

**UPDATE ON STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR SPORT AND  
LEISURE FACILITIES IN CARDIFF – PHASE 1**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR (CITY OPERATIONS)**

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**PORTFOLIO:** Community Development, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

**Reason/s for this Update**

1. To inform Members on the progress being made on developing a Strategic Framework for Sport and Leisure Facilities in Cardiff against a backdrop of the likely future demand for leisure and community facilities that will have to be considered in light of the Local Development Plan and the predictions of a significantly increasing future population.
2. To agree the timescales for the work to be completed and further reporting to Members.

**Background**

3. The Council does not currently have an agreed Strategic Framework in place to determine current and future sport and leisure facility requirements that could guide and inform future planning including the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools building programme, any Section 106 allocation and inform the future investment in facilities based on need, demand and linked to the Local Development Plan.
4. The Council's current leisure facility stock, is in reasonable condition as a result of some substantial investment in recent years at Cardiff International Sports Stadium, Maindy, Western and Fairwater Leisure Centres and the planned refurbishment of Eastern Leisure Centre, still has a number of Centres that are 25 years old or more.
5. In light of the Council's financial position, it is difficult to envisage any future leisure facility developments led by the Council beyond the planned refurbishment of Eastern Leisure Centre and the development of the STAR Hub, which could take place on sites other than schools or as part of wider commercial developments.
6. Planning for the growth areas of the city has to consider how dual use of education sites could provide the best way for costs and management to be minimised, whilst usage maximised.

7. If the management of the current leisure facility stock is through a third party operator in the future, the Council would have to maintain a 'client function', specifying and managing the contracts with operators. However, a development function would also be required in order to input into design briefs, planning policy, the strategic development of dual use facilities across the growth areas, and providing the coordinating function. This would be essential to enable facilities to be developed by non-Council organisations, and to broker arrangements whereby community access could be organised at commercial or private sector facilities such as hotels and health clubs.
8. The approach being taken by Council officers has been to split the work into three distinct parts:
  - Phase One: Leisure and Sports Centres - to consider the supply and demand for swimming pools, sports halls and artificial pitches;
  - Phase Two: Outdoor Sports Pitches - determine the needs for the recreational and parks provision of playing field, and;
  - Phase Three: Specialist and Single Sport Facilities (Local, Regional, National and International) - determine the specialist, single sport facility requirements such as for Tennis, Athletics and Cycling.
9. The first stage of Phase One was to undertake an audit of current provision, looking at the capacity of the current facilities to meet demand now and into the future; trends in provision, and whether there were shortfalls or over-supply.
10. Following this initial audit of the facility types, discussions were held with Sport Wales, resulting in the Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM) being used as an assessment based on an analysis of the data on the supply, demand and access to facilities in 2014.
11. The Facility Planning Model (FPM) is a spatial planning model, which helps to assess the strategic provision of Community sports facilities by determining the location of facilities and the availability of space (supply) and developing an understanding of how they are used and by whom (to create as assessment of demand). Population data was based on local authority projections produced by the Welsh Government in 2013.
12. The purpose of the FPM work was to develop an evidence base on the supply and demand for facilities in Cardiff on which to base future provision across the city. In particular it provides an assessment of:
  - the extent to which the existing supply of facilities is meeting the current levels of demand from the Cardiff population in 2014;
  - how demand is distributed across the city and at individual sites;
  - the extent to which facilities are estimated to be full both at the city wide level and at individual sites; and
  - the travel patterns to facilities by car, public transport and by walking and how this can influence the demand at individual sites.

## Initial Audit Findings

### SPORTS HALLS

13. The supply and demand was calculated and measured taking into account factors such as number of visits, sites, available space in peak periods, attractiveness, as well as the number of courts available. The following is a short summary of the key points:
14. Overall there were 34 Sites in Cardiff with sports halls (incorporating 133 badminton courts) in 2014:
- 1 x 8 Court Hall at Sport Wales National Centre (primarily Elite provision)
  - 5 x 6 Court Halls (of which Talybont Sports Village has two halls)
  - 12 x 4 Court Halls
  - 15 x 3 Court Halls
  - 1 x commercial 3 Court Hall at David Lloyd Centre
15. Approximately 50% of Sports Hall Provision in the city is on Educational Sites (schools or colleges, not higher education) which are generally poorly utilised with only an average of 36% of the capacity available for public use in a weekly period being used, which is well below the recommended comfort level of 80%.
16. In contrast the Council's leisure facilities are operating above the 80% comfort level with some operating at 100%:
- Canton Community Hall, Channel View Centre, Star Centre, Llanishen, Pentwyn and Eastern Leisure Centre are attaining an average of 91% usage, with;
  - Canton, Channel View, Pentwyn and Star Centres actually achieving 100%.
17. The citywide average usage therefore is depreciated by the Educational establishments and brings the average down to 63%, meaning there is 17% of unused capacity. Clearly without a concerted effort to "open school facilities up" there would appear to be little opportunity to reduce the Council's leisure footprint without causing an obvious gap in provision.

