7 different Heritage and Local History Talks & Walks were delivered.

10. Areas where further improvement work is required include:

- The number of Full Time Equivalent Staff continues to be lower than target with an average FTE equivalent of 194 against a plan of 246, 21% below target and is at a level that could threaten the sustainability of the performance levels that have been achieved;
- 22 customer complaints were recorded in Q4 2023/24 compared to 14 complaints in Q4 2019/20; and,
- Live Active appointments were down 27% from Q4 2022/23 due to increasingly complex patient needs. In response the NHS is piloting a change in the way the scheme operates in order to ensure patients can be supported more intensively if required. A staff member from *Vitality* has taken on the role of patient triage and intake, and an additional staff member is in place to support those with more complex needs.

11. The vision for ERCL “is to be the highest-performing Leisure Trust in Scotland”. Action continues to be taken to improve performance further and modernise service delivery including:

- Implement year 2 of the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy, year 1 of the Library Strategy and of the Arts and Heritage Strategy;
- Continually review service design to widen access to those with protected characteristics including those with a disability and those living in poverty;
- Investment in digital capability transforming operational platforms to increase digitisation and automation within the customer journey; and,
- Continued focus on the People Strategy including revisiting ERCL Mission, Vision, Values and Identity with core staff and implementing the Staff Engagement Survey.

FINANCE & EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. However, in order for ERCL to achieve the strategic aim of creating “*a financially sustainable business model, balancing strong ambitions with commercial viability*” they must address and reduce the operating deficit, i.e. the difference between the income generated from commercial activities and grants and the total operating expenditure. Given the financial challenges facing the Council, in planning for the period 2024-25 and beyond, ERCL need to continue the excellent progress in increasing income through increased attendance across services, and identify ways of mitigating projected losses.

13. During 2023-24 East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust has ended the year in a breakeven position which is a significant improvement to the anticipated loss of £1,702k that was predicted for 2023-24. Operating income was £375K ahead of budget, primarily due to Theatre Hire and Sports having higher participation levels than predicted. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to be a challenge, with an underspend of £444k in Staff Costs as a result. The final financial position was improved from the forecast and allowed for a prudent level of reserves to be retained.

14. East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Trust Best Value Review was considered in June 2020 by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Director of Education, in consultation with the Chief Executive of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, reviewed the recommendations within the Report and the relevant recommendations were incorporated into a Joint Action Plan to address recommendations of Finance and Business Review and Best Value Review. Due to the progress made in the subsequent joint Trust / Council action plan, it was agreed at the 21 May ERCL Board Meeting that the joint action plan should be closed. Business will continue to be overseen by the Director of Education, the Trust's Board and its Chief Executive.

CONSULTATION

15. ERCL's Business Plan calls for the development of "*An understanding of our customers and audiences, and an offer that attracts and inspires them.*" In support of this, customers are consulted through surveys, social media platforms and a number of digital channels to gain a better understanding of customers. Net Promoter Scores are in place for gyms, fitness and theatres and provides nationally benchmarked indicators linked to customer satisfaction, these scores are high in ERC, for example ERCL Net Promoter Score was 47% for gyms and fitness against an overall industry average of 38%.

16. In line with ERCL's people strategy, staff are regularly consulted on key areas, supported by staff newsletters, management blogs and through the meetings of the Extended Leadership.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

17. This report relates to the contribution of ERCL to the delivery of the Community Planning Partnership's Community Plan. In making this contribution, ERCL work with many partners across the Council and externally, including national and third sector organisations.

CONCLUSION

18. This report provides a high level summary of performance of ERCL at 2023-24 year - end. Elected members should note that the information presented here shows an overall positive and improving picture although there are areas where there is scope for further improvement.

19. The Director of Education is confident that ERCL is well placed to continue to make positive contributions to the CPP's Community Plan and will work to achieve the targets set out in the Council's ODP. ERCL will continue to self-evaluate its performance and take the necessary steps in partnership with the Council, to build on areas identified for improvement through its quality assurance processes as part of its business planning process.

