

### Scrutiny Board: Health – 15 December 2009

#### Vision for Council Leisure Centres

The sport and active recreation service has put health improvement at the heart of its key purpose:

***“ Increasing participation in sport and active recreation, contributing to healthier communities. ”***

The Vision for Leisure Centres (approved by Executive Board on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2009) provides a plan for the improvement of the Council's Leisure Centres.

Use of many current centres has been severely limited by poor location and poor design and specification. The location and design of leisure centres is vital if it is to appeal to as broad a base of clients as possible. Leisure centres should be located on main arterial routes, district centres and/or co-located with complimentary services, for them to work effectively.

Leisure centres will continue to provide a Universal service offer, but additionally are increasingly being used to provide more targeted opportunities, whether through health referrals or through service integration such as Adult day care.

In summary the Vision for Leisure Centres proposed that;

- Over 50% of existing sites be refurbished, focusing on key customer facing areas, disability access and wind and weather tight repairs. This will require approximately £14.1m of external and Council capital funding over the next 10 years.
- That new ways of working be supported with the development of Well Being centres in Holt Park, Inner East Leeds and Inner South Leeds. These centres would effectively be community hub sites offering a range of health interventions but built largely around a Universal Leisure offer, a targeted adult social care offer and a series of other related health services. Funding is required for approximately £40m and will be sought through PFI, if available, or alternative external funding as the opportunity arises
- That some sites be offered to the Community. These will follow the Council's approved community asset transfer route.

The delivery of the Vision for Council Leisure Centres is dependant on continued investment from the Council's capital programme.

## APPENDIX 4

The costs of building, maintaining and running Leisure Centres are high. The service relies heavily on income from fees and charges, but Leisure centres are still subsidised, and any plans have to be financially sustainable.

Council Leisure Centres play an important role in helping in meeting health improvement related outcomes. The current free swimming initiative ( for older people and young people) is a good example of where levels of activity can be increased if the costs of taking part are reduced through external funding support.

The August Executive Board report concluded;

- *The challenge for the service is complex. Leisure centres provide important opportunities for people to be active, leading to better health and wellbeing, as well as being a place to meet and socialise, acting as community hubs in many cases. There is no cheap and quick solution to the long term needs of the service and whilst performance remains strong it is not considered sustainable without significant investment. Methods of improving the service have been identified as have investment requirements.*
- *Capital funding is required to improve the Council's large stock of sports and leisure centres. Some of this may come from Government PFI credits and Free Swimming capital. However, without capital funding from Leeds City Council, the service is unlikely to meet customer expectations in the future. The recommendations provide a combination of clear actions together with a framework within which to improve the quality of the existing Leisure Centres. Given the degree of complexity and the challenges relating to funding the Vision, it is vitally important that the plan retains sufficient flexibility to respond to funding decisions and any future opportunities that may arise but critically are clear and detailed enough to allow effective planning of delivery given the potential impacts on existing customers, staff and revenue budgets.*