



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Friday, 16 September 2016
:

**Committee:
Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date: Monday, 26 September 2016
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Shirehall

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee

Vince Hunt (Chairman)	Roger Hughes
Keith Roberts (Vice Chairman)	Christian Lea
Dean Carroll	Pamela Moseley
Ted Clarke	Vivienne Parry
Nigel Hartin	Arthur Walpole

Your Committee Officer is:

Tim Ward Committee Officer
Tel: 01743 257713
Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence and substitutions

Apologies for absence have been received from Councillor Walpole. Further apologies will be reported at the meeting

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2016 (Pages 1 - 4)

To consider the Minutes of the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 July 2016.

4 Public Question Time

To receive any public questions or petitions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 5.00pm on 21 September 2016

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given notice. Deadline for notification for this meeting is 5.00pm on 21 September 2016

6 Highways and Transport Engineering Consultancy Contract: Mouchel Performance Review

Report marked 6 **TO FOLLOW**

7 Draft Leisure Facilities Strategy (Pages 5 - 20)

Report of the Leisure Services Manager is attached marked 7

8 Update on Emstrey Crematorium and Bereavement Services (Pages 21 - 24)

Report of the Bereavement Services Manager is attached marked 8

9 Date/Time of next meeting

The Committee is next scheduled to meet on Monday 28 November 2016 at 2.00pm

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Environment and
Services Scrutiny
Committee

26 September 2016

2.00 pm

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2016
2.00 - 3.45 PM**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward
Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257713

Present

Councillor Vince Hunt (Chairman)
Councillors Ted Clarke, Nigel Hartin, Christian Lea, Pamela Moseley, Vivienne Parry and Arthur Walpole

12 Apologies for absence and substitutions

- 12.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dean Carroll, Roger Hughes and Keith Roberts. Apologies had also been received from Councillor Mal Price, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing, Regulatory Services and Environment.
- 12.2 There were no substitutions

13 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 13.1 Councillors Clark, Moseley, Hunt and Parry declared interests as Members of Parish and Town Councils who were in discussions with the Council regarding their local libraries.

14 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2016

- 14.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2016 had been circulated.

14.2 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Service Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2016 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

- 14.3 The Chairman advised Members that he had held a meeting with the Portfolio Holder and the Managing Director, Star Housing regarding the proposed task and finish group to look at the options appraisal and that he had been advised that the

options could not be drawn up until the government bill had received its second reading in September as changes were expected to the bill.

15 Public Question Time

15.1 There were no questions from members of the public

16 Member Question Time

16.1 There were no questions from Members

17 Portfolio Holder Update

17.1 As the Portfolio Holder was unable to be present a written update had been circulated.

17.2 The Chairman asked Members to email any questions arising from the report to the Committee Officer and these would be passed to the Portfolio Holder for response

17.3 The Chair of the Backbenchers Committee advised Members that the Portfolio Holder would be giving an update to the next meeting of Backbenchers.

18 Update on Libraries Activity

18.1 Members received the report of the Director of Commissioning which set out the progress made in redesigning the Library Service and the future approach to supporting the provision of a modern and sustainable library service.

18.2 The Commissioning Manager advised Members that the redesign of the service was progressing and that a report would be taken to Cabinet in July recommending the closure of the library at Shawbury and an alteration to opening hours at 11 libraries across the county.

18.3 A Member asked for an update of provision of library services in Church Stretton. The Commissioning Manager advised that the final court judgement had not been received yet but that work was ongoing with stakeholders to look at alternative solutions.

18.4 A Member asked what was happening to “back office” staff. The Commissioning Manager advised that the Council would continue to run the libraries in key market towns but were currently looking at alternative delivery model in order to reduce costs.

18.5 A Member expressed concern regarding the future of the mobile library service. The Commissioning Manager advised the meeting that it was not proposed to review the mobile library service until the management of the static libraries was finalised.

18.6 A Member asked whether consideration had been given to the roles of schools in delivering library services. The Library Service Manager advised that the schools

library service was run separately as a paid for service by the education department.

18.7 The Chairman thanked both officers for their report and for answering questions

19 Defra Waste Contract Management visit

19.1 The Waste Contracts Manager provided a verbal update and advised members that the recent visit by DEFRA had gone well however the report arising from the visit had not been received. It was agreed that once this had been received and finalised, a further report would be brought back to Committee

20 Outdoor Partnerships Update

20.1 The meeting received the report of the Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager which provided an update on the review of the Outdoor Partnerships team and the work carried out in the development of a future sustainable business model for the service.