20. East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust is performing well. It has continued to strive towards improving customer experiences, meeting its charitable objectives and is contributing to the health and wellbeing of the residents of East Renfrewshire. ERCL operated with a balanced budget in relation to the budget for 2023-24 and has still continued to deliver £420k of net base savings on NDR and VAT since 2016-17. As such, ERCL is supporting the Council to improve outcomes and secure best value in delivery of services. This will continue to be a key priority given the financial challenges faced by all public sector organisations.

RECOMMENDATION

21. Cabinet is asked to comment on and approve this report as a summary of East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure end-year performance for 2023–24.

Mark Ratter
Director of Education
3 October 2024

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Appendix
1. ERCL - Year End Summary Report 2023/24



Balanced Scorecard & Business Performance Overview

For the Quarter ended 31st March 2024

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Board

4th June 2024

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balanced Scorecard

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balance Scorecard - Key Performance Indicators

For the quarter ended 31-Mar-24

- ▲ Improvement from previous period
- No movement from previous period
- ▼ Decline from previous period

PERFORMANCE

Leisure Centre Attendances	-
Libraries - Total Attendances	-
Community Facilities - Total Bookings	▼
Theatre - Professional Programme % Target	-
Swimming Lesson Participants	-
Gym Membership Numbers	-
Public Swimming	▲
Community Sports Bookable Courses - % Capacity	-

CUSTOMER / PROCESS

Customer Complaints	▼
Operational Projects	-
Unplanned Closures / Events	▼
Audit Recommendations	-
Communications / Marketing Activity	-
ERC SLA Services	▲

PEOPLE

FTEs	-
Recruitment - <i>vacancy lead time</i>	-
Recruitment - <i>% of posts unfilled</i>	-
Staff Absence	-
Disciplinaries / Grievances	-
Training & Development	▲
Leadership	▲
Staff Engagement	▲

FINANCIALS

Net Income / (Expenditure)	-
Income	-
Expenses	-
Cost / Income Ratio	▲
Average Swimming Income	-
Average Gym Membership	-
Unplanned events/closures - Financial Impact (<i>pending Q4</i>)	n/a

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balanced Scorecard

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balance Scorecard - Metrics

For the quarter ended 31-Mar-24

PERFORMANCE		Actual	Plan / PY	Variance
Leisure Centre Attendances ^{1 2}	#	703,536	600,066	103,470
Libraries - Total Attendances ¹	#	542,324	700,583	(158,259)
Community Facilities - Total Bookings ¹	#	18,722	23,266	(4,544)
Theatre - Professional Programme % Target	%	110%	100%	10.1%
Swimming Lesson Participants	#	3,339	2,924	415
Gym Membership Numbers	#	3,573	3,104	469
Public Swimming (inc. free swims) ¹	#	122,981	115,686	7,295
Community Sports Bookable Courses - % Capacity	%	82.5%	85.0%	(2.5%)

CUSTOMER / PROCESS		Actual	Plan / PY	Variance
Customer Complaints ¹	#	22	14	8
Operational Projects		Green	Green	n/a
Unplanned Closures / Events	#	3	0	3
Audit Recommendations		Green	Green	n/a
Communications / Marketing Activity		Green	Green	n/a
ERC SLA Services		Red	Green	n/a

PEOPLE		Actual	Plan / PY	Variance
Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)	#	194	246	(52)
Recruitment - vacancy lead time	Days	87	55	(32)
Recruitment - % of posts unfilled	%	55%	10%	(45%)
Staff Absence	#	2.08	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴
Disciplinarys / Grievances	#	6 / 1	0 / 0	6 / 1
Training & Development		Green	Green	n/a
Leadership		Green	Green	n/a
Staff Engagement		Green	Green	n/a

FINANCIALS ³		Actual	Plan	Variance
Net Income / (Expenditure)	£k	(268)	(1,711)	1,443
Income	£k	11,497	10,637	860
Expenses	£k	11,765	12,348	583
Cost / Income Ratio	%	102.33%	116.09%	13.75%
Average Monthly Swimming Income	£	21.53	19.61	1.91
Average Monthly Gym Membership	£	25.11	25.70	(0.59)
Unplanned events/closures - financial impact	£k	166	0	166

