

131. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duggins declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter referred to in minutes 133 and 147 below, headed “Public Leisure Facility Re-Provisioning for the North East of Coventry”. He withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of these matters.

133. Public Leisure Facility Re-Provisioning for the North East of Coventry

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of City Services and Development, which sought approval for investment in the development of wet-side (including swimming pools), community and associated service facilities at Centre AT7 as a re-provisioning for those facilities at Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre, Livingstone Road that would be withdrawn as a result of the decommissioning and closure of this ageing leisure centre.

A corresponding private report detailing financially confidential aspects of the proposals was also submitted to this meeting (Minute 147 below refers).

In July 2011, Cabinet approved collaborative working with Coventry Sports Trust (CST) and Coventry Sports Foundation (CSF) to identify a new vision for public sports and leisure provision in the city, involving both operational and facility stock reviews. As a consequence of this collaborative working, in April 2012, CSF assumed a consultative management responsibility for the service provision of CST.

Alongside this review of public leisure service provision, a wider consultation was also been undertaken in respect of the City’s future sporting aspirations, through extensive desktop strategic research, a city-wide public survey and initial stakeholder engagement.

The findings of this research and consultation drew out eight key vision statements that became the basis of an Emerging Sports Vision. One of these key vision statements referenced the need “to provide a range of modern, accessible and high quality sports facilities in the City”.

Following the July 2011 Cabinet approval for CST to close the Arena Health and Fitness Club, Cabinet further approved the detailed development of a proposal for aquatic (swimming pools) and community facilities at Centre AT7 as a re-provisioning of facilities at Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre, Livingstone Road.

As an ageing facility, Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre (which opened to the public in 1937) had experienced a significant decline in participation (from 223,000 in 1995 to 91,002 in 2011/12). The ageing plant within the Centre meant that currently just two of the three boilers at the centre were operational, whilst the inadequate capacity of the pool

circulation plant limited bather loads, required a 41 hour shut down of the pool to deal with any contamination and required specific testing and management regimes in order to monitor and maintain acceptable microbiology levels in the pool water.

Similarly, in 2007 an approved capital investment of £0.5m for rectification works that were anticipated to last for 14 weeks, actually resulted in works costing £1.1m along with a 13 month closure of the main pool and a 21 month closure of the learner pool.

Centre AT7 was located 0.8 miles from the Livingstone Road site. As a dry-side only site (with no wet-side provision), through various developments and facility expansions, the Centre had broadened its activity base and public leisure offer, resulting in a 128% increase in participation in the same period from 1995 to 2012 (rising from 130,000 to 296,050 visits per annum).

Accordingly, on 3rd January 2012, Cabinet approved grant funding not exceeding £0.65m to Coventry and Warwickshire Award Trust (CAWAT), as the owners of the Centre AT7 site, for design and feasibility works relating to any proposed development of aquatic, service and community facilities. As such, project management and full design teams were subsequently procured through the Scape framework and had been working since March 2012 and May 2012 respectively to produce the currently proposed designs for Centre AT7.

The proposals within the report aimed to improve the quality of sports facilities in the north east of the City, with the inclusion of a new 25 metre swimming pool, a leisure/learner pool, water slides, a health suite (jacuzzi, sauna and steam room), community facilities and improved parking at the Centre AT7 site, along with some associated service renewal to existing facilities within the Centre. It was anticipated that the provision of new, high quality sports facilities along with associated community outreach programming would further contribute to increasing local participation in sport and active recreation, thereby also contributing to health and wellbeing outcomes for local people, particularly in the north east of the City.

These proposals further contributed to the delivery of a more coherent and consistent leisure offer for the people of Coventry, including organisational structures that would drive greater efficiency savings and facilitate the recycling of existing finances into the development of high-quality, public leisure facilities. This would deliver a cost-neutral revenue position for the Council over the life of the funding of the project, through the reinvestment of repatriated savings from the closure and withdrawal of public leisure service provision from other sports facilities.

In addition, the Cabinet considered a petition bearing 6,657 signatures, opposing the closure of the Foleshill Leisure Centre. Mr Bromwich, the petition organiser, attending the meeting and spoke on behalf of the petitioners.

RESOLVED that, after due consideration of the options and proposals contained in the report and matters referred to at the meeting:

1. The Cabinet approves:

a) The delegation of authority to the Director of City Services

and Development and the Director of Financial and Legal Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) to approve the detailed scope and implementation of the proposed works in accordance with the planning permission, along with associated professional appointments.

- b) The delegation of authority to the Director of City Services and Development and the Director of Finance and Legal Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Community Safety and Equalities) to agree to complete a lease with the Coventry and Warwickshire Award Trust as the freehold owner of Centre AT7 for the construction of the wet-side facility for 47-year term commencing on 1st April 2013.**
- c) The managed decommissioning and closure of Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre, with the intention of facilitating a seamless transition of service provision in the north east of the city (subject to risk management and budget constraints);**
- d) Further investigation of potential options for future usage of the Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre/Livingstone Road site and undertake a marketing/disposal feasibility exercise with a view to reporting back to Members.**

2. The Cabinet recommends that the City Council:

- a) Note the above approvals from Cabinet.**
- b) Approves proposals for the development of wet-side (including swimming pools) and community and associated service facilities at Centre AT7 as a re-provision of the ageing facilities at Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre, Livingstone Road;**
- c) Provides funding of £7.45m for the development of wet-side (including swimming pools) and community and associated service facilities at Centre AT7 as an addition to the 2013/2014 Capital programme*;**

(NOTE: Councillor A Khan abstained from voting on this matter.)