### SWIMMING POOLS

18. The FPM assessment of 2014 shows that there were 16 swimming pools on 14 swimming pool sites (not including smaller pools in hotels) and it is estimated that the 10 public pool sites (public leisure centres and school sites which provide for community use) as a city wide average are 61% full over the weekly peak period (with a comfort level of 70% of total capacity). The 4 commercial pool sites are estimated to be 43% full over the weekly peak period.
19. At a city wide average of 61% (public pool sites) used capacity at peak times there is very reasonable headroom of 9% of capacity before the pools full comfort level is reached. This does leave capacity to absorb any increases in swimming participation which the Council are promoting as part of active and healthy lifestyle objectives.

20. Furthermore, the used capacity percentage at individual swimming pool sites does vary from the city wide average due to several factors, e.g. differing amounts of demand in the catchment area of each pool; the age and condition of the pool.
21. Two pools are estimated to have a much higher used capacity than the 61% city average for the public swimming pools. These are: Fitzalan High School (a 20m x 4 lane pool opened in 2006) with an estimated used capacity of 86%. Also the Maindy Centre (a 6 lane x 25 metre pool opened in 1993) with an estimated used capacity of 98%.
22. A longer term issue is the age of the Cardiff pools and the need for replacement or modernisation. 11 of the 16 pools pre date 2000 with only four of these pools having had major modernisation (defined as either replacement of major plant or building changes based on condition surveys).

#### ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCHES (AGP)

23. There are currently 13 AGPs in Cardiff (8 x schools, 1 x Leisure, 3 x Higher Education). It should be noted that the majority of these are sand filled AGP's only suitable for Hockey.
24. The current AGPs are fully utilised at 100%, well above the recommended comfort level of 80%. Converting demand to pitches gives a supply deficit of 5 x AGPs, approximately 4 x 3G Football and 1 x Synthetic Hockey.
25. Future demand for football will be on 3G AGP which will improve playing standards and eliminate cancellations for inclement weather. Net saving on grass pitch maintenance can also be achieved. Collaboration with the Football Association of Wales, Welsh Rugby Union and Hockey Wales will need to take place to identify future demand led sites for AGPs.
26. The introduction of 3rd Generation playing surfaces has a number of benefits which include; improved playing standards, increased participation rates and frequency of participation. Of note is the potential to reduce maintenance costs incurred through grass pitch management, extended playing hours and increased income.
27. Further potential can be explored by linking to Schools re organisation plans and establishing key community clubs at each 3G site to engage local communities.

#### HOW PHASE ONE HAS BEEN USED

28. The information gleaned from the FPM data above has informed work on the development of Eastern High School and has also informed our application for a Welsh Government Sport Facility Capital Loan Scheme for the development of ATPs across the city.

## **Requirements for Strategic Framework Completion**

29. In order to complete the Facilities Strategic Framework the following remains to be completed:

- The FPM needs to be run on the predicted population increase stated within the Local Development Plan
- Phase Two (Outdoor Sports Pitches). Work has started on this element in terms of an initial audit of facilities. The FPM tool cannot be run on outdoor pitches, so a methodology (including resource requirements) for completing this element is currently being compiled.
- Work has not yet started on Phase Three (Specialist and Single Sport Facilities) and again the FPM cannot be used for this element.
- On completion of all the data collected for each Phase the partnership group will decide on priority actions going forward and will finalise the Strategic Framework document.

30. It is estimated that this work will be completed by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016.

## **FUTURE TIMELINE**

Members are asked to note that officers continue to develop a Strategic Framework for Sport and Leisure Facilities and present the final findings and recommendations in February 2016 which means that the following work will take place:

- Process work on developing data based on LDP and population growth
- Continue with Phase Two and Three
- Develop the final documentation of the Strategic Framework for Sport and Leisure Facilities to be used go forward to influence decision making.
- Scope out how this will influence Community Focused Schools and the commitment on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

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