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## Report of the Director of City Development

### Executive Board

Date: 3 December 2008

### Subject: Vision for Council Leisure Centres

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#### Electoral wards affected:

All and specifically Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, City & Hunslet, Garforth, Gipton & Harehills, Kippax & Methley, Middleton Park, Temple Newsam

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific implications for:

Equality & Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for call In

Not eligible for call in

(details contained in the report)

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## Executive Summary

This report considers the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the Council's draft Vision for Leisure Centres. The report considers the feedback from a broad range of interested stakeholders and the outcome of a Citizens' Panel survey drawn from a representative sample of Leeds residents.

The outcome of the publication consultation exercise has highlighted a general level of dissatisfaction with the level of quality in Council Leisure Centres and a general preference that facilities should be provided in Town and District Centres, on arterial roads, or adjacent to schools or health centres.

With respect to the centre specific proposals the consultation has indicated a divergence of views. In particular, Sport England has suggested that further work is undertaken to understand the impact of the proposals on the supply of swimming facilities at a local level. The report recommends that this additional work is undertaken before any final conclusions are developed for consideration.

## 1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides feedback to Executive Board on the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the Council's draft Vision for Leisure Centres.

## 2.0 Background

2.1 On the 2 September 2008, Executive Board received a report concerning the future of Leisure Centres operated by Leeds City Council. In summary the report highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed, namely:

- Increasing costs, which has resulted in the service reporting a significant overspend in 2007/08 of £1.4m.
- Increasing capital investment needs in facilities which were largely constructed in the 1970's and 1980's and a consequent concern over the quality of the Council's provision.
- An apparent oversupply of swimming pools in the city with a rapid increase in provision by the private sector in recent years.

2.2 As a consequence of the issues highlighted above the report advocated the need for a managed solution to be sought and with this in mind, officers proposed a long-term vision for Leisure Centres in Leeds as outlined below:

*'To secure a city-wide network of quality, affordable, accessible and sustainable leisure centres for the benefit of all the people of Leeds.'*

2.3 In addition, it was proposed that future provision should be in locations that appear to offer the greatest potential to maximise usage, which were considered to be:

- Town and District Centres
- Main arterial roads
- Adjacent to complementary facilities such as High Schools.

2.4 In considering the issues highlighted above, a series of draft proposals were put forward for consultation which outlined plans for the future distribution of Leisure Centres in the city and capital investment in them. Four proposals were put forward in particular and are outlined below:

Facility	Draft Proposal 1
Aireborough Leisure Centre	To bring forward detailed plans for capital investment and remodelling to modernise and improve the quality of the facilities provided.
Pudsey Leisure Centre	
Bramley Baths	
Scott Hall Leisure Centre	
Kirkstall Leisure Centre	
Otley Chippendale	
Rothwell Leisure Centre	
Wetherby Leisure Centre	
Facilities	Draft Proposal 2
East Leeds Leisure Centre	i) To re-provide Fearnville and East Leeds Leisure Centres in the form of a new, purpose built, well-being centre, located close to the A64
Fearnville Leisure Centre	

	corridor.
Richmond Hill Sports Hall	ii) to consider the transfer of the management of Richmond Hill Sports Hall to the voluntary sector as part of a community asset transfer.
Facilities	Draft Proposal 3
Kippax Leisure Centre	To re-provide Kippax and Garforth Leisure Centres in the form of a new, purpose built, well-being centre to serve the communities of Garforth and Kippax.
Garforth Leisure Centre	
Facilities	Draft Proposal 4
South Leeds Sports Centre	i) To close South Leeds Sports Centre once the new Morley Leisure Centre has opened and to concentrate provision at the John Charles Centre for Sport and Morley.
Middleton Leisure Centre	ii) to close the pool at Middleton Leisure Centre and to consider the transfer of the dry-side facilities to the voluntary sector as part of a community asset transfer.

2.5 Accordingly, Executive Board requested that officers undertake a consultation exercise to gauge the opinion of a broad range of stakeholders so that the outcome of the public consultation exercise can be reported back to December's meeting. Specifically, Executive Board requested that all Area Committees be consulted as part of this process.

