

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO THE  
CABINET**

**REPORT TITLE:**      **Update Report on the Future of Kidsgrove Sports Centre**

**Submitted by:**      **Dave Adams - Executive Director (Operations)**

**Portfolio:**              **Leisure, Culture and Localism**

**Wards affected:**      **All, especially Kidsgrove area wards**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Cabinet with an updated position statement on the options available in respect of the future of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.
2. To consider a temporary extension to the current Joint Use Agreement between Kings School, (formerly Clough Hall School) Staffordshire County Council and the Borough Council.
3. To consider entering into a community use agreement with Kings School for the use by the community of the new school sports facilities once completed.

This follows feedback from partners after initial engagement with the Kings School regarding the transfer of the artificial grass pitch to them and the inclusion of a sports hall as part of a new sports block attached to the new education super block currently under construction and the interim and future operation of the sports centre and swimming pool.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

**With regards to a Replacement Facility:**

- a) Agree to consideration of a constant depth pool of modular construction as part of a new sports centre on the school campus as an option for the development;
- b) Authorise Officers to enter into detailed discussions with The Penda Partnership and a suitable pool supplier with a view to establishing a business case for a development of a replacement swimming pool, fitness centre and studio on the school campus;
- c) Establish a Cabinet Panel to provide the leadership and governance

required to bring such a scheme to fruition, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Localism.

**With regards to extending the current agreement:**

- d) Agree to extend the current agreement with the school and county council for the management of Kidsgrove Sports Centre until the school takes on operational responsibility for the new education super block and sports block.

**With regards to a Community Use Agreement for School Facilities**

- e) Authorise Officers to hold further detailed discussions with the Head teacher and Governing Body of the Kings School with a view to developing an agreement for the community use of the astro-turf pitch, natural grass pitch and new school sports hall.

**Reasons**

- 1. As a result of condition survey findings, structural report findings and the need to take urgent action, an additional option to those considered in December 2014 is now suggested to find an affordable solution for the replacement of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.
- 2. To provide continuity of service provision while the new school is being built and the replacement sports facility project is being developed.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The County Council and Borough Council have clearly set out their vision for the development of a new Sports Centre in Kidsgrove (the District Deal Letter refers). In December 2014 the Cabinet agreed to the proposals for options for a scheme, the preferred facility mix and also considered a number of site options. Budget estimates were considered for each of the alternatives but it was recognised further work could not be undertaken until capital finance was available to progress both feasibility (this could be revenue or capital funded) and subsequent professional services and construction.
- 1.2 The current Joint Use Agreement between the Kings School, (formerly Clough Hall Technology School), Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle Borough Council, expires on 31 March 2016.
- 1.3 The strategic case for providing appropriate sports and leisure facilities in the Kidsgrove area was established by the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Working Group and reported to Cabinet at your meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

**2. Issues**

## **Replacement Facility**

2.1 Site options have now been refined, leaving the school site as currently the best development opportunity to provide a range of sports facilities, suitable for curriculum, extracurricular and community use. This is due to the schools proposals to include a sports hall, all weather football pitch and natural grass football pitch all within the grounds of the school.

2.2 Your Officers have recently brought a further swimming pool option to the attention of the members of the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Working Group. Known as a constant depth swimming pool, that uses a modular method of construction, this type of pool is now proven for the provision of 25m public swimming pools. The above ground sectional steel tank with a pool liner is constructed on a 400mm concrete slab and is considerably cheaper and quicker to build than traditional concrete foundations.

The swimming pool will provide all the usual requirements for changing, showers, toilets and lockers as well as spectator seating. At a 1.2m constant depth the pool can accommodate a full aquatics programme, including public swimming and lessons, school swimming lessons, clubs from the local community and aqua fit classes.

2.3 Members of the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Working Group looked at case studies from a market leader in this method of design for swimming pool solutions across the UK. Over the last 5 years they have delivered over 40 projects for local authorities, leisure trusts and private leisure providers. Case studies at Bury Council (Radcliffe Pool), Dumfries and Galloway Council (Dumfries Pool) and East Yorkshire Council (Bridlington Pool) were reviewed by the working group as well hearing a report from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services who had visited the Radcliffe Pool. The Working Group came to the view that this solution probably offers a more affordable option for Cabinet to consider.

2.4 To further the concept, discussions have started with partner organisations. Staffordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire and Kier have recently formed the Penda Property Partnership to provide the capacity, funding and investment and the development of the local supply chain and are keen to move at a pace on a Partnership Plan. If accepted as a Penda Partnership Project an outline business case would be developed, which if approved would lead to a full business case being developed, with the costs shared amongst partners. This may provide an opportunity to progress the development of a new swimming pool in Kidsgrove.

