

Executive
11 February 2021

Title: Warwick District Leisure Development Programme - Addendum

Lead Officer: Paddy Herlihy

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Rhead

Public report

Wards of the District directly affected: All Wards of the District but likely to specifically affect: Kenilworth Abbey and Arden, Kenilworth Park Hill, Kenilworth St Johns.

Contrary to the policy framework: No

Contrary to the budgetary framework: No

Key Decision: Yes

Included within the Forward Plan: No

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken: Yes Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken for the two facilities in this project, and have been submitted as part of the Planning Application documentation

Consultation & Community Engagement: Yes. The first stakeholder and public consultation for Phase Two of the Warwick District Leisure Development Programme took place in October 2018. The report to Executive in January 2019 reported back on the results of that consultation. The second consultation was undertaken in November and December 2019. The results of that consultation were reported back to the Project Board and Members' Working Group; summary results were published and full results form part of the planning applications. The two planning applications offer a further opportunity for public consultation and community engagement

Final Decision: Yes

Accessibility checked: Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval

| Officer Approval | Date | Name |
|--|-------------|---|
| Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive | 19/1/21 | Chris Elliot/Andrew Jones |
| Head of Service | 19/1/21 | Rose Winship |
| CMT | 19/1/21 | Chris Elliot/Andrew Jones/Bill Hunt/Dave Barber |
| Section 151 Officer | 19/1/21 | Mike Snow |
| Monitoring Officer | 19/1/21 | Andrew Jones |
| Finance | 19/1/21 | Mike Snow/Dilip Dapasia |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | 21/1/21 | Councillor Rhead |

1. Addendum

1.1. The changes to the report are being made in order to retain flexibility on the decision about whether or not to re-open the Abbey Fields Swimming Pool and the Castle Farm Recreation Centre as the current situation with the Covid pandemic is creating considerable uncertainty around the operation of the two leisure centres.

1.2. Amended Recommendation

2.8 That, subject to agreeing recommendations 2.2 to 2.7 inclusive, Executive delegates to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) and the Head of Cultural Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Neighbourhood, the decision as to whether or not to re-open, and to what extent, the Abbey Fields Swimming Pool and the Castle Farm Recreation Centre between the current Covid pandemic closure and the closure of the facilities for demolition.

1.3. Amended Paragraphs

3.8.1 If Executive approves recommendations 2.2 to 2.6 inclusive it is likely that Abbey Fields Swimming Pool and Castle Farm Recreation Centre will close for demolition in the second half of 2021. Both centres are currently closed due to the Government restrictions related to the Covid 19 pandemic and it is currently not clear when leisure centres in Warwickshire will be permitted to re-open. After the first lockdown in 2020 ended, attendance at the two leisure centres in Kenilworth took longer to recover and even after 3 months of trading income at Abbey Fields Swimming Pool only reached 41% of pre-Covid levels and 48% at Castle Farm Recreation Centre. At the present time the uncertainties of the pandemic mean that both centres are operating at a loss and the Council is supporting Everyone Active financially to remain open whenever restrictions allow, in order to continue to make a fitness offer to local residents.

3.8.2 When it is clear what date leisure centres will be permitted to reopen and it is also clear what date the two Kenilworth facilities are likely to close for demolition it is possible that it will not be cost effective to open the facilities between the two dates, given the short amount of time before the facilities are due to close again. However, this must be weighed against the importance of continuing to make a sport and fitness offer to residents of Kenilworth and surrounding villages, even if this is only on a temporary basis. This is particularly important at the present time, when the Government will be encouraging people to re-commence a healthy lifestyle after the various periods of lockdown.

3.8.3 The current situation with the pandemic makes it extremely difficult to accurately predict the situation for leisure centres in the summer of 2021. There is no indication yet of when the current lockdown will be lifted. Even when it is lifted, there is likely to be a gradual removal of restrictions. Previous lockdowns have shown that closure of leisure centres and swimming pools is not usually one of the first restrictions to be lifted. When such restrictions are lifted the appetite for customers to return to such facilities can be hard to predict. It is likely that the imminent closure of the Abbey

Fields Swimming Pool and the Castle Farm Recreation Centre will lower demand for customers to return. However, a period of time when access has not been possible, coupled with the imminent closure, may conversely encourage more people to use the centres if they are re-opened.

- 3.8.4 Given the uncertainties shown in paragraph 3.8.3 above, it is considered that at present it is too early to make a considered decision as to whether or not to permit Everyone Active to re-open the Abbey Fields Swimming Pool and the Castle Farm Recreation Centre between the end of the current Government restrictions and the start of demolition. It is therefore proposed to delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) and the Head of Cultural Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Neighbourhood, the decision as to whether to open or not, and to what extent. This decision should be made at the time when it is clear when the leisure centres will be permitted to re-open and when they will be due to close to commence the reconstruction process. This decision will need to balance the importance of providing as many opportunities as is reasonably possible for the residents of Kenilworth and surrounding villages to take part in physical activity with the cost to the Council of providing a temporary solution of this type. It is proposed that the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Neighbourhood should be consulted on this decision as the Portfolio Holder is leading on this project on behalf of the Executive.