20.2 The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager advised the meeting that the Outdoor Partnerships Manager had recently left the Council after taking voluntary redundancy and that the team had been restructured as a result of this. She informed Members that she had been appointed as the new Service lead as part of this restructure.

20.3 The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager advised the meeting that an Enterprise Plan had been drawn up for the Country Parks and Countryside Heritage Sites which included plans to raise income from these sites to contribute to the running of the sites, and outlined the work that was being carried out around this.

20.4 The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager advised that in addition to the Enterprise Plan, other work was being carried out to gain additional income including work to enable the Rights of Way Maintenance Team to develop income generating work, and that any income generated would be placed in a reserve account to build up funds that could be reinvested in work on major capital schemes outside of the existing budget.

20.5 A Member asked about the Healthy Outdoors Programme. The Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager advised that she was currently working with colleagues in Public Health to develop a programme of free outdoor activities.

20.6 A discussion took place around ways of raising income for the service. Suggestions included: -

- Adoption of sites by local organisations
- Development of a lottery
- Increasing the use of volunteers
- Investing in existing buildings to increase income for lettings and use of facilities such as restaurant's and gift shops

20.7 A Member commented that there was a role for town and parish councils in managing sites or in encouraging volunteering and use of sites.

20.8 The Chair thanked the Outdoor Partnerships Enterprise Manager for her presentation.

21 Date/Time of next meeting

21.1 Members were reminded that the Committee was next scheduled to meet on Monday 5 September 2016 at 2.00pm

Signed (Chairman)

Date:



Committee and date
Environment & Services
Scrutiny

26th September 2016

DRAFT INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

Responsible Officer Peter Davis, Leisure Services Manager
Email: peter.davis@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 255932 Fax:

1. Summary

This report provides background information on the need to produce an update of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy. The Executive Summary from the report including the draft recommendations are attached and are currently part of consultation which is due to end on the 30th September.

An Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy was produced in 2009 at the inception of the Shropshire unitary authority, covering the period up to 2019. The Strategy primarily covered the provision of sports hall, swimming pools and fitness facilities, concentrating on quantity and quality with the following main objectives:

- Advise on the future suitability of the present leisure stock and inform future facility requirements.
- Inform and provide a guide to future capital investment.
- Used to influence and inform Building Schools for the Future and other agendas.

At that time Shropshire Council directly operated 18 indoor sports and leisure facilities, 4 were operated by a leisure trust under a management agreement with the Council and 2 others were operated under different models with financial support from the Council.

As a commissioning authority this operational landscape has altered significantly during the intervening years. The Council now directly operate 3 indoor facilities; 9 are operated by leisure trusts across two different management agreements; 9 joint-use sites have been transferred to school/college responsibility, of which only 3 are supported financially and the remaining 3 operate under different trust models with one of these receiving an annual grant from Shropshire Council. (Appendix 1)

As operational responsibilities have changed and funding streams have been withdrawn this, along with the Council's changed financial situation, necessitated the requirement to review the document produced in 2009.

2. Decision

Members of Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

- A. Note the reasons why a review of the Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy is required.
- B. Scrutinise the draft strategy and recommendations identified within it.
(Executive Summary attached: Appendix 2)
<http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/draft-sports-facilities-strategy-2016-2037/>
- C. Comment on what the outcomes of the strategy may shape in terms of future leisure provision in the county.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Sports and leisure facilities are extremely important to quality of life, providing a wide range of benefits for all members of the community.

Rationalising the level of provision reduces opportunities for participation in parts of the county. However, facility operation can be maintained to allow access within a reasonable drive time.

This is balanced against the need to make financial savings on discretionary services.

The Draft Strategy is out to consultation until 30th September 2016. The document and the draft recommendations will be reviewed immediately after the consultation period ends and a final report and strategy brought to Cabinet for approval.

4. Financial Implications

On 27 January 2016 Shropshire Council announced, within its Financial Strategy, that in order to balance its budget over the medium term, it would be unlikely that funding for leisure facilities would be available beyond 2016/17. A worst case scenario of no Shropshire Council funding for Leisure from 2017/18 was highlighted.

Subsequently, work has been carried out across the council to identify one-off funding in an attempt to balance the budget within 2017/18 and 2018/19, providing discretionary services with the opportunity to secure alternative, sustainable sources of funding over a further 2 years; this was described within the 13th July Financial Strategy report. Further updates on future years' funding will be provided in subsequent Financial Strategies.