2.5 The feasibility study is expected to demonstrate the leisure and education needs of the community (already identified) can be met, by

providing a new Kidsgrove Sports Centre on the school campus to replace the existing facility.

- 2.6 If Members wish to move the project forward, either through the Penda Partnership Agreement or independently, financial provision for the feasibility study needs to be made by the Borough Council either for the full costs or a contribution through the Partnership Agreement. Members' views are sought on this now as there is the opportunity to move quickly and plan the development of new sports facilities to follow on from the completion of the new school.

### **Extension of the existing Joint Use Agreements**

- 2.7 The new school is expected to be completed by December 2016. Up until that point the School will continue to have a need to use the existing sports centre.
- 2.8 Cabinet is asked to consider extending the current Agreement until the new school has been completed. To do this, financial provision to continue to operate the existing sports centre needs to be agreed when the Council sets its budget for 2016/17. This would roll forward the current joint use agreement to coincide with the expected completion of the school in December 2016 and a dual use agreement with the Staffordshire County Council thereafter, until a replacement facility is available. There are clearly added benefits to the community if the existing sports centre stays open until new facilities are ready.

### **Community Use Agreement for School Facilities**

- 2.9 There is an opportunity to secure community use of the new school sports facilities being built on the new campus. These consist of a new sports hall, the astro-turf pitch and a natural grass turf pitch. It is proposed to enter into discussions with the School in this respect.

## **3. Options**

### **Replacement Facility**

- 3.1 As a result of condition survey findings, structural report findings and the need to take urgent action the Council aspires to deliver new sports facilities as part of the physical and social regeneration of Kidsgrove. A Scrutiny Committee Working Group looked into the feasibility and a range of options for the project, which is to include both wet and dry areas and address the age/condition of the existing joint use sports centre and the significant running costs.
- 3.2 In December 2014 the Cabinet agreed to the proposals for options for a scheme, for the preferred facility mix and considered a number of site options, but it was recognised further work could not be undertaken until capital finance was available to develop the project further.

- 3.3 Subsequent to the Scrutiny Panel's findings being reported to Cabinet the development a new swimming pool with associated health and fitness facilities on the existing site is now felt to be the strongest option and will complement the new sports hall and existing astro-turf pitch at Kings School. However, due to the high estimated capital cost of over £7.7million, the Scrutiny Committee Working Group has decided to explore alternative, more cost-effective delivery options. Furthermore rather than simply wait until finances permit, the working group has been keen to see partners engaged to progress the optimal specification and financial costs of providing and operating a new pool.

The current situation is summarised in the following table in relation to each partners' aspirations:

Partner	Objectives, concerns and considerations
Newcastle Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council is aware of the negative impact that recent closures of the swimming pool has had on the local community and the accessibility to quality swimming opportunities</li> <li>• The Council has no capital and limited revenue funding available to contribute to a new swimming pool</li> <li>• It cannot therefore currently commit to providing any capital funding and needs to significantly reduce the revenue funding required to subsidise the swimming pool</li> <li>• It is important to examine ways in which a pool could be provided which requires limited revenue subsidy from any of the partners</li> <li>• A new pool is being considered in Stoke-on-Trent and the effect of City Council's pools should be taken into account. Even so currently across North Staffordshire there is a shortage of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of water space, with Newcastle having 10.7m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 population, compared to an England average of 12.4m<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• In spite of this shortfall, Newcastle actually has a higher satisfied demand at 91.6% than the England average of 91.3%. This would indicate that as far as possible we need to maintain the current amount of water space in the Borough, but could reduce it, dependant on the scale of provision in Stoke.</li> <li>• Having looked at examples of constant depth modular swimming pools at their last meeting, the scrutiny panel are keen to see the use of this system considered for Kidsgrove. The above ground steel construction is considerably cheaper and quicker to build than traditional concrete foundations. It could provide a 1.2m constant depth 6 lane 25m pool, to satisfy the demand above and without the need to provide a separate</li> </ul>