2.6 Further to the Executive Board on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, officers have undertaken a consultation exercise with a broad range of stakeholders that would be impacted by the draft proposals put forward. A range of consultation methods were employed to seek not only the views of existing adult users, but also young people, non users and people with disabilities, amongst others. A full schedule of the consultation undertaken is outlined in Appendix 1 and included:

- A citizens' Panel survey
- The distribution of 6,000 user surveys in Leisure Centres and Libraries
- 19 public workshops held in key leisure centres affected.
- Members of Parliament
- Town and Parish Councils
- The Youth Council
- The Equality Forum
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Attendance at the Inner East, Outer East and Inner South Area Committees
- All other Area Committees
- Beeston Hill and Holbeck Regeneration Partnership Board
- Workshops for Garforth Community College and Brigshaw High School.
- Sport Leeds Board
- Sport England
- Primary Care Trust
- Gipton Residents' Association
- City Development Scrutiny Board
- Trade Unions
- Web site comment facility

### **3.0 Main Issues**

3.1 The consultation exercise undertaken has resulted in a broad range of valuable feedback. A schedule and the main reports on the feedback received can be accessed via the Council's website at [www.leeds.gov.uk/sportsurvey](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/sportsurvey). In addition, feedback on most affected sites is also available to the public at those sites. This report should not be read as a detailed review of all consultation responses, however, the main themes have been highlighted, with the full consultation responses available on the Council's web site. The information collated can be split into two areas. Firstly, feedback from respondents with a city-wide perspective, including city wide agencies and the Citizens' Panel survey. Secondly, responses from consultees who were most likely to be interested in the proposals that impact on them directly at a local level. This includes user surveys, workshops and area specific forums. Accordingly, this report considers both aspects and reports on the main findings.

### **4.0 City-Wide Consultation**

4.1 A number of consultees with a city-wide perspective have fed back their views on the consultation process. These consultees included the Citizens' Panel, the Youth Council, Equality Forum, Sport England, a web site and Sport Leeds.

### **5.0 Citizens' Panel Survey**

5.1 A citizens' Panel Survey was undertaken, which sought responses to the Council's draft proposals. The survey was selected as a way of receiving feedback from a representative sample of Leeds residents about the Council's draft proposals. Using statistical rules, the reports authors, QA research, are 95% confident that the research findings have a potential variance of no more than plus or minus 3%.

5.2 This feedback included both users and non-users of existing facilities. The Citizens' Panel survey received 755 responses, which is a 43% response rate. Of this figure, 48% of respondents had used a Leisure Centre in the last 12 months, leaving 52% non-users. Of the user group, 64% used Council facilities, 22% used private facilities and 14% used both Council and private centres.

5.3 Key points to highlight from this survey are as follows:

- 28% of respondents felt that the Council's Leisure Centres were of high or reasonable quality, with 43% stating average and 29% reporting that they felt the Council's facilities are low or very low quality. Such a high proportion (nearly one third) in the low and very low categories is a cause for concern.
- 87% of respondents feel that Council's centres should be of the highest quality. It appears, therefore, that the Council's facilities do not appear to meet the aspirations of the Leeds public.
- When asked to rank their preferred location for Leisure Centres, the overall ranking from panel respondents was Town or District Centre first, close to a school or health centre second, on a main arterial route third and in a housing estate fourth. This outcome appears to support the principles put forward to Executive Board in September 2008.

- When asked to choose between spending more on existing sites, or consolidating the existing facilities to improve quality, 66% of panel respondents favoured consolidating existing centres with 34% preferring to spend more on existing sites. From a general perspective, this outcome appears to support the general principle put forward to Executive Board for consolidating some centres. However, at the same time, when asked whether they would travel further to a larger, better quality centre only 31% agreed with this statement, with 43% against.

