

## **KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE**

**Submitted by:** Executive Director, Operational Services – Dave Adams/  
Head of Leisure and Cultural Services – Robert Foster

**Portfolio:** Culture and Leisure

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report**

To update Members on the re-opening of the Swimming Pool at Kidsgrove Sports Centre and to outline current and future development opportunities for sports facilities in Kidsgrove.

### **Recommendations**

**It is recommended that Cabinet:**

- (a) Approves the approach to providing quality indoor and all weather sports facilities in Kidsgrove as outlined.**
- (b) Agrees to receive further reports as the options are developed to direct the strategic planning and provision of sports facilities in Kidsgrove.**

### **Reasons**

To ensure that quality sports facilities are provided, in the right place, for the right people, the Council has adopted a community leadership role to bring together the perspectives of the different organisations involved in the provision of sports facilities in Kidsgrove under a comprehensive plan for the area.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 Kidsgrove Sports Centre is owned by Staffordshire County Council and was opened in 1976, being last refurbished in 1999. Approaching 40 years old, the centre is at the end of its lifespan. This became apparent in October 2011 when the swimming pool had to close as a result of structural failure of the ceiling cladding due to water ingress through the roof.
- 1.2 The County Council are in the process of completing repairs to the pool hall building envelope, including a new roof and internal ceiling so that the Borough Council can re-commission the pool plant and reopen the pools to the public.

It was originally hoped to re-open the pools in time for the October half term break, however, in the process of re-commissioning the plant and equipment, further unexpected and essential works were identified which had to be undertaken before the re-opening could take place. In addition, during the closure the Borough Council has also replaced the showers throughout the centre

## **2. Issues**

- 2.1 The immediate success of the centre now relies on sufficient numbers of swimmers, gym and class users returning and using the facility and the avoidance of further building failures. In any event the centre requires a sizeable subsidy and due to the current range of facilities

and general condition of the building and fittings, fails to provide a quality experience, by comparison to the Council's other leisure site.

There is a long-term shared aspiration with the County Council to provide accessible and fit for purpose leisure and recreational facilities that support the high school offer that serves the communities of Kidsgrove. One potential route to the funding required to bring this aspiration to fruition is through the realisation of land value left over after the school has been replaced with funding from the Private Finance Initiative on a much smaller footprint.

However the government are not due to commence dialogue with the school until the second quarter of 2015. Therefore there is a need in the meantime to plan how best to ensure continuity of provision and duty of care, for users of the centre.

### 3. **Options Considered**

- 3.1 The full replacement cost of the sports centre is estimated to be around £6,000,000 in the current climate and requires a large capital receipt to fund, which may in the longer term be supported through the realisation of land value by the County Council associated with a replacement school project.
- 3.2 A full refurbishment of the sports centre has been estimated at £4,500,000. Part of the refurbishment scheme would involve reducing the pool water volume and increasing the fitness area thus significantly reducing the operating costs and improving income generating opportunities. Dependant on the scope and detail of the refurbishment scheme, savings up to an average of £178,000 pa over 5 years compared to current budgeted operating costs may be achievable.
- 3.3 Following the work recently undertaken to re-open the pool, a reduced refurbishment scheme has been value engineered from the full refurbishment scheme and has been estimated at the reduced sum of £2,500,000. This option would give the sports centre around a 12 year lifespan, but does not address the synthetic turf pitches.
- 3.4 A further approach is to seek to undertake the elements of the reduced refurbishment scheme on a phased approach if and when grant-led funding opportunities are identified.

An application had recently been submitted to the Sport England Improvement Fund for the funding to refurbish the existing changing rooms and outdoor synthetic turf pitches. If successful, the project would have brought in excess of £500,000 worth of investment. Unfortunately, the Council has been informed that its bid has been unsuccessful as the Sport England fund was six times over-subscribed.

- 3.5 Further discussions are also being explored with the Health Sector and Stoke City Council in relation to potential funding or joint provision.

### 4. **Proposal**

- 4.1 It is proposed to continue to develop options and seek opportunities to secure the long term future of quality sports facilities for the Kidsgrove area. Whilst at present there are no known short or medium term sources of the significant funding required to achieve any of the 3 main options included in this report, in the context of the overall condition of the building, it is important that over this period officers continue to identify and seek opportunities to secure grant-led funding where available to maintain the current range of facilities

5. **Reasons for Preferred Solution**

- 5.1 To ensure that we provide quality sports facilities, in the right place, for the right people, the Council has adopted a community leadership role to bring together the perspectives of the different organisations involved in the provision of sports facilities in Kidsgrove under a comprehensive plan for the area.

6. **Outcomes Linked to Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Priorities**

- 6.1 The case for increasing participation in physical activity and sport is compelling. New sports facilities bring many benefits to an area - through encouraging positive participation they will result in people being in better health - with the resulting reduced healthcare costs.
- 6.2 They will contribute to the development of individuals at all ages and help to build strong communities. Furthermore it will be seen to generate economic benefits and, most importantly, contribute to people's quality of life.

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has the power to provide sport and recreation facilities.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 The current facilities do not comply with existing access regulations. These issues would be fully addressed in any redevelopment work, or part addressed where work is undertaken on a phased basis.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Further reports will be brought to Cabinet as options are developed, including any financial implications for the Council.

10. **Major Risks**

- 10.1 The risk of not having a development plan in place is that the building could fail and be forced to close again, with the associated cost of repair, loss of income and availability of local facilities.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

None

12. **Key Decision Information**

This is a key decision and appears on the Council's Forward Plan

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

None

14. **List of Appendices**

None