

REPORT FROM: Director of Place

TO: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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STRATEGIC LEISURE REVIEW

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides the Committee with background information on the strategic leisure review. The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the findings of the feasibility study carried out by Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) and the review carried out by Alliance Leisure, and make recommendations to the Executive.

ISSUE

Background/KKP Review

1. The Council operates three wet and dry leisure centres, which are located in Nelson, Colne and Barnoldswick.
2. In the autumn of 2021, the Council and Pendle Leisure Trust (PLT) commenced a strategic review of leisure. The review was commissioned as a result of requirements from Sport England in relation to being able to apply to them for funding. The review was overseen by a cross-party working group of members and delivered by leisure specialist, Max Associates.
3. This review concluded that per capita provision of leisure facilities by the Council was high and that some parts of the service (Nelson and Colne) were competing in close proximity. Max Associates also concluded that the size and scale of the population pointed to either a one-centre or two-centre model. Given the geographic spread of the borough it was felt that a two-centre model would be more appropriate for Pendle.
4. In order to look at next steps in more depth, and look at the detailed feasibility of a two-centre model, Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) were commissioned by PLT to do a study which considered the following two options:
 - Develop a new flagship leisure centre for the borough
 - Retain two leisure centres in the borough; one new facility and one refurbished facility

5. The study considered demand and supply, the potential development of the leisure market, and a number of sites, looking in turn at proximity to settlements, accessibility and transport. A link to this study has been circulated to members in advance of the committee meeting.
6. The study concluded that the Council should move to two sites through refurbishing and retrofitting West Craven Leisure Centre in Barnoldswick (with stronger links with health provision), and replacing Pendle Wavelengths in Nelson and Pendle Leisure Centre in Colne with a wholly new eco-centre on a new site.
7. The study identified Seed Hill as the favoured site for a new 'Passivhaus' eco-centre, given its proximity to Nelson and Colne, its accessibility to other parts of the borough, it being adjacent to Nelson and Colne College and the outdoor facilities in Victoria Park, and its perception as being a 'neutral' place.
8. David McHendry, Managing Director of KKP will be attending the committee to outline the findings of this study in more detail.

Executive Committee Decision/Alliance Leisure Review

9. A report on the leisure review was presented to the Council's Executive Committee on 20th July 2023, with the committee agreeing the following:
 - That this Executive is committed to retaining three accessible leisure facilities in Colne, Nelson, and West Craven.
 - That mechanical and electrical surveys of the leisure facilities be carried out as soon as possible.
 - That a review be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine how the three leisure facilities in Colne, Nelson and West Craven can be made to be financially viable through retrofitting and renewal; to consider the mix of features taking affordability into account; to consider operating models for the future taking account of what is needed to ensure delivery of requirements for each leisure facility.
 - That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consult with Town and Parish Councils and users of the three leisure facilities as part of the review above.
10. Further to this request by Executive, a tender was issued to procure consultants to advise on the potential to enhance the leisure offer through:
 - Retrofitting and renewal of the existing three leisure facilities of Pendle Wavelengths, Pendle Leisure Centre, and West Craven Sports Centre.
 - Reviewing the mix of leisure, recreation and well-being services on offer and the extent to which they could be diversified and expanded to suit the needs of the communities served by Pendle Leisure Trust, and in so doing turn the requisite service mix into a strong and sustainable commercial offering.
 - Consideration of the extent to which existing funded development proposals, development opportunities and development projects, with particular regard to Nelson Town Deal, could be levered and utilised to support the delivery of leisure services in the Borough through complementing existing centres.
11. Further, it was requested that the appraisal should include proposals for how an enhanced new leisure offer can:
 - be designed to reflect and service the communities' needs.

- seek to improve and rationalise existing facilities, while providing efficient buildings for future sustainability.
- lever and integrate with existing regeneration proposals.
- generate additional income and support a long term sustainable operating model through increased commerciality and cost reduction in service design.
- increase accessibility and the appeal of the service and facilities to a wider range of users including the local community, particularly inactive residents, and disadvantaged groups.
- have a positive impact on health and wellbeing outcomes for Pendle along with increasing participation in recreational, well-being, sporting and physical activities.
- consider different approaches and partnership working via a review of existing operating models.
- be delivered in the most carbon efficient way while allowing for delivery of the requisite future service mix and model.

12. A consultancy team led by Alliance Leisure was appointed to undertake this study. George Sutcliffe, Principal Consultant, from Strategic Leisure (which is working as part of the overall Alliance Leisure team), will be attending committee to outline the findings of this report, a link to which was also issued to members in advance of the meeting.