Notes:

¹ Denotes comparatives used are 2019/20 actuals, being the last full year of operation

² Sports club hires in Leisure Centres based on average attendance factors as per LGBF guidelines

³ Based on financial position for 12 months to 31 March 2024

⁴ Data not available for Q4 due to COVID-19 Lockdown

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balanced Scorecard

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Balance Scorecard - Tolerances

For the quarter ended 31-Mar-24

PERFORMANCE				CUSTOMER / PROCESS				
Leisure Centres - Cumulative total attendances across all centres (inc. outdoors)	<95%	>95%	>100%	Customer Complaints - Number of complaints through the Customer Comments system compared with the same quarter last year.	>120%	<120%	<100%	
Libraries - Total Attendances - Cumulative total 'in person' and 'virtual' visits	<95%	>95%	>100%	Operational Projects - Tracking progress of Operational Projects	>2 Ambers / Any Red	<3 Ambers	<2 Ambers	
Community Facilities - Bookings - Cumulative total bookings processed for halls, community centres, pavilions and out of school after 6pm	<95%	>95%	>100%	Unplanned closures / Events - Unplanned closures leading to a claim against ERC	Any	n/a	-	
Theatre Professional Programme % Target - Percentage of target Professional Programme tickets sold (cumulative)	<95%	>95%	>100%	Audit Recommendations - Progress against internal and external audit recommendations	>2 Ambers / Any Red	<3 Ambers	<2 Ambers	
Swimming Lesson Participants - Participants registered at close of Quarter.	<95%	>95%	>100%	Communications / Marketing Activity	on activity during Quarter			
Gym Membership Numbers - Total direct debit members at close of Quarter	<95%	>95%	>100%	ERC SLA Services - General assessment of current SLA services and progress to close gaps	>2 Ambers / Any Red	<3 Ambers	<2 Ambers	
Public Swimming Attendances - Total cumulative attendances for casual swimming, themed activities and free swims	<95%	>95%	>100%					
Community Sports Bookable Courses - % Capacity - Percent of spaces on bookable Sports Development courses filled	<95%	>95%	>100%					
PEOPLE				FINANCIALS				
FTEs - No. of Full-Time Equivalent staff contracted, including O/T & Add Basic	<90%	>110%	>105%	<105%	Net Income / (Expenditure)	<95%	>95%	>100%
Recruitment - Vacancy Lead Time - Average time to fill a vacancy (Request to offer)	>60	>55	<55	Income - Year to Date total income as per current Period financials	<95%	>95%	>100%	
Recruitment - Percentage of Posts Unfilled - % of posts advertised in previous Quarter still unfilled	>15%	>10%	<10%	Expenses - Year to Date total expenses as per current Period financials	>100%	>95%	<95%	
Staff Attendance - No. of FTE sick days per FTE staff	<95%	>95%	>100%	Cost / Income Ratio - Expenses YTD / Income YTD - based on actual %	>110%	<110%	<100%	
Disciplinaries / Grievances - No. of staff discipline / grievances cases live at quarter close	>1	n/a	-	Average Monthly Swimming Income - YTD income / average members during period	<95%	>95%	>100%	
Training & Development	Based on activity during Quarter			Average Monthly Gym Membership - YTD membership BACS income / average participants during period	<95%	>95%	>100%	
Leadership	Based on activity during Quarter			Unplanned closures / Events - Financial Impact - Base estimate of lost income / additional expenditure from unplanned closures as per "Customer / Process" above	>£5k	n/a	<£5k	
Staff Engagement	Based on activity during Quarter							

