

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet

16 July 2013

Leisure Facilities Strategy and Prince of Wales Feasibility Study

Accountable member	Councillor Rowena Hay, Cabinet Member for Sport & Culture
Accountable officer	Sonia Phillips, Director of Wellbeing & Culture
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>The Leisure & Culture review is one of a number of strategic commissioning projects that aim to find a viable and sustainable future for L&C services. The review has sought to ensure that we maximise the community benefits that our assets, facilities and services deliver, whilst reducing the level of financial subsidy. In respect of sport and leisure, Leisure@ Cheltenham and the adjacent Prince of Wales stadium represent the council's key hub facility serving the town.</p> <p>As part of the commissioning review, a Leisure Facilities Strategy has been written and feasibility studies have been undertaken to consider the current operation of the site and a range of future options including changes to the use of existing spaces and the possible addition of new facilities on the site that compliment the current offer. The study into the Prince of Wales Stadium, has also considered the current leasing arrangements on the site within the context of maximising community benefit and financial return from the site.</p> <p>Following the decision to proceed with the proposed creation of a charitable trust for leisure and culture, the recommendation to Cabinet is that the principles of future investment in sport and leisure to further strengthening the appeal of the current facility mix be agreed.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Cabinet is requested to RESOLVE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To agree to the commencement of detailed discussions with tenants and key users of the Prince of Wales Stadium to negotiate future usage arrangements2. To support the strategic principle that facility development and future investment for sport and leisure within the town be focussed on Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium, as recommended in the Leisure Strategy and associated feasibility studies3. To consider detailed business cases for future investment to deliver specific capital developments at a later date, following the successful establishment of a new charitable trust for

leisure and culture.

Financial implications	<p>There are no financial implications arising at this stage.</p> <p>Contact officer: Sarah Didcote, sarah.didcote@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264125</p>
Legal implications	<p>The council intends to establish a new Culture and Leisure Trust to take over the running of the Stadium as from April 2014. As part of the arrangement the council should be clear of its aims and requirements for, in this case, leisure on this land. These can then be written in to the contract documentation and will help define the vision of the council.</p> <p>The situation regarding the legal liabilities for the occupation of the various facilities should be resolved to enable the most effective use of the facilities at the Prince of Wales Stadium, so that the trust can operate on a clear basis, with minimal uncertainty. This will mean negotiations with the key users of the facilities to clarify their usage, its legal basis and how to move forward.</p> <p>There are uncertainties regarding the existence of the lease under which the Rugby Club uses the ground and this needs to be resolved so that there is some certainty on this point. However the reports have used the shorthand term of Lease to simplify the explanation of what the situation is.</p> <p>Contact officer: Gary Spencer, gary.spencer@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272690</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>The implications of TUPE transferring the Wellbeing & Culture Division into the proposed trust model are already being explored in detail and there are no further HR implications as a result of this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Donna Sheffield, donna.sheffield@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242</p>
Key risks	<p>See Appendix 1 – Risk Assessment</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>The Leisure Facilities Strategy and feasibility studies are specifically identified as improvement actions in the 2013/14 Corporate Strategy, and contribute to the delivery of the Healthy Lifestyles priority outcome.</p>
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The proposed leisure and culture trust will maintain the council's current commitment to minimising any negative impacts on the environment, however the recommendations of this report do not have any direct environmental impact</p>
Property/Asset Implications	<p>There are no property implications arising at this stage.</p> <p>Contact officer: David Roberts, David.Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 264151</p>

