

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 14th July 2014

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Community and Leisure – Councillor Carter

PART I **KEY DECISION**

LEISURE STRATEGY

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to update on the progress of the Leisure Strategy task and finish group. It presents for approval by Cabinet a high level Leisure Strategy focused on increasing levels of physical activity in Slough. It also sets out the next steps to establish momentum in delivering improvement in leisure provision in the borough.

2 Recommendations

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the strategy for leisure contained in section 6 and Appendix A to this report be approved.
- (b) That the Assistant Director for Community and Skills be authorised to implement the next steps as set out in section 7 of this report, in consultation with the Commissioner for Community and Leisure, including:
- i. specify, plan and implement refurbishment and extension of the Ice Arena to maximise its community use potential, reporting on progress to Cabinet;
 - ii. specify requirements for a new pool, identify a site and initiate feasibility, to report to Cabinet in October 2014. The preferred option is the Centre site in Farnham Road, subject to feasibility testing.

3 Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

- **Economy and skills**
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Regeneration and environment**
- **Safer Slough**
- **Civic responsibility**
- **Improving the town's image**

- 3.1 All the actions within the Leisure Strategy will contribute towards achieving the overarching vision of the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy and will make significant contributions specifically to the health, wellbeing and safer Slough themes.

- **Health and Wellbeing.** Cabinet in September 2013 approved a strategy for leisure, with the overarching aim to "enhance the health and wellbeing of Slough residents by ensuring leisure activity is adopted as a habit for life for all – more people, more active, more often". The causal link between physical activity and overall health indicators is clear, particularly in relation to reducing obesity and heart disease, which are high priorities for Slough.
- **Safer Slough.** The opportunity to participate in shared leisure activities makes a positive contribution to community cohesion and interaction for all members of the varied and diverse community in Slough.
- **Regeneration and environment.** Leisure facilities, both open spaces and buildings, can be used for leisure purposes, contributing equally to the quality of the environment of the town. They can provide opportunities to regenerate specific sites and local communities.

3.2 This strategy will be one of a group of strategies that underpin and enable the Wellbeing Strategy. Each strategy addresses a specific area of activity and links with and reinforces the strategic aims and objectives of others. All are linked by the common vision of the Wellbeing Strategy.

4 Other Implications

4.1 Financial

A more complete plan for revenue and capital investment for up to five years will be available for Cabinet in December as part of the updated strategy. At this stage, the main financial strands are:

- £1.463m related capital investment in this year's programme (see paragraph 6.7ff). This comprises £521k for repairs to Montem and The Ice Arena, £442k for improvements at Langley, Ten Pin and The Centre, and £500k for Multi Use Games Areas;
- £195k external funding over three years awarded by Sport England CSAF with an additional £182k match funding secured (see paragraph 6.6);
- £10k awarded from Sport England for facility development;
- £130k funding secured from Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund and British Rowing for the new Jubilee River outdoor rowing and canoeing centre due to open this summer (see paragraph 7.1);
- Financial and funding implications of any proposed improvements to the ice arena (see paragraph 6.10).

4.2 There are currently no funds, above the figure already in 4.1, included in the capital strategy for leisure. Any additional costs will need to be included in future capital strategies, and there will be a revenue impact of further capital expenditure (be this from additional borrowing or the opportunity cost of utilises existing capital funds). Once the leisure strategy is clear on the additional costs, these will be included in future capital strategies for members to make funding decision on.

4.3 Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	None at this stage	
Property	A detailed facilities options appraisal will be	

	undertaken as part of the development of the Leisure Strategy	
Human Rights	None	
Health and Safety	None	
Employment Issues	None	
Equalities Issues	The strategy is focused on identified priority groups, but will maintain opportunities for all. There will be a clear link between more local dispersed provision and the ability of priority groups to engage	Improved access to quality facilities will contribute to increasing levels of activity by Slough residents
Community Support	User and non user usage data and survey information has been used to inform the strategy.	Further consultation and engagement will be undertaken as proposals are developed
Communications	None	
Community Safety	None	
Financial	See section 4.1	
Timetable for delivery	None	Link with contract ending in 2017 and the opportunity to re-tender
Project Capacity	None	

4.4 Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no direct Human Rights Act or other legal implications arising from this report.

