

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

24 March 2020

Subject: Clarendon Swimming pool, Trowbridge Sports Centre

Cabinet Member: Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling Cabinet Member for IT, Digitalisation and Operational Assets and Cllr Allison Bucknell Cabinet member for Communications, Communities, Leisure and Libraries

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

Since September 2019, the council has been investigating structural concerns at Trowbridge Sports Centre relating to corrosion of the steel frame of the main pool building and reception area. In December 2019 exploratory bore holes were drilled to ascertain the extent of the problem with a view to designing a programme of remedial works. Following the exploratory work, structural engineers recommended the issuing of a Section 78 Unsafe Structures Notice and closure of the site. The Council's Building Control officer confirmed this recommendation on 23rd December and the site was closed.

The dry side of the centre, which includes the sports hall, squash courts, offices and dry change is unaffected and following minor works were re-opened on 20th January 2020. The swimming pool remained closed while an assessment of required repairs has been undertaken.

Proposal(s)

This report requests that Cabinet:

- i. Approve the Capital funding required to undertake the repair works to Clarendon swimming pool bringing the pool back into use and maintaining it over a 5-year period.
- ii. Confirm Cabinet's commitment to invest in, and deliver, a financially viable town-centre leisure facility to include gym and swimming facilities for residents of Trowbridge and the surrounding area. This to be taken forward as part of the Future High Streets Fund with recommendations and options from this work to be brought back to Cabinet.

Reason for Proposal(s)

Trowbridge Swimming Pool has been closed since 23rd December 2019 due to structural issues. Repairs are possible and will provide up to five years additional usage of the facility. The proposals contained in this report seek to

ensure that there is continued swimming provision in Trowbridge whilst also seeking to enable Trowbridge Town Centre to thrive through sustainable service led growth integrating leisure facilities to provide a catalyst for this.

Alistair Cunningham, Chief Executive Director - Place

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Capital funding needed to repair Clarendon swimming pool and bring the pool back into use; with the aim of reopening to the public by the end of Summer 2020.
- 1.2. The report asks Cabinet to agree resources to explore options for a future Trowbridge Town Centre site to provide gym and swimming facilities to the residents of Trowbridge and the surrounding area. Ensuring these communities have a modern gym and swimming pool to meet their needs in 5 years' time when the life span of the Clarendon pool expires. Our vision is for a future development that enables Trowbridge Town Centre to thrive through sustainable service led growth integrating a leisure offer.

2. Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

- 2.1. The purpose and recommendations noted in the report reflect the following areas of the Business Plan 2017 - 2027:
 - 2.1.1. Strong Communities: 'We want people in Wiltshire to be encouraged to take responsibility for their well-being, build positive relationships and to get involved, influence and take action on what's best for their own communities – we want residents to succeed to the best of their abilities and feel safe where they live and work'.
 - 2.1.2. The third goal for Personal Wellbeing (Prevention) references 'improved leisure provision through new campuses, sports and leisure centres and community hubs (including libraries and community engagement)' and a 'healthier population'.

3. Background

- 3.1. Since September 2019, the council has been investigating structural concerns at the Clarendon Swimming Pool, Trowbridge Sports Centre relating to corrosion of the steel frame of the main pool building and reception area. In December 2019 exploratory bore holes were drilled to ascertain the extent of the problem with a view to designing a programme of remedial works.
- 3.2. These investigations revealed deficiencies to the concrete pads used in the foundations at the base of the steel structure, and extensive corrosion below ground of the steel uprights. It was also discovered that the sealant (paint) originally used on the structure was sub-standard, which has resulted in accelerated and excessive corrosion.
- 3.3. Following the exploratory work, structural engineers recommended the issuing of a Section 78 Unsafe Structures Notice and closure of the site. The Council's Building Control officer visited the site on 23rd December and advised closure.
- 3.4. The extent and nature of the issues is such that immediate works are required to make the structure safe. Any significant weather event such as high winds or lying snowfall will increase the risk of major failure including potential collapse.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. Whilst the immediacy of the situation required the whole site to be closed, the areas affected were limited to the swimming pool, wet change and reception area. The dry side of the centre, which includes the sports hall, squash courts, offices and dry change was unaffected by the issues.
- 4.2. Work has been undertaken to isolate the dry side of the facility, relocating the reception to the side of the building, managing the dynamics of school and public access and isolating the wet side of the facility.
- 4.3. The dry side re-opened on 20th January 2020. The wet side remains closed.
- 4.4. The site is managed on behalf of the Council by Places for People Leisure Ltd (PfP). Officers have been working with PfP to support communications to customers and to seek alternative swim provision particularly for swimming lessons while the pool is closed.