1. Background

- 1.1** The Leisure & Culture Review is one of a number of strategic commissioning projects, and has included a review of the council's current sport and leisure provision, which is primarily centred upon Leisure@ Cheltenham and the Prince of Wales Stadium, supported by targeted community outreach projects delivered through the Sport, Play and Healthy Lifestyles Team. The commissioning review seeks to ensure that Cheltenham Borough Council maximises the community benefits that our assets, facilities and services deliver, whilst reducing the level of financial subsidy.
- 1.2** Through the review, following outcomes for leisure were developed and approved by Cabinet in December 2011;
- Primary outcome
 - More people are supported to be physically, socially and mentally active and are able to enjoy life to the full
 - Secondary Outcomes
 - More people are supported to make the right lifestyles choices to manage their own health
 - More people enjoy new experiences which learning valuable skills and knowledge
 - More families are able to be together to enjoy a range of fun leisure activities
 - More people have active and healthy lifestyles by participating in positive leisure activities, that they are able to access at affordable prices
- 1.3** As part of the review a Leisure Facility Strategy has also been developed which considers the facility provision across the Borough, and the needs of a growing population. The Strategy is provided in Appendix 2 and, within Section 5 sets out a number of principles for the future provision of sport and leisure. The Strategy has been created to provide the overall decision making framework for potential future investment in the Council's leisure facilities over the coming 5 years.
- 1.4** In addition feasibility studies have been undertaken to consider the current operation of the Leisure@ and Prince of Wales site, and a range of possible future development options on the sites that would compliment the existing facility mix, and support both the delivery of the outcomes listed above, and improve the financial performance of the site.

2. Leisure Facilities Strategy

- 2.1** Significant work has already been undertaken in order to progress the Joint Core Strategy, Local Development Framework and the Cheltenham Local Plan, and there is a clear expectation of significant population growth in and around Cheltenham over the next 20 years. To inform the leisure review, and in order to help build and support the required evidence base, a Leisure Facilities Strategy has been developed, which assesses the current level and adequacy of sports provision across the Borough, and recommends a set of strategic principles to guide future investment. The Leisure Facilities Strategy specifically examined;
- Strategic context and future population growth
 - Population estimates and current sports participation rates (Sport England – Active People data)
 - Existing facility provision across the Borough including educational sites (Sport England - Active

Places data)

- Supply & Demand analysis
- Development of Strategic Vision and Objectives

- 2.2** The Leisure Facility Strategy concludes in Section 3, (page 19) that sports provision across the Borough is largely adequate with a good network of community facilities being available on school sites across the town, which meet the needs of the current population, and are also able to meet the needs of a growing population, particularly if greater community access to the independent school facilities can be made available.
- 2.3** The strategy identifies in the facilities at Leisure@ and the Prince of Wales Stadium as the key hub for sport and leisure provision within the town, with the recreational facilities in Pittville Park creating an even more attractive leisure destination, offering an even broader range of family leisure activities in one locality, including the boating lake, golf course, tennis courts, skate park and children's play area. Section 4 of the Leisure Facility Strategy (pages 22-24) concludes that future investment in sport and leisure provision should be focussed upon further strengthening the sports hub concept to create an outstanding destination for sport and family leisure, which not only serves the population of Cheltenham, but is attractive as an event and tourist destination to people living further afield.

3. Feasibility Studies for Leisure@ and Prince of Wales Stadium

- 3.1** During 2012 a feasibility study for Leisure@ was undertaken to assess the current performance of the centre. The study is provided in Appendix 3 Sections 5-12 (pages 23-55) of the study a series of options are set out which would improve the financial performance within the existing footprint of the site. Within Section 5 (page 57) of the feasibility study, it concluded that the fitness facilities provided at Leisure@ generated the largest proportion of income, and operated within a highly competitive private sector market. In order to maintain its current market share, exploit a locally identified latent demand, and increase membership in the coming years, an expansion of the fitness facility was required.
- 3.2** Within Section 4 (page 21) of the study, it concluded that the cricket hall should be physically connected to the main leisure centre given the poor access and lack of changing facilities, toilets and catering offer. By improving access and creating a physical connection, the cricket hall would become a far more integrated component of the leisure centre, and could accommodate a wide range of further activities beyond its current usage which is predominantly indoor cricket, and an overflow facility for 5 a side football and badminton at peak times. Within Section 5 the report provides consideration of a number of alternative options for the cricket hall that would broaden the family leisure appeal of the leisure centre including Soft play, Laser Quest, Ten Pin Bowling and/or the inclusion of an indoor climbing facility, or a combination of these.
- 3.3** A further consideration of the report, set out within Section 6 (pages 27-31) is that a modern 3G rubber crumb artificial pitch should be provided on or alongside the Prince of Wales training pitch, to enhance the outdoor facility mix on site and provide a high quality year round playing surface for both rugby and football. Whilst Cheltenham already has a good number of artificial pitches, these are exclusively on school sites, and offer the traditional playing surface that supports hockey, rather than the modern rubber crumb surface that has become the approved surface for football and rugby.
- 3.4** In January 2013, a further feasibility study was undertaken, looking more specifically into the current performance and operational arrangements and user \ lease agreements for the Prince of Wales Stadium. This report sought to recommend ways of improving the financial sustainability of the stadium operation and the possible enhancement of the current outdoor sports facility provision. The study brief also asked to specifically consider the merits of incorporating a