#### 5.4 With reference to the proposals for specific leisure centres:

- 39% either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to provide a new facility for Kippax and Garforth, with 19% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to provide a new facility in place of East Leeds and Fearnville Leisure Centres, with 21% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- 64% of respondents expressed no view regarding proposals to transfer the management of Richmond Hill Sports Hall to the community, with 24% in agreement and 12% against.
- 34% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with proposals to consolidate swimming provision in the Inner South Area at John Charles Centre for Sport, with 27% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

5.5 Based on the above information it is evident that, overall, more Citizen Panel Members agreed with the centre specific proposals than disagreed, however of these, the proposals for the Inner South Area are the least popular.

## 6.0 Youth Council

6.1 Consultation with the Youth Council indicated a general level of dissatisfaction with the quality of existing Leisure Centres, with cleanliness and maintenance cited as issues to address. In general, respondents indicated a desire to see bigger Bodyline Gyms, Leisure Water and there was an emerging consensus on the provision of larger sites.

6.2 In terms of the location of future centres, the need to take account of public transport routes was highlighted and a general agreement was reached over the principles presented by the Council for Centres to be located in Town or District Centres, on arterial roads, or adjacent to large complementary facilities. In addition, there was also general agreement with the draft proposals presented. However, this general agreement was also tempered by some concern raised that the Council would need to ensure that communities were not marginalised and steps may need to be taken to support deprived areas.

## 7.0 Equality Forum

7.1 The Equality Forum Working Group have fed back their views on the Council's draft proposals. In general it is evident that disabled users have a number of concerns about the existing Leisure Centre provision in the city in terms of their quality. Issues at Holt Park, Armley, Kippax and Rothwell were highlighted specifically. Similar to the Youth Council, the Equality Forum also raised the need for locations to be accessible by bus and a preference for sites to be located on main arterial roads. The Equality Forum also supported proposals which resulted in Leisure Centres co-locating with health facilities. In summary, there was general support for

the proposals outlined, however it was also acknowledged that further consultation was needed should the proposals be developed and refined further and to consider the implementation of proposals on a trial basis.

## **8.0 Sport England**

8.1 Sport England have provided written feedback to the Council's draft proposals. In summary, Sport England acknowledges that planning future leisure provision will require some 'tough decisions' by the Council and they fully support the steps taken by the Council to date. Sport England has also indicated a willingness to work further with the Council as it develops its strategic vision and they recommend that they re-run their Facilities Planning Model for Leeds to enable the Council to look in more detail at the availability of pools in specific parts of the city.

## **9.0 Sport Leeds Board**

9.1 The Sport Leeds Board received a presentation on the Council's proposals at their meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008. Written feedback has been received from the Board's Chair which indicates broad support for the vision presented. The Board also recognised and supports the need to rationalise the number of facilities in the city. Notwithstanding this position, the Board also raised some concerns. Primarily, the Board would not want to see a net reduction in swimming lanes in the city and any proposals implemented would need to ensure that there was not a decrease in the learn to swim programme and other swimming development initiatives. The Board also raised the need to consider school transport costs as part of any proposals developed. With these points in mind, the Sport Leeds Board suggested consideration of pre-fabricated pool construction at school sites and the potential for joint ventures with sports colleges and offered the opportunity for a small group of Sport Leeds Board Members to discuss these options with the Council further.

9.2 Sport Leeds also indicated a broad support in the voluntary sector for proposals for community management of Richmond Hill Sports Hall and the dry facilities at Middleton Leisure Centre, but stressed the need for the financial parameters of any proposals to be set at a realistic level.

## **10.0 Learning Disability Partnership Board**

10.1 The respondents from the Learning Disability Partnership expressed a desire for facilities that better met their needs. In broad terms respondents agreed with the proposal for centres to be located in Town and District Centres, next to arterial roads and or schools/health centres. However, when asked about the specific proposals, respondents also indicated that they liked facilities to be close to their homes.

## **11.0 NHS Leeds**

11.1 The NHS Leeds has provided written feedback to the Council's draft proposals, through the Director of Public Health in Leeds. Investment in the City's Leisure Centres is broadly welcomed as was the concept of well-being centres. Attention was drawn to the need to focus on the potential health inequality impact of the proposals especially in South Leeds and to ensure that this is effectively managed.