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Business Performance Update

Performance

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

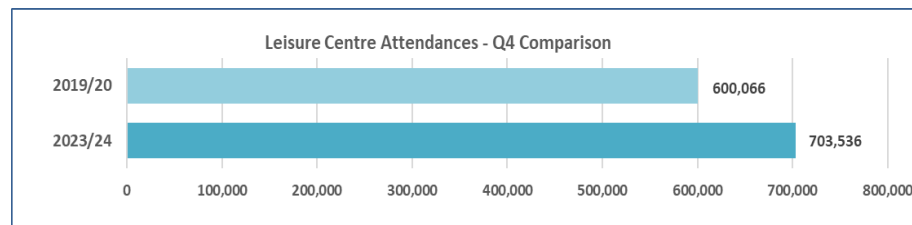
Balanced Scorecard - Attendances

For the quarter ended 31-Mar-24

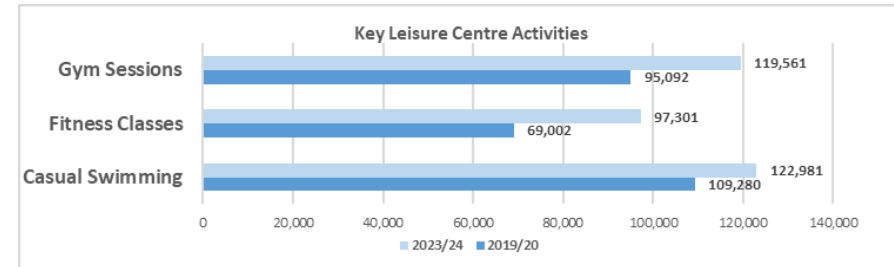
Attendances		Q4 2023/24	Q4 2019/20	Var.
Leisure Centres <i>- Total attendances across all centres (inc. outdoors)</i>	#	703,536	600,066	103,470
Libraries - Physical <i>- Total "in person" attendances across all libraries</i>	#	298,188	485,399	(187,211)
Libraries - Virtual <i>- Total virtual visits where these replace "in person" visits (both years revised to meet new national guidelines)</i>	#	244,136	215,184	28,952
Community Facilities - Schools Out-of-Hours <i>- Total user attendances in schools after 18:00</i>	#	498,202	659,687	(161,485)
Community Facilities - Halls & Pavilions <i>- Total attendances in halls, community centres & pavilions</i>	#	228,725	265,630	(36,905)
Professional Theatre Programme Attendances <i>- Total tickets sold for professional productions (exc. events streamed to customers' homes)</i>	#	31,040	23,693	7,347

Leisure Centres

2023/24 ended with attendances through our Leisure Centres up by 17.2% - 103.5k attendances over our benchmark of 600.1k set in 2019/20.

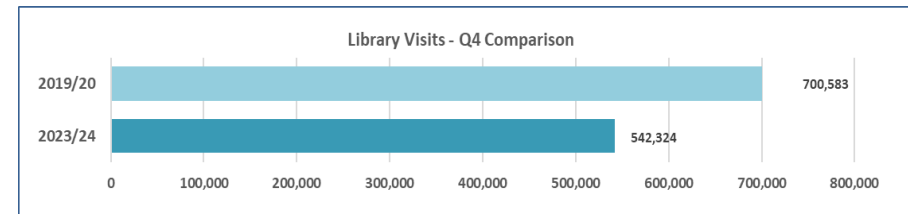


Most of the increase in Leisure Centre attendances from 2019/20 of 2023/24 came from 3 key drivers - Gym Sessions, Fitness Classes and Casual Swimming as summarised in the graph below:



Libraries

Virtual and in-person Library visits increased to 542.3k representing 77.4% of the 2019/20 benchmark (704k attendances). In-person visits increased to 298.2.9k – 61.4% year end numbers 2019/20. Virtual visits continued to exceed 2019/20 levels, reaching 113.4% of 2019/20 levels.



Total customer borrowing continued to increase. Total issues – including adult, children’s and e-Issues – were 990.0k compared with 398.0k in 2019/20. E-issues through Borrowbox continued to account for the majority of issues, with digital magazine loans reaching 593.0k.

Total children’s issues also increased. Total borrowing grew to 166k against a benchmark of 115.1k in 2019/20.

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Business Performance Update

Children & Family Learning Activities

Uptake on Children and Family Learning Activities continued to grow throughout Quarter 4, finishing the year with total children’s attendances for *Bookbug*, Family Learning Activities and Class Visits reaching 30.0k – up by 45.8% in comparison to 20.6k in 2022/23.