competition standard BMX track onto the site, following Cheltenham & County Cycling Club securing a £50,000 Sport England grant to develop such a facility within Cheltenham, but at present having no site upon which to build it.

- 3.5** The study is provided in Appendix 3 and considers the merits of a number of targeted investments to the site that would increase usage, broaden the appeal of the site and support the financial sustainability of the site, including;
- the installation of a modern 3G artificial pitch for football and rugby
 - the addition of a competition standard BMX track - recognising the strategic location and excellent cycle route connections through Pittville Park and the Honeybourne Line.
 - the installation of an indoor climbing facility
 - improvements to the meeting rooms, function space and bar/catering provision on site.
- 3.6** In order to meet the likely increased levels of usage that sporting facilities such as these would bring to the site, the report also raises the issue of car parking and suggests a need to increase the number of spaces available, which raises the issue of potentially expanding the site beyond the current fence line. Initial discussions have been held with the Parks Department, Property Services and Planning to explore a range of planning issues and potential land disposal issues, and further detailed discussions would need to take place prior to the development of any future plans for the site which expand beyond its current foot print.
- 3.7** Through the course of the feasibility study, meetings were arranged with key clubs and users of the site, in order to discuss their current and future usage requirements. The current usage of the site by sports clubs and community groups is through a combination of block bookings, one off events, and casual usage, as well as lease agreements. The lease agreement with Cheltenham Rugby Club incorporates sole usage of the clubhouse and bar facility, as well as usage of both rugby pitches until 2016/17. The Rugby Club have acquired use of the another site with similar clubhouse facilities on the outskirts of Cheltenham in recent years, and through the consultative work with them it would appear that their future usage need of the Prince of Wales site may be reduced in the coming years, whilst still requiring usage of the main pitch as their preferred match day venue.
- 3.8** Meetings with other users indicated that the current usage arrangements at the facility work well, although could ideally be improved. However finding a balance between meeting the needs of all users is of critical importance, and the recommendation of the report is that we continue to provide a high quality facility for users.
- 3.9** Section 4 of Prince of Wales feasibility report (pages 34-35) concludes that the current arrangements do not fully maximise the community benefits that our assets, facilities and services are able to deliver, nor do they minimise the level of financial subsidy. The report recommends therefore, that prior to the consideration of any new developments or physical enhancements to the sports facility mix on the site, detailed discussions with tenants and key users of the Prince of Wales Stadium take place in order to negotiate and clarify future usage arrangements.

4. Conclusions & Next Steps

- 4.1** It is important to note that the Leisure Facilities Strategy is not an investment programme. The strategy has been created to develop an overall framework and set of principles to guide the Council's future decision making and investment in leisure and sports provision. As a long term strategy it would not be desirable or practical to predetermine Council spend at year one and it does not seek to do this