## **12.0 Trade Unions and Staff**

12. GMB and Unison have provided a joint initial response to the Council's draft proposals. The Unions have indicated that they do not agree with the Council's proposals put forward and that they will require more time to consult fully with their members. Notwithstanding this response, the general feedback from staff briefings undertaken by officers has been largely positive with many staff keen to see investment in facilities.

## **13.0 Scrutiny Board (City Development)**

- 13.1 The Scrutiny Board (City Development) considered the 2<sup>nd</sup> September Executive Board report at its meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2008. After considering the matter, the Board agreed to note the proposals for consultation on the draft vision for the Council's Leisure Centres.

## **14.0 Area Based Consultation**

- 14.1 Area based consultation has been undertaken in the form of Area Committees, user surveys, workshops and correspondence and meetings with local stakeholders.

## **15.0 Area Committees**

- 15.1 Area Committee consultation has taken the form of visits to Inner East, Outer East and Inner South Committees and by requesting written feedback from the other seven committees in the city. In terms of the visits to three Committees named above, Inner East Area Committee discussed whether investment in some current centres would provide optimum output, which to some extent links to the issues of centre quality and their location considered by Executive Board at the 2 September meeting. However, the Area Committee also expressed a desire for fuller consultation on the matter and to ensure that consultation was made available to all. The Area Committee confirmed the desire to maintain a facility in the Inner East Area. The Area Committee also asked that any sites identified for a new facility be considered in consultation with public transport providers.
- 15.2 Outer East Area Committee expressed concerns that the consultation process undertaken was not inclusive enough and was being 'rushed'. Accordingly, the Committee resolved:
- 15.3 *'That the Outer East Area Committee demand to be presented with proposals for further extensive consultation with residents of the Outer East Leeds area concerning Leisure Centres relevant to the area. Such consultation to include the provision of detailed information contained in the reports presented to the Area Committee and further information concerning the possible nature of any future reprovisions.'*
- 15.4 Inner South Area Committee considered the Executive Board report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> September and provided a lot of feedback specific to the Inner South Area of the city. Particularly, the Committee indicated that the John Charles Centre for Sport was, in their view, not well located to meet community need and that the existing facilities at South Leeds Sports Centre and Middleton were 'fit for purpose' and met local need. The regeneration initiatives in both Beeston and Middleton were highlighted and there was concern that the proposals would have a detrimental impact on their delivery. The relative high levels of deprivation in the Inner South

Area were also highlighted which resulted in low car ownership and health inequalities. Accordingly, the Committee felt that proposals needed to better consider the narrowing the gap perspective. The Committee also expressed a desire for a longer consultation period.

15.5 As a Member of the Committee, Councillor Congreve also wrote separately to outline his concerns, particularly in relation to the impact on the narrowing the gap agenda.

## **16.0 User Surveys**

16.1 6,000 user surveys with pre-paid reply envelopes were distributed to all Leisure Centres and 11 libraries. In total 2,015 responses were received. Overall the responses to the user survey tend to contrast with the outcome of the Citizens' Panel survey. Key responses include:

- 98% of respondents have used a Leisure Centre in the past 12 months, of which 85% had used a Council facility.
- 36% of respondents felt that the Council's facilities were of high or reasonable quality, with 29% indicating they felt they were of low or very low quality. Again, nearly one third of respondents, many of whom are existing users, are unhappy with the existing quality of facilities.
- 86% of respondents felt that centres should be of the highest quality.
- Overall respondents felt that their preferred location for Leisure Centres was Town and District Centres first, arterial roads second, alongside schools/health centres third and in housing estates fourth.
- When asked to choose between a consolidation of the existing facilities to provide fewer, better quality facilities against the option of spending more on the existing facilities, the response is almost exactly opposite to the Citizens' Panel survey with a 71% preference for spending more on the existing sites and 29% in favour of fewer better quality facilities.

16.2 With respect to the Centre specific proposals:

- 27% were in favour of proposals for a new facility to replace Kippax and Garforth with 39% against.
- 23% in favour of a new facility to replace East Leeds and Fearnville with 42% against.
- 16% in favour of proposals for the transfer of Richmond Hill with 24% against.
- 17% in favour of proposals in South Leeds with 51% against.

