

## GROWTH, INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### LEISURE UPDATE

#### Report of the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change

Strategic Aim:	Vibrant Communities	
Key Decision: Yes	Forward Plan Reference: FP/	
Exempt Information	Appendix A of this report contains exempt information and is not for publication in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Further details can be seen in paragraph 7.2 below	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr Lucy Stephenson, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change	
Contact Officer(s):	Penny Sharp, Strategic Director for Places	01572 758160 psharp@rutland.gov.uk
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Ward Councillors	All	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee

1. Notes the recommendation to Cabinet to the Director for Places, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with portfolio for Communities, Environment and Climate Change, to progress to procurement of a dry-side only leisure management contract for the Catmose Sports Centre on a nil-cost basis for both the Council and Catmose College, following soft market testing undertaken in partnership with Welland Procurement. Award of any contract will be subject to Cabinet approval as part of the procurement process.
2. Notes the recommendation to Cabinet to the termination of the Council's lease for the Catmose Pool and Auxiliary Sports Hall area of the Catmose Campus; and the contribution of a maximum of £150,000 to Catmose College to facilitate the demolition of the Pool, which will reduce the risks associated with the derelict part of the site and enable the Campus rebuild work to be expedited.

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the leisure review and enable Cabinet to consider the options for the future of the Catmose Sports facility.

## **2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 Officers have worked with Welland Procurement to undertake soft market testing to assess the appetite of the Leisure Management sector for operating the Catmose Sports dry side facility following the pandemic. This work has indicated that there are a number of operators interested in bidding to operate the site on a nil revenue cost basis to the Council and the College.
- 2.2 The Council's contract with SLL to operate the site ends in March 2023. Officers recommend that procurement of a successor contract is undertaken in the coming months to seek to ensure there is no gap in provision when SLL's existing contract ends.
- 2.3 The Council's contract with SLL was designed to be nil cost, except for significant repair costs. Under the terms of the contract and lease, these repair costs fall to the Council to meet. Following the closure of the Catmose Pool for safety reasons during the pandemic, Cabinet agreed on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 that the pool should not be re-opened. The pool has continued to deteriorate, and Officers advise it is now necessary to remove risks associated with the derelict site by demolishing it.
- 2.4 Officers have worked with Catmose College to understand the costs of this work and have reached an agreed provisional cost assessment of £150,000. As the Council currently holds a lease on this part of the campus which lasts until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2032, the Council is liable for this cost. This sum is less than one third the estimated cost for undertaking repairs to the facility.
- 2.5 By demolishing the unsafe parts of the site and tendering a new nil-cost contract for the dry side operation, the Council will be able to explore the opportunity for sustaining existing leisure and wellbeing provision, whilst being able to explore opportunities for future improved provision in partnership with the community.

## **3 LEISURE AND WELLBEING NEEDS**

- 3.1 Both Uppingham School Sports Centre and Oakham School Sports Centre provide access to leisure and swimming facilities and have reported an increase in users following the closure of the Catmose Pool. Both sites have increased their numbers of primary school swimming sessions and swimming lessons, however they have not been able to increase hours of general public access.
- 3.2 In line with Cabinet approval, initial design work and costing for a new build leisure facility on an alternative site (to be determined) has been undertaken. Two options have been specified on the basis of average current construction costs (£3,000 - £3,500 per square metre for leisure centres). Costs are given in the table below.

4 lane pool plus training pool, exercise studio, fitness suite, soft play, café area, consulting room and community room	£14.485m
As above plus 6 court sports hall	£18.795m

As a real-world comparator, the new Whitwick and Coalville Leisure Centre in North-West Leicestershire (with an 8-lane swimming pool and 8-court sports hall) opened in January 2022, at a cost of £22.5m.

- 3.3 New build leisure facility work will not be progressed beyond this initial stage without the identification of at least 90% external funding and a cost neutral revenue operation, in line with the Cabinet decision.
- 3.4 Active lives are not purely about provision of facilities. Many activities can take place in non-specialist multi-purpose spaces, and the development of active environments makes it easier for people to be physically active. The Future Rutland consultation demonstrated the wide range of activities that Rutland residents enjoy, with walking, cycling and swimming being the top-ranking activities. Walking and cycling benefits can be enhanced with long term changes to the way our settlements are planned, built and used. Officers will continue to work with stakeholders to identify opportunities to maximise the opportunities for residents to lead active lives.

#### **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 A stakeholder group has been established to inform the development of future leisure options, which includes representatives of the Local Sports Alliance; Active Together; Public Health; and has consultees from the Clinical Commissioning Group and Rutland Access Group. The stakeholder group will be engaged with both the procurement process for the Catmose Sports facility and the development of additional opportunities with the community.