- 4.2** The two feasibility studies have identified a number of specific suggestions and common themes in order to extend and enhance the current provision, most notably;
- Extending the fitness gym facility to maintain and grow market share
 - Installation of a 3G artificial pitch to provide a high quality year round facility for football and rugby
 - Creation of a competition standard BMX facility
 - Investment to improve the quality of meeting rooms, function areas and hospitality provision within the Prince of Wales Stadium
 - Physical connection of the cricket hall to the main building and consideration of a range of possible alternative activities that broaden the leisure offer and enhance the family leisure appeal (eg climbing)
- 4.3** These specific options need to be explored further in the context of developing a long term plan for the future development of the site, which improves the sporting opportunities provided, and also provides greater financial return. However, as the Prince of Wales feasibility study concluded, the future arrangements at the stadium need to be discussed and resolved first, in order to provide clarity of future arrangements and a timeline that enables detailed business cases to be fully worked up.
- 4.4** Finally, the recent decision to proceed with the proposed establishment of a new leisure and culture trust, following the commissioning review and subsequent procurement process, needs to be considered. Under the proposed new management arrangements, the council would retain ownership of the assets and will need to work in close partnership with the proposed trust to deliver the investment programme on the site during the coming years.

5. Reasons for recommendations

- 5.1** As explained in the main body of the report

6. Alternative options considered

- 6.1** As explained in Section 3 of this report.

7. Consultation and feedback

- 7.1** Throughout the Prince of Wales feasibility study tenants and users of the site were consulted, and a stakeholder feedback session is planned for July 2nd to brief them on the headline findings and recommendations of the report. Within the recommendations of this report we are seeking Cabinet approval to commence more detailed discussions with tenants and users to clarify future usage arrangements in order to inform discussions and establish the timeline for taking forward any detailed development recommendations on the site.

8. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 8.1** Detailed action plans and performance management arrangements will need to be considered and agreed alongside the management arrangements for the proposed new trust.

Report author	<i>Contact officer: Sonia Phillips, sonia.phillips@cheltenham.gov.uk 01242 774401</i>
Appendices	<p>Appendix 1 Risk Assessment</p> <p>Appendix 2 Leisure Facility Strategy</p> <p>Appendix 3 Feasibility Study Leisure@ Cheltenham</p> <p>Appendix 4 Feasibility Study Prince of Wales Stadium</p>
Background information	1. Leisure & Culture Commissioning Review

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1.01	Failure by the Council to have a Leisure Facilities Strategy and associated feasibilities will result in Cheltenham being void of a strategic plan and vision for its sports provision & the future commercial & sporting potential for facilities will not be maximised.	Director Wellbeing & Culture	April 2012	4	2	8	Accept	Adoption of the leisure facilities strategy & associated feasibility studies	July 2013	General Manager Leisure@cheltenham	
1.02	Failure by the Council to have a Leisure	Director Wellbeing & Culture	April 2012	4	2	8	Accept	Adoption of the leisure facilities strategy &	July 2013	General Manager Leisure@cheltenham	

	Facilities Strategy and associated feasibilities will result in future capital investment programmes being developed without adequate planning & therefore may result in a decline in condition of facilities							associated feasibility studies			
1.03	Failure by the Council to have a Leisure Facilities Strategy & associated feasibilities will result the facilities being unable to attract external funding sources and therefore may result in the need for	Director Wellbeing & Culture	April 2012	4	2	8	Accept	Adoption of the leisure facilities strategy & associated feasibility studies	July 2013	General Manager Leisure@cheltenham	

	increased property related expenditure by the Council.										
1.04	Failure to integrate the leisure facilities strategy with the emerging JCS may result in missed opportunities to protect and enhance sport and leisure provision for future generations.	Director Wellbeing & Culture	March 2013	4	2	8	Accept	Adoption of the leisure facility strategy and ensure the continued development of the JCS is reflective of the leisure facility strategy	July 2013	Head of Planning	
1.04	Failure by the Council to begin negotiations with current lease holders and users, at the POW Stadium will result in there being no clear timeline for decision making to inform future	Director Wellbeing & Culture	April 2012	5	2	10	Reduce	Adoption of the POW feasibility study and commencement in negotiations with users.	July 2013	General Manager Leisure@cheltenham	

	developments										
1.05	Failure to develop detailed business cases for future facility investment programmes will result in there being no sound basis upon which to make funding decisions.	Director Wellbeing & Culture	April 2012	5	2	10	Reduce	Adoption of leisure facility strategy and associated feasibility studies	July 2013	General Manager Leisure@cheltenham	

Explanatory notes

Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)

Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6

(1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)

Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close