

## **Sports Facilities Development Plan**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. To update the Commission on the progress made with the Sports Facilities Development Plan.
2. To advise the Commission that the proposed closure of Lancaster Sports Centre is being considered at Council Cabinet on 1 August 2006.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Most local authorities are now facing significant challenges to modernise and improve their sport and leisure facilities. With many of these public leisure facilities built in the 1970's coming to the end of their useful economic life, local authorities are having to develop different solutions to provide provision that is affordable and complimentary of the new sport facilities we have seen emerge over the past 10 years at schools and through the voluntary and private sector.

Derby City Council is no different and in December 2003 a Best Value Review was undertaken of the Sport and Leisure Service. Due to the significant challenges the Service faced, the Council appointed external consultants to conduct the review. A comprehensive Best Value Improvement Plan was developed from the Review that would aim to tackle the problems that the service faced and develop a systematic way forward.

#### **2.2 Background**

On 7 September 2004 Council Cabinet approved the Best Value Review 29 point Improvement Plan to inform future decisions on the role and development of the service. The Improvement Plan recommended three inter related pieces of work that would need to be completed;

- Develop a city wide partnership strategy for Sport and Physical Activity
- Complete a city wide Sport Facility Assessment
- Complete an Option Appraisal and condition survey on Council Leisure Facilities.

All three pieces of work have been completed and are being used to inform future opportunities, decisions and plans. The information from the condition surveys was used to identify the financial options that would need to be considered within the Sports Facilities Development Plan in terms of the long-term investment in sports centres and potential opportunities currently being pursued to modernise and improve the Service.

The Plan was structured around three options for investment,

- Basic refurbishment
- Adaptation and remodelling
- Total rebuild

and has revealed the following:

### 2.3 **Basic Refurbishment**

This mainly includes superficial works to keep the buildings operational, with a degree of betterment to improve changing rooms and upgrades required to meet legislation.

Refurbishment cost	£6,932, 004
Lifecycle Investment	<u>£10,739,666</u>
Total over 25 years	£17,671,670

The basic refurbishment does not include the installation of a lift at Moorways Sports Centre or Moorways Pool. To meet responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), at some stage in the near future it will be necessary to provide this service at a cost of around £170,000.

### 2.5 **Rebuild**

This includes rebuilding Moorways Sports Complex, Shaftsbury Sports Centre and Queens Leisure Centre, remodelling Lancaster Sports Centre and extending Springwood Leisure Centre. This option would provide state of the art provision in the city and facilities of county, regional significance that has the potential to play an important role in the county, during the build up to the Olympic Games in 2012.

• New build cost	£52, 320,670
• Lifecycle cost	<u>£18,201,403</u>
• Total over 25 years	£70, 522,073

- 2.6 The Sports Facilities Development Plan recommended, that given the significant and competing demand for capital to invest in buildings across the Council, the only way of sourcing the necessary funds to modernise, improve and sustain sports centres in the long term, appears to be associated with the reconfiguration, rationalisation and/or relocation of existing provision alongside a commitment to work in partnership with other organisations in the City.

## 2.7 **Lancaster Sports Centre**

The condition survey at Lancaster Sports Centre highlighted specific health and safety issues relating to evacuation and fire risk assessment. Subsequently, Officers received a report on the Fire Risk Assessment that following consultation with the Fire Officer, identified measures that had to be immediately undertaken so that the facility could remain open and be safely evacuated.

To keep Lancaster Sports Centre open over the past six months, it has been necessary to:

- Staff reception during all opening hours to provide supervision of a fire risk area and assist with any emergency evacuation of the centre. This is costing £1,200 a month for which there is no budget provision
- Install battery operated smoke alarms and improved signage around the centre
- Introduce metal cabinets for the storage of cleaning products and install a new metal fire exit door for the sports hall
- Fit low level Perspex guards below window frames, to reduce the risk of children climbing on ledges, accessing and falling through windows
- Fit smoke guards to the fire doors in the car park stairways and introduce a system of regular inspection
- Reduce the maximum occupancy of the centre by 33%, from 150 to 100. This could well reduce the income taken the centre during peak periods and may have a negative impact on the budget
- Because of concerns over evacuation in emergencies, casual access to the Centre for people with disabilities, for example wheelchair customers, has been stopped

- Undertake a Risk Assessment that includes a full evacuation, for special schools and clubs that have disabled people attending. The Special School or Club will then need to comply with the control measures to ensure continued access

