



## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject: Calverton Leisure Centre**

**Date: 16 March 2005**

**Author: Cllr.Golland Portfolio Holder Leisure Services**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The report contains details of the final proposals relating to the revised opening hours of Calverton Leisure Centre.

### **2. Background**

In March 2004, Cabinet agreed a proposal to examine operational changes at Calverton Leisure Centre in light of the reduction in funding from Nottinghamshire County Council for joint-use leisure centres.

The initial proposal was for a complete closure of the facility, however the Authority decided not to pursue this option but to look at alternative proposals for cost reduction, which included closure during periods of low capacity utilisation. The initial proposal, based on the low usage, was to close during the day Monday to Friday in school term time. The requirement was to achieve an efficiency saving of £32,000 per annum.

Pinpoint Consulting were engaged by the Authority to conduct a detailed examination of the Centre and its usage and to engage in an extensive and detailed consultation process with stakeholders.

A further report approved by the Leisure Portfolio Holder in November 2004, instructed officers to pursue a partial day time closure option rather than the complete closure first envisaged.

**Partial Daytime Closure** (Partial public use in school hours / term time, providing for early morning swimming two days per week)

The actual initial effects of these changes to facility opening times were detailed in the Consultants report but are summarised below.

<b>Current</b>	Opening	Closing
Monday	7.30am	10.00pm
Tuesday	7.30am	10.00pm
Wednesday	7.30am	10.00pm
Thursday	7.30am	10.00pm
Friday	7.30am	10.00pm
Saturday	9.00am	9.00pm
Sunday	9.00am	9.00pm

The most cost effective solution was to amend the opening hours as detailed below.

<b>Initial Proposal</b>	Opening	Closing	Opening	Closing
Monday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Tuesday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Wednesday	7.30am	9.00am	4.30pm	9.00pm
Thursday	7.30am	9.00am	4.30pm	9.00pm
Friday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Saturday			10.30am	7.30pm
Sunday			10.30am	7.30pm

N.B. The early morning swimming identified for Wednesday and Thursday is indicative only. The actual days would be subject to timetabling along with Primary Schools Swimming requirements.

Following concerns raised through the consultation process, and at the express request of the Portfolio Holder, which focussed on the total loss of daytime access, officers have re-examined the possible operation of the Centre. Key to the issue was the need to examine access, even for minority groups and at less popular times whilst achieving economies and efficiencies. Having listened to the needs and desires of existing users we have tried to fine-tune the proposals to take account of these needs.

The table below shows revised proposals for the opening hours of the Centre.

<b>Revised Proposal</b>	Opening	Closing	Opening	Closing
Monday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Tuesday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Wednesday	7.30am	1.00pm	4.30pm	9.00pm
Thursday	7.30am	1.00pm	4.30pm	9.00pm
Friday			4.30pm	9.00pm
Saturday			10.30am	7.30pm
Sunday			10.30am	7.30pm

These revised proposals provide for two early morning swims, popular with the more elderly customer base. In addition these hours would also allow opening of the fitness studio, addressing the concerns for GP referral customers and the Primary Care Trust within our Positive Moves programme. Additionally, it would also allow the squash courts to be opened for two mornings between these hours.

In addition to the above the Centre would open in school holidays to provide a structured programme of children's holiday activities.

By adopting this revised stance the authority will be able to meet existing demand in a cost effective manner without reducing the service to a point where future development and or changes in emphasis could not be addressed.

To re-emphasise the current low levels of demand, we have provided below, some up to date, pertinent information regarding usage levels. All the data relates to a three-month period November through to early February, which is after the consultation period.

- There were only 118 G.P referral attendances for the fitness room in daytime periods (Mon-Fri), which totalled 17 actual users.
- Mon to Friday daytime, there were only a total of 1760 attendances in the fitness room in the period. This equates to 3 people per hour or only 14% of the capacity.
- There were only 542 early morning swims during the period. This equates to less than 7 people per hour, 17% of capacity and only relates to 65 individual users.
- Average daily income from squash (Mon to Fri) before 4pm is £5, or the equivalent of 1 court booking per day, less than 6% of capacity.

