



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

STRATEGY



Stevenage Borough Council

Re-framing Leisure Delivery through a Co-operative Lens

Stevenage Borough Council set up a new leisure trust in 1998 with a 25-year contract. Whilst this was right at the time, ahead of it coming to an end in 2022-23, we set about a whole system review working extensively with residents and community and sporting groups, which resulted in the “Stevenage Leisure Eco System”. An innovative approach to procurement has resulted in a leisure contract that is no longer limited to physical assets but rather focused on health creation in communities, maximising open spaces, community assets and informal networks.

This was coupled with an options appraisal resulting in a mixed economy approach to delivering leisure functions, with some services delivered in-house and some delivered through partnering arrangements. This was to ensure that we were prepared to meet not only current demands but also consider how residents’ needs may continue to evolve.

Stevenage has a £1billion regeneration scheme and at the time of going to market we were uncertain on some key areas of future development, including our ambition for a new leisure centre. Therefore, it was important for any operating partner to be able to match our ambitions for the town by providing a unique delivery model that could develop with us on that journey.

The answer for Stevenage was to develop a detailed, bespoke specification and contract comprising of a series of method statement requirements for bidders to respond to, with

Social Value being 10% of the overall scoring. Part of the specification was an Active Communities Service to promote health creation outside of the core leisure facilities.



This has resulted in a once in a lifetime change for the Council & its residents with Stevenage gaining a partner who understands its ambitions. Staff included as part of the transfer are excited and reinvigorated to be involved.

A bespoke dashboard will provide Stevenage with key performance data and invaluable insight into a wide range of interventions which will demonstrate the real social value this contract has added to the town, for example a new resident card with a target of 32,400 cards by year 2 of the contract and employment of NEETS representing 20 FTE's over the term of the contract, and four apprentices per year with an overall contract value of £412,516.

For further information contact:

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