Work with schools had already been undertaken over several financial years, creating alternative delivery models for joint-use facilities. This has resulted in the transfer of facilities and the introduction of tapered funding agreements which have provided savings for the council and established sustainable operating models.

Since the publication of the 27th January 2016 Financial Strategy, discussions have taken place with Town and Parish Councils and local community groups to identify whether funding may be available locally to support the continuation of community use provision.

The work already undertaken to achieve savings has resulted in Leisure's net controllable budget reducing from £2.3m in 2013/14 to £1.7m in 2016/17.

At present, savings required over the next two financial years are £147,910 in 2017/18 and nil in 2018/19. Of the £147,910, £70,080 is scheduled to be made through a combination of 'back office' efficiency savings and a reduction in required capital payments. The remaining £77,830 will need to be made through local contributions to services.

From a financial perspective, the aim of the facilities strategy would be to provide a basis for facility rationalisation, assuming that the current levels of funding will not be available in the future.

5. Background

In 2009 Shropshire Council commissioned an Indoor Facilities Strategy to bring together the supply and demand from the district and borough councils pre-unitary and identify priorities for the new authority. This 2016 review represents an update on the previous work undertaken in 2009.

Since 2009 Shropshire Council have moved forward in terms of local policy and strategic planning. There have been changes in national policy of which the requirement to produce a Community Plan under the National Planning Policy Framework has been significant. In 2014 Sport England introduced the ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance) approach for facility planning. In early 2016 the Department of Media, Culture and Sport launched the national Sports Strategy "Sporting Future".

A key local factor is the changed financial situation of Shropshire Council where significant revenue reductions have to be achieved in non-statutory service provision and there is a need to ensure that any investment in future sports and leisure facility provision is affordable, sustainable and future proofed and delivers value for money.

It was, therefore, the right time to revisit and refresh the existing Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy to reflect these local and national changes. The updated document provides a robust and evidenced based approach, providing clarity on how and where any funding should be targeted and how the Council could use its own resources and work with others to ensure that the right facilities are delivered in the right places, to deliver the best outcomes.

In March 2014 Schools Forum decided to redistribute joint-use funding that supported sport and leisure facilities on school sites on a per pupil basis. It was proposed that a tapering of the funding received directly by schools for joint-use facilities would take place over a four year period.

A change in the approval from the Education Funding Agency on the treatment of this funding as an exceptional premises factor in the local funding formula, from 2016-17 onwards, resulted in the decision approved in March 2014 having to be amended. The planned tapered profile for the removal of funding over four years had to be accelerated, with individual sites having to manage the removal of funding over a shorter period than originally planned.

This, along with a changed financial situation of Shropshire Council, prompted discussions with local communities and Town and Parish Councils, along with the operators of facilities on school sites and schools themselves to try to identify sustainable models to retain community use of school based swimming pools, sports halls and other facilities.

6. Draft Sports Facilities Strategy

The scope of the work included in producing the draft strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Review existing facilities strategy using the ANOG guidance from Sport England
- Revisit countywide demographics
- Building on existing information and knowledge base to audit sports facilities
- Update existing facility supply countywide for swimming pools, sports halls and fitness facilities
- Revisit and identify the countywide supply and demand position
- Consultation with National Governing Bodies of sport, facility operators and other key stakeholders
- Make recommendations on facilities needed

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, based on analysis and assessment, and taking into account other relevant factors, the draft strategy makes it clear that the future distribution of directly provided swimming pools, sports halls and fitness provision could look very different.

Although the extent of provision may be reduced, whilst still ensuring access to all communities, it is also a fact that there is significant other provision of these types of facilities across the county. The critical issue is that in Shropshire Council's enabling and facilitating role it is able to ensure long term community access to these facilities.

Following on from the analysis the main draft recommendations, which would be subject to the required levels of available funding are as follows:

- The Council aims to invest in and support three main community leisure hubs – these will be strategically located, multi-facility sites in the market towns of Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Oswestry.
- The replacement Quarry swimming facility is developed on a site where there are existing leisure facilities to maximise participation and participative opportunities, optimise investment benefits and reduce overall operational expenditure.
- The Council works in partnership with local partners and key organisations over the next 12 months to identify alternative future funding models to support facilities in Market Drayton and Bishop’s Castle, particularly the swimming pools.
- Two swimming pools (Church Stretton & Bishop’s Castle) need significant investment and therefore, based on the review, would not form part of the Council’s funding strategy going forward. However, the Council will need to work in partnership with these communities to support them in raising the necessary investment needed if these pools are to remain available to the local communities.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009-2019
 Draft Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2037
 Shropshire Council Financial Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Stuart West – Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture

Local Member

Countywide – all members

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Leisure Facilities Managerial Status
 Appendix 2 - Draft Sports Facilities Strategy 2016-2037 – Executive Summary

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Appendix 1 – Leisure Facility Management Status

Leisure Facility	2010 Managerial Status	2016 Managerial Status
Oswestry Leisure Centre	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
Shrewsbury Sports Village	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
Quarry Swimming & Fitness Centre, Shrewsbury	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
Whitchurch Swimming Centre	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
Market Drayton Swimming Centre	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Community Leisure Trust
Whitchurch Leisure Centre	Shropshire Council	Marches Academy
Rhyn Park Sports Hall, St Martins	Shropshire Council	St Martins School
The Grange Sports Centre, Shrewsbury	Shropshire Council	Shrewsbury Academies
Church Stretton Leisure Centre	Teme Leisure	Teme Leisure
Ellesmere Swimming Pool	Shropshire Council	Ellesmere Primary School
Idsall Sports Centre, Shifnal	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Council
Cleobury Mortimer Sports Centre	Teme Leisure	Teme Leisure
Lakelands Sports Centre, Ellesmere	Shropshire Council	Lakelands Academy
South Shropshire Leisure Centre, Ludlow	Teme Leisure	Teme Leisure
Roman Road Sports Centre, Meole Brace	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Council
SpArC, Bishop's Castle	Teme Leisure	Teme Leisure
Mary Webb Sports Centre, Pontesbury	Shropshire Council	Mary Webb School
Thomas Adams Sports Centre, Wem	Shropshire Council	Thomas Adams School
Severn Centre, Highley	Trust	Trust/Halo Leisure
Wem Swimming Pool	Private operator	Friends of Wem trust
Much Wenlock Leisure Centre	Shropshire Council	Shropshire Council
Craven Arms Community Centre	Shropshire Council	Furniture Scheme
Bridgnorth Leisure Centre	Shropshire Council	Bridgnorth Endowed Academy/Halo Leisure
London Road Sports Centre, Shrewsbury	Shropshire Council	SCAT/Mosaic
Total	24	24

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SC's Vision for future provision of sport and leisure facilities in Shropshire is:

'To deliver a network of modern, efficient and sustainable sports facilities in the County'

(Source: Shropshire Council Cabinet report 30 July 2014).

This is a vision clearly based on partnership and facilitation, as opposed to direct delivery.

AIMS

The aim of providing sufficient high quality, fit for purpose and accessible provision is to:

- **Increase participation for health benefits**
- **Increase regular participation amongst those who are inactive**

Shropshire's Indoor Facilities Strategy (2016), reflects the above Vision, current priorities and challenges of the Unitary Authority, as well as changes in national policy. This includes the requirement to produce a Community Plan under the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF) the 2014 Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) approach for facility planning, the national Sports Strategy, 'Sporting Future' (Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2016), and Sport England's 'Towards an Active Nation' (2016).

ANALYSIS OF FACILITY NEED

SPORTS HALLS

There is significant existing sports hall provision across Shropshire; importantly all identified spatial zones have access to a strategic –sized sports hall which is either protected for community use through a formal community use agreement, or is part of one of the three major community leisure facilities, located in Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Oswestry.

From the Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM), which is only one element of the needs assessment, the simplistic analysis of supply versus demand in relation to sports halls within Shropshire has identified there are sufficient sports halls across the County to meet both current and future demand.

There is a good level of satisfied demand with 91.5% of the visits demanded being satisfied. The majority of demand from Shropshire residents is met at halls in Shropshire (i.e. demand is retained) and the hall network has significant spare capacity to provide for future demand.

Based on the Sports Facility Calculator analysis there is a need for a further 16.69 badminton courts by 2027. This need can be met within the existing supply of sports hall across the county through a range of partnership and delivery arrangements.

The three main SC community leisure facilities provide a strategic-sized sports hall, and given that SC has limited future funding for non-statutory provision, there is a need to ensure a mechanism is in place to protect and continue community access to sports hall provision across Shropshire, but especially in the North East where all existing halls will be without formal community use arrangements by 2018.

Given the need to ensure all communities have access to a strategic-sized sports hall, there will be a need to consider future arrangements in the North East and the East areas. This is because there is no SC operated community leisure centre in these areas and the halls which provide community access are not all part of a formal community use agreement. Even where there is a formal community use agreement, these are all, with the exception of Much Wenlock, time limited.