16.3 It is therefore apparent that overall, respondents to the user survey do not support the centre specific proposals put forward by the Council, which contrasts with the outcome of the Citizens' Panel survey.

## **17.0 Leisure Centre Workshops**

17.1 13 workshops were held focussing on the proposals that impact on centres in the Inner East, Outer East and Inner South areas of the city. Overall, attendance at these sessions was initially low and concern raised about the public's awareness. To seek



to address this issue a further 6 workshops were scheduled and arranged at times convenient to Ward Members. Overall feedback from workshops indicated that:

- Leisure Centres are thought to be an integral part of the community.
- People believe that the Council should better promote its centres, rather than propose any closures.
- Most agree that centres need some level of refurbishment and this should be the priority.
- Closing leisure centres goes against the ethos of providing leisure facilities for all to encourage healthy lifestyles.
- There tended to be a feeling of distrust at the workshops, with a feeling that the Council already had plans in place.

## **18.0 Town and Parish Councils**

18.1 All Town and Parish Councils in the Leeds City Council area were written to and asked to comment on the draft proposals presented to Executive Board in September 2008. In total 11 Town and Parish Councils have participated in the consultation. The feedback received varies. Full support was received from East Keswick Parish Council for the refurbishment of Wetherby Leisure Centre as well as support from Collingham and Linton Parish Council and Wetherby Town Council. In addition, agreement in principle at this stage was received from Aberford and District Parish Council.

18.2 Scarcroft and Thorner Parish Councils highlighted the need to also focus on local voluntary facilities and not to develop new centres at the expense of grass roots, community, sport. Alwoodley Parish Council outlined the lack of public facilities in their parish.

18.3 Ledston and Ledston Luck Parish Council did not support the proposals, but acknowledged the need for investment in facilities. Similarly, Allerton Bywater Parish Council did not agree with the proposals. Barwick in Elmet and Scholes Parish Council felt that Garforth and Kippax centres were in a poor state of repair, however, they did not agree with the draft proposals feeling that a consolidation of existing provision would adversely impact on people with limited transport options. The Council went on to comment that should the proposals be taken forward the most important issue to ensure is that the range of leisure facilities that is currently available continues to be provided in any new facilities.

## **19.0 Garforth Community College**

19.1 Officers were invited to undertake a consultation session with 300 Year 10 students at the Community College. The session identified a general level of dissatisfaction with the physical appearance of the facilities at Kippax. Comments received included:

- *'I don't like the pool as it is boring and dull'*
- *'The Centre is old and unattractive'*

19.2 The general views expressed identified a desire for more facilities for young people. In addition, whilst there was general, but not full, support for a new facility there was a need expressed to ensure that it was conveniently located and accessible by public transport. There was some concern expressed about consolidating two facilities into one.

## **20.0 Garforth School Partnership Trust**

20.1 Representatives of the School Partnership Trust in Garforth asked to meet with Council Officers to discuss the draft proposals and written feedback has been received. The Garforth School Partnership Trust has indicated that they feel they are in a unique position to contribute to the consultation over the draft plans to re-organise leisure centres in Garforth and Kippax. The Trust has indicated that they would be keen to participate in a joint venture with Leeds City Council and other partners to develop a well-being centre close to the grounds of Garforth Community College.

## **21.0 Brigshaw High School**

21.1 Officers facilitated workshops with 240 year 10 pupils at the School. The main feedback indicated a view that Kippax Leisure Centre was outdated and lacked facilities that would appeal to them. The majority, approximately two thirds of pupils, indicated that they did not use the current centre. There was some concern expressed if a new facility went to Garforth.

## **22.0 Web Site**

22.1 Respondents to the Web Page tended to indicate a desire for better quality facilities. However, concerns were raised about a potential loss of water space and transport access issues to centres.

## **23.0 Members of Parliament**

23.1 The MP for Leeds Central has written to the Leader of the Council expressing concern at the proposals affecting Richmond Hill Sports Hall, South Leeds Sports Centre and Middleton Leisure Centre indicating (in his view) that particular communities are going to be most adversely affected by the proposals in comparison to others. At the time of writing, responses from other Leeds MP's are being sought.

