

Report of Active Leeds

Report to: Chief Officer Operations

Date: 22 January 2021

Subject: Service Review Active Leeds – Leeds Sailing & Activity Centre

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Otley and Yeadon, although users come from all over Leeds and Bradford.	
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	
Appendix number:	

Summary

1. Main issues

- A report to the Council's Executive Board in October 2020 highlighted a budget gap in 2021/22 of £118.8 million, of which £59.1 million is due to the ongoing financial impact of Covid-19. In response, a number of proposals have been put forward for Active Leeds. One of which was approved to commence consultation on a proposal to close the Leeds Sailing & Activity Centre (LSAC) in Yeadon which would contribute a £88k saving.
- There are c3.75 full time equivalent staff members at the Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre, 1 of the full time posts is currently vacant. Active Leeds currently has in excess of 20 vacancies across the service and it is anticipated that alternative roles can be offered to displaced staff, even without taking the current programme of voluntary measures into consideration.
- The tarn (lake) is shared with Yeadon Sailing Club and the Angling Club which have lease arrangements in place with Parks and Countryside. LSAC has dedicated times so this would need to be considered and plans in place if LSAC closed.
- The proposal to close LSAC has received significant interest and concerns from the local community, schools/colleges/universities, clubs, organisations, and National Governing Bodies. A group from the local community have also set up a 'Save LSAC' petition which has attracted over 3000 signatures. The main concern being

this is the only Water based facility in Leeds and people won't access to affordable water based activities and coaching.

- Funding from The National Lottery Community Fund (which now represents what was the New Opportunities Fund) to originally build the LSAC have confirmed that it is likely, in principle no payback on the funding will be required if the building closed. A formal response from the fund will be required pending the decision on the proposal.
- Discussions have been had with two third party organisations in terms of operating the LSAC, however no confirmed interest has been registered and more time is required to explore this potential option.

2. Best Council Plan implications (see the [latest version of the Best Council Plan](#))

Leeds Sailing & Activity Centre contributes to the Councils vision for Leeds to be the best City in the UK and the following Best Council Plan priorities:

- Health & Wellbeing; supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles. Reducing health & inequalities
- Child Friendly City; Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- Age Friendly Leeds; Promoting opportunities for older people to be healthy, active, included and respected

This facility contributes to wider plans such as Get Set Leeds (Get Set Leeds is a partnership of people from all over the city who want to play a part in making Leeds more active). Thousands of people across of the City have told us that that an Active Environment which includes access to facilities and activities would encourage activity levels.

It also contributes to the Leeds Health & Wellbeing Board priorities which is 'More people more physically active, more often'

It links to a council Key Performance Indicator of reducing the number of people who are inactive which currently Leeds has 21% of the adult's population doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week.

There is also more of an emphasis in the National Curriculum of learning outside of the classroom. This includes outdoor learning and adventure activities. Sailing has also been reintroduced to the NC.

3. Resource implications

- The financial outcome from this proposal is a saving of 88k. The service intend to achieve this by continuing to explore the potential with the interested third party organisations, however this won't be in time for the start of the financial year 2021/22 and likely won't be in until mid-way in to the year.
- Replacement savings will be found within the service while these options are being explored to allow for the slippage in 2021/22.
- This change as a priority will aim to protect jobs and full time employees from the likelihood of redundancy.

Recommendations

The Chief Officer Operations is recommended to approve:

- a) further work to continue with interested third parties to identify options for future delivery of Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre whilst continuing to increase usage by existing parties.
- b) moving forward with an Expressions of Interest process in relation to a)
- c) the service to find the replacement savings to allow for the 2021/22 slippage while these options outlined at a) are explored.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the consultation undertaken on the proposal to close the Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre (LSAC) and recommend the potential proposal for LSAC in order to achieve savings of £88k.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds Sailing & Activity Centre is situated at Tanfield Park, Yeadon. The Centre offers a diverse range of outdoor and water based activities such as ; Sailing, Kayaking, Open Canoeing, Stand Up Paddling boarding, Windsurfing, Rowing, Climbing, Abseiling, Orienteering, off Road and Biking.
- 2.2 LSAC budget position for 2019/20 was a net position of 112,137. Total expenditure was 202,171 (of which 143,000 relates to staffing) and the income was 90,034.
- 2.3 The Centre is held in high regards nationally and is a training centre for the Royal Yachting Association and British Canoeing. A number of Schools, Groups, Organisations and Clubs across Leeds use the centre on a regular basis. Along with the centre also being used by adult and juniors on a regular basis for activities such courses and club based activities.
- 2.4 The lake is shared with Yeadon Tarn Sailing Club and the Anglers and this arrangement has been in place for a number of years. Parks and Countryside manage the lease and access arrangements for both of these. LSAC's access times are weekday Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday until 5.30pm with exclusive used on Thursday and Friday evenings and weekends until 12.30.
- 2.5 A majority of the work is seasonal, however regular bookings such as schools, courses and individual access are facilitated throughout the year. Maintaining equipment is a key task and is crucial to the longevity of the equipment so this is programmed to take place in the winter months and undertaken by site staff.
- 2.6 A number of successful partnerships are in place at LSAC. The first one is Leeds Youth Service who use the building to provide a base for young people for two evenings a week. They run a successful youth provision for local young people in the area from the centre and have done for over 15 years. The group work has had a positive impact on young people and provides positive support for schools and provides activities to support the young's people's health & wellbeing.
- 2.7 Another partnership is Leeds Beckett University for which LSAC provide space and lake access to enable the University Rowing Club and Canoe Kayak Club to train on site. There are approx. 50 members across both clubs which provides opportunities