#### **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 5.1 If it is not possible to secure a nil-cost or better contract for Catmose Sports, the Council will need to determine whether to cease leisure provision from the Catmose Sports facility. The decision point for this issue will be at the conclusion of the procurement process.
- 5.2 If the derelict Catmose Pool is not demolished, the Council will bear the health and safety risks of the unsafe site. The College, as Landlord, is able to require the Council to keep the site in a good state of repair. The cost of repair to the Pool, which is beyond its design life, would be many times more than the demolition costs.

#### **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The leisure provision project work is funded through a specific project fund agreed by Cabinet in 2020. This resource can be used to undertake the procurement work for the dry-side provision at Catmose Sports.
- 6.2 Exempt Appendix A outlines in more detail the financial implications of the demolition and repair costs. All of the available options place additional pressures on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The information is restricted as it includes commercially sensitive information.
- 6.3 The capital expenditure required could be funded using part of the Council's c. £11m Reserves. There are significant and continuing pressures on the reserves, however this one-off expenditure should reduce future potential liabilities to the Council from

the derelict facility.

## **7 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council holds a lease from Catmose College for the auxiliary sports hall complex and swimming pool which expires in 2032. In order to reduce the liability of the Council, it is recommended that this lease is surrendered ahead of the proposed demolition. In order to secure public use of the auxiliary hall and studio through SLL for the remainder of their contract, a simple licence will be agreed with the College.
- 7.2 In order to mitigate any risks arising from the demolition through a third-party contractor working on the College site, it is further recommended that the financial sum is provided to the College to undertake the work, rather than the Council seeking to procure and undertake the work directly itself.

## **8 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant risks / issues were found arising from Cabinet considering this issue. A copy of the DPIA can be obtained from Robert Clayton (Email [rclayton@rutland.gov.uk](mailto:rclayton@rutland.gov.uk))

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 If work is not undertaken to secure long term leisure and wellbeing provision for the County, there may be equality and diversity impacts. A full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed which outlines the potential areas of impact.

## **10 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Provision of accessible, good quality sports and recreation facilities may help to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour, by providing diversionary activities. Membership of sports and recreation organisations helps to build community bonds and a sense of local pride.
- 10.2 Allowing part of the Catmose Campus to remain in a derelict state may increase the risks of vandalism both in the area of the pool and across the wider site.

## **11 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Provision of an accessible network of facilities to enable individuals and groups to participate in sports and recreation can be of significant benefit to the health and wellbeing of the community. A vibrant sports community already exists in Rutland is likely to be a significant contribution to the generally high levels of health and wellbeing recorded in the County. A positive attitude to physical fitness and personal health has also been shown to improve the mental wellbeing of individuals. The range of facilities and pursuits available in Rutland is also a strong draw for persons considering relocating to the area.
- 11.2 If the Catmose Sports facility closes without alternative provision there could be short and longer term health implications for the wellbeing of a number of residents both young and old. The loss of the Catmose fitness facilities could result in a

downturn in levels of physical activity within the County. It is therefore recommended that procurement work is undertaken to attempt to secure a nil cost contract to operate the existing dry side facility.

## **12 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

### 12.1 Environmental implications

12.1.1 Provision of local leisure and wellbeing facilities reduces the need of residents to travel significant distances, which reduces the carbon impact on the environment. The derelict Catmose Pool made use of decades-old technology and was highly energy inefficient.

### 12.2 Procurement Implications

12.2.1 If a new leisure management contract for the operation of Catmose Sports dry side is to be let, work needs to start immediately to ensure the contract is in place before the existing contract ends. The outcome of the procurement would be subject to further Cabinet approval.

## **13 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

13.1 Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 approved a multi-strand series of actions to explore the viability of future leisure provision options for the County. Following exploratory work by Officers and Stakeholders, it is recommended that a procurement exercise is undertaken to attempt to secure a dry-side only nil-cost Leisure Management Contract for the Catmose Sports facility. The outcome of this procurement will be reported to Cabinet for approval.

13.2 The Catmose Pool has continued to deteriorate following its closure for safety reasons during the pandemic. The health and safety risks of the site, and the Council's ongoing liability, have resulted in a recommendation that the Council provide a financial sum to Catmose College to undertake the safe demolition of the Pool, and that it surrenders the lease for that part of the site.

## **14 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **15 APPENDICES**

15.1 Appendix A – Exempt Financial Summary

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**

## **Appendix A. EXEMPT Financial Summary**

Exempt Appendix – Appendix A is marked as “Not For Publication” because it contains exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely to protect commercially sensitive information.