As SC withdraws from funding/supporting existing community use agreements in the short to medium term, it is critical that the partnerships for the future provision of sports hall facilities continue to provide community accessible facilities. Without this, there will be a significant deficit in community accessible sports halls across Shropshire.

Securing community access arrangements beyond the life of existing SC supported agreements are a priority in these areas and across the county to retain access to strategic-sized sports all from every community. Given there is actually an over-supply in all areas of the county except the North East whilst retaining secured community access is important, it is not requisite that every sports hall on an education site provides community use. Some could continue to operate limited books, targeted at sports clubs, as they do now.

SWIMMING POOLS

There is sufficient provision of swimming pools now and in the future to meet current and future demand. In fact, there is an over-supply of provision (472.51sqm), equivalent to at least 1 x 4 lane x 25m pool in the north and south areas of Shropshire. This means that there is an opportunity to consider rationalisation of some smaller pools, particularly those which require significant investment, have high operational costs and low usage.

In the south, both SpArC and Church Stretton pools are small, costly to operate, require significant investment, and serve very small communities, so have low throughput. Both of these need to be considered for closure. The SpArC pool is in better condition and there could be more opportunity to work in partnership with a local organisation to take on the operation of this pool and the other adjacent sports facilities. The Church Stretton pool is in a very poor condition, and does not offer a fit for purpose environment in which to learn to swim.

If both Church Stretton (160 sqm) and SpArC (180 sqm) pools were to close, this would equate to a loss of 340 sqm of water, still well within the over-supply of 472.51 sqm (over-supply would reduce to 132.51 sqm). Even if these two pools closed, residents in both areas would still be within 30 minutes of a strategic size pool.

Replacement of the Quarry with less water space would effectively remove any surplus in provision of community accessible water space in Shropshire, but, this calculation excludes the smaller pools, and lidos available across the county. There would still be sufficient water space to meet current and future demand for swimming, and this would be further enhanced by provision of smaller pools across the county.

Clearly any pool closures need to be accompanied by an overall review of pool programming in the area, to ensure that school swimming and Learn to Swim opportunities are programmed appropriately, to ensure they are available and accessible, and reflect potentially increased travel times to facilities.

Local communities and relevant organisations should be engaged as early as possible to seek opportunities for local communities to take over the operational responsibility for facilities which SC is no longer able to support. This is particularly relevant in relation to SpArC, Church Stretton, Market Drayton and Whitchurch pools.

The existing 3,888 sqm of community accessible water space in Shropshire more than meets both current and future demand to 2037. Allowing for increased demand from population growth, there is an over-supply of 472.51 sqm of water space; it is important to highlight that this excludes smaller pools which are not included in the FPM analysis.

In Shrewsbury, there is potential to consider siting the town's sport and leisure offer on one major site; this would increase participation opportunities, reduce operational costs and provide real savings moving forward, but not at the expense of community participation. Implementing this option would mean replacing the Quarry Swimming and fitness centre on the site of an existing multi-facility, owned and operated by SC. Equally, the fact that there is a current over-supply of water space in the county provides the opportunity to develop fit for purpose swimming pool provision in the town, based on recommended ASA and Sport England guideline for pool size and scale. Whilst potentially reducing the overall level of water space e.g. provision of an 8 lane x 25m pool plus a 10 x 10m learner/training pool would equate to 134.50 sqm less than the existing water space provided at the Quarry, this would improve the overall of provision, and would still provide for the demand in the town.

In the north of Shropshire, there are two similar swimming facilities in Whitchurch and Market Drayton. The latter also offers a learner pool and a fitness suite. It is considered that this facility should be retained as a priority. If there is a local party interested in taking responsibility for its future operational management, and this can be secured, then retaining Whitchurch should be considered. It may not however be sustainable to continue to provide both facilities within the same catchment area. SC's role in providing either facility should not be long term, but ensuring continued access to swimming facilities for the communities in both areas is a priority, because both towns are outside the 30-minute catchment drive of the

FITNESS PROVISION

There are sufficient fitness stations to meet current and future need across the county. There is a need for more community accessible fitness stations in Shrewsbury given that the majority of commercial provision is also in this area.

SUMMARY OF FACILITY NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

SC needs to focus resources and provision in the three main towns of Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Ludlow; core provision is swimming, sports hall and fitness. Shrewsbury, as the main county town also provides the 'specialist' facilities e.g. cycling, indoor tennis, bowls and climbing.

