

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Strategic Review – Community Facilities

Date: 17 July 2024

Author: Head of Communities and Leisure

Wards Affected

All wards

Purpose

For Cabinet to note the findings and recommendations from the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model review, to agree further feasibility work on the future development of a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre and authorise future consultation on that with stakeholders and residents.

For Cabinet to agree resources to fund the proposed pre-construction feasibility programme.

Key Decision

This is a key decision as the proposed work is likely to have a significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards and is likely to incur expenditure in excess of £500,000.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- 1) Cabinet note the research, findings and recommendations from the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Strategy Stages 2, 3 and 4 and its associated Indoor Built Facilities Strategy.**
- 2) Cabinet agree to a pre-construction feasibility programme in relation to the development of a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre on the Richard Herrod Centre site up to RIBA Stage 2.**
- 3) Cabinet agree to the establishment of a project board and project team to lead on the development programme for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre.**
- 4) Cabinet authorise consultation with stakeholders and residents regarding**

the facilities, activities and services to be included in a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre.

- 5) Cabinet note that a virement be approved by the Chief Finance Officer from the Leisure Strategy Earmarked Reserve (as set out in Financial Regulations) for £500,000 for the pre-construction feasibility programme for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre.

1 Background

Strategic Outcomes Planning Model

- 1.1 On 6 August 2022, Cabinet agreed to undertake a [Strategic Review of Community Facilities](#), based on Sport England's Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM). The purpose of this review is to understand 'why', 'where' and 'how' local physical activity, leisure, sport, wellbeing and community services can be continued to be delivered in a sustainable manner.
- 1.2 Max Associates acted as lead consultants on behalf of the Council for the development of the SOPM and an Indoor Built Facilities Strategy.
- 1.3 The SOPM is developed through 4 stages:
1. **Outcomes:** Develop shared local strategic outcomes for your place
 2. **Insight:** Understand your community and your place
 3. **Interventions:** Identify how the outcomes can be delivered sustainably
 4. **Commitment:** Secure commitment to a strategic approach and delivery of outcomes
- 1.4 This work has been based on Sport England guidance and frameworks to ensure it is robust to inform future business planning, resource allocation and applications for external resource.
- 1.5 On 9 November 2023, Cabinet adopted the [Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Stage 1 Vision and Outcomes and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy](#). The Stage 1 Strategy identified the following vision statement:

“Gedling is a healthy borough with its people more active, more often, and promotes health equality across our communities.”

It also determined the priority themes for Gedling Borough, as **Economy, Community and Place** and creates a synergy with the similar Gedling Plan 2023-27 themes. Financial sustainability has also been adopted as an underpinning theme of the Strategy. The outcomes identified under each theme can found at Appendix A.

1.6 Strategic Outcomes Planning Model – Insight

Stage Two of the SOPM sets out the insight data used to understand the socio demographic context of the Council up to 2028. The final document can be found at Appendix B.

1.7 Service development needs to reflect the future and current population and health profile of the area. The aim of the insight work is to present a picture of where the Borough currently is, key outcomes of where the Borough would like to be and the key performance indicators to monitor progress towards these outcomes. This is a comprehensive review of evidence that includes:

- Review of the Borough’s demographic profile, health profile, active travel, physical activity participation rates and identifies areas of deprivation.
- Indoor Sports Facilities Needs Assessment recommendations, condition surveys, a catchment analysis and leisure centre performance review.
- Existing outdoor leisure provision in the area is analysed looking at the active environment, playing pitch and outdoor sports strategy and redevelopment plans that impact sport and physical activity provision.
- Key findings from previous and recent public engagement work to highlight local behaviour patterns around physical activity, barriers to participation and encouragement factors.

1.8 Strategic Outcomes Planning Model - Interventions

Stage 3 of the SOPM presents the practical interventions to support the sustainable delivery of the outcomes identified in Appendix A by:

- considering and determining the optimal and sustainable mix of facility and service interventions across the broad range of provision
- exploring and identifying effective management option(s) to deliver core sport and physical activity services.

The SOPM Stage 3 can be found at Appendix C.

Facility Interventions and Indoor Built Facility Strategy

1.9 A separate Indoor Sport Built Facility Strategy (IBFS) has been produced and its recommendations have informed the facility interventions of the SOPM. This has considered future needs and requirements for:

- Swimming pools
- Sports halls
- Health and Fitness
- Studios
- Squash
- Indoor Bowls

- Indoor Tennis
- Gymnastics

1.10 The facility intervention recommendations include:

Carlton

Replace Carlton Forum Leisure Centre with a new facility on the Richard Herrod Centre site, incorporating an 8 lane swimming pool, teaching pool, gym, studios, multi court sports hall, community space and assisted exercise suite. This would consider the need for future indoor bowls provision on that site and any wider community health and wellbeing hub activity.