5. Main Considerations for the Council

- 5.1. Release of Capital funding to repair the Clarendon Swimming, Trowbridge Leisure Centre extending the working life of the site for 5 years.

- 5.2. The implementation of a programme of works and the initial resources required for this to assess options for a future Town Centre leisure site working towards a future gym and swimming provision for Trowbridge.

6. Short Term Considerations

- 6.1. Swimming pools provide the community with opportunities for physical and mental health and well-being, social interaction, opportunities for volunteering, skill development and employment. They provide children with the ability to develop a life-long and potentially life-saving skill, and swimming contributes generally to reducing levels of obesity, diabetes, social isolation and health inequalities, enabling people to manage their long-term health conditions.
- 6.2. Should a decision be taken not to make the repairs, this would leave the community without a pool for a minimum of 3 years and potentially longer depending on preferred future locations. It is estimated that any new facility will take a minimum of 33 months to develop, once the location is identified (15 months to design and seek planning consent, 18 months to build).

7. Long Term Considerations

- 7.1. A county-wide leisure facilities review is currently taking place, which includes the future leisure needs of the Trowbridge community. Alongside this it is recommended that options for a future Trowbridge Town Centre site are explored to provide gym and swimming facilities to residents of Trowbridge and the surrounding area once the life span of the Clarendon site expires.
- 7.2. Our vision is for a future development that enables Trowbridge Town Centre to thrive through sustainable service led growth integrating a leisure offer. We will take the development of this forward linked to the Trowbridge Future High Streets Fund opportunity.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

- 8.1. There has been no Overview and Scrutiny engagement in this item. As plans for the future of leisure provision of Trowbridge are developed these will be taken to the Environment Select Committee for scrutiny.

9. Safeguarding Implications

- 9.1. Not applicable to the recommendations. Safeguarding clauses are built into the contractual arrangements for the site requiring the operator to adhere to safeguarding policies, procedures, training and safer recruitment will be expected.

10. Public Health Implications

- 10.1. Leisure facilities provide the opportunities for people to lead healthy and active lifestyles. Increasing physical activity can help to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population, improve healthy life

expectancy and reduce inequalities. As a result, this can alleviate the reliance on health and social care, reduce sickness absence and therefore significantly reduce the cost associated with providing these services.

- 10.2. Access to leisure facilities supports the aim of increasing the number of people meeting physical activity guidelines and reducing the proportion of 'inactive' adults and children and young people.
- 10.3. Public health aims to increase participation by those people living in quintile 1, the most deprived areas of the county. These residents are also most likely to be the most economically disadvantaged in our community. Targeted work with priority groups who meet health inequality criteria as defined in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will also increase the focus on the use of leisure facilities and services to mitigate ill health and its long-term results in the population.

11. Procurement Implications

11.1 Appointment of contractors to undertake the repair works will follow procurement regulations.

12. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 12.1. Under any management, or contractual arrangement similar levels of adherence to Equality Duty would be expected:
 - 12.1.1. Due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination
 - 12.1.2. Due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - 12.1.3. Due regard to the need to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

13. Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

- 13.1. Leisure centres are some of the highest energy users in the building estate due to long opening hours, high footfall, need for air conditioning, lighting, heating and water. The proposed immediate repairs are to the structure of the building only and will not affect a change in current levels of energy consumption.
- 13.2. For any new provision of leisure facilities Wiltshire Council will seek to provide a carbon neutral building that meets the latest environmental standards.

14. Risk Assessment

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

- 14.1. Not agreeing to release the capital required to repair Clarendon swimming pool would mean repairs could not be undertaken. This would leave the Trowbridge community without a swimming pool. This would have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents in the area

and in particular, those who are most vulnerable in the community. This could place additional pressure on health and social care.

- 14.2. A significant number of young people will not be able to learn to swim, whether this is through their schools (impact on Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 attainment targets), or through swim school programme.
- 14.3. Additional activities will need to be provided for the community to replace the loss of swimming provision.
- 14.4. Not undertaking the feasibility study could significantly delay the identification of a preferred future leisure site and the development of a future facility when the life span of the Clarendon site expires.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

- 14.5 There will still be an approximate six-month closure of the swimming pool whilst the works are undertaken. Officers have been working to develop a solution for the required repairs and have consulted procurement to agree the most appropriate route to market. Officers are ready to procure the work as soon as Capital funding is agreed.
- 14.6 Officers will continue to work with PfP to relocate swimmers to other sites and develop additional communications.
- 14.7 While the swimming pool is closed revenue is lost to PfP leading to additional contractual costs to the Council.
- 14.8 The repairs will only give the site a maximum of five years additional usage. It is possible that a new facility is not in place in this timeframe. It is essential that officers progress with the proposed feasibility study and outcomes at pace.