2.8 In order to keep the centre open in the long term, in addition to the above measures, it would be necessary to:

- In the next month or so, invest £5,000 to coat the windows with an anti-shatter film
- In the next two months, invest £27,000 to upgrade the fire alarm and emergency lighting
- In the next six months invest £10,000 in ICT to meet the ODPM requirement for on-line booking at sports facilities and around £3,000 a year for maintenance of equipment and staff training.
- Within the next 12 months, invest up to £100,000 to reorganise the management and organisation structure at the centre. This is necessary for the development of the service and to bring the management of the facility in to line with the practice at other Council run centres
- Over the next five years, based on a condition survey by external consultants, it would be necessary to invest £750,000 in the basic refurbishment of the building, plant and equipment
- Over the following 20 years, based on a condition survey by external consultants, it would be necessary to invest a further £534,140 to keep the building operational
- Carry out a risk assessment before allowing organised club/group bookings and activities that include Disabled People. We have been advised by the Fire Officer that individual wheelchair users will not be able to access the facility because of the uncertainty of providing a safe means of escape in the event of an emergency evacuation

2.9 Given the scale of investment referred to above, in particular that detailed at paragraph 2.7, there are a number of other factors that need to be taken into account when considering investing at Lancaster Sports Centre. These are:

- Location of the centre -- the centre's location on the top of Chapel Street multi-storey car park, is far from ideal. The lift is small and unwelcoming, as is the entrance through the car park and the ten flights of stairs to access the centre.

There are also concerns about the activities that occur in the access route, usually associated with homeless or intoxicated people that congregate in and use this area as a public toilet. This is an intimidating and unpleasant environment and potentially has implications for the safety and well being of customers and employees. It also limits the scope to develop the service.

Evacuating people from the centre is also problematic, particularly when programmed activities are being delivered for Disabled People

- the changing infrastructure in sport in the city -- in 2005 as part of the Best Value Review of the Council's Sport and Leisure service, an external consultant analysed the supply and demand for sports halls in Derby. They concluded that by 2011 there would be a demand for 13.5 four court sports halls and that this could be met from the supply, estimated at 23.5 four court sports halls. In the past two years there has been considerable investment in sports facilities on school sites and from September 2006, an additional 3 four courts sports halls will be available.

Increasingly through the Derby School Sport Partnerships and the City Council's Sport Development Service steps are being taken to develop the capacity and capability of Special Schools and youth agencies to deliver their own PE and sport programmes without having to travel to Lancaster to access specialist teaching and coaching.

An Advisory Group has also been established to provide Sports Facility management and planning expertise to schools. The Group consist of Officers from Sport and Leisure Management, Sport Development, Extended Schools, Asset Management and PE and School Sport. This is very important to ensure that opportunities for community use of sports facilities on schools sites are developed and that community sport and leisure needs are incorporated into any future plans for Derby as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Despite a number of user groups being reluctant to work with Leisure Officers on alternative accommodation until a decision has been made on the future of the centre, Sport and Leisure have been able to identify alternative facilities for the following;

- 15 of the 18 hours coaching courses
- 2 of the 3 special schools
- All 4 of the Sports Clubs based at the Centre.
- 2 out of 5 martial arts clubs
- The 2 leagues based at the Centre
- Ladies Only Gym (feasibility of re establishing the old gym at Queens Leisure Centre).

- Free Weights – can be accommodated at Champions Gym.

In short, by working in conjunction with people using the centre (excluding 5 a side) Officers so far have been able to accommodate 75% of the existing user groups. The remaining 25% of user groups will be met in the next few weeks. This includes schools, the Youth Service and Pupil Referral Unit who also use Lancaster Sport Centre.

The Centre has 19 club/ block bookings for 5 a side that can be accommodated, if the users would be prepared to play at an outdoor venue.

- Budget pressures across the Council -- the demand and competing priorities for capital is significant and the existing backlog for investment in buildings is estimated at approximately £100 million.

The minimum investment needed for the basic refurbishment and to maintain the Council's sports centres over a 25-year period has been costed by external consultants at £18,671,670. This comprises of £6,932,004 for a basic refurbishment of facilities, £10,739,666 to cover building life cycle costs and £1,000,000 for the replacement of major sports equipment.