Given the implication this has for swimming in particular, there is a need to re-think the programming of the pools to ensure school swimming is a priority - accessible, available, and can be done as effectively as possible (link here to the replacement for the Quarry which could have a room that could be used for lessons to enable schools to bring 2 or 3 classes at once and maximise water time, whilst minimising travel times and using space in the leisure centre to teach), plus also after school swimming lessons need to be planned realistically to allow for travel. Location of the Quarry replacement is crucial in this respect, as town centre could add significantly to travel times.

SC will need to continue to work in partnership, where budgets allow, to support swimming provision in the 'secondary' settlements - Market Drayton, Whitchurch (under contract until 2022), Much Wenlock (complete anomaly). These decisions can be tapered out by 2022 (except Much Wenlock), and where possible, handovers will by then have been negotiated with local partners. All these facilities are in better condition than the other secondary pools.

The geography and population distribution of the south of Shropshire is different from the north of the county and this reflected in the proposed future facilities network. Any changes in SC facility provision as a result of this Strategy will need to be reflected in future arrangements for the operational management of the three main hub sites.

There will be a need to continue supporting the operation of SpArC and Church Stretton for 12 months with a view to removing ongoing financial support after this time (no signed joint use agreements in place). On this basis, SC should not make any more capital investment in the pools, which are both in poor condition, small, and do not demonstrate financial viability in terms of the relationship between use and operational cost. If there is potential to encourage community management of these small pools, this should be undertaken; there are some other examples around the UK which function, although financially there is always some risk. It is also critical that any community organisation operating a swimming pool is clear about the operational risks.

The map of SC's direct facility provision will look very different in terms of direct provision moving forward, but overall, it should be possible, through partnership working, to retain many existing facilities, but operate them through different arrangements. This approach will optimise partnerships at local level, and importantly make best use of existing assets.

The facility needs to 2037 have been identified as a result of the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility analysis undertaken.

- **Swimming Pools – a replacement facility for the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre;**
- **Sports Halls – facilitating access to a strategic-size sports hall (i.e. 3 badminton courts +), with long term accessible community use in the North East area, and potentially in the East area, depending on what happens with the current joint use arrangement at Much Wenlock (William Brookes School), Market Drayton (Grove School - no formal community use agreement in place), Corbet School (no formal community use agreement in place). There is already community use at Oldbury Wells School in the East (no formal agreement in place).**
- **Facilities on Education sites due to age (sports halls could include: Idsall School, Ellesmere College, Moreton Hall, St Martin's, Wem – all built in the mid-1970s or earlier)**

- **To deliver and sustain these, there is a need for SC to develop a strategic framework, or hierarchy of provision, moving forward.**

PROPOSED HIERARCHY FOR FUTURE PROVISION OF SPORT AND LEISURE PROVISION IN SHROPSHIRE

In order to ensure that there remains sustainable and affordable SC provision of sports halls and swimming pools, there is a need to take a pragmatic view of how future provision is delivered, and how SC can best target its limited resources for non-statutory provision. Overall, in the interests of efficient, affordable and sustainable operation of non-statutory facilities, SC need to focus its future provision through a number of strategically-located, multi-facility sites. These need to provide for a minimum of a 30 minute drivetime catchment area, to be sustainable; clearly larger facilities have this capability more than smaller ones.

The above network of community facilities provides core sports facilities (sports hall, pool, fitness) within a 30 minute drivetime of all Shropshire's communities, except to the north east and east of the area; there are however existing facilities in both Market Drayton and in Bridgnorth which are community accessible. The latter is no longer operated SC but a funding agreement is in place with Bridgnorth Endowed School until 2020. There is potential for Market Drayton to be financed through an alternative source, thereby reducing the existing subsidy. This facility is currently part of the SC leisure contract, but in the longer term there may be potential for alternative delivery options for this facility.

The hierarchy proposed is based on strategic location, community accessibility, population growth, existing communities, ability to invest, and partnership.

- **3 (or 4) main multi-facility hub sites – Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Oswestry (South Shropshire Leisure Centre, Shrewsbury Sports Village (and /or the Quarry replacement facility), Oswestry Leisure Centre**

N.B Clearly, until a final decision is made on the future of the Quarry Swimming and fitness centre (replacement/refurbishment, and the location of this), it is difficult to state whether it should be 3 or 4 total sites i.e. 2 or 3 in Shrewsbury. In the context of achieving the most sustainable operational delivery one site in Shrewsbury would be the most effective and efficient.