Arnold

Replace Arnold Leisure Centre with a new build facility to include 8 lane swimming pool, teaching pool, gym and studios/flexible space.

Provide a separate venue for the Bonington Theatre to increase its visibility. This could be part of a leisure development but would ideally have its own entrance and facilities.

Remove Redhill Leisure Centre from the Council Portfolio and work with Redhill Academy Trust to keep the sports hall and 3G pitches available for community use. The current Redhill Leisure Centre would remain operational until such time a new Arnold Leisure Centre is open for business.

Calverton

Work with on-site partners Nottinghamshire County Council and Redhill Academy Trust to consider a full intrusive condition survey of Calverton Leisure Centre to determine the future viability of the site.

- 1.11 A need to transform the current leisure centre provision operated by the Council has been identified, including new facilities for both the Arnold and Carlton area that not only protects the current level of indoor facility and cultural provision but also provides enhanced facilities to meet the future demand for health and wellbeing activities. This includes options for swimming pool, fitness and wider health and community activities across two sites in Arnold Town Centre and at the Richard Herrod Centre site and the provision of a new Bonington Theatre for Arnold.
- 1.12 The development of this aspiration is subject to the financial and commercial viability of any plan to do so. In their analysis, Max Associates have considered the relevant indicative capital costs and design layouts including design, procurement and construction of two new sites. Indicative business cases for each site have also been developed based on current market knowledge and the comprehensive insight analysis contained within the SOPM. This analysis has informed the IBFS facility intervention recommendations in paragraph 1.9 above.
- 1.13 Financial sustainability has been identified as the underpinning theme of the Strategy work to date, particularly as the current service arrangements require a

subsidy of circa £2m per year. The SOPM has projected that if both Arnold and Carlton projects are progressed annual savings in the region of £1.2m-£1.7m could be achieved.

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

- 1.14 The progress report from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2023 made reference to the Council's completed leisure services review playing a major part in income generation and cost recovery strategy. The Peer Challenge has recognised that decisions based on the review findings will help shape the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Community Health and Wellbeing Internal Audit

- 1.15 An internal audit on Community Health and Wellbeing was completed in March 2024. The audit identified that the Council had not yet developed a costed long-term action plan to address the recommendations within its strategic review of community facilities, that included prioritising the proposed actions for capital investment.

The audit proposed that the Council should prioritise the recommended actions from the external review and assess whether capital funding will be available for its leisure assets.

Assessment of Current Provision

Carlton

- 1.16 Carlton Forum currently acts as the flagship site in terms of participation and financial performance but is at the highest risk in terms of asset management due to the building and its infrastructure being over 50 years old. This site is managed under a joint use agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council and Redhill Academy Trust and not owned by Gedling Borough Council. Therefore, asset management is a joint responsibility of the respective joint use partners. Richard Herrod Centre site is owned and maintained solely by Gedling Borough Council but has the highest subsidy of all its leisure facilities. With a combination of future capital receipts and borrowing the Council can only afford to build new on one of its existing sites. Due to these factors the priority need for future leisure facility investment by the Council is the development of a new Carlton centre on the current Richard Herrod site.
- 1.17 Feasibility planning work for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Hub will produce a full business case to build a new centre that will determine future site and operational management options. Undertaking stakeholder and community engagement to inform possible facility, activity and service options for a new site will be an essential part of this. As part of its desire to develop a robust business case the Council will seek to commission design work up to RIBA Stage 2 standards.

- 1.18 The Council is currently working with Severn Trent Water at the Richard Herrod Centre following a statutory water notice served by the water company to install a subterranean sewage overflow storage chamber in the east car park of the centre. Works for this project commenced in June 2024 and are not connected to any recommendation for new leisure provision included in this report. The Council will work alongside Severn Trent to manage community information regarding these current construction works on site. The centre will remain open throughout the duration of these works that are due for completion in early 2025.

Arnold

- 1.19 It is noted that the current Arnold Leisure Centre site is the only other building within the current leisure portfolio in the ownership of the Council. Calverton and Redhill Leisure Centres are managed through joint use agreements with Nottinghamshire County Council and Redhill Academy Trust.
- 1.20 Initial feasibility plans for the development of a new Arnold site are being considered as part of the Council's wider Ambition Arnold regeneration programme which is currently underway. This work will consider options for a future enhanced wet and dry-side provision currently offered at Arnold and Redhill Leisure Centres and a new Bonington theatre and cultural facility. As part of the Ambition Arnold programme a development partner will be sought in order to deliver any new leisure facilities for the Arnold area.

