

Title: Council Motion – Leisure provision in Kenilworth during construction of new facilities

Lead Officer: Rose Winship 01926 456223

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Bartlett

Wards of the District directly affected: All Kenilworth wards

Summary

A Notice of Motion was presented to Council on 20th October 2021 and passed unanimously asking the Cabinet to work with Everyone Active to put in place creative and imaginative solutions to ensure that during the demolition and construction work at Abbey Fields and Castle Farm, as many existing members of Everyone Active are both retained and encouraged to take exercise.

Recommendation(s)

- (1)** That the Cabinet approve the actions that are already underway as detailed in Appendix 1
 - (2)** That the Cabinet note the explanation in the report relating to item e) in the Motion to Council
-

1 Background/Information

- 1.1 The Motion presented to Council sought reassurance that the Cabinet and officers would work closely with Everyone Active (EA) to ensure that wherever possible, alternative options were available for customers of Abbey Fields and Castle Farm to continue to take regular exercise when the facilities are closed from Jan 2022 to Spring/Summer 2023 to allow the new facilities to be constructed.
- 1.2 Work has been ongoing for some time to relocate programmed activities from Abbey Fields and Castle Farm to identified spaces within the other district sports facilities. Everyone Active are confident that they will be able to offer alternative sessions to all of their users during the build period. It must however be recognised that some of the alternative options will require customers to travel to access their classes/bookings. Officers and EA are doing what they can to provide as many options as possible as close as possible to Kenilworth. Appendix 1 details the latest position regarding alternative provision.
- 1.3 A detailed communications plan is in place to ensure that all EA members and residents of Kenilworth are aware of the alternative provision during the construction of the new facilities. This will include direct mailing of EA members, updates for club and school bookings, and updates on EA and WDC websites directing customers to a range of options. An example is attached as Appendix 2 – Email to parents with children on swimming lessons

- 1.4 Item e) in the Motion to Council made the statement that “any loss of members by Everyone Active during the demolition and construction work will result in lost income to the District Council and so will be a potential cost to local taxpayers”. This is not entirely accurate as the Council will have an agreed financial position with EA which will factor in the closure of the facilities, and project a level of recovery when the sites reopen. It should also be noted that Abbey Fields and Castle Farm both currently run at a loss, with the value of the contract coming from the modernized Newbold and St Nicholas Park centres.

2 Alternative Options available to Cabinet

- 2.1 Cabinet could ask officers to work with Everyone Active to provide additional indoor activities at alternative venues i.e. (village halls and function rooms), but these will come at an additional cost to the Council and will also compete with local established independent providers.

3 Consultation and Member’s comments

- 3.1 The Motions tabled by Cllr Dickson asked for the Cabinet to work with Everyone Active to develop creative ideas that would offer a variety of ways for the residents of Kenilworth and members of Everyone Active to maintain active lifestyles while Abbey Fields and Castle Farm are close for redevelopment. This report outlines that the actions that have already been confirmed or are in development.

4 Implications of the proposal

4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

- 4.1.1 N/A.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Officers are in negotiations with EA to approve the latest financial projections for the wider contract for 2021/22 and for 2022/23. A financial projection for 2023/24 will be agreed in due course. Each of these projections will factor in the closure of Abbey Fields and Castle Farm from Jan 2022 to Spring/Summer 2023.

4.3 Council Plan

- 4.3.1 In respect of Warwick District Council’s Business Plan these proposals will have the following relevance and impact as set out below:

External:

People - Health, Homes, Communities – The proposal seeks to offer alternative opportunities for people of Kenilworth to participate in active lifestyles during the closure of the 2 Kenilworth centres.

Services - Green, Clean, Safe - The proposal seeks to offer local opportunities to reduce wherever possible the need to drive excessive distances to participate in activities.

Internal:

People - Effective Staff – The proposals will require ongoing close work between WDC officers and Everyone Active and other stakeholders for the coming 18 months.

Services - Maintain or Improve Services – the Council are investing significant funds to provide modern facilities for Kenilworth and the wider district. In the interim the proposals will offer a range of opportunities that the Council can

monitor during the closure period.

Money - Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term – the modernised facilities from 2023 onwards will strengthen the contractual financial agreement between WDC and Everyone Active.

Environmental/Climate Change Implications

4.3.1 N/A

4.4 Analysis of the effects on Equality

4.4.1 No EqIA has been completed. The impact on users is a temporary situation, and when the new facilities are open in 2023, all sectors of the community, irrespective of any protected characteristics, will be able to enjoy these improved centres.

4.5 Data Protection

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 Health and Wellbeing

4.6.1 It is acknowledged that provision of appropriate alternative opportunities for local people to take exercise is essential if we are to continue to encourage individuals to adopt active lifestyles. The range of options are designed to provide choice for local people. There is no one simple solution as each individual will choose what solution works for them while Abbey Fields and Castle Farm are closed. Based on the experience at Newbold Comyn and St Nicholas Park following their refurbishment in 2018 the vast majority of existing customers returned to the facilities, together with significant numbers of new members.

5 Risk Assessment

5.1 The risks associated with this report are largely risks around the construction programme which will be captured in the project risk register in due course.

5.2 There are risks that some customers may not find a suitable alternative for them to continue to be active, but officers and EA believe that a suitable range of options have been provided (Appendix 1)

6 Conclusion/Reasons for the Recommendation

6.1 Officers will continue to work with Everyone Active to develop a wide range of alternative options for customers of Abbey Fields and Castle Farm to exercise during the construction period at these sites. These options will be communicated through a range of channels throughout the closure period.