to train as there is limited opportunity to use space within swimming pools, so LSAC provides the perfect venue for these clubs.

- 2.8 The third partnership is with British Rowing who have supported the team at LSAC and provided Leeds City Council with 8 rowing boards so we can provide activity.
- 2.9 The centre is an accredited sailability (Royal Yacht Association) and paddleability (British Canoeing) centre and provides a number of activities for paddlers and sailors with a disability. LSAC also works closely with Leeds Disabled People's Organisation and also has a disability outdoor activity club which operates weekly.
- 2.10 LSAC also provides a number of activities for youth groups, schools and for those who are often disengaged in main stream activities. LSAC has also worked closely with organisations to improve participation amongst the female population and weekly sessions for women and girls are on the programme.
- 2.11 Leeds Beckett University have a self-contained container in the boat yard accessed via an external gate which they use for changing and storage. LBU pay an annual charge of £4k to access the Tarn, boat yard and equipment.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Interest received from three third sector organisations to explore the potential operation. However more time is required to explore the interest of the organisations.
- 3.2 To appoint a third party operator to operate the site and for the service to find replacement savings to allow for 2021/2022 slippage (Staffing vacancies, ELI and energy management)
- 3.3 Two key partnership who would be directly affected by the closure; Leeds Beckett University and Leeds Youth Service.
- 3.4 Public petition in circulation with over 3000 signatures being led by a 'save Leeds sailing and activity centre' group. Feedback and comments captured have been included as part of this consultation process.
- 3.5 Concerns raised over the loss of the only outdoor water based facility in Leeds, and opportunities for people to take part in cost effective alternative sport and physical activities, that other leisure centres are not able to provide.
- 3.6 Loss of opportunities for alternative education where children learnt different skills to normal activities. Particularly for people on lower socioeconomic groups, who could afford to take part in activities provided elsewhere?
- 3.7 Alternative saving suggestions included a provision of a café on site, third party operator, investment in to alternative activities and equipment, more pay and play access times to the lake.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Public consultation started on proposal to close the Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre on Monday 23rd November and concluded on the Monday 04 January 2021. The methods used to consult included an online survey which was on the main

Council website and Active Leeds website. Paper copies were also available at all of our leisure centres. There were also:

- Virtual public conversations with all key user groups and local clubs.
- Virtual public consultation meetings held between December and January 2021.
- Conversations have taken place almost weekly with the community group set up to save the centre (Save LASAC community group).
- Consultation has taken place with Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Youth Service, National Governing Bodies and Yeadon Sailing Club.
- Staff have been consulted on the proposal and feedback has been captured as part of the consultation process.
- Further consultation and conversations have also taken place with local ward members and Otley Town Council.

4.1.2 In addition the service has also received a number of emails, comments and direct letters on this proposal which has also fed into this process.

4.1.3 The online survey returned 310 responses. A full summary report of the responses is included as an appendices with some key highlights noted as follows:

- 144 individual responses ,
- 166 responses from groups (education, youth services, clubs, businesses)
- 240 (77%) of the respondents have indicated that closing this facility would have a negative impact on their physical activity levels and therefore physical and mental health.
- Public petition in circulation with over 3000 signatures being led by a 'save Leeds sailing and activity centre' group. Feedback and comments captured have been included as part of this consultation process.

4.1.4 From the open comments there are number of key themes which include:

- Concerns raised over the loss of the only outdoor water based facility in Leeds, and opportunities for people to take part in cost effective alternative sport and physical activities, that other leisure centres are not able to provide.
- Loss of opportunities for alternative education where children learnt different skills to normal activities. Particularly for people on lower socioeconomic groups, who could afford to take part in activities provided elsewhere

- Alternative saving suggestions included a provision of a café on site, third party operator, investment in to alternative activities and equipment, more pay and play access times to the lake.