In addition, in support of East Renfrewshire’s *Gaelic Development Plan*, Gaelic and hybrid English / Gaelic *Bookbug* sessions have been introduced.

Mearns Library Resources

Our Library Service invested in new resources for Mearns Library, including a sensory area and a “magic carpet”. Visitor numbers through the library suggest that this has been well received by families with 6,040 visitors in March 2024 cf 4,898 in 2023.

Digital Participation Team

Libraries’ Digital Participation Team delivered 144 learning sessions and engaged with 124 individual learners. These numbers represent a return to normal levels after the higher levels of engagement seen during the Festive Virtual Reality initiative in December 2023.

At close of Q4 2023/24 customer PC sessions through Libraries were 25,377 compared with 20,901 in 2022/23. Customer WiFi access in the same time span increased from 20,901 in 2022/23 to 29,265 in 2023/24.

Gyms & Fitness

Total membership numbers at close of Quarter 4 were 3,573 against a target of 3,104. Attrition was -3.3 which is the lowest level in over 2 years. Membership numbers overall were 3,573 against a budget of 3,104. In comparison the benchmark 2019/20 was 2,901 memberships – 81% of current level.

Current monthly average gym membership is running at £25.11 against a budget of £25.70.

Our Net Promoter Score (NPS), averaged across the Quarter, was 47% against an overall industry average of 38%. This represents an improvement over Q4 in 2022/23 (NPS 37 vs an industry benchmark of 36).

Swimming Lesson Programme

Total Swimming Lesson numbers at close of Quarter 4 was 3,339 against a capacity of 3,700 – overall 90% uptake. By comparison March 2023 was 2,355 while pre-Lockdown was 2,535.

The breakdown across the centres was:

- Barrhead Foundry - 681 (91% of capacity)
- Eastwood High Sports Centre - 1,096 (87% of capacity)
- Eastwood Park Leisure - 1,205 (93% of capacity)
- Neilston Leisure Centre - 357 (87% of capacity)

Our *Inclusive* swimming lessons in Barrhead and Eastwood High were at capacity, with 65 participants taking part.

Average monthly swimming income per participant continues exceed plan, running at £21.06 against a target of £19.19.

Active Schools

The overall percentages for school pupils taking part in sport and physical reported a significant increase for both Primary and Secondary Schools:

	Quarter 1	Quarter 3*	Quarter 4
Primary Schools	20%	25%	31%
Secondary Schools	16%	27%	25%**

*No update in Q2 due to summer holidays

**A drop in Q4 is typical due to exam study

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited Business Performance Update

EmpOUR Ambassadors Initiative

Developed by ERCL's Active Schools the EmpOUR East Ren initiative is changing the landscape of female sports and physical activity participation in East Renfrewshire. The programme empowers young women by fostering a sense of belonging, developing confidence, supporting wellbeing, and inspiring them to embrace sport and physical activities throughout their lives.

Community Sports Coaching Block (Nov - Mar)

Overall Capacity	83%	1,689 participants	2,048
Block Average	78%	1,573 participants	2,020 capacity
Growth	22%	1,387 to 1,689 participants from weeks 1 to 12	

Overall target (occupancy) 85%

Overall target (participants) 1,525

* taken end of week 12, Sunday 17th March 2024

The November to March block saw pre-COVID levels achieved by the middle of Week 5 with the number of participants reaching 110% of March 2019 levels.

Overall, the average number of participants grew by 12% compared to the same block from the previous year - from 1,406 to 1,573.

The number of gymnasts attending our programme dropped slightly by 34 compared to the previous block largely due to the transfer of the programme from the Foundry to Barrhead High to make room for the creation of the new gym facility - *The Grid*. Unfortunately the change in location did not suit some customers.

Average occupancy across this block was 78%, with the last 4 weeks increasing to an average of 82% due to a strong return from our football provision in targeted nurseries.

Overall, this block was delivered with 9 less sessions, compared to the programme delivered in March 19.

