

# Item 5

## KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET  
22 DECEMBER 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF  
LEISURE SERVICES

### Portfolio: Culture & Recreation

#### Review of facility accommodation at Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The pace with which the leisure market is changing demands that facility provision and accommodation is able to change also.
- 1.2 Consideration of accommodation located on the lower and ground floors of Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre which reflects a public consultation exercise undertaken in August and September of 2005, concludes that changes are necessary.
- 1.3 This report to Cabinet will seek approval in principle to redesign part of the leisure centre with the assistance of both the private and voluntary sector partners, and consider the existing operating arrangements with the SSLC bowling club.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members of Cabinet approve in principle the redevelopment proposals outlined in the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree to a lease arrangement with the Bowling Club and authorise the Director of Leisure Services to negotiate appropriate Heads of Terms.
- 2.3 That a further report be submitted to Cabinet outlining development costs, funding partners and agreed Heads of Terms referred to in 2.2 above.

## 3 DETAIL

- 3.1 Members are aware of plans to extend the fitness suite at Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre currently located within a converted squash court. These proposals were articulated within the contract conditions negotiated with Competition Line and signed in 2004.
- 3.2 Cabinet have called for reviews of leisure centre accommodation within each of the Borough's leisure centres and changes are currently

underway at both Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre and Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

- 3.3 Given the programming of work to Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre is now under consideration for a start date of Autumn 2006, a consultation exercise with users of the leisure centre, Shildon residents and Shildon Town Council was undertaken in August and September 2005 in an effort to gather views about all the accommodation located on the first floor of the centre.
- 3.4 Areas under review included the lounge, the fitness suite, the second squash court, the sauna suite and the bowling green.
- 3.5 Anchored within the community strategy, corporate plan and medium term financial plan are the aspirations to improve the health of the residents of the Borough by encouraging more opportunities for physical activity, to provide facilities and programmes for our young people to engage in the cultural agenda and to work with other partners to attract capital investment and reduce operating costs.
- 3.6 The conclusion of the research findings are contained in section 6 of the report. However, shown at appendix 1 is a first and second floor plan setting out existing and proposed changes to accommodation which reflects the findings of the leisure centre research.

In summary the fitness suite would be extended on the first floor incorporating space currently occupied by the second squash court and lounge. The lounge would no longer exist, however the bar would remain in tact, the sauna suite would be redeveloped into changing accommodation, a new fitness class/activity area would be provided on the ground floor below the existing fitness suite and the bowling green and adjacent lounge would remain.

#### **4 CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The consultation period commenced in August and extended into September 2005. The work was conducted within the local community targeting both users and non-users of the leisure centre.
- 4.2 The consultation process was delivered using a mixed strategy including qualitative and quantitative feedback from a questionnaire, emails, telephone and written responses.
- 4.3 There were 517 completed questionnaires received of which 468 were completed by existing users, 48 by non-users and 5 did not specify. Furthermore 6 written responses were received.
- 4.4 The age profile of the 517 sample was 23% under 18's, 11% 19-29 year olds, 27% 30-49 year olds, 11% 50-60 year olds and 29% 65 years and over.

- 4.5 Of the total sample, 29% were bowlers, 25% fitness users, 11% footballers, 7% users of fitness classes, 4% athletes, 4% martial arts exponents, 3% cyber café users and 13% other.
- 4.6 A detailed analysis of the research is available for inspection, however the main results indicate that current provision at the leisure centre broadly speaking reflects consumer demand, with emphasis lying on the need for specific improvements to certain activity areas. Results conclude that 32% of respondents want improvements to the quality of the bowling green, 27% want improvements to fitness training accommodation, for example larger room, more equipment and generally a better environment. A total of 18% want to see improvements to fitness classes which again includes a better environment, more equipment and greater variety and availability of classes. Finally 15% of the sample want to see more opportunities for junior fitness training, for example a larger space and more equipment.
- 4.7 Other comments included better changing rooms, better toilet accommodation and improved air conditioning to all physical activity areas.
- 4.8 Specifically, non-users (49 respondents) commented upon the need to increase accommodation for fitness classes, improve the environment for bowling, increase the accommodation for junior fitness opportunities and improve the environment and accommodation for fitness training.
- 4.9 The complete research findings are available for inspection.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Borough Council's desire to keep under constant review its investment in Leisure Services and to ensure that the facility stock reflects consumer demand has driven this research study.
- 5.2 To deliver changes to Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre which reflects the consultation feedback requires a re-assessment of current accommodation.
- 5.3 Should Cabinet approve on principle the proposals to develop the accommodation in line with the report's recommendations, relevant costs and partnerships will be able to be established in order to submit a further report to Cabinet before April 2006.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Improvements to the quality of activity areas in terms of their size, the use of materials, equipment and temperature/humidity issues are key issues for our customers.

6.2 Generally speaking the Borough Council is providing the range of facility accommodation that is currently demanded, however in order to provide more accurately fit for purpose accommodation, the way in which existing areas are being used must be kept under constant review.

## 7 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 There is real pressure to increase the operating space for the expansion of fitness suite accommodation. The most cost effective way to do this is to convert the bowling green. However, if appropriate Heads of Terms of a lease are able to be successfully agreed between the Borough Council and the Bowling Club and subject to the satisfactory discharge of responsibilities under the terms of the lease, then the option to retain the bowling green should be approved.

**Contact Officer:** Mr Phil Ball  
**Telephone No:** Ext: 4386  
**Email Address:** pball@sedgefield.gov.uk  
**Ward(s)**

**Key Decision Validation:** Two or more wards

**Background Papers:** Review of Facility Accommodation at Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre – Public Consultation, August 2005

### Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>