These figures reinforce the data within Pinpoint's original analysis and demonstrate the continuing low level of usage.

Further to this, preliminary discussions have taken place between officers of Gedling Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council In respect of the potential impact on the recently revised joint use agreement.

A number of other significant factors have also been given consideration:

- Discussions with the same representatives from the County over the management and operation of the new synthetic pitch at the Colonel Frank Seely
- The potential redevelopment of the secondary schools in the "Building Schools for the future" programme.
- The current vacancies in the Managers posts at Calverton and Arnold Leisure Centres
- The current vacancy of an Assistant Manager at Arnold Leisure Centre
- The ongoing reduction of revenue funding from the County Council

The main issues in the changes will be the re-negotiation of the current joint use agreement and the implications for the current staff. The detailed staffing consequences will be the subject of a further report to Personnel and Resources Committee.

### **3. Implication of partial closure**

The implications fall into 3 main sections:

1. Management arrangements
2. Operational staffing
3. Other operational issues.

#### **Management Staffing**

As outlined earlier, there are a number of management vacancies within both Calverton and Arnold Leisure Centres. This factor and the desire to improve efficiency and provide a stable platform for the future have prompted an examination of the management arrangements.

With the reduction in hours at Calverton, it was not felt viable to continue with a dedicated Managers post. The cost to the Authority of this post being approximately £34,000 per annum. Equally, the close proximity of Redhill and Arnold, coupled with the need to ensure that their complimentary facilities are managed in a sympathetic manner has led to the conclusion that the overall management of these three centres should be combined.

An additional, more general managerial concern was the gulf, in responsibility, salary, and personal requirements, between the existing Manager and Assistant Managers posts. To a degree this had been addressed at Carlton Forum, where the post of Deputy Manager had been in place for some time. The scale of operation of these three sites did not allow this to happen, under an individual site-management routine.

It was clear during the examination of management proposals that Calverton Leisure Centre could not be considered in isolation and that a more extensive examination was required. After lengthy consideration it was concluded that given the desire to improve the structure, the uncertainties of the future and the need to achieve savings, that a new management approach was needed, combining Arnold, Calverton and Redhill Leisure Centres. A limited application of a multi-site management arrangement has been trialled for some months now and has been working very well.

Appendix 1 shows the existing management and proposed management structures. For information.

The main principles are;

- The creation of a General Manager post to co-ordinate the management of all three facilities
- The creation of the posts of Operations Managers at Arnold, Calverton and Redhill Leisure Centres. These posts would be responsible to the General Manager for the day to day management of the facilities
- A reduction of two Assistant Managers posts at Calverton to match the reduced opening hours.

This revised arrangement will provide a significant improvement for the potential career development paths of staff in leisure facilities management.

## **Operational Staffing**

The reduction in opening hours of the centre from its current 96.5 to 51.5 hours, results in a significant reduction in the number of hours we require for operational staff, which includes, Receptionists, Cleaners, Pool Lifeguard, Leisure Assistants and Fitness Staff.

As there has been a degree of uncertainty over the Centre, we have managed the staffing at the Centre to ensure that the impact of any future changes would be minimised. Using a combination of short-term and casual contracts, the permanent establishment for these types of staff has been kept as low as possible in order to avoid any unnecessary future staffing problems. Officers have now completed an exercise mapping the existing operational establishment against the requirements for the revised operation.

All existing staff can be accommodated within the proposed management and operational staffing structure but this may result in redeployment to other Centres.

Members need to be aware that if it is not possible to find reasonable redeployment for all employees additional costs may result if there is a requirement for early retirement or redundancy.

As with normal convention, all the above will be dealt with in a report to Personnel and Resources Committee.

Members should note that even minor changes to proposed opening hours will have a significant affect on staff shift patterns, annualised hours and holiday cover.