## **24.0 Deputations to Council**

24.1 At the Council meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008, three deputations were received relating to Garforth Leisure Centre, Middleton Leisure Centre and South Leeds Sports Centre. Each deputation raised concerns regarding the proposals outlined to Executive Board on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September. It is proposed that the issues raised by these deputations are considered as part of the next report brought back to Executive Board on this matter.

## **25.0 Summary findings**

25.1 The public consultation exercise undertaken has resulted in a wide range of feedback being received from a broad range of respondents interested in the provision of Leisure Centres in the City. In some respects there appears to be a developing consensus in a number of areas. These areas include:

- A view that the public want high quality leisure centres and that they are valued, but too many respondents do not feel that the Council's existing provision meets their aspirations and are maintained well enough.
- A consensus between the citizens' panel and the user surveys that the top three locations for leisure centres were either Town and District Centres, arterial roads

or adjacent to schools/health centres. Locating leisure centres in housing estates was the least favoured option by both groups.

- 25.2 However, it is also clear that there is a divergence of views in relation to a number of the specific proposals put forward. In addition, it appears that the divergence of views expressed is linked in part to the perspective of the respondents. Respondents from a city-wide perspective have tended to show greater levels of support for the Council's proposals. Conversely, where respondents are more likely to be impacted directly, they have responded less favourably to the draft proposals put forward.
- 25.3 In some cases there is clear opposition to the closure of centres that people use on a regular basis, even if this might result in the development of a new facility. To some extent this position is understandable. Where facilities are used regularly by local people there is likely to be some resistance to change. However, the difficulty is that the Council cannot realistically provide Leisure Centres within easy travelling distance for everyone in the city and some deprived areas in the city, such as Seacroft and Harehills, appear to be less provided for by the current network of facilities.
- 25.4 Looking at the proposals specifically, it is apparent that the proposal to invest in Aireborough, Kirkstall, Pudsey, Wetherby and Rothwell Leisure Centres is supported as a means of improving the quality of leisure centre provision. In addition, their locations accord with the principles supported through the consultation.
- 25.5 With respect to Richmond Hill Sports Hall there has been a high level of neutrality expressed about the proposal to transfer the centre's management to the community. In particular there has been largely no arguments put forwarded advocating a reconsideration of this proposal. On this basis, it is proposed that these proposals are developed further. It will have cognisance of the English Table Tennis Association's current use of the facility.
- 25.6 In terms of Fearnville and East Leeds Leisure Centres, it is evident that respondents in the local area would, overall, prefer investment in the existing facilities. However, in acknowledging this point, the Council needs to consider whether the £967,299 annual subsidy incurred in the operation of these facilities is delivering an optimum outcome. Both facilities are under utilised and the Inner East Leeds Area Committee has agreed to look at whether investment in some of the current centres would provide an optimum output. The user maps detailed in Appendix 2 highlights the concentration by users around the A64 corridor. The existing outdoor facilities at Fearnville will also need to form part of any further consideration.
- 25.7 Similarly, in Kippax and Garforth there appears to be an acknowledgement that the facilities are in need of investment, particularly Kippax. However, at a local level there also appears to be an overall preference to retain the existing facilities. A number of respondents from Kippax tended to express a view that Kippax may lose out to Garforth, which would be a concern to them. However, feedback from Garforth College students and the Garforth School Trust are more generally supportive of the proposal to provide a single new facility.
- 25.8 In considering the Kippax and Garforth proposals, the user analysis of regular customers (Appendix 3) indicates that there are very similar user patterns for both facilities indicating that the community appears to act as a single greater catchment area.
- 25.9 With respect to South Leeds, at a local level the facilities appear to be valued by their users. However, whilst acknowledging these points, it is also the case that South

Leeds Sports Centre and Middleton Leisure Centre have the lowest user levels of any leisure centres in the city with the exception of Chippendale Pool in Otley, which is only open to the public outside of school hours ( Appendix 4). Added to this point, the provision of the Aquatics Centre has increased the supply of leisure water in this part of the city by more than 200%. There have been difficulties with the operation of the floating floor at this pool, which has not helped to facilitate community use during the first 11 months of operation. Although, now that this floor is fixed, the pool tank can be split into four separate pool facilities and can accommodate all swimming activities, including lessons in the diving pool, which is kept at a warmer temperature. Feedback received during the consultation process indicated a feeling that the pool at JCCS was 'elitist' and not for local people. However, whilst noting this point it is the case, that 33% of existing swimmers to the pool with a Leeds Card came from Inner South Wards, with a further 29% from the Outer South Area. With the floating floor now fully operational the prospect is that this level of community use will increase as swimming lessons and other community activities can now be fully facilitated in the pool.

