

Appendix 1 Outcomes to the Public Consultations on the Leisure Facilities Strategy

(1) Public consultation on the draft Leisure Facilities Strategy, 29th July to 30th September 2016.

90 individual responses were received and 13 formal responses were received from various organisations. 5 Shropshire Council members also responded. Respondents were weighted towards Church Stretton and Bishops Castle which reflected relatively high profile local concerns at the future of the facilities within these towns.

Key themes raised during the public consultation are summarised below along with a Shropshire Council response on how the second draft strategy addressed them.

Theme:	‘the strategy is based on finances’
Council response:	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 consulted on the Council has committed to supporting discretionary service, including leisure facilities, until March 2019; furthermore the final 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 draft strategy.
Theme:	‘written to justify Council decision to relocate swimming provision in Shrewsbury’
Council response:	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 strategy does not make any specific recommendation for the location of future swimming in Shrewsbury and it is noted that this is currently the subject of a process set out within detailed Terms of Reference.
Theme:	‘recommendations are discriminatory to people living in rural areas, mothers, less abled users’
Council response:	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

	<p>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 final 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 delivery of the strategy</p>
Theme:	'conflicts with Sport England strategy'
Council response:	<p>The Needs Assessment supporting the final 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 final 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 local 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 delivery of the strategy</p>

Theme: Strategy'	'conflicts with Shropshire Council vision and Core
Council response:	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.

The first draft Sports Facilities Strategy set out seven recommendations. We have summarised below how these were subsequently reflected within the final 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 final 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 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 final strategy does not make specific comment about 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). A decision on future swimming provision within Shrewsbury will be subject to a separate process already underway and described within detailed Terms of Reference. See:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/swimming-provision-in-shrewsbury/>

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.

Based on a detailed analysis of accessibility the final strategy confirms that provision within Market Drayton and Bishops Castle should form two of six 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
- Funding support for five years plus, dependent on local circumstances.
- Opportunity for Community Asset Transfers to suitable local groups in support of social, economic or environmental benefit, dependent on local circumstances.

- Aim to be profitable with no public subsidy required with operational surplus reinvested into the facility

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 final 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 final 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 Cabinet decision.

With respect to future investment, the final 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. Projects will be appraised on an individual basis. Where the responsibility for the management of centres is being transferred to new organisations, we will adopt an "invest to save" "approach within the context of wider commercial discussions and considerations.

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

(2) Public consultation on the revised draft Leisure Facilities Strategy, 20th March to 8th May 2017

119 responses and eight stakeholder responses were received. Responses were again heavily weighted towards Bishops Castle and to a lesser extent Church Stretton. 70% of respondents agreed with the vision, principles and aims and 56% with the proposed minimum leisure facility provision set out within the strategy.

87% of respondents use a leisure facility at least once a week, while only 6.7% of respondents do not use leisure facilities at all.

73% of respondents use leisure facilities for swimming, 54% for health and fitness and 30% for badminton, indoor football, etc.

Below is a summary of the main themes emerging from the second public consultation and also a Shropshire Council response.

Theme	Council response
Reclassify Church Stretton Leisure Centre as a Leisure Hub	<p>Church Stretton is 27 minutes’ drive time from Shrewsbury, which explains why this location is identified as a “Community Leisure Centre within a hierarchy of leisure facility provision. Council funding will be provided on a tapered basis for the next five years.</p> <p>We recognise that it meets some of the “criteria” for a Leisure Hub, but it otherwise falls of short of being a “destination” location. Local residents will be able to access regional competitions and more varied provision within Shrewsbury while continuing to be able to access local provision.</p>
Shropshire Council should be supporting leisure facility provision within the Shifnal / Albrighton area	<p>Our mapping work shows that residents of Shifnal will be able to access existing provision within Telford, Madeley and Bridgnorth all within 20 minutes. However, although Idsall Sports Centre is not identified as a Tier 2 Community Leisure Centre the Council will be working hard with the school and other partners to ensure long term community access.</p> <p>The Council does not support any indoor leisure provision within Albrighton. We do recognise that in the event of the closure of Idsall Sports Centre (13 minutes’ drive time)</p>