The dilemma the service faces is that the basic refurbishment investment of £6.9 million needed over the next five years is insufficient to make the changes that are necessary to provide modern, attractive and accessible facilities. Research in Derby over the past three years of sports centre users and non-users has consistently identified that improving and modernising local facilities must be given high priority if we are to increase usage and participation. In effect we need to provide facilities that are of comparable quality to those offered by the private sector.

It is not acceptable for people who cannot afford to use private facilities to be offered anything less than similar good quality public sector facilities and this can only be achieved by investing capital to adapt and remodel facilities or by the rebuilding option. Because of the above, investing in the basic refurbishment of sports centres is not considered a long-term cost effective solution.

The investment needed to modernise, improve and maintain all of the Council's sports centres over a 25-year period, has been costed at £37,774,525. This includes £20,916,000 for modernisation, £15,858,525 for building life cycle costs and £1,000,000 for the replacement of major sports equipment.

## 2.10 Other Sports Centres

As would be expected, the focus of attention is currently on the proposed closure of Lancaster Sport Centre. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that Lancaster forms only one part of a much broader long-term process to finance investment in the modernisation and improvement of sports facilities in the city.

The Council has yet to determine how it will fund the basic refurbishment works for all its sports centres, identified as £6.9 million in the next 5 years and almost £38 million in the next 25 years.

Having said this, options to modernise and finance improvements at Moorways Sports Complex, Queens Leisure Centre, Shaftesbury Sports Centre and Springwood Leisure Centre are currently being explored in conjunction with Estates, Planning, Derby University, Derby College and the Primary Care Trust.

## 2.11 There are several outstanding tasks to be undertaken if a decision is taken to close Lancaster Sports Centre and these include:

- staffing -- staff have already been met to discuss potential redeployment opportunities, initially within Sport and Leisure and if necessary, in other Departments of the Council. This process will need to be formalised.
- transferring demand -- 2.9 highlights the work that has been undertaken with the existing user groups to try and find suitable alternative accommodation elsewhere in the city. Inevitably, there will be user groups that we cannot or who are unwilling to be accommodated. It is important therefore that we continually work with the remaining 25% and the 5 a side user groups during the summer period.
- vacant/surplus properties procedure -- work closely with Estates and Property Services to implement the guidelines in the procedure and meet the Council's insurers requirements for unoccupied properties. The cost to secure the centre (boarding windows), monitor the condition and keeping the building closed in 2006/7 is estimated at £38,000. This will fall to around £10,000 a year from 1 April 2007.
- Asset Management Group -- will need to consider the long-term future of this property and explore alternative uses by other departments or a letting to release Sport and Leisure from this ongoing liability.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	Culture and Prosperity Commission -- 20 February 2006
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

## IMPLICATIONS

### Financial

1. The investment needed for the basic refurbishment and to maintain the Council's sports centres over a 25 year period has been costed at £18,671,670. This includes £10,739,666 for building life cycle costs and £1,000,000 for the replacement of major sports equipment. The existing services maintenance budget that has been transferred to Property Services for sports centres is around £80,000 a year, equivalent to £2 million over the building life cycle.

The investment needed to modernise, improve and maintain all of the Council's sports centres over a 25-year period, has been costed at £37,774,525. This includes £15,858,525 for building life cycle costs and £1,000,000 for the replacement of major sports equipment. Regardless of the opportunities that may arise through the outcome of the approach referred to at paragraph 2.10 above, this level of investment is unlikely to be realised.

Given the significant and competing demand for capital to invest in buildings across the Council, the only way of sourcing the necessary funds to modernise, improve and sustain sports centres in the long term appears to be associated with the reconfiguration, rationalisation and/or relocation of existing provision.

The closure of Lancaster Sports Centre will save £65,000 per year. However, there may be specific costs to meet in 2006/07 to secure the building and cover staffing related issues.

### Legal

2. Planning permission will not be granted for development which would involve the loss of land previously or currently used for sports or recreational purposes, including playing fields associated with educational establishments unless:
  - the facilities now provided can be fully retained or enhanced through the development of only a small part of the site, or;
  - the alternative provision of another site of the same or better facilities in terms of community benefit is implemented before the commencement of development; or
  - it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the City Council that the site is not required to be retained for sports or recreational purposes and there is excess of suitable sports pitches and open space provision



**Personnel**

3. Staff employed at Lancaster Sports Centre and trade unions are being consulted on the proposed closure of the centre and options for redeployment.

**Equalities impact**

4. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken around the potential closure of Lancaster Sports Centre.