



<b>Report to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 January 2008
<b>Report from:</b>	Director of Development Services
<b>Title of Report:</b>	Leisure Options Review
<b>Agenda Item Number:</b>	<b>7</b>

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## **1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek members' approval and agreement to the discontinuation of Phase 2 of the Leisure Options Review.

1.2 It is recommended that

In the light of Local Government Reorganisation and the proposed dissolution of Chester-le-Street District Council in April 2009 Members agree not to progress Phase 2 of the Leisure Options Review

## **2. CONSULTATION**

2.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted and the informal Executive.

## **3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES**

3.1 The report directly supports and contributes to two of the councils Corporate Priorities. These are:

- **Priority 6 – New ways of working in Leisure**

*Considering options for the delivery of our range of Leisure Services, improving the level of services offered, while responding to priorities the community has identified for the service*

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Financial Implications and Value for Money Statement

There are no specific financial implications attached to this report.

#### 4.2 Risk

If Members were minded to progress with Phase 2 of the Leisure Options Review the process and implementation would not be completed before the dissolution of the council in April 2009. Therefore any key decisions on the process and its implementation including any expenditure leading up to April 2009 would have to be referred to and agreed by the "transition council". It is unlikely that the transition council would approve the process and the associated expenditure pending the establishment of the new council in April 2009 and therefore any work is likely to be abortive.

### 5. **BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 In the winter of 2005 following a "Use of Resources" audit in which the level of expenditure and value for money provided by the councils Leisure Services was questioned. The council embarked upon a comprehensive review and options appraisal of its Leisure Services. The review was to be in two phases.
- 5.2 Phase one of the review was to critically review the level and quality of service provided, assess the value for money provided, identify gaps in service provision and develop a series of options for future service delivery which would provide improved quality and value for money.
- 5.3 Phase one of the review was completed and the findings and recommendations for phase two of the review was reported back to the Executive in December of 2006.
- 5.4 However Members took the decision not to go straight into phase two of the review but to delay its implementation until June 2007. This decision was taken in the light of the competing demands for resources due to the housing stock transfer which was reaching a critical phase in its development.
- 5.5 The implementation of phase two of the Leisure Options Review was further delayed by the proposals contained in the government white paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities" and the subsequent "Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill" for local government restructuring in county areas to form single Unitary Authorities as.
- 5.6 As a result of the Bills introduction and subsequent consideration of submissions made by the Districts Councils and the County Council the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has approved the establishment of a single unitary authority for County Durham to be effective from April 1 2009.

- 5.7 This means that the seven County Durham District Councils (including Chester-le-Street District Council) and the County Council will all be dissolved on 31 March 2009.
- 5.8 A transition council is in the process of being set up to oversee the change from a two tier to a single tier system between May 2008 and April 2009.
- 5.9 During the transition period the existing councils will have to refer key decisions (such as the Leisure Options Review) to the transition council for approval.
- 5.10 It is highly unlikely that Phase two of the Leisure Options Review would be completed and implemented before the April 2009 time frame before the council is dissolved.
- 5.11 It is equally unlikely that the transition council would approve the level of expenditure and resource input necessary to implement phase two pending the introduction of a new authority.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is recommended that

In the light of Local Government restructuring and the proposed dissolution of Chester-le-Street District Council in April 2009 Members agree not to progress Phase 2 of the Leisure Options Review.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO**

- 7.1 Draft Leisure Options Review Report - 2006  
Minutes of Leisure Options Working Group Meetings  
Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities  
Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill

<b>AUTHOR NAME</b>	<b>Tony Galloway</b>
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>Director of Development Services</b>
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<b>AUTHOR CONTACT</b>	<b>0191 3872101</b>