Calverton

- 1.21 As referenced in paragraph 1.19, Calverton Leisure Centre is managed as part of a joint use agreement and not owned by the Council. To understand the future viability of provision at this site, further site condition surveys will need to be considered in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Redhill Academy Trust.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:
- 1) note the research, findings and recommendations from the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Strategy Stages 2, 3 and 4 and its associated Indoor Built Facilities Strategy.
 - 2) agree to a pre-construction feasibility programme in relation to the development of a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre on the Richard Herrod Centre site up to RIBA Stage 2, within a budgeted cost of £500,000.
 - 3) agree to the establishment of a project board and project team to lead on the development programme for a new Carlton Leisure and Community

Wellbeing Centre.

- 4) authorise consultation with stakeholders and residents regarding the facilities, activities and services to be included in a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre.
- 5) Note that a virement be approved by the Chief Finance Officer from the Leisure Strategy Earmarked Reserve (as set out in Financial Regulations) for £500,000 for the pre-construction feasibility programme for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre.

- 2.2 Should any future capital development of a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre commence on the Richard Herrod Centre site, the existing Carlton Forum Leisure Centre will remain in operation until the new centre is opened. This is subject to any unforeseen health and safety issues emerging due to the current age of that building. It is recognised that during the building phase of a new facility the current Richard Herrod Centre will need to close and all arrangements for this would be managed appropriately.
- 2.3 A new project board will be established for the Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre. The membership is to be determined but will require representation from elected members and key partner stakeholders. Due to the scale of this development programme additional capacity will be required through a dedicated internal project team.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Cabinet does not use the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model as an evidence base to drive financial sustainability and enhanced provision for its leisure centres. However, following Sport England's most up to date modelling ensures that a robust assessment of community supply and demand has been undertaken to inform sustainable investment. As strategic documents they are essential to inform investment into facilities and community programmes that support the healthy lifestyles of our residents, in line with the Gedling Plan 2023-2027 priorities. This approach strengthens the capabilities of the Council and its community partners to obtain strategic funding to support the development of community facilities from national funding bodies and housing development contributions and also to develop business cases that inform future investment.
- 3.2 That Cabinet considers an alternative evidence base and built facilities assessment to inform its future leisure strategy. This is not recommended as the SOPM is based on a Sport England modelling framework and incorporates the most comprehensive assessment of national strategy and local partner strategy the Council has done for leisure and community facilities to date. It has also been based on extensive local stakeholder engagement, a thorough assessment of community health and well-being need and facility performance and sustainability.

- 3.3 That Cabinet does not support the feasibility planning for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre. However, investment in such work is essential to establish a full business case to determine the most sustainable future site and management options.
- 3.4 An option is for the Council to do nothing. However, the operational leisure assets are currently at end of life and cost the Council circa £2m to operate. Given the current finances of the Council, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan, this level of subsidy cannot be sustained. This leaves two options for the Council, either investment in new facilities or closure.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 A budget was established for the SOPM strategic review by Cabinet on 4 August 2022 drawing upon contributions from the Transformation Fund and the Leisure Strategy Reserve.
- 4.2 The Council will use existing staffing resources to enable participation in, and development of, physical activity programmes with local communities and partners. Part of this model will be to influence the commissioning of local health services to meet the needs of the local population, to build capacity within the local community sports and voluntary sector and to inform additional external funding bids. Any external funding bids will follow the Council's external funding policy process and its financial regulations.
- 4.3 There are currently established budgets within service areas that enable the on-going delivery and maintenance of existing wellbeing programmes and recreational, leisure and community facilities that support residents to get more active.
- 4.4 There are financial implications when securing investment to enhance the Council's leisure facilities. The SOPM, determines an indicative financial position regarding the delivery of the Council's own indoor leisure facilities and this will be used to inform any feasibility planning which will require additional investment. Initial soft market testing suggests that further feasibility work up to RIBA Stage 2 design planning may cost in the region of up to £500,000. This report seeks agreement to allocate £500,000 for the Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre feasibility programme. Budget provision will be funded from the Leisure Strategy Earmarked Reserve. Additional revenue funding of £38,000 to support the feasibility programme has been identified within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan for expenditure in 2024/25. These budget allocations will fund any additional resources required for a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing project team.
- 4.5 A new Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre for Carlton located at the current Richard Herrod Centre site will require significant capital funding to deliver. Indicative capital development costs referred to in the SOPM are in excess of £25m. Feasibility planning and the subsequent business case developed will determine final cost of a capital programme and from where

finance can be sourced to enable delivery. It is expected sources will include capital receipts and prudential borrowing.

