

Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy, 2017 to 2022
Review of outcomes to the public consultation and resultant changes to the strategy

It is possible to identify a number of key themes raised during the public consultation carried out in 2016. These are summarised below along with a response on how the revised draft strategy addresses them.

Theme:	‘the strategy is based on finances’
Council response:	<p>We have sought to embed the strategy in a wider recognition of the positive benefits of physical activity, while accepting that the pressure on public finances is inevitably a key consideration. Since the draft strategy was originally consulted on the Council has committed to supporting discretionary services, including leisure facilities, until March 2019. The revised draft strategy sets out a five year plan to support minimum leisure facility provision to meet the needs of Shropshire residents, comprising Leisure Hubs within six locations and Community Leisure Centres in a further four locations. This is an improved offer to that suggested within the first draft strategy.</p>
Theme:	‘written to justify Council decision to relocate swimming provision in Shrewsbury’
Council response:	<p>The draft strategy confirmed the Council’s preferred option to relocate swimming in Shrewsbury to a site with existing leisure facilities. However, the draft strategy also notes that until a final decision is made on the future of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre it is difficult to state whether there should be one or two (tier 1 Leisure Hubs) sites in Shrewsbury. The revised draft strategy does not make any further recommendation for the location of future swimming in Shrewsbury. The revised draft strategy is also not consulting on the future location of swimming in Shrewsbury in that this is subject to a detailed process set out within Terms of Reference*.</p> <p>*Note that, based on a detailed assessment of the options and affordability issues, the Council’s preferred location for improved swimming provision in Shrewsbury is at the Shrewsbury Sports Village. However, potentially interested organisations have been given until the 27th October 2017 to submit Full Business Cases to retain swimming provision at the existing Quarry site or other town centre location. Detailed Terms of Reference, 31 October 2016, describe the process to be followed, the evaluation criteria and the evaluation methodology. A decision will be taken by Cabinet on the final location. Reference: Cabinet report, 28th September 2016 For further information visit: http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/swimming-provision-in-</p>

Theme:	‘recommendations are discriminatory to people living in rural areas, mothers, less abled users’
Council response:	<p>This point is recognised and has been reflected in our reanalysis of the accessibility of indoor leisure facilities. We have designed a minimum leisure facility provision that 89% of the population will be able to access within a 20-minute drive time. In setting this out we recognise that the way that people access leisure provision is much more complicated than this simple analysis suggests, for example, not everyone has access to a car, and public transport options are more limited in rural areas. We also recognise that residents have access to leisure facilities in neighbouring authority areas and that there are many other options available to residents including private discount gyms, health spas, community halls, school community facilities, etc.</p>
	<p>Our revised draft strategy confirms that, while we want to provide a universal offer for everyone we also want to support the needs of people at both ends of the age spectrum and people living within disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>A detailed Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been prepared, and will be kept under review alongside the further development and ultimate delivery of the strategy.</p>
Theme:	‘conflicts with Sport England strategy’
Council response:	<p>The Needs Assessment supporting the revised draft strategy has been completed using the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance approach for facility planning. We have also reflected Sports England’s recent ‘Towards an Active Nation’ strategy, 2016 and its emphasis on the benefits of physical activity. Throughout the development of both the draft and revised draft strategy, the Council has worked closely with Sport England officers, and sought the advice of Energize, the local County Sports Partnership.</p>
Theme:	‘public transport and actual distances do not allow access within a 30 minute drive time’
Council response:	<p>We recognise this point and have adopted a 20-minute drive time in our design work. Sports England use a 20-minute drive time catchment in their Facilities Planning model tool, which is based on observed behaviour through benchmarking work. 89% of the population of Shropshire live within 20 minutes’ drive time of the proposed minimum leisure facility provision.</p>

Theme:	‘assumptions that everybody has access to a car’
Council response:	<p>The 2011 census identified that 84.2% of households own one car or more. However, we recognise that public transport options are limited in rural areas, and that not everyone who wants will be able to easily access a leisure facility local to them.</p> <p>A detailed Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been prepared, and will be kept under review alongside the further development and ultimate delivery of the strategy</p>
Theme:	‘conflicts with Shropshire Council vision and Core Strategy’
Council response:	<p>The revised levels of provision within the minimum leisure facility provision will strongly support the Council’s high-level outcomes for healthy people, resilient communities and a prosperous economy.</p>

We have also set out below the seven recommendations included within the first draft Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy and described how these have been reflected within the revised draft strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 1 (R1)

Shropshire 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 revised draft strategy sets out minimum leisure facility provision to meet the needs of Shropshire residents. Within this, rather than suggesting three main leisure hubs it proposes leisure hubs in six locations - Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton, Bishops Castle. These leisure hubs will provide access to 93% of the Shropshire population within a 25-minute drive time.

