

Key Decision Required:	Yes	In the Forward Plan:	Yes
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CABINET

23 JANUARY 2013

JOINT REPORT OF FINANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE HOUSING, SPORTS FACILITIES AND REVENUES & BENEFITS PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A.16 - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND REFURBISHMENT OF DOVERCOURT SWIMMING POOL

(Report prepared by Paul Price)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To obtain Cabinet's agreement to proceed with the proposal to redevelop and extend Dovercourt swimming pool to provide modern high quality facilities and increase the sports offer that is available to Tendring residents. In addition to obtain Cabinet's approval to utilise any funding which remains unspent when all works to Dovercourt are completed to be used at other sites as and when proposals are brought forward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following public consultation in the summer of 2012 and a review of sports facilities across the District, work has been undertaken with officers to develop a programme to meet Cabinet's aspirations in respect of sports facilities provision, build upon the Olympic legacy and to deliver on residents' aspirations following the public consultation exercise. An initial analysis of the consultation responses and a review of the early business planning progress led to the commissioning of draft plans to identify refurbishment required to bring Dovercourt pool to a modern level and also to provide an extension to the current facility to provide a multi-purpose fitness studio.

Having considered the range of options, Cabinet is asked to agree what is considered to be the best design which provides both value for the taxpayer as well as meeting the broad consensus of responses to the consultation. In addition the provision of a flexible space within the redevelopment will enable officers to maximise the potential for delivering sustainable activities at the facility for years to come.

Based on the provisional estimate of costs for undertaking these works some potential further works which could be undertaken at other sites in the District has been included. Again these are based on the broad feedback from the consultation exercise and any progress of these works will be dependent upon the final costs for works at Dovercourt as well as any grant funding which may be available to offset costs at Dovercourt and other sites.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 1. That Cabinet agrees the proposed works at Dovercourt pool, agrees to the commissioning of more detailed plans based on the initial outline and the subsequent commissioning of these works, subject to tender and Tendring District Council financial rules;**

2. In addition Cabinet agrees to the virement of any capital funds not used for the development of the Dovercourt site to be used at other Council sports facilities elsewhere in the District as and when plans emerge, subject to a report back to Cabinet on any proposals.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The provision of sports facilities and sporting activities positively assists the Council in delivering its key priority to *'promote healthy and active lifestyles.'*

A number of the services provided by the sports facilities contribute towards the delivery of the Council's priority to *'reduce health inequalities and disadvantage'* through its Health Inequalities Strategy:

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

It is anticipated that the identified budget for sports facility investment contains sufficient capital financial provision for this project. However, it is further anticipated that external grant funding may become available to supplement this capital provision but this has not been included at this stage so as to ensure that the works proposed can be contained within the resources available if external funding does not materialise.

Although the availability of financial resources is a key component in the delivery of services there will also need to be appropriate input of other resources such as staffing, assets, IT etc.

Risk

Whilst the Council has set aside a capital provision to meet the costs of these works the ongoing revenue costs need to be properly assessed within the service business plan and as such the service will need to maintain flexibility in how the offer is structured. It is anticipated that income derived from the extension of services will fully offset any new expenditure and hopefully generate a surplus within the business plan.

LEGAL

The proposals are within the Council's powers.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.

Whilst the business case has not as yet been fully developed it is likely that the gym area currently located on the first floor will be relocated, partially or completely to the ground floor. This will have a direct effect on accessibility as we will work to improve external access to and flow through the facility which will increase the opportunities for mobility impaired users.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

Attached at Appendix A.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Summary

As part of the business review of sports facilities and sports activities which has been conducted as part of the department Fundamental Service Review (FSR) process, a public consultation exercise was undertaken across the District in July/August 2012 to ensure public input into the future direction of investment in sports facilities. The results of this review have helped to shape the future direction of sports services and whilst the business case has not as yet been fully formed it is clear that certain decisions can be brought forward at this point as it will enable the council to address some deficits which were identified within the consultation as well as assisting in delivering the long term business focus for the service.