	<p>residents will not have any access to any local provision either in Shropshire or across the border.</p>
<p>Provision in Wem should be identified as either a Leisure Hub or a Community Leisure Centre</p>	<p>Our mapping work shows that in the event of Wem Swimming & Lifestyle Centre closing residents will be able to access provision within Whitchurch within an 18-minute drive time. However, the Council is aware of the support of the Town Council for the trustees of the independently run Swimming Centre and of their plans to invest in improved provision; we are confident that provision will continue to serve the needs of the local community without the need of long term support from Shropshire Council.</p>
<p>Clarification of five-year action plan, specific levels of revenue support and capital investment and availability of council officer support</p>	<p>Once the strategy is approved it is the Council's intention to work with a broad range of interested parties to develop a co-ordinated and jointly owned five-year implementation plan within the context set out in the strategy and the Council's financial position. We feel that joint production of the plan will give it a better chance of being successfully delivered by all parties.</p> <p>The strategy sets out the Council's proposed support for leisure facility provision within different time periods for different groupings. However, the Council also recognises that revenue support to existing leisure facilities currently supported by the Council is subject to a range of existing operating agreements; and that following the end of these agreements individual bespoke discussion will be required within the context of the objectives of all parties.</p> <p>The Council also recognises that long terms solutions for future provision may require some initial investment both to rectify existing building problems and to support future commercial opportunities. We will seek to adopt an "invest to save approach and to access external investment and the Council's capital programme where appropriate.</p> <p>The Council recognises the need to provide "professional support" to "community organisations considering taking on more local "responsibility" for provision. The Leisure Services Manager will act as the first point of contact.</p>
<p>The Strategy should be emphasising the positive community health, social and economic wellbeing opportunities supported by leisure provision</p>	<p>The Council recognises this significant point and has developed the strategy within the context of the provision of a range of opportunities that increase physical activity levels, and use physical activity and sport to raise aspirations, support health improvements, tackle inequality in communities, grow the economy, create more jobs and underpin the continued social, physical and economic regeneration of neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The Council also recognises that the active involvement of public and stakeholder bodies who benefit from leisure</p>

	<p>facility provision should be actively sought in the development of a detailed five-year action plan,</p>
<p>Facilities should be more local than 20-minute car drive</p>	<p>The Council recognises that in an ideal world every community and resident would have access to local leisure facility provision. However, local authority support provision is relatively expensive and the ongoing pressure on public finances make it impossible to provide and sustain a comprehensive offer.</p> <p>The Council recognises that it does not have to do everything, and that residents have access to leisure facilities in neighbouring authority areas and that there are many other options available to residents within their communities including private discount gyms, health spas, community halls, school community facilities, etc.,</p> <p>The Council also recognises that, in the context of physical activity, leisure facilities do not appeal to everyone and that many people choose to exercise in other ways.</p>
<p>Need to understand the needs of rural communities with respect to lack of alternatives, transport and cost</p>	<p>The strategy recognises the rural nature of Shropshire and picks this up within a detailed Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA).</p> <p>The strategy recognises 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 and community transport options, while available are more limited in rural areas. For a list of available community transport options in Shropshire visit: https://travelshropshire.co.uk/bus/community-transport.aspx</p>
<p>Have you consulted with users and will they be willing to travel 20 minutes both ways?</p>	<p>Over 90% of respondents to the consultation used leisure facilities, with 87% using them more than once a week.</p> <p>The development of specific proposal for individual facilities will need to be subject to separate consultation within the context of the development of an ESIIA.</p>

In summary, we have not made any changes to the strategy as a result of the second public consultation, although we have re-presented the hierarchy of provision and identified three groupings (tiers) within this. A number of points will be picked up within the context of the development of a detailed action plan.