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.

The 2016 draft strategy noted that until a final decision is made on the future of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre it is difficult to state whether there should be one or two (tier 1 Leisure Hubs) sites in Shrewsbury.

The revised draft strategy does not make further comment about the detailed future provision of swimming in Shrewsbury beyond confirming that there should be swimming provision in the context of the development of Leisure Hubs (see R1). The revised draft strategy is also not consulting on the future location of swimming in Shrewsbury in that this is subject to a detailed process set out within Terms of Reference*.

*Note that, based on a detailed assessment of the options and affordability issues, the Council's preferred location for improved swimming provision in Shrewsbury is at the Shrewsbury Sports Village. However, potentially interested organisations have been given until the 27th October 2017 to submit Full Business Cases to retain swimming provision at the existing Quarry site or other town centre location. Detailed Terms of Reference, 31 October 2016, describe the process to be followed, the evaluation criteria and the evaluation methodology. A decision will be taken by Cabinet on the final location. Reference: Cabinet report, 28th September 2016 For further information visit: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/swimming-provision-in-shrewsbury/>

RECOMMENDATION 3 (R3)

Shropshire Council (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.

Based on a detailed analysis of accessibility the revised draft strategy confirms that provision within Market Drayton and Bishops Castle should form two of the six proposed Leisure Hub locations (see R1). The strategy sets out the Council's expectations for the day-to-day operation of these facilities:

- Fully staffed
- Managed by third parties
- Ongoing revenue funding support with the aim to be profitable with no public subsidy required over an agreed timeframe
- Opportunity for Community Asset Transfers to suitable local groups in support of social, economic or environmental benefit, dependent on local circumstances.

RECOMMENDATION 4 (R4)

Two swimming pools (Church Stretton Pool and SpArC's) 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.

The revised draft strategy confirms that the pool in Bishops Castle (SpArC) should form one of six Leisure Hubs (see R1 and R3).

Based on a detailed analysis of accessibility the revised draft strategy confirms that the pool in Church Stretton should form one of four Community Leisure Centres. The strategy sets out the Council's expectations for the day-to-day operation of these facilities:

- Maximum of five year time-limited tapered revenue support
- Opportunity for Community Asset Transfers to suitable local groups in support of social, economic or environmental benefit, dependent on local circumstances
- Potential closure as last resort in the event of no sustainable alternative management options. Would be subject to separate consultations and a Cabinet decision.

With respect to future investment, the revised draft strategy states that the Council will continue to work in partnership with Sport England to acquire external funding to ensure the future sustainability of leisure facilities within its minimum leisure facility provision at all levels. Access to the Council's Capital Programme will also be

pursued. Shropshire Council will consider providing one-off funds, particularly to leisure centres that are unlikely to be financially supported in the future, in order to increase their chances of sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION 5 (R5)

SC withdraws from all remaining joint use funding arrangements as soon as is practicable, but works with local partners to secure future community access.

The revised draft strategy confirms the Council’s approach to “supporting” minimum leisure facility provision within ten locations. The strategy also confirms the Council’s commitment to work with a wide range of partner organisations and individuals as co-creators and co-deliverers of leisure facilities so that they best reflect the differing needs of local communities.

In a number of these locations revenue support is currently provided within the context of joint use funding agreements. The revised draft strategy sets out the Council’s aim to either reduce this to zero within a defined time period or to seek to review it.

RECOMMENDATION 6 (R6)

Through partnership working, SC ensures it is aware of any changes in sports facility provision in neighbouring authorities which might impact on accessibility for Shropshire residents.

In drawing conclusions for a minimum leisure facility provision the revised draft strategy has considered the opportunity for residents to access provision within neighbouring authority areas. This will continue to form a significant factor within the review of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 7 (R7)

This Strategy and analysis is reviewed and updated every 5 years to ensure the needs analysis remains robust and relevant and properly informs decisions about sports facility provision beyond 2037.

The revised draft strategy will be reviewed every five years in the context of progress achieved and the circumstances prevailing at the time.