- **Smaller swimming pools and fitness centres – one in the south and one in the north**
- **Secured community access arrangements to a number of sports halls, pools and fitness suites across the county – these would complement the main community sites.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis and assessment, plus all other relevant factors, it is clear that the future distribution of directly provided SC swimming pools, sports halls and fitness centres could look very different. Although the extent of this provision may be reduced, whilst still ensuring access to all communities, it is also a fact that there is significant other provision of these types of facility across the county. The critical issue is that in SC's enabling and facilitating role it is able to ensure long term community access to these facilities.

Following from the analysis, the following draft recommendations are made:

RECOMMENDATION 1 (R1)

SC aims to invest in and support three main community leisure hubs – these will be strategically located, multi-facility sites in the market towns of Ludlow, Shrewsbury and Oswestry.

RECOMMENDATION 2 (R2)

The replacement Quarry swimming facility is developed on a site where there are existing leisure facilities to maximise participation and participative opportunities, optimize investment benefits and reduce overall operational expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)

SC works in partnership with local partners and key organisations over the next 12 months to identify alternative future funding models to take on Market Drayton and SpArC facilities, particularly the swimming pools.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)

Two swimming pools (Church Stretton Pool and SpArC) need significant investment, therefore based on the review, would not form part of SC's investment Strategy going forward. However, SC will need to work in partnership with these communities to support them in raising the necessary investment needed if these pools are still wanted by these local communities.

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<u>Committee and date</u>
Environment & Services Scrutiny Committee
26 th September 2016

<u>Item No</u>
Public

Emstrey Crematorium

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1. Summary

This report provides background information and recent activity relating to Emstrey Crematorium and the concession agreement to run the wider Bereavement Services.

Since September 2011 aspects of Shropshire Council's Bereavement Service have been provided via a concession agreement awarded to Funeral Services Limited (Co Op). Following a competitive tendering process, the agreement was awarded for a 30 year term expiring in September 2041. Early in 2016, for commercial reasons, Co Op notified the council of its desire to sell the entirety of its cremation operation business to another provider, Dignity PLC (Dignity). Due to conditions within the existing concession agreement, Co Op required the council's consent to novate the concession agreement. Shropshire Council agreed the necessary consent for the novation to Dignity Funerals No 3 Limited (a subsidiary of Dignity plc) following a decision taken by Cabinet at a meeting held on 13th July 2016.

Shropshire Council has been working with Dignity since this time and have recently met with senior officers from the company. A verbal update on the working relationship so far will be provided at the committee meeting.

2. Recommendation

- A. That scrutiny committee scrutinise and comment on the contents of the report and highlight any areas they would like further updates on in the future.

REPORT

3 Financial Implications

The transfer of provider has been effected via novation with Dignity Funerals No 3 Limited acquiring the same suite of financial and payment mechanisms that

previously existed, therefore no change is foreseen to the financial position of the council. Further, the legal costs of the council to effect the change have been met by Co Op as it was the Co Op that wished to transfer the service.

4. Background

Bereavement Services transferred from Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council to Shropshire Council in April 2009. This transfer included ownership of the bereavement estate assets and authority status for provision of bereavement services. The bereavement estate comprised the crematorium and cemetery at Emstrey, chapel and cemetery at Longden Road, Shrewsbury and rural cemeteries located at Alberbury, Church Pulverbatch, Great Ness, Minsterley and Westbury. The service that transferred included operation of the crematorium, funeral booking administration, grave preparation and maintenance and retention of associated records. Since 2011, provision of most day to day aspects of the bereavement service have been carried out by Co Op who lease and occupy the crematorium and Longden Road Chapel.

The council remain as owner occupier of Longden Road cemetery and the 5 rural cemeteries and whilst most service administration functions are undertaken by the provider, decisions on some service aspects, such as disputes, complaint resolution and similar are deferred to the Bereavement Service Manager at Shropshire Council for ultimate decision. Grounds maintenance of the bereavement estate and most grave preparations are undertaken by Shrewsbury Town Council and the works undertaken are funded and directed by the respective occupier of each site accordingly.

5. Overview of Co Op, Dignity and the Novation of the Concession Agreement

The suite of provision of bereavement services Co Op initially tendered for comprised; upgrade of cremators and related facilities at Emstrey Crematorium in order to comply with planned new stricter limits relating to emissions to atmosphere. Administration and provision of cremation, burial and funeral services across Shropshire Council's bereavement estate that is comprised of: Emstrey crematorium and cemetery, London Road, Shrewsbury, Longden Road cemetery and cemeteries at Alberbury, Church Pulverbatch, Great Ness, Minsterley, and Westbury.

