

## Active Leeds – Vision for Wellbeing Centres Report

Date: 11th December 2024

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

This report sets out the updated position regarding the ongoing development and delivery of the Vision for Wellbeing Centres in Active Leeds, the opportunities being delivered and developed for facility invest to save projects and the challenges being faced around the Council's financial challenge and the requirement to generate additional income and make savings and efficiencies where possible.

Active Leeds is a large, complex service with over 365 FTE's working across 17 leisure centres, 14 gyms and 22 pools, as well as delivering health and well-being programmes commissioned by Sport England, the NHS and Public Health.

Since the previous Vision for Leisure report was presented to Executive Board in 2016, there has been significant investment into facilities including a new gym at Middleton, gym upgrades across a number of sites and increased efficiencies in operating costs around reduction in hours and co-location. This has had a positive impact on membership numbers which are now over 32,000 having pre-pandemic only ever achieved 21,000.

This report sets out the current pipeline of invest to save proposals which are focused on increased income generation as well as health and well-being outcomes to support Leeds' Marmot City ambition. In addition, it also identifies opportunities to review and operate sites in a different way to reduce the net cost of the service to maximise service efficiencies and the broader role of the leisure estate. Once delivered it is anticipated that the 3 year financial savings target of c£2.5m will be achieved.

### Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to

- a) Note the overview presented regarding the Active Leeds service, progress and achievements delivered since the previous Vision for Leisure and the need to look forward in the context of the Council's Best City Ambition and the current financial challenge;
- b) Note the positive impact facility improvements are delivering across the city in relation to health and well-being outcomes, increased memberships, swimming programme growth and the importance of

continued invest to save proposals brought forward to support both health and well-being outcomes, driving Leeds' ambition as a Marmot City and to continue to increase income generation;

- c) Note and support the invest to save proposals into Leisure and Wellbeing Centres across the city to deliver: a network of high quality, affordable, accessible and sustainable leisure and wellbeing centres and a modern, commercially competitive leisure offer that supports income generation and the Council's financial challenge;
- d) Approve in principle, the proposals for a long-term lease of Middleton Leisure Centre (excluding the gym) to Laurence Calvert Academy and note that detailed Terms will be delegated to the Director of City Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Adult Social Care, Active Lifestyles and Culture.
- e) Note the ongoing work regarding Wetherby Leisure Centre and the potential considerations around its potential relocation at a future point in time; and
- f) Note that all of the proposals have been designed in line with the Financial Challenge position and the ask to reduce the Active Leeds net managed budget by £2.5m over a 3 year period.

## **What is this report about?**

1.0 This report provides Executive Board with: -

- An overview of Active Leeds and its operational facilities, business support functions and health and well-being programmes facilitated by the Service and the outcomes delivered;
- Progress to date and projects delivered following the previous December 2016 Vision for Leisure and Wellbeing Centres Executive Board report;
- The 'Vision for Wellbeing Centres' and workstreams progressed to continue to deliver a network of high quality, affordable, accessible and sustainable wellbeing centres for the benefit of Leeds residents;
- Proposals currently in development and to be brought forward, that will enhance and improve Active Leeds facilities from a condition and activity point of view, generate income and attracting new users;
- An insight into some of the wider challenges being faced by Active Leeds across the service and the proposals being considered to address these.

1.1 In 2016 the previous Vision for Leisure and Wellbeing Centres report was approved by Executive Board. The report set out a long-term vision to secure a network of high quality, affordable, accessible and sustainable leisure and wellbeing centres (in particular public swimming pools) for the benefit of the people of Leeds. The report highlighted the net cost of Active Leeds of £5.7m, a reduction by 45% over the previous 5 years (2010-2015). These reductions in the net cost related to proposals including the closure of East and South Leeds Sports Centres, removal of Middleton Leisure Centre swimming pool, Richmond Hill Centre One Stop closure, Bramley Baths Community Asset Transfer as well as the replacement of 3 existing leisure centres with new PFI operated facilities.

1.2 Based on the approach above the 2016 Vision identified the following principles for Active Leeds to consider during the ongoing operation and management of the facilities, which are embedded fully in Active Leeds as its delivery framework. These are: -

1. To bring forward schemes that improve the customer offer, increase participation, increase income and generate sufficient return on investment that can then support the Council's wider revenue savings targets over the next 3 years;
2. Continue the role out of brand-new Leisure and Wellbeing Centres, where centres are life-expired;

3. Deliver ongoing planned maintenance to facilities where funding allows to protect existing customer income levels and ensure our buildings stay open and attractive;
4. Respond to future demand and supply pressures;
5. Ensuring where possible that the investment decisions are appropriately balanced taking into account health inequalities in addition to swimming pool demand;
6. Reducing or removing services to meet revenue budget challenges and support future developments.
7. Bring forward new developments that limit the potential impact on the Councils revenue budget.