4.5 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed for new leisure facilities when those plans have been developed.

4.6 Workforce

There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

5 Background

5.1 The Council agreed a leisure strategy in September 2013, which included an approach to leisure facilities. While focusing on delivering broader outcomes for the community through improved participation in leisure and physical activity, the next stage of the work concentrated on the provision of buildings to contribute to achieving those outcomes.

5.2 Further review and improved information about the overall cost of the previously agreed approach led to the need to change the way in which the leisure strategy is addressed. Cabinet agreed in March 2014 to setting up a member and officer task and finish group to review the evidence and options for leisure provision within the town with the aim of bringing a refreshed strategy to Cabinet in summer 2014.

- 5.3 The group was set up and has met weekly since late March. The group has taken a structured approach to the task and has considered evidence and information about the following:
- Current evidence base on health and physical activity of the residents of Slough.
 - Review of the facilities available for leisure, including parks and open spaces, private and semi-public facilities including schools.
 - Survey and interview information from residents relevant to leisure activities.
 - Case studies and examples of what works and good practice in getting residents engaged and more active.
- 5.4 The group is continuing to meet into July, meeting with providers working in other areas and undertaking site visits to understand delivery models and how other councils are addressing similar issues. It is expected that this way of working will continue through the next stage of the Leisure Strategy.
- 5.5 In considering the evidence, it has been a priority to make a much stronger link between the Council's role in providing facilities and its role in enabling and working with others to engage local people and generate programmes to get more people more active.

6 Strategy for leisure

- 6.1 Levels of physical activity in Slough are among the lowest in the country and this has clear links to poor health outcomes for local people. In parallel there has been a significant level of national concern about the effects of physical inactivity on individuals and communities and the relationship between health and quality of life.
- 6.2 The review of evidence for Slough has clearly identified three priority groups. These are children, young people aged 16-25 and women. In addition, it is noted that overall physical activity levels are low and there is a need to maintain efforts to engage with men aged over 25.
- 6.3 The group considered examples of good practice from other areas and established that the most successful interventions over the longer term maintain a strong focus on younger people and families to influence habits for life and change behaviour.
- 6.4 Slough is well provided with some types of leisure facility, including parks and open spaces, and school and community facilities, as well as its own leisure sites. Despite an adequate provision of facilities, Slough has the 10th least active population in England.
- 6.5 In reviewing the experience of Greenwich, Manchester and other areas with excellent facilities, similar issues of low participation were found. This indicates that while good facilities clearly are important, programming activities must complement providing good facilities to reach people who are disengaged.
- 6.6 Slough has been successful recently in securing £195,000 funding from Sport England for a programme called Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF). The programme brings together the Council and other local partners to provide activity programmes for over 14s and women in priority wards across the borough. It will make use of parks and focus on reaching those most reluctant to take part in physical activity, working with them in their localities. This will test the effectiveness of a dispersed locally focused revenue based leisure programme. The impact and lessons learnt from this will be integrated into the Leisure Strategy.