## **Other operational issues**

The remaining operational issues focus on three main areas:

1. Access to the swimming pool by Primary Schools
2. Pool water and safety
3. Amendments to the joint-use agreement.

The swimming pool is used by a number of primary schools, however, the current maximum level of usage is for 7 hours per week, and has been declining steadily over the years. The pupils are supervised by the school, who provide their own lifeguarding and teaching staff. The health and safety responsibilities in respect of the swimming activity clearly lies with the Education Authority and is identified as such in the joint-use agreement.

Gedling Borough Council is, however, responsible for the residual health and safety issues arising for the operation of the facility, including appropriate cleaning and health and safety checks.

The revision of the opening hours will, to a degree, assist this process by having staff on site for two mornings per week. This will accommodate 30% of the current primary timetable. It is hoped that satisfactory conclusions can be reached with the Colonel Frank Seely School and the County Council, whereby the school caretaking service can provide interim pool water and safety checks, outside of these times.

This could be supplemented by remote monitoring of the dosing system by use of the dedicated communications links the centres now enjoy. The new chemical dosing system installed in 2003 has this capability.

Admissions to the facility can be controlled by issuing schools with access codes to digital door locks or by the use of the new Flex admissions system which has the capability of door access control via swipe card.

#### **4. Resource Implications**

It is anticipated that the budget savings target can be achieved, subject to the conclusion of satisfactory negotiations with the County Council and the adoption of a revised staffing report.

#### **5. Recommendations**

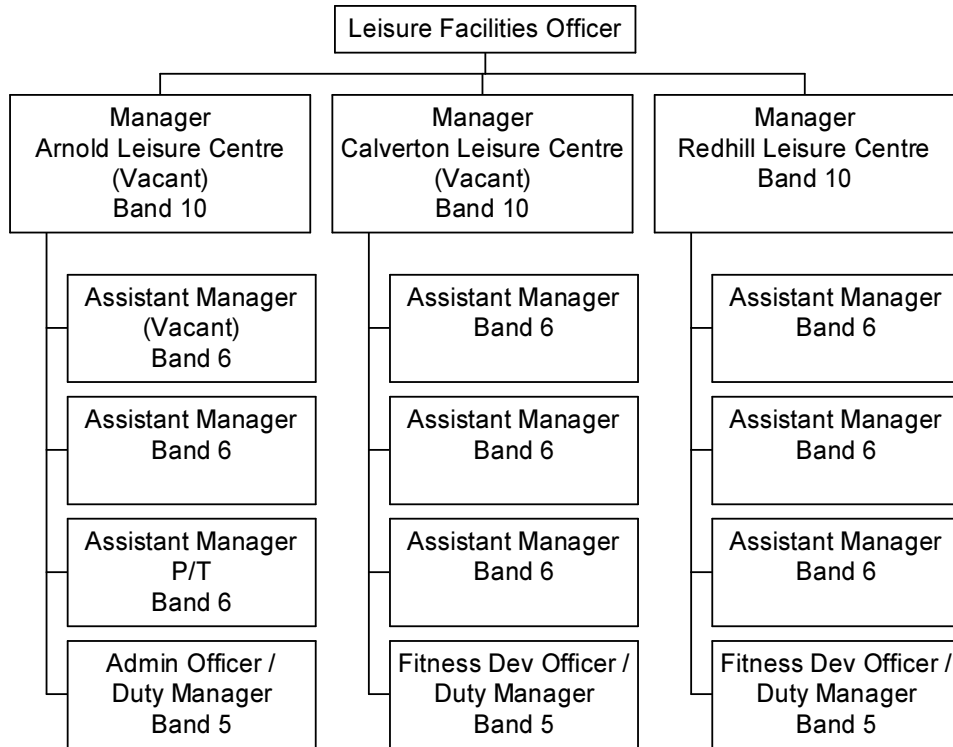
**The revised opening hours arrangements be approved subject to the successful outcome of the further negotiations contained within the report**

#### **6. Wards Affected**

Calverton

Appendix 1

**Existing Structure**



**Proposed Structure**