	teaching pool.
The Kings School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The integration of a swimming pool within the School complex fits with the ambitions to create a community campus which provides extended learning opportunities</li> <li>• The School is very keen to ensure that there is a pool available which can easily provide swimming lessons from a basic level to ensure children have the skills to swim</li> <li>• The School caters for a large catchment of children and several feeder schools who all need to learn basic swimming skills</li> <li>• The design of the pool must be sustainable</li> <li>• The school has limited capital resources although it is willing to make land available for the pool.</li> </ul>
Staffordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The core objectives for the County Council are from both assets and Public Health view point.</li> <li>• Increased participation in physical activity in core target groups to tackle long term conditions.</li> <li>• There are great opportunities to explore regarding cardiac rehabilitation and a GP referral scheme currently in place at Jubilee2 for Kidsgrove</li> <li>• There is an opportunity to include provision for local day services with the flexible space proposed at the new centre, plus the provision of a 'Changing Places' room</li> <li>• The County Council are responsible for the existing sports centre building at the end of the joint use agreement but will not operate it as a sports centre.</li> <li>• Staffordshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire and Kier have recently formed the Penda Property Partnership to provide the capacity, as well as funding and investment, and the development of the local supply chain and are keen to move at a pace on a Partnership Plan.</li> <li>• If accepted as a Penda Partnership Project an outline business case would be developed, which if approved would lead to a full business case being developed. This may provide an opportunity to progress the development of a new swimming pool in Kidsgrove.</li> </ul>

- 3.4 To take the project forward the Working Group supports the establishment of a Cabinet Panel to provide the leadership and governance required to bring such a scheme to fruition. If approved it is proposed that the Cabinet Panel would be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Localism.

**Extending the current joint use agreement:**

- 3.5 The extension of the current joint use agreement with the school and county council for the management of Kidsgrove Sports Centre until the school takes on operational responsibility for the new school education super block and sports block will need to be contained within available resources. It is anticipated that the same budget will be available in 2016/17 as for 2015/16.

### **Community Use Agreement for School Facilities**

- 3.6 The agreement for community use of the school sports hall and astro-turf pitch from January 2017 will develop the sports hall programme and continue to operate the astro-turf pitch and support the school in upgrading the pitch with 3G surfacing (through grants). It is proposed that no new money is made available for this but the existing funding for the sports centre is used across the site to maximise sports participation and income generation.

### **Long term agreement for the new facility**

- 3.7 As the new facility project is developed full consideration will be given to any agreements with partners necessary for the future operational success of the sports centre.

## **4. Financial and Resource Implications**

### **Capital**

- 4.1 It is anticipated that a contribution towards the feasibility costs of between £25,000 and £40,000 (subject to formal quotes) are needed to progress the project. A project cost ranging from around £3m is anticipated at this stage for a constant depth pool solution to £7.7m for a traditional build replacement.

The Council has no capital funding available to contribute to a new swimming pool. To enable progress to be made, the means to fund the work at each stage will need to be secured.

### **Revenue**

- 4.2 The councils current approved revenue contribution to Kidsgrove Sports Centre is budgeted to be £246k. However, due to a combination of factors such as building condition, site constraints and service disruptions from a number of short term closures, an additional strain of £123k is forecast.

Included in this budget is a contribution of £72k towards the sports centre this financial year made by the School. The basis for the annual financial contribution from the school is covered in the Joint Use Agreement and covers specific operational costs calculated either on a shared basis according to proportionate use or recharged based on qualifying expenditure.

The Council's costs have been reduced where possible through efficiencies over the past two years. The ability to reduce these further is limited by the current agreement. The only scope remaining would be to reduce the hours that the sports centre is open to the public, but care would need to be taken not to simply shunt costs onto the other partners who may not have ability to absorb such increases. Therefore, any extension of the joint use agreement will need to be contained within available resources.

- 4.3 To secure community use of the school's sports facilities so that the community can use them outside of school hours, the proposal would be to use the existing funding for the sports centre across the site to maximise community use, sports participation and income generation.
- 4.4 The operation of the new swimming pool will still require a level of subsidy, but it is expected to be on a reduced scale compared to the existing sports centre. The expected subsidy will be determined as the business case is developed.

5. **Outcomes Linked to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 There will be a positive impact on those relating to health improvement, quality of life, and support for disadvantaged communities, community safety and potentially broader social regeneration objectives for the Borough.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1 The Council has powers, under the Local Government Act 2000, to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough's residents.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 7.1 An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken for the project.

8. **Major Risks**

- 8.1 A full risk assessment/log will be developed for the project in conjunction with the Council's Corporate Risk Manager and will be subject to regular review.

9. **Key Decision Information**

- 9.1 To promote positive health and wellbeing. This should be reflected by an increased number of the Borough's residents participating in sports, health, and physical activity programmes, which in turn should lead to improvements in individual life expectancy and the reduced burden of disease or ill health.



10. **Previous Cabinet Decisions**

14<sup>th</sup> November 2012

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014

10<sup>th</sup> December 2014

12. **List of Appendices**

None