Parallel to the consultation process officers have undertaken a desk top exercise to identify whether there are any opportunities for attracting grant funding which would help to deliver improvements to facilities where these are identified as being something that residents want and compliment the long term business plan. Initial feedback is very positive.

An early analysis of the consultation responses as well as some very encouraging discussions with both Active Essex and a local sports club indentified that one of the key priority areas for work was the Dovercourt sports facility, where it was identified that refurbishment and extension of the facility would fit with the Council's objectives.

Utilising the Council's in house surveyors some initial work was undertaken to develop a brief for refurbishment and extending the current facilities and more detailed plans were commissioned to develop a deliverable scheme for the site.

The Proposed Design

Having considered the public consultation, Cabinet is requested to approve the proposed attached design (Appendix A) which is considered to provide both value for the taxpayer, as well as meeting the broad consensus of responses to the consultation.

The design encompasses a modern, village style unisex changing facility, with provision for group changing and an accessible shower room. This will replace the current outdated changing provision, with a standard which could be expected from a modern leisure facility.

In addition there will be provision for a flexible space which will enable officers to maximise the potential for delivering sustainable activities at the facility for years to come. It is anticipated that this area will be used as a ground floor fitness studio, which will address the issue of access to the current gym situated on the first floor. It is also proposed to develop 'dry' changing facilities to serve this area, to enhance the offer for users of the fitness suite.

These improvements were requested by local people during the consultation exercise.

The potential for further works which could be undertaken from the Capital programme at other sites in the District, were also suggested during the consultation process. These works can be considered once costs have been determined for this project, and it is established what budget remains.

CURRENT POSITION

Consultation feedback was strongest in respect of the Dovercourt pool with the majority of respondents wanting both improvements and refurbishment of the facility generally and changing facilities as their main priority. There was also significant support for a more flexible space to expand the sports offering from the facility as well as for a learner pool for younger learners. Officers were asked to consider these responses alongside the future offering that could be provided by any works which would help to secure the long term viability of the facility.

Whilst a learner pool would provide an expansion of the swimming offering, the significant capital costs involved in creating and operating a new pool made this option not realistic and would certainly mean that no other provision could be made at the site.

Working within the overall budget, officers developed a brief to provide options for reconfiguration and improvements to the changing area and complex generally, whilst also providing a flexible space attached to the facility. The proposed design is attached at Appendix A.

It is likely that fine modifications will be made to the finalised design but hopefully this will provide Cabinet with an overall impression of the modernisation and extension which is proposed. Based on initial estimates it is believed that these works can be achieved within the overall capital budget but clearly before any tenders are sought a more detailed plan would be required.

It is also estimated that the proposed works could be achieved within 12 months of commissioning.

Officers have conducted initial discussions with external bodies to determine whether any grant funding would be available towards these works and indications are currently very positive. In addition one of the organisation respondents to the public consultation indicated that providing certain conditions could be agreed, it would be willing to provide a significant capital contribution towards the costs of the works. Officers have met representatives of this organisation and their conditions for making the capital available appear to be fair, given their capital input, and dialogue will certainly be progressed with it. Securing a third party funder would also be a very positive indicator if an application were to be made to one of the sports funding bodies.

If these indicative costs can be achieved when tenders are submitted for these works and if we are able to secure external funding I am confident that works can also be progressed at sites which the consultation exercise indicated are a priority for residents as well as at sites where I would like to develop an enhancement to the council's sports offer. In particular it may be possible to also refurbish the changing facilities at Frinton and Walton pool as well as undertaking works at Brightlingsea and Manningtree joint use facilities and some additional works at Clacton leisure centre to provide treatment rooms (minimal cost).

These proposals have to be viewed as part of a range of measures which are being developed to secure the long term viability of the Councils' sports facilities. The Fundamental Service

Review and the development of the Business Plan have identified a requirement for a strong business approach to the way that the service is delivered which will require both realignment of expenditure and investment so as to ensure a lower cost to the taxpayer. A business manager will be appointed to oversee this transformation and to operate the service on a commercial basis and running alongside this a planned maintenance programme is being put in place to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose and provide high quality, good value for customers.