

16 January 2025

Agenda Item No. 5

Fife Sports & Leisure Trust Performance Report

Report by: Emma Walker, FSLT CEO

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To present the annual performance report for Fife Sports and Leisure Trust (FSLT) for 2023/24 in its sixteenth year of operation.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note and comment on the performance of FSLT during 2022/23 and the work undertaken to maximise the recovery of attendance and income in the post-pandemic period.

Resource Implications

There are no specific resource implications as FSLT is in receipt of an annual services fee.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal and risk implications.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

FSLT's Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 was approved by the FSLT Board and subsequently accepted by the Council, as the sole member of FSLT, at its Annual General Meeting on 26th September 2024.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 FSLT commenced trading on 1st April 2008, as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status. Fife Council is the sole member of the registered company.
- 1.2 FSLT is a non-profit distributing company which has a Services Agreement to deliver services from the fourteen facilities it manages on behalf of the Council in three key strategic areas:
 - Widening the level of participation in sports and active recreation.
 - Developing opportunities and pathways for people to take up and fulfil their potential in sport.
 - Providing good quality, adequately resourced facilities and services, which meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Fife.
- 1.3 The continued funding support from Fife Council, in addition to the Core Services Fee, allowed FSLT to open its facilities, including all of its pools, and during 2023/24 return to full operating hours during this pandemic recovery period. This allowed FSLT to continue to thrive and progress to full recovery of previous attendance levels, a position not widely replicated across the Scottish Public Leisure Sector. This support is vital to serve the needs of the community to allow them to become more active more often, in the aftermath of a pandemic.

2.0 Key highlights during 2023/24

- 2.1 For 2023/24 the main focus of the Business plan was “Back to 100”, recovering previous attendances levels and putting the building blocks in place for financial as well as operational recovery.
- 2.2 Details of all the performance highlights can be found [in FSLT's Performance Review 2023/24](#) (Appendix 1), with the major achievements as follows:
 - FSLT achieved almost 2.4 million attendances, 95% of the target set of approximately 2.5 million, a fantastic result due to the closures encountered in the year.
 - The formal transfer of swimming lessons from Community Use Schools took place with the learn to swim programme going from strength to strength achieving in excess of 8,200 members by the end of the year, making it the largest swimming programme in Scotland.
 - FSLT was awarded the “Scottish Water Learn to Swim Provider of the Year 2023” at the annual Scottish Swimming awards in recognition of the excellence of delivery of the programme.
 - The launch of new gym and fitness membership packages in January contributed to record breaking member numbers with growth in the year of almost 3000 members achieving over 15,600 members by the end of the year, a growth rate of 24%, and 14% above the target set.
 - Developing programmes to increase participation in junior activities has gone well, achieving over 1,600 members in our junior dry-side programmes by the end of the year, supported by the launch of Rise Gymnastics. FSLT also delivered programmes in partnership with schools to increase engagement with health and fitness activities.

- A new campaign “Together we can” focused on how FSLT health and wellbeing services impact on the health outcomes of the people of Fife, and the benefits the tailored support from these programmes provide.
- A falls prevention programme, “Active Stability”, was introduced and new pathways for referral into the health programmes were developed, a GP referral scheme for Parkinson’s disease and self-referral programmes widened out to supporting all people with long term health conditions and those who require additional support to become and stay active. Over 47,000 attendances were achieved across all programmes.
- “Active for Leisure” project funding was also secured from Fife Council to enable free access to facilities to support families on low incomes to access the facilities or for individuals to gain free access to health programmes.

3.0 Supporting the Ambitions of the Plan4Fife

3.1 As well as the key highlights above FSLT delivers on a number of the desired outcomes across all ambitions within the plan and supports Fife Council’s journey towards a Fairer Fife, the main areas being:

- Thriving Places - Ensuring access to high quality leisure opportunities within communities is the main driver within our organisation and our business plan focusses on driving up participation both within our facilities and also outreach in the communities with our health programmes delivering on all the desired outcomes. In particular this year, increase in membership, expansion of junior activity programmes and customer satisfaction have been key areas. A quality assurance programme was launched encompassing mystery visits, customer surveys and our “talk to us “platform was introduced for customer feedback and we achieved a customer satisfaction score of 8.7 for the year – a fantastic result.
- Opportunities for all – supporting concessionary access and also providing free access where we have received funding to do so for targeted groups such as those on low incomes, carers etc. Our health and wellbeing services are also vital in ill health prevention with our referrals scheme and giving confidence to those.
- Inclusive Jobs and Growth – we delivered initiatives such as “Take the Opportunity” programme to create a pathway for young people and adults into leisure and work with key teams to promote leisure opportunities with our business. We improved our Employee Value Proposition and are working with key stakeholders to target groups to support employability outcomes.

4.0 Financial Review

4.1 The full financial statements and review of the financial position can be found in the Annual Report and financial statements for 2023/24 which is provided as background information to this report. A high-level financial overview can also be found in the [Annual Performance Review 2023-24](#) in appendix 1 of this report.

4.2 FSLT achieved generated income of £9.0m from customers and grant funding, exceeding the income targets by £0.7m, an 8% increase over the previous year. As a result of this and also containment of expenditure, the level of support required from Fife Council was reduced to £5.3m from the £6.2m anticipated at the start of the year which reduced the additional recovery support required to £0.233m.

5.0 Investment in Facilities

- 5.1 Facility investment by Fife Council has been vital to FSLT's recovery in growing and sustaining the levels of recovery and ensuring facilities run effectively. Key capital investments for recovery in 2023/24 were replacement of synthetic pitches at Cupar and Michael Woods centres and significant works were carried out at Michael Woods Sports & Leisure Centre for the replacement of the sports hall floor and improvements to the ventilation in the pool hall. Without this level of investment FSLT would not be able to provide the quality of service to our customers and achieve the success it does.
- 5.2 FSLT has also invested in facilities where it has been possible in providing up to date studios spaces, with cost effective updates that reflect the needs of customers in the current marketplace, ensuring the growth of our membership offering and increase footfall within centres.
- 5.3 Preparation works were ongoing during the year with Fife Council and Fife Cultural Trust on the transformational refurbishment of Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre, to create a modern integrated community hub for leisure and cultural space by the end of Summer 2025 which further embeds the partnership working and delivery of the "one door" approach for communities.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 2023/24 was a successful year for FSLT, and thanks to the ongoing support and partnership working with Fife Council, with full operational recovery and attendances of almost restored to pre-pandemic levels achieving 2.4million attendances. It is well on its way to recovering financially with income generation of £9 million due to the focus on quality assurance and service delivery, and the work being undertaken to transform the business as part of the Business Plan to make the business fit to address future challenges.
- 6.2 Both Fife Council and FSLT are continuing to invest in those facilities and provide the infrastructure to grow the business into the future with the purpose of making the communities of Fife, more active more of the time and improving overall health and wellbeing across Fife.

List of Appendices

1. [Fife Sports & Leisure Trust Annual Performance Review 2023/24](#)

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- The Annual Report and Financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 can be viewed online [About - Fife Sports and Leisure Trust](#)

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