Co Op leased and occupied the whole of the Emstrey site and areas of the chapel at Longden Road cemetery. At Emstrey, Co Op direct and fund grounds maintenance work, at all other cemeteries grounds maintenance is carried out as a component of a wider service level agreement funded and directed by Shropshire Council, the budget for such work having reduced in recent years in line with reduced funding available to Shropshire Council.

The crematorium serves a wide catchment area in Shropshire and beyond into parts of mid wales and carries out in the region of 1,700 cremations per year. Burials into the various council owned cemeteries total in the region 100 to 150 per year, with around half of these being a second or third interment into an existing grave and half being into a new grave.

Co Op successfully provided the services and the significant investment it was obliged to deliver and has replaced cremators, installed necessary abatement equipment, and general works to the buildings including asbestos removal and improvements to staff and visitor welfare and waiting facilities during their tenure.

In addition to the agreement won in Shropshire, Co Op also leased and operated one other local authority crematorium and also owned the freehold of a small number of other crematoria. However, following a review of its business Co Op decided it had too small a cremation market share and wished to focus business activity in the Funeral Home sector and subsequently looked to sell its crematorium portfolio as a package. Following market testing it found a buyer in rival company Dignity PLC, the largest private sector provider of cremation services in the UK.

The terms of the Concession Agreement required Co Op to obtain the Council's consent to a Novation, but such consent could not be unreasonably withheld. Under the direction of the Director of Place and Enterprise, officers have evaluated the risks associated with the novation to Dignity including assessment of a tender type submission, scoring this against the criteria matrix used for evaluation of bids during the original tender exercise. The submission scored sufficiently well to remain as a pass to the next stage. Other officers have carried out due diligence type checks, financial audit, Companies House, pensions admissions, legal, HR and insurance provision, all checks have been satisfied. The novation was agreed on 13th July and following call in period the transfer took place at 18:00 on 22nd July 2016.

As a large and experienced provider of cremation services there are no concerns with Dignity's ability to deliver the services. As Dignity also operate the crematorium at Telford this is likely to offer opportunities for flexibility and staff cover. Also, as a midlands based and larger operator, greater opportunities are presented to the transferring staff for career progression.

The public client base that access the services at Emstrey will have so far seen little if any difference in service provision. In time, signage, branding, staff uniforms etc. will change but for most people that utilise the services it will have been business as usual. Inevitably the relationship that had been established with Co Op senior staff has been lost in this context and it will take some time before similar relationships are established with Dignity staff over time. Throughout the stages leading to the novation, senior staff from both parties have been working closely together and a first operational, meet and greet type meeting was held on 9th September. Dignity will also need some time to fully understand the obligations they have acquired, site specific issues and the fine details that prevail in the concession agreement. There have been no staff changes at present within the local compliment of staff and none are currently planned.

6. UK Cremation Market

Local authorities are by far the largest provider of cremation services in the UK, between them owning 70% of the UK's crematoria. Traditionally seen as a local authority service, most, if not all crematoria operate profitably with surpluses used to support other front line council services. Dignity is the largest private sector operator of crematoria in the UK holding a 15% market share, prior to the acquisition of the Co Op Funeralcare business. With less than 2% of the UK crematoria market, Co

Op's opportunity for growth in this sector was limited to growth through costly acquisition or new build. Having undertaken its own soft market testing, Co Op had confidence in Dignity to take over Co Op's responsibilities where Co Op leased and operated local authority owned crematoria in Shropshire and Stockport.

7. Dignity PLC

Dignity is the UK's largest private sector provider of crematoria and cemetery services operating 39 crematoria, and 24 cemeteries. Dignity Funerals Limited is the main trading entity for the group owning the majority of group assets and businesses. Dignity Funerals Limited, as the parent company of Dignity Funerals No 3 Limited, entered into a Deed of Indemnity at the same time as the Novation was completed. This indemnity obliges the parent company to be responsible for any losses suffered by the Council as a result of the contractor's default.

Dignity advises that their employees form a key part of the high levels of service standards and are critical to the continued success of Dignity. Dignity's customer service centre was voted number one in both the 2012 and 2013 contact centre awards.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p>
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<p>Transfer of Emstrey Crematorium Contract –13th July 2016.</p>

<p>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</p>

<p>Cllr Karen Calder, Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing</p>
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<p>Local Member</p>

<p>All</p>

<p>Appendices</p>

<p>None</p>