4.1.5 Brief overview of the comments from key partners:

- Leeds Beckett University (LBU) - LBU stressed it would have a huge implication for the university if LSAC closed. LBU stressed that as well as creating opportunities for students who are experienced in a sport to progress and compete at University, students also have the opportunity to try different activities. Students will often start a new sporting interest at University so they also cater for a lot of beginners. LBU stressed that the clubs rely on access to LSAC to be able to recruit new members especially beginners as the Tarn at provides a facility where beginners can be trained in a safe environment. Without new beginners the clubs would not have enough numbers to be able to operate and the University would lose the clubs
- Leeds Youth Service - The groups/work has a positive impact on young people and provides positive support for out of school activities, and wellbeing. The Youth groups have a positive impact on young people's lives. This is a needed more than ever in the current climate with the current Covid situation. The Youth Service help young people with mental health support, health relationships, self-esteem, **education and training. The Youth Service is the primary provider of 3in1 services** to young people, overseen by Leeds Sexual Health (Public Health) and is the only venue in the area delivering this. There is a lack of community buildings in Yeadon for alternative venues.
- Clubs (Yeadon Sailing Club, White Rose Canoe/Kayak Club and Leeds Rowing Club) – In summary the clubs felt that 2020 has been a challenging year. The clubs have no capacity to take additional work, or funds to expand or renovate club premises so they would struggle to support demand if LSAC closed. All clubs would be willing to continue the work with Leeds City Council to try and maintain the facilities an increase levels of participation.
- National Governing Bodies (British Rowing, British Canoeing, Royal Yachting Association) - LSCA is an accredited site which facilitates a varied programme of coaching awards. These opportunities within the region would be lost if LSAC closes. Governing bodies are finding that there has been an increase in people wanting to take part in water based activities because it can be accessing outside in a COVID safe environment. Unfortunately opportunities to do this safely is on the decline all Governing Bodies are willing to continue their work with Leeds to look at ways of increasing usage. Losing this facility will have a great impact opportunities for people to access and become qualified in these sports.
- 'Save LSAC' – the petition has attracted 3987 signatures to date and feedback can be seen in appendix 2.

4.1.6 It is clearly evident through this consultation exercise that the users and the local people feel quite strongly about the proposal to close the Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre. The closure would result in lack of opportunities for local people in Leeds to partake in activities delivered and support by this centre. Encouraging conversations with interested third parties, groups, organisations, NGB's and local

people mean that an alternative option could be considered. A third party operator would enable activity to remain in the locality which would greatly benefit the people of Leeds.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Impact Assessment has been completed for the original proposal to close the service and is attached to the report.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Leeds Sailing & Activity Centre contributes to the Council's vision for Leeds to be the best City in the UK and the following Best Council Plan priorities:
- Health & Wellbeing; supporting healthy, physically active lifestyles. Reducing health & inequalities
 - Child Friendly City; Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
 - Age Friendly Leeds; Promoting opportunities for older people to be healthy, active, included and respected
- 4.3.2 This facility contributes to wider plans such as Get Set Leeds (Get Set Leeds is a partnership of people from all over the city who want to play a part in making Leeds more active). Thousands of people across the City have told us that an Active Environment which includes access to facilities and activities would encourage activity levels.
- 4.3.3 It also contributes to the Leeds Health & Wellbeing Board priorities which is 'More people more physically active, more often'
- 4.3.4 It links to a council Key Performance Indicator of reducing the number of people who are inactive which currently Leeds has 21% of the adult's population doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week.
- 4.3.5 There is also more of an emphasis in the National Curriculum of learning outside of the classroom. This includes outdoor learning and adventure activities. Sailing has also been reintroduced to the NC.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.6 Leeds City Council's Best Council Plan includes ambitions for '*improving air quality, reducing pollution and noise*'. Accessible and local facilities will reduce the need to travel outside the local area which will contribute to reducing the carbon footprint across the City.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The recommendations outlined in this report indicate that the financial saving of 88k would not be achieved from the 01 April 2021 but the intention is that this would be achieved later in the year 2021/22.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this decision to continue further work on options.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There is no risk in proceeding with the alternative service delivery model other than budgetary pressures should there be a short fall in the identified savings target.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report provides detail on consultation undertaken, for which the community have expressed concerns with losing the only water based sport facility in Leeds. There has been interest from three third party organisation in operating the facility. However more time is required to explore the options fully to ensure the organisations confirm their interest in the operation moving forward. The ideal option is to appoint a third party operator to operate the site and for the service to find replacement savings to allow for 2021/2022 slippage (Staffing vacancies, ELI and energy management)

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Chief Officer Operations approved
 - a) further work to continue with interested third parties to identify options for future delivery of Leeds Sailing and Activity Centre whilst continuing to increase usage by existing parties.
 - b) moving forward with an Expressions of Interest process in relation to a)
 - c) the service to find the replacement savings to allow for the 2021/22 slippage while these options outlined at a) are explored.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.