



Committee and date  
Environment & Services  
Scrutiny

26th September 2016

## DRAFT INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

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### 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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As operational responsibilities have changed and funding streams have been withdrawn this, along with the Council's changed financial situation, necessitated the requirement to review the document produced in 2009.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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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