



To
Scrutiny Co-ordinaton Committee
Date 12th April 2006

Subject: Coventry Sports Centre – Update on development options specifically relating to the Listed Status of the building

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Coventry Sports Centre redevelopment options with specific reference to the listed status of the building.

2 Recommendations

This note is an update on progress and to provide information and as such has no specific recommendations

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Coventry Sports Centre was constructed in the 1960's as part of the post war reconstruction of Coventry. The original wet side facility was extended in the mid 1970's with the addition of linked dry side facility.
- 3.2 In 1997 the building was granted a Grade II listed status for the following reasons:
- The buildings importance as part of the post war reconstruction of Coventry;
 - It is important as an example of its type (Large public sports facility);
 - The architectural quality of the main pool has merit, and
 - The history of its use (positive associations and affection of local people) is important.
- 3.3 In 1999 the City Council outsourced its leisure delivery service to Coventry Sports Trust and entered into a lease arrangement that encompassed responsibilities for the maintenance and repair of the building. Essentially this means that the City Council is responsible for all repairs that cost over £5000.
- 3.4 The building is structurally in good condition, but is showing signs of age. The plant in particular is in poor condition and cannot provide adequate ventilation and heating without significant upgrades/replacement. Surveys have been commissioned to fully assess the condition of the building and the plant. These will be available in late Spring 2006.

- 3.5 Changes in how sport and leisure are provided to the public in the 21st Century mean that the building is rapidly becoming obsolete. In addition the suitability of the building for major swimming events is diminishing for the following reasons:
- The design and size of the pool (too small and not deep or wide enough);
 - The pool cannot be maintained at the correct temperature (too cold);
 - The orientation of the building (glare from sun shining in), and
 - The design and layout of the building also means that it suffers from very poor circulation and accessibility.
- 3.6 The City Council currently subsidise the Coventry Sport's Centre in excess of £1.4M per annum. The deterioration in condition of the building would suggest that there will be a need to increase this subsidy.
- 3.7 There is a trend of less people using the facility on an annual basis for a variety of reasons (obsolescence, wider competition/choice, accessibility, condition of the building etc). This trend will also have an impact upon the subsidy requirements for the building.
- 3.8 The above issues and the possibility for funding for the provision of a new sport and leisure facility, that will effectively meet the needs of Coventry residents, as part of the Swanswell Initiative has meant that an options for the redevelopment of the building need considering. Any redevelopment of the building will need LBC (Listed Building Consent). To obtain LBC the following key considerations must be addressed:
- The condition of the building, the costs of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use;
 - The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use, and
 - The merits of alternative proposals for the site.
- 3.9 Any new sport and leisure development in the Swanswell area will not be opened until 2010 at the earliest, but probably later. This has implications on the maintenance and management of the Sports Centre, particularly costs and the need for major intervention (replacement of plant in particular). The Condition Survey and a recently commissioned Business Plan will provide recommendations for consideration in the Summer of 2006.
- 3.10 The City Council has allocated £2.3M towards urgent repairs to the building. This money is being used to fund a programme of essential health and safety related works. This programme is ongoing and includes the replacement of electrical plant (completed 2005), asbestos removal (on-site) and works to improve disabled access (on-site April 2006).
- 3.11 In parallel with the work being completed on the building and surveys and business plans being developed Officers have been consulting English Heritage over the issues listed above. Together we are undertaking an appraisal of all the redevelopment options for the building and site. These options are:
1. Retain the building and provide sufficient maintenance to ensure that it can be operated;
 2. Redevelop the existing site for sport and leisure usage;
 3. Redevelop the site for commercial uses (retaining the building), and

4. Demolish the building and redevelop the site.

3.12 Prior to deciding upon a particular option an assessment on the commercial viability of each option will be required. It is estimated that this report will be commissioned in May 2006 with an assessment provided in the late Summer/early Autumn.

3.13 At this point we will be in a position to provide the City Council with a recommendation on a preferred redevelopment option for this building and site.

3.14 Once an option is agreed the City Council will need to undertake certain courses of action in relation to the listed status of the building. In summary these will be:

1. Retain the building and provide sufficient maintenance to ensure that it can be operated

It is not envisaged that LBC will be required unless major alterations are required.

2. Redevelop the existing site for sport and leisure usage

This will require LBC as any redevelopment will almost certainly require major alterations to the pools, the spectator seating, circulation routes and the external glazing.

3. Redevelop the site for commercial uses (retaining the building)

This will require LBC for redevelopment of the building and Planning Permission for a change of use.

4. Demolish the building and redevelop the site.

This will require LBC for the delisting and demolition of the building and Planning Permission for any subsequent development on the site.

3.15 To reiterate the preferred option will be assessed against the considerations listed in Paragraph 3.8 above. We have worked closely with English Heritage and the 20th Century Society up to this point and will continue to do so to ensure that the most appropriate option is arrived at.

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