Active Health & Wellbeing

Live Active

104 new patients registered for the *Live Active* scheme - a 37% increase on Quarter 3, but slightly down by 10% compared to Q4 22/23. 546 appointments were delivered, representing a 13% increase on Q3 on the previous quarter but a decrease of 27% compared to the same quarter last year.

Overall this reflects patients' needs which are becoming more complex, resulting in an increase in the time needed to understand the issues they present with. This is reflected in a 27% decrease in new patient intake compared with 2022/23. In response the NHS is piloting a change in the way the scheme operates in order to ensure patients can be supported more intensively if required.

The team continues to grow and develop in order to support the new model of operation being piloted by NHSGG&C, with a staff member from *Vitality* taking on the role of patient triage and intake, and an additional staff member taking on support for supporting those with more complex needs.

The number of *Live Active* attendances this quarter, including swim, fitness classes and gym attendance, increased to 1,685.

Vitality

Attendance for *Vitality* classes increased to 3,134 across all classes - a 23% increase on the Quarter 3 and a 47% increase on Q4 2022/23. 135 new participants attended classes this Quarter, 105 of whom were clinical referrals. This is a 137% increase on Q3 and an 85% increase on Q4 2022/23.

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited Business Performance Update

Due to demand for lower level Vitality classes, our timetable has grown from 12 to 14 classes. We have added a further level 2 class in Eastwood Park and a further chair based, Level 1 class in Barrhead Foundry.

The Level 1 Barrhead Foundry classes take place in the Library, with coffee and biscuits after each class to allow the group to connect. As a result, a number of participants have joined the Library book group. One of our Level 1 participants, who came from our Live Active scheme, is now a volunteer at the group. He has benefitted from a *Health for Heroes* free membership and also attends the gym.

The Vitality team was nominated for an *All About Barrhead* award in the “*Initiative of the Year*” category. Though they didn’t win they enjoyed the event along with other local community groups.

The team also celebrated a very special birthday in February with one of our participants turning 96. She credits *Vitality* with keeping her young and fit. To celebrate her birthday she moved from Level 2 to Level 3!

Arts & Heritage

Heritage & Local History

Volunteer Programme

Heritage volunteers contributed 65 hours to the *Heritage & Local History* service in Q4 taking part in collection work and assisting at *Memories Scotland Reminiscence* sessions and at heritage events.

Portal to the Past

During this quarter there have been 8,375 page visits and 4,455 individual users.

Outreach Requests

Outreach talks were delivered to *Barrhead & Neilston Historical Association*, *Greenbank Guild*, *Burnfield Care Home* and *Westacres Care Home* during Quarter 4.

Heritage Walks & Classes

Quarter 4 Heritage and Local History Talks & Walks included:

Classes	Spaces	Uptake
Family History for Beginners	12	8
House History	12	8
The Life & Death of Agnes Montgomery	40	32
Introduction to Ancestry	6	6
Busby & Eaglesham – The Power of Water	12	10
Millwheels & Waterfalls (<i>Postponed due to weather</i>)	-	-
Eaglesham: Wee Burns & Big Dams	12	6
Totals	94	70

Poor weather resulted in one cancellation and possibly reduced uptake for other activities.

Pay the Rate / Pay What You Can

Over the course of this year, the *Heritage & Local History* service have been piloting an initiative which allowed participants to pay based on 3 price bands: £7 / £5 / £2.

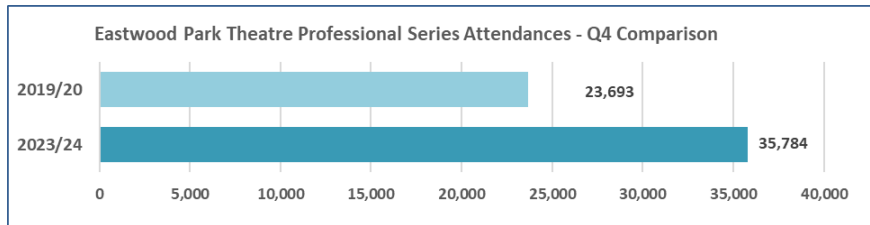
A short survey was conducted during the “*Life & Death of Agnes Montgomery*” event to understand how participants felt about this approach:

- £7 – 25% felt they could pay this and the activity was worth the price
- £5 – 62.5% felt the event was worthwhile / cited reduced income, etc.
- £2 – 12.5% paid this price but did not supply a reason

East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure Limited

Business Performance Update

Eastwood Park Theatre - Professional Performing Arts



We continued to see great success from our music offer with most shows selling out: *We Three Kings*, *Three Little Pigs* (for children) and *The Straits UK* particularly all achieving far beyond initial target. These shows have also garnered some of the best customer feedback we have ever received, with one customer commenting that they “now attend Eastwood Park Theatre for concerts purely on the basis that I trust if you put it on, it will be worth my money’.

Our live theatre screenings continue to struggle to regain /return to pre Covid levels. We are in discussion with the Marketing team to develop ways to analyse existing customer data in more depth for us all to understand why this has happened and what marketing strategies we can implement to boost future numbers.

“In Conversation With” events continue to bring in big crowds with multiple sell out shows including *Reverend Richard Coles* and *Rangers Legends* (starring 3 ex-Rangers footballers). We recognise the critical input from the Venues Operations team in setting these events up, managing and keeping the performers and customers safe and happy.

Children’s Drama Programme

For our drama programme we have reverted to offering two drama classes (as it was pre-Covid) split by age group. This was based on customer feedback, and our objective to launch two youth theatre groups by mid-2024. Not only did we keep all of our 16 current customers, but we increased the numbers by an additional 15 – an increase of 94%.

Visual Arts

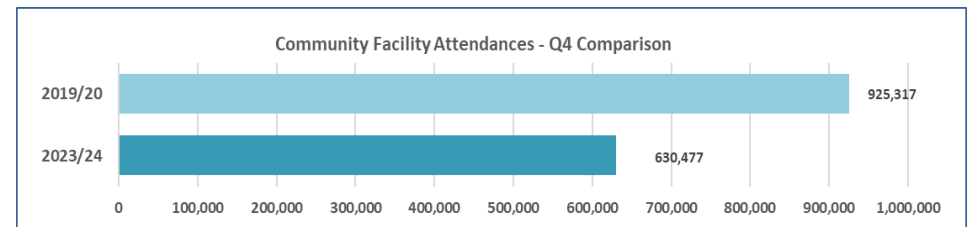
Development with a local artist, Amy Peoples, has begun to create a programme of art classes for neurodivergent young people. Alongside this, we have arranged ‘*Understanding and Developing Neuro-inclusive Events and Activities*’ training for ERCL staff through SWAN to be delivered in June 2024.

A call-out was issued to commission artists to create the memorials as part of phase 2 of the Scottish Government funded *Remembering Together Community Covid Memorial Project*. 11 artists/collectives submitted concepts and 4 were interviewed; from this 2 have been appointed to design and create memorials for Carlibar Park, Barrhead and Eastwood Park; Jeremy Cunningham and Nicola McGuigan. Work on the project will continue over summer 2024.

Staff input to East Renfrewshire's new BSL plan for 2024-2029 through attending working group meetings and helping to develop ERCL's activity into the plan.

Work continued on East Renfrewshire's Cultural Strategy 2024-2029 for cabinet approval.

Community Facilities



Customer attendances through halls and schools out-of-hours reached 630,477 - an overall improvement to 68.1% of level in Q3 2019/20.

At close of Quarter 4 the number of facility bookings processed was 18,722 compared with 23,266 in 2019/20

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CUSTOMER / PROCESS

Customer Comments

22 customer complaints were recorded this Quarter. By comparison, 14 complaints were lodged in Q4 2019/20.

The most significant issues reported included:

- Communication (Regarding change of programme time x2, Issues around cancelling a D/D x1, Regarding hall set up x1)
- Environment (Facilities too cold – Yoga classes x3, Pool temperature x1)
- Staff Attitude (manner with customers x3)

All complaints were managed by Business Support staff who worked with colleagues to ensure SPSO mandated response times were met.