25.10 Taking account of this position and the increase in supply in this area, it is difficult to see a circumstance where the low levels of use at Middleton and South Leeds are likely to grow, particularly when the new Morley Leisure Centre opens. That said, the centres are still likely to have an appeal and be valued in their local areas.

## **26.0 Proposals**

26.1 Consequently, in taking account of all of the consultation feedback undertaken, it is proposed that:

- More work is undertaken on the potential for community management of the centres most affected by these proposals
- Officers explore in more detail the potential to transfer Richmond Hill Sports Hall to community management as part of a community asset transfer and, report back on the outcome of this work.
- Officers bring forward outline capital investment plans for Aireborough, Bramley, Kirkstall, Pudsey, Otley, Rothwell, Scott Hall and Wetherby Leisure Centres.
- Officers to respond to Sport England's suggestion to re- run their Facilities Planning Model for the whole of Leeds and undertake specific analysis in those areas where it is proposed that facilities are consolidated. In this way, in the context of the consultation feedback received, the Council will be able to obtain a fuller understanding of the likely impact of the proposals on swimming provision across all communities in the city.

## **27.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

27.1 Previous reports to Executive Board have highlighted the significant investment needs of the Council's Leisure Centres and the escalating costs associated with the operation of the portfolio, which last year over spent its budget by £1.4m. As a consequence of the above and in light of the public's view of the existing quality of provision, there is a need to bring forward proposals to address this position to provide long-term stability to the operation of the service.

## **28.0 Conclusion**

28.1 The public consultation exercise has sought and obtained a broad range of views from stakeholders with an interest in the provision of Leisure Centres in Leeds. The

outcome of this consultation exercise appears to support the investment proposals outlined in the September 2008 report to Executive Board and there are wide ranging concerns about the overall quality of the Council's provision. However, the Council's proposals for consolidating some centres including new provision in Outer and Inner East Leeds and concentrating swimming provision in the Inner South Area at John Charles Centre for Sport, have received a mixed response. The Citizens' Panel Survey has indicated more people in favour of the proposals than against. However, at a local level and particularly amongst existing users, there is a preference to retain existing provision, which in some cases manifests itself as outright opposition to the draft proposals.

- 28.2 In view of this position and in recognition of the substantive and long-lasting impact that any final decision will have, it is considered that the most appropriate approach is to undertake more work on the implications at a local level in conjunction with Sport England, prior to any final proposals being submitted to Executive Board for consideration. In particular this work will seek to clarify the operational sustainability of the existing level of provision to enable Executive Board to fully understand the local impact of any final proposals presented.

## **29.0 Recommendations**

- 29.1 Members of Executive Board are asked to note the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the Vision for Council Leisure Centres and to:

- 29.1.1 request that officers explore in more detail the proposal to transfer Richmond Hill Sports Hall to community management as part of a community asset transfer.
- 29.1.2 request that officers ask Sport England to re-run their Facilities Planning Model for swimming pools provision in Leeds and in particular examine the implications of the Council's draft proposals.
- 29.1.3 request that officers consider the potential for community management for each of the centres most affected by these proposals and report back to a future Executive Board.
- 29.1.4 request that officers further develop capital investment proposals for Aireborough, Bramley, Kirkstall, Pudsey, Otley, Rothwell, Scott Hall and Wetherby Leisure Centres.

## **Background Papers**

Executive Board Report - A Draft Vision for Investment in Sport Centres in Leeds and and Proposals for Future Provision for Public Consultation, September 08

Consultation results September 08 to November 08

Deputations to Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008.