- 4.6 The SOPM details the income and expenditure options for both a new Arnold and a new Carlton leisure centre. Five year usage for a new Arnold site is expected to increase significantly by over 200% with a new site. By Year 5 calculations predict a £271,600 operating surplus for an in-house service. This compares to a current 2023/24 budget deficit of £412,300 for Arnold Leisure Centre. Additional savings could be identified should part of the current dry-side provision at Redhill Leisure Centre be re-located into a new Arnold Centre.
- 4.7 Five year usage for a new Carlton site is expected to increase by 50% with a new site. By Year 5 calculations predict a £56,000 operating surplus for an in-house provision and potential savings also made by combining provision at the Richard Herrod site and withdrawal from the current Carlton Forum site. This compares to a current 2023/24 budget deficit of £214,700 for Carlton Forum Leisure Centre and £475,000 for Richard Herrod Centre.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is no statutory requirement to undertake an SOPM and its associated strategies. However, doing so ensures a sound evidence base to make informed decisions around the provision of community facilities in the future. Consultation undertaken has ensured that the views of relevant stakeholders, residents and user groups have been taken into account.
- 5.2 The SOPM will enhance the Council's position to influence partnership delivery, seek external funding and raise other capital expenditure to encourage healthier lifestyles in our communities. Where either funding is obtained by the Council, or it seeks to contract third party organisations to support Strategy delivery, the relevant procurement or grant funding processes will be followed and legal contracts and funding or grant agreements will be established in accordance with the Council's governance framework.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 National research from Sport England shows there are some clear inequalities in opportunities, accessibility and experiences of physical activity, leisure and sport some of which have developed or been made worse since Covid-19, but most of which are long-term inequalities seen for many years.
- 6.2 Covid-19 has further highlighted and intensified many of the long-term inequalities in physical activity, leisure and sport – the people who faced the most barriers to activity before the pandemic have struggled the most to be active.
- 6.3 Tackling inequalities is at the very heart of this strategic review, the Council's ethos is that every person should have an equal chance to benefit from living an active life. The SOPM and its associated strategies will focus on the areas that will make the greatest difference. This includes ensuring people and

communities have improved access to opportunities to be active in environments that are inclusive, safe and accessible, as well as being able to enjoy experiences with confidence, motivation and the capability to take part.

- 6.4 Ongoing feasibility planning work will use local health and well-being data and further reflect upon stakeholder consultation and local and national strategy.
- 6.5 The strategies seek to have a positive impact on certain protected characteristics based on the data and consultation analysis undertaken. In particular it seeks to address health inequalities and this will support the opportunity for protected characteristic groups to benefit from opportunities to get active.
- 6.6 It is acknowledged that there are some gaps in national and local insight with regard to certain protected characteristic groups and this is reflected in the Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix D. Health and wellbeing and protected characteristic data in relation to physical activity will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure positive impacts can be regularly reviewed where data indicates support may be required.
- 6.7 The Council will undertake further stakeholder and community consultation to identify how a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre can best meet local need.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 The SOPM provides the opportunity to contribute to carbon reduction in the Borough. Non-formal physical activity opportunities, such as walking and cycling, provide a more sustainable alternative to high carbon emission transport options and consideration of promoting these sustainable benefits from physically active travel will be considered as part of the Strategy delivery. The Strategy considers 20 minute neighbourhood and active environment models in the place shaping of local communities. The development of a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre will be at the heart of this approach.
- 7.2 In addition, any future improvements made to the Council's local leisure and recreational facilities will seek the opportunity for carbon reduction through project delivery in line with the Council's Carbon Management Strategy. This will consider modern and innovative sustainable models for leisure centre construction including the feasibility of alternative heat sources for swimming pools.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A: Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Stage 1 Outcomes
- 8.2 Appendix B: Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Stage 2 Insight
- 8.3 Appendix C: Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Stage 3 Interventions

- 8.4 Appendix D: Strategic Outcomes Planning Model Stage 4 Commitment
- 8.5 Appendix E: Equality Impact Assessment SOPM
- 8.6 Appendix F: Carbon Impact Assessment SOPM

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None.

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To ensure the Council and its partners are informed and directed by local consultation and data, other health and wellbeing insight, and national and local strategies when seeking to support residents to get more active and making its facilities and services more financially and environmentally sustainable.
- 10.2 Supporting residents to get more physically active has a significant positive impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of residents. This in turn can offer financial benefits for both the local economy through participation, but also reduce the long-term financial strain on local health services.
- 10.3 A completed SOPM will enhance any external funding applications that the Council, and its statutory and community partners, seek in future for the development of local leisure facilities and physical activity opportunities for local residents.
- 10.4 A feasibility programme for pre-construction services in relation to a new Carlton Leisure and Community Wellbeing Centre is essential to identify a sustainable and robust business case for future investment.
- 10.5 Working alongside key strategic local stakeholders such as Nottinghamshire County Council, Redhill Academy Trust, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System and voluntary sector partners is essential to future proof the provision of new community facilities in the Carlton area. Likewise, community consultation alongside identified health and wellbeing data is key to ensure new facilities address local community need.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer