

North Wiltshire Leisure Centres – Latest Position

The Executive at North Wiltshire District Council have now agreed to a request by North Wiltshire Leisure Limited for the closure of three leisure centres in North Wiltshire. The Cricklade Leisure Centre, Lime Kiln Leisure Centre, Wootton Bassett and the White Horse Leisure Centre, Calne have been identified for closure and will be mothballed with a view to exploring future options.

The Executive also agreed that North Wiltshire Leisure Limited should submit a proposed recovery and business plan for 07/08 by the end of December 2006 and that no further funding be approved over and above that already agreed for 2006/07. The Executive also approved an advance payment from the 2007/08 management fee budget to enable NWLL to continue to trade.

The financial position of North Wiltshire Leisure Limited and future leisure provision was considered at a special meeting of North Wiltshire District Council's Executive, on Thursday 23rd November.

The meeting took place following concerns regarding the financial and operational management of the six leisure centres, which are owned by the council. The leisure centres are managed by North Wiltshire Leisure Limited (NWLL).

In March this year, NWLL's interim management team - Wycombe Leisure Ltd, (appointed following the suspension of NWLL's senior management team in October 05) recommended a recovery plan for the organisation to NWLL's Board members.

The recommendations, which were endorsed by NWLL, were presented to the council's Leisure Provision Working Group as proposals for future service provision.

The council's Leisure Provision Working Group, chaired by Cllr Dianne Moore, the Lead Member for Healthy Lifestyles considered the recommendations and advised the Executive that consultants be appointed to undertake work to validate NWLL's recommendations.

The appointed consultants (Strategic Leisure Ltd) were appointed to assess the condition of the six leisure centre buildings; the strategic need for leisure facilities across North Wiltshire and the financial viability of all six centres. This work was completed in October but was subject to detailed assessments on legal, financial and other issues, which had to be investigated prior to any recommendations, being made to the Council's Executive.

At the Executive meeting, Members considered the recommendations of the Leisure Provision Working Group and agreed to the following;

That in response to a request from North Wiltshire Leisure Ltd (NWLL) and having taken financial, legal and leisure consultants advice, the Council agrees to vary the Services which NWLL provide under the contract relating to the management and operation of six leisure centres within the district. That by agreeing to vary the contract that any requirement to provide services at Cricklade Leisure Centre, Lime Kiln Leisure Centre, Wootton Bassett and the White Horse Leisure Centre, Calne is removed and that these centres be mothballed in a condition satisfactory to the Council.

That North Wiltshire Leisure Limited be advised to submit a recovery and business plan for 07/08 by the end of December 2006, as per the terms set out in the contract.

That in light of the current financial that no further funding be approved to NWLL over and above that already agreed for 2006/07.

That the Executive considers approving advance payments from the 2007/08 management fee budget, subject to a Business Plan from North Wiltshire Leisure Limited for the remainder of the 2006/07 budget year, to enable them to continue to trade until end March 2007.

That the agreed annual management fee for later years does not exceed the approved base budget provision.

The Executive agrees to underwrite the cost of auditors carrying out a full financial audit of NWLL's accounts.

That the Leisure Working Group continues its work and submits further reports by the end of March 07 to the Executive to cover the following:-

Recovery Plan & Enhancement Plan for centres to remain open

Disposal Plan and options for centres proposed for closure, including costs of closures

Proposals for testing the market and procurement of future service provider.