

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
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## **CABINET**

**8 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **REFERENCE REPORT FROM RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 14 OCTOBER 2019**

#### **A.4 REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLICLY OWNED LEISURE CENTRES WITHIN THE DISTRICT**

(Report prepared by Keith Simmons and Michael Carran)

##### **BACKGROUND**

At the meeting of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny (RSOS) Committee held on 14 October 2019 (Minute 30 refers) the Committee received a presentation from the Council's Head of Sport and Leisure of a verbal update on the development of the proposed Business Case for the future of publicly owned leisure centres within the District. He advised the Committee that later in this Calendar Year there was intended to be consideration by Cabinet of a 10 year Strategy for Sports facilities in the District as provided by the Council. The underpinning themes of the new Strategy were reported as:

- (1) Securing the financial sustainability of the Council's leisure and sports facilities.
- (2) Seeking to harness the work being undertaken with Sport England to break the cycle of inactivity and consequential health problems and design services that will align with the outcomes of the project.
- (3) Adjusting the service offer and pricing policy to respond to the changing market in leisure facility provision nationally and attract more users.

He also pointed out that the agreement for joint use facilities in Brightlingsea, Harwich and Manningtree had a term that would come to an end in the next 2-3 years.

The Committee was advised that the Football Foundation had identified the appropriateness of 3<sup>rd</sup> generation artificial pitches (3G pitches) in Clacton, Harwich and Walton and the Council would work with partners to respond to the Foundation's assessment.

Each project under the intended Business Case for the future of publicly owned leisure centres within the District would need to be separately assessed and approved in the same way as the project for asset investment for Clacton leisure

Centre had when it was considered by Cabinet on 11 October 2019. For reference, the Committee had before it a report of the Portfolio Holders for Corporate Finance and Governance and Leisure and Tourism Business Plan for Clacton Leisure Centre which had been submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 October 2019.

Several Members of the Committee asked questions about the financial basis of the proposals in the report to Cabinet on Clacton Leisure Centre asset investment. Likewise there were questions about the timing of the project in view of the peak in gym memberships occurring in January each year. There were concerns expressed about the absence of consultation with members and users of the Centre about the proposals and issues such as disabled access to different areas within the Centre based on the proposals set out in the report. Questions also spanned the potential for use of the photo-voltaic cells on the roof of the Centre to generate electricity.

There were further questions around procurement and contract management for the project; given the previous experience of works at the Centre (a lift near the Spa Pool that failed to work repeatedly).

The Head of Sport and Leisure informed the Committee that there had been some slippage in the scheme programme and it was now unlikely to commence at the end of November 2019. The duration of the project was reported as being five weeks.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

Having considered and discussed the presentation and report it was:-

**RESOLVED** that the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee **RECOMMENDS TO CABINET** :

- (1) That the asset improvement works to Clacton Leisure Centre as approved by the Cabinet Committee on 11 October 2019 not be commenced until after the end of January 2020 and that before those works commence consultations are undertaken with Members and other users of the Leisure Centre on the works and the findings of those consultations reported on and considered; and
- (2) That the detail of the cost implications of the individual elements of the project be fully reported on and considered.

Cabinet is now asked to consider the recommendations of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

### **Comments**

The Portfolio Holders for Corporate Finance and Governance and Leisure and Tourism thank the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its recommendations and comment as follows:-

*“We can confirm that the refurbishment works will not commence until after January 2020. Once the wider Sports Facilities Strategy has been considered by Cabinet in December, a decision over what consultation is appropriate in relation to this project will be made. Furthermore, once proposals have been provided by contractors and details are subsequently developed for energy efficiencies, we would be happy to share details with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.”*

### **Recommendation to Cabinet**

That Cabinet notes the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and endorses the responses of the Portfolio Holders for Corporate Finance and Governance and Leisure and Tourism thereto.