- 6.7 A key debate has been between a strategy that focuses all investment on one site (a centralised approach) or one that has facilities distributed around the town (a dispersed approach). The conclusion of the group is that a dispersed strategy is most likely to achieve the overarching outcome of more people being more active more often.
- 6.8 A dispersed leisure strategy is preferred. A dispersed strategy for facilities as well as activities would bring opportunities for leisure participation closer to local people, many of whom are reluctant to travel or are put off by a large leisure centre. It is also more flexible and able to respond to needs and opportunities as they arise and can be scaled according to available resources. This approach would enable a much stronger connection between facilities and capital investment and targeted programmes to engage local people and run activities in a wide variety of venues, from parks or community centres to leisure centres.
- 6.9 Since the group was set up in March, plans for Arbour Vale are developing and offer the potential for a community sports hub, and work with schools to open facilities to the public has made good progress. The dispersed model will provide a framework to link these initiatives, together with the Curve and community hubs, multi use games areas (MUGAs), play areas and the emerging parks strategy. Capital investment would need to include a replacement pool with complementary facilities at another site. Other smaller investments could include for example outdoor gyms, walking or cycling tracks, or a pop-up temporary pool that can be used in different locations of strategic need. These should be accompanied with revenue funding to enable activity programmes to build interest and use and engage local people and community based partners who can help ensure continuing use and sustainable programming for the longer term.
- 6.10 The first stage of the dispersed strategy would be improvements to the ice arena. The ice arena is particularly successful in attracting female users and young people, two of the Council's target audiences for physical activity. For this reason it is proposed that it be retained. The strategy proposes that the ice arena should remain where it is on the Montem Lane site, but should be refurbished and extended to give it a presence on the A4. The extension will enable additional features such as a climbing wall to be included as appropriate, which will both improve use of the centre and its financial viability. Officers have started work on developing a specification for this, at an estimated cost of £3.5m. The main Montem leisure centre would be demolished and the remainder of the site would be available for redevelopment once alternative facilities were in place.
- 6.11 It is critical to the successful achievement of this strategy and the outcomes it will deliver that sufficient funding is available to continue and develop this kind of support. This will involve both capital and revenue. In tandem with this, work will continue to encourage and enable community owned and school facilities to be more available to the public. This will be an important component of the dispersed strategy for leisure facilities and programmes. This approach complements also the Curve and community hubs, community youth provision, satellite libraries and other initiatives to bring facilities and opportunities to more local venues where residents need them
- 6.12 Local people will be involved in developing the council's plans with consultation during the autumn of 2014 and as the plans for individual improvements are designed and implemented. In addition, there are opportunities for volunteering, advocacy and working with resident and voluntary groups to help sustain and add value to activity programmes.

6.13 The specification for the new contract for 2017 will be developed in the context of this strategy.

7 Next steps

7.1 The next steps to implement the strategy will include extending and improving the ice arena and delivering the first phase of programmes to involve more people in physical activity across the borough (Sport England funded CSAF project). In parallel, a five year plan to provide a template for targeted capital and revenue investment will be prepared for submission to Cabinet in December 2014.

July 2014	Develop plans and proceed to implementation to extend the ice arena. Expected completion 2015-2016 Roll out of CSAF programme at parks across the borough Commence work to specify a new pool and identify a site
September 2014	Open rowing and canoeing facility on the Jubilee River
October 2014	Report to cabinet on a site for a new pool. The Centre in the Farnham Road is preferred, subject to feasibility testing
December 2014	Updated strategy and plan for revenue and capital investment to Cabinet
January 2015	Start work to develop the specification for the leisure facilities operational contract, based on the principles of the Leisure Strategy

7.2 There will be consultation with local people in the autumn to make sure the council's 5 year plan meets needs as effectively as possible.

8 Comments of other committees

8.1 Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 July will be reported at the Cabinet meeting.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The Leisure Strategy identifies clear priorities for participation in physical activity, linked to health outcomes. Slough's community is one of the most inactive in the country with particular priorities for children, young people aged 16-25 and women. The strategy proposes an integrated plan to invest both revenue (activities programming) and capital (mix of small and larger facilities) funds that will be effective in enabling more people to be more active more often. A full detailed plan will be developed for December 2014, but immediate actions to refurbish and extend the ice arena and implement other community based programmes will lay the foundations for the next stage.

Appendices Attached

A Get Active Slough: a physical activity strategy for Slough, July 2014

Background papers

Leisure Capital Strategy. Cabinet report, 21 November 2011

Leisure Strategy. Cabinet report, 16 September 2013

Leisure Strategy (full text), September 2013

Leisure Strategy. Report to Overview and Scrutiny, 10 September 2013

Leisure Strategy. Cabinet report, 10 March 2014