Processes

Venue Access – Entry Barriers, Digital Screens at Doors, RFID Lockers

Work continued in Q4 to assist staff and customers with the introduction of entry barriers at Barrhead Foundry. The Gladstone 360 'Access' module was configured at Reception and the Gym to display member pictures when cards are scanned, giving staff visibility of all entry points in real time. Discussions continued around the implementation of RFID technology for customer authentication at entry points and lockers using wristband, fob or sticker. It is expected this will happen in Q1 2024/25.

WiFi Spark – New Public Network in Libraries and Leisure Centres

The second phase of the project implementing the WiFi Spark solution in Mearns Library and Trust HQ (Burnfield Ave) was completed in Q4. All ERCLT libraries and sports centres are now connected to the new FTTC

network delivering faster speeds, enhanced WiFi coverage and improved customer registration experience.

Outdoor Sports Pitches – transfer of management from Council to Trust

The Business Support team took over day-to-day management of the service and system in Q4. It is expected that the Change Team will support the configuration of the new season in Q1.

Community Sports Rolling Programme

The Change Team were tasked with exploring a solution for a new rolling 36-week programme using the Gladstone platform, adding recurring card payment functionality and interlinking the reporting element of this to SharePoint. The team investigated various different options throughout Q4 – focussed on improving the digital customer journey and mitigating outstanding GDPR risks. During the exploration phase an external solution – *Class For Kids* – was brought forward. The project will continue in Q1 with an expected completion date of June 2024.

Marketing & Communications

Gyms, Fitness and Swimming

Campaigns to recruit new gyms, fitness and swimming membership customers ran through the quarter. A 'Join for £1' promotional campaign in January followed by a 'No Joining Fee' in February. Over 800 new members joined in the quarter, up 10% on previous year. The January campaign delivered the highest number of new joiners in any month. Social media campaigns included Instagram Stories to advertise fitness classes and memberships and 'Customer Stories' across social media to share

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positive customer experiences. We encouraged customers to try new fitness classes with a Les Mills taster evening at Eastwood Park Leisure.

Theatre

Marketing campaigns promoted theatre performances through the quarter with a range of shows including live music, comedy, In Conversation with..., drama, children's and screenings from NT Live and Opera Bohemia. Tickets sales were for shows across the 2024 programme. 70% of live shows achieved or exceeded target ticket sales, with five sell-out shows including The Legends of American Country, Rangers Legends - In Conversation and Three Little Pigs. Compared to same period in 2023, income was up 28% and the average ticket price was up 30%.

Sports, Swimming, Arts and Libraries

Holiday programme for 2024 launched in February and marketing campaign promoted early booking and was delivered using email marketing, social media and direct to parents through ER schools. Swimming lesson campaign to convert customers to direct debit payments improved the percentage of customers using DD payments. Customers paying by DD receive public swimming as part of their membership to encourage children to improve by swimming outside their lessons. Marketing campaigns delivered for term-time sports, libraries events and activities and heritage events.

Unplanned Closures / Events

Other than works in Neilston pool there were 3 unplanned closures over this Quarter. All were linked to pool contaminations in Barrhead Foundry.

ERC SLA Services

A full suite of revised SLAs have been received and are being considered. A meeting was held to review HR SLA on 28th May.

Capital Programmes

A verbal update of the capital programme will be provided at the meeting, including progress in relation to:

- Eastwood Leisure Centre and Eastwood Park Masterplan Working Group
- Neilston Joint Campus development

PEOPLE

The number of *Full Time Equivalent Staff* continues at a level which results in programme cancellations and corresponding loss of income. Throughout Quarter 4 the average FTE staff level was 194 against a plan of 246 FTE.

The average time to fill a vacancy from request to offer rose to 87 days – up from 74 days in Quarter 3 and 32 days over target.

The percentage of posts unfilled rose to 55% - up from 40% in Q3 and 45% over the agreed target of 10%.

Staff absence for this Quarter is 2.08, however a corresponding FTE absence is unavailable on account of moving into COVID 19 lockdown. For reference FTE staff absence in Q4 2022/23 was 2.8.

Disciplinary actions against staff increased from 5 to 6 in Quarter 4. There was 1 Grievance. Targets for both remain at 0.