Background papers:

None

Supporting documents:

None

APPENDIX 1 – Situation as at 9th November 2021

Everyone Active Members:

- Will receive direct mail communication w/c 8th November to explain the options available to them to use other Everyone Active facilities.
- Existing swimming lesson customers will be offered a place by the end of November on a swimming scheme at other local pools from January 2022. Current swimming classes will continue at Abbey Fields until the pool closes at Christmas.
- 79% of sports hall activities have already confirmed a move to other EA sites in the district. Work is ongoing to relocate the other activities. Of the 79%, 64% of the bookings are remaining in Kenilworth, using Meadows Community Sports Centre as an alternative venue. Only one booking has chosen to go elsewhere to a non EA venue; and 1 booking has chosen to suspend their activity during the closure
- Direct Debit members will be able to use all other Everyone Active leisure centres during the upgrade at no additional upgrade fees (Kenilworth site fees are currently slightly less than Warwick or Leamington sites)
- 64% of exercise classes from Castle Farm have confirmed that they will move to another EA site in the district, and 3 classes will move to Meadows Sports Centre.
- Direct Debit members will have free access to "Everyone on Demand" – the online exercise platform that allows members to log on from home to a range of exercise classes at a time to suit them. The classes include fitness, health & well being and personal training options.
- Meadows Community Sports Centre will return to a 7 day a week operation. Weekend opening had been suspended as we emerged from COVID due to restrictions on certain sports but also on availability of staffing.

Clubs and Schools:

- Everyone Active will be working closely with club organisers to identify alternative locations for club activities whilst the centres are closed. Clubs will announce any changes directly with their members once they have been confirmed.
- Over 30's Club has moved to Newbold Comyn LC; Baginton Swimming Club will be offered EA swimming lessons for the period of closure; Junior Triathlon Club have rejected the offer of EA venue but are in contact with Warwick University regarding water space. If water space can be found at a suitable time at Newbold or St Nicholas Park then the club has expressed a wish to consider option. Kenilworth Masters have rejected the offer of space at St Nicholas Park but EA continue to review if alternative space could be offered without significant impact on public swimming.
- Kenilworth Swimming Club have relocated to Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre where they have been throughout the COVID restrictions.
- Schools currently using Abbey Fields will all be offered space at either Newbold or St Nicholas Park pools. Work is ongoing with these schools – but the latest position is that St Nicholas school and Crackley School are in discussion about moving their classes to Newbold or St Nicholas Park. Clinton have chosen to pause their swimming activities, but EA will keep in contact with the school regarding alternative options in 2022. Some Kenilworth schools have already transferred to these other sites in advance of the closure announcement.

Alternative providers of activities/classes:

- WDC officers are in dialogue with other non WDC/Everyone Active organisations who already offer fitness classes of various types in Kenilworth to see if they would be willing for the Council to advertise these opportunities to local residents in order to offer an alternative to Castle Farm Recreation Centre during the period of the works. These opportunities will be listed on the WDC website to provide alternatives for those wishing to continue to exercise locally in the town and villages close to Kenilworth.
- A meeting took place on 3rd Nov with Kenilworth Lawn Tennis and Squash Club to discuss how facilities at the club could be made available to non members during the unavailability of the Abbey Fields courts. Positive feedback from the club who are about to introduce a "pay and play" option for informal play all year round. Also planning to offer some "taser sessions" based at the club courts to encourage new players.
- Contact has been made with Warwick University to identify opportunities for local people to use the university sports facilities. Once details have been confirmed about fees and membership options, details will be posted on the WDC website.
- Discussion has been had with Kenilworth School to allow public use of the tennis courts (summer term only) and basketball hoops on the Leyes Lane site out of school hours. Bookings and supervision will be managed by Everyone Active while they are on site during out of school hours at Meadows Community Sport Centre.
- Petanque at Castle Farm – the construction contractors are proposing to leave 3 or 4 of the existing rinks for use. The current users are content with this solution.
- Football at Castle Farm – discussions underway with the demolition contractors to retain car parking until April 2022 that can be used by users including footballers. There is also a possible solution to be finalised with the construction contractor that would allow weekend parking for users including football.
- Park Run – the success or otherwise of a Park Run event is a willing franchisee to run the event, and a suitable site with sufficient parking. Officers are not aware of any interest from a Park Run franchisee to establish an event in Kenilworth or any suitable site. It should be noted that there are popular well established Park Runs in Warwick, Leamington Spa, and at Memorial Park in Coventry.
- Walking for Health groups – further work to be done to identify opportunities local to Kenilworth
- Park Permit scheme – officers are suggesting 3 months free trials for groups wishing to start a new group in Kenilworth for the duration of the closure. Details of how this would be managed to be confirmed. To be discussed at the PAB on 11th Nov as part of the general discussion on the Park Permit scheme

Report Information Sheet

Please complete and submit to Democratic Services with draft report

Committee/Date	Cabinet – 9 th December 2021	
Title of report	Council Motion – Leisure provision in Kenilworth during construction of new facilities	
Consultations undertaken		
Consultee *required	Date	Details of consultation /comments received
Ward Member(s)	20/10/21	Council
Portfolio Holder WDC & SDC *	20/10/21	Council
Financial Services *	16/11/21	Mike Snow
Legal Services *	16/11/21	Phil Grafton
Other Services	16/11/21	Environmental and Operational
Chief Executive(s)	16/11/21	Chris Elliott
Head of Service(s)	16/11/21	Rose Winship
Section 151 Officer	16/11/21	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	16/11/21	Phil Grafton
CMT (WDC)	16/11/21	Chris Elliott Andrew Jones
Leadership Co-ordination Group (WDC)	22/11/21	
Other organisations		
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Ctte/Council?		Final decision
Contrary to Policy/Budget framework		No
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?		No
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?		No
Accessibility Checked?		File/Info/Inspect Document/Check Accessibility