15. Financial Implications

- 15.1. This report asks for the release of Capital funding to repair Clarendon swimming pool.
- 15.2. The Capital requirements are as follows:
 - £500,000 to repair and bring back into use.
 - £300,000 to maintain the swimming pool over the 5-year period.
- 15.3. This would need to be allocated from the approved "Other Capital Schemes to be approved" 2020/21 budget. The £800k allocation will leave £17.976 million in the contingency budget. The revenue costs of financing the borrowing were included for this budget as part of budget setting and would be circa £50k.
- 15.8 Due to the closure of the swimming pool income is being lost from this site. This will continue during the repair period. We will be working with our

Leisure provider to minimise the impact of any loss which will have to be managed in the overall service budget.

- 15.9 Options works required to identify future town centre sites for leisure provision will be funded from the Future High Streets Fund.

16 Legal Implications

- 16.1 The legal implications are set out in the body of the report and no further comment is required.

17 Workforce Implications

- 17.1 Not applicable

18. Options Considered

- 18.1 Due to the nature and scale of any works, and considering that immediate attention is required, options have been limited to undertaking a short-term repair, or not repairing. This is assessed in the context of the structure nearing the end of its life and will need to be replaced within 5 years.

Option 1 – Repair and Re-open Swimming Pool – recommended option

- 18.1.1 This would require the installation of new concrete pads and bracing steel works throughout and would give a maximum of 5 years temporary use. The swimming pool would remain shut until the works are completed, estimated to be 9 months total closure (Jan 2020 – September 2020). Further maintenance/lifecycle issues will materialise over the next 5 years requiring further work and investment.
- 18.1.2 Repairing the pool will enable swimming to be re-provided for the community, vital for a range of benefits including opportunities for physical and mental health and well-being, reducing levels of obesity and diabetes, reducing social isolation and health inequalities, enabling opportunities for volunteering, skill development and employment.
- 18.1.3 This option alleviates the impact of the current closure, where the majority of swimmers will not be able to be catered for and negates the need for alternative activities to be provided. This enables the provision of swimming to continue whilst the future redevelopment plans for leisure are developed and implemented in line with the wider regeneration of Trowbridge.

18.2 Option 2 – Close Wet-side permanently and decommission - discounted

- 18.2.1 The swimming pool would close permanently. The pool structure would be immediately removed, which will take approximately three to four months.

The dry side will remain open. Further maintenance/lifecycle issues will still be required to the dry side until a new facility is provided. There will be a requirement to provide alternative activities particularly for the more vulnerable individuals/communities for a minimum period of three years.

18.2.2 With this option, the community will not have a swimming pool for at least three years which will have a significant impact for clubs, schools, young people learning to swim, Key Stage 1/2 educational attainment targets and health and wellbeing. This timeframe is likely to be longer as the appropriate future redevelopment site has yet to be identified.

18.2.3 Alternative activities would need to be considered for the community, which will be challenging to establish and deliver.

19 Conclusions

19.1 Whilst it will cost more to repair the swimming pool than to close it, the additional cost will retain swimming provision in Trowbridge. This is vital in maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community and ensuring that children develop a life skill and potentially life-saving skill.

19.2 It is evident that the community would be without a swimming pool for a minimum of three years if the repairs were not undertaken. There is currently no identified site for a future leisure facility for the community and therefore this feasibility work needs to take place. It is noted in making the recommendations that:

19.2.1 the only option that does not require the pool to close for a significant period is to repair the swimming pool and redevelop a new site in Trowbridge.

19.2.2 repairing the swimming pool and then developing future provision at that site is the most expensive revenue option.

19.3 Cabinet is therefore asked to:

19.3.1 Release the Capital funding required to undertake the repair works to Clarendon swimming pool bringing the pool back into use and maintaining it over a 5-year period.

19.3.2 Confirm Cabinet's commitment to invest in, and deliver, a financially viable town-centre leisure facility to include gym and swimming facilities for residents of Trowbridge and the surrounding area. This to be taken forward as part of the Future High Streets Fund with recommendations and options from this work to be brought back to Cabinet.

20 Reason for Proposal

20.1 Trowbridge Swimming Pool has been closed since 23rd December 2019 due to structural issues. Repairs are possible and will provide up to five years additional usage of the facility. The council needs to balance the cost of

undertaking this work with the impact to the community of closing and decommissioning the building, for which there is also a cost.

- 20.2** The proposals contained in this report seek to ensure that there is continued swimming provision in Trowbridge whilst a long-term solution is determined and implemented.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None