1.3 The 2016 Executive Board Report identified several invest to save proposals to be delivered as part of the Council's Vision for Leisure programme. These were: -

- **Aireborough Leisure Centre (phase 1)** – improvements to changing facilities, pool hall, reception, car parking, reception area local 'Community Hub', which was completed 2019;
- **Middleton Leisure Centre** – a new multi-purpose gym to be constructed adjacent to the existing leisure centre which was completed in 2019;
- Site assessments to be undertaken to identify a location for a new wellbeing centre in Inner East Leeds, the outcome of which concluded that the existing Fearnville Leisure Centre site was the optimum location. This was approved by Executive Board in September 2017;
- Site assessments to be undertaken for reprovision of the Wellbeing Centre in Rothwell. The outcome of this was dependent upon Royds Secondary School co-locating to the Leisure Centre site thereby releasing land for development to support a business case. The school is now an academy and Royds (now Fulton Academy) will be rebuilt on its existing site as part of the DFE Schools Rebuilding Programme, restricting any potential business case for the Leisure Centre at this time. However, Rothwell has received recent investment in the gym and the swimming pool, which has seen memberships increase by 157 members in August alone.
- The reduction of hours at Kippax Leisure Centre to 58 was implemented. Following a lengthy closure (Dec 2021 and Summer 2022) these were reduced further, however due to demand for school swimming opening hours are again at 58. Work to identify a central site to relocate both Kippax and Garforth Leisure Centres proved challenging at the time however further considerations around Kippax are set out in paragraph 2.8.

1.4 The Active Leeds service provides a wide range of facilities/centres, activities and programmes, as well as various targeted health and wellbeing initiatives in both leisure centre and community/locality settings. The service operates 17 leisure centres, 14 gyms and 22 pools and almost 4 million people visit annually.

1.5 Continued capital investment is required just to maintain Leisure centre revenues, let alone increase them. Active Leeds over the last 2 years have delivered several invest to save proposals across sites which have delivered positive health and well-being outcomes as well as increases in memberships and additional income to support the service. These include: -

- Wetherby Leisure Centre introduced Techno gym live and on demand capability and equipment upgrades which has increased members by 391.
- Morley Leisure Centre introduced Bio Circuits, increase the gym size and techno gym live and on demand which has increased members by 806.
- Armley Leisure Centre introduced a larger space for strength work, techno gym live and on demand and Skill Run for performance running which has increased members by 239.

- Rothwell Leisure Centre introduced a larger space, techno gym live and bio circuits and when the new gym reopened this increased members by 157 in the first month.

- 1.6 These investments are playing a major role in Active Leeds in year financial position, with an increase in income of c£1m during the 2024/25 financial year. This has delivered an increase in Leeds Card membership from 23,300 in 2018 to over 32,000 in September this year. This is the highest membership ever achieved by Active Leeds. Further investment is planned, with proposals underway at Scott Hall Leisure Centre, John Smeaton Leisure Centre and Kirkstall Leisure Centre which will be delivered in time for the start of the New Year.
- 1.7 The Active Leeds Service has also played an important role in supporting a more flexible approach to delivering services. There are a number of sites including John Charles, Aireborough, Middleton, Pudsey and more that provide in the first instance Council services such as community hubs and libraries as well as staff from services across the Council using spaces as their office base or touch down spaces. There are many more opportunities to explore as part of wider asset reviews as to how Active Leeds sites can and should be used more proactively and flexibly as Council assets.
- 1.8 In addition there are a number of external organisations such as Aspire, Hunslet Rugby League, Cockburn MAT, Ralph Thorseby and other schools who either lease or licence/book space within leisure centres, for the benefit of the local community. Aspire in particular use many of the Council's centres to deliver their services. Holt Park in particular has benefitted from the positive site relationships between their members, Mitie the PFI operator and Active Leeds to deliver a new community garden together at the centre. The approach outlined in 1.7 and 1.8 supports the Council's Customer Strategy ambitions to enable customers to be able to contact us in an easy and accessible way, helping us tailor services to meet the unique needs of users/individuals and helps to build trust between the Council and local communities.
- 1.9 Local Authorities are the major provider of leisure centres particularly pools. Swimming pools are complex and expensive facilities to build and operate, which has manifested in an insufficient supply of pools across the city to meet current demand for aquatics disciplines. The Council is the main provider of pool space for swimming lessons with each week, over 14,000 children on the Council's learn to swim programme, over 300 adults and 110 on the disability learn to swim programme. The Council provides over 94% of all school learn to swim sessions in our centres, which supports Children and Families statutory duty for all children being able to swim 25m by the end of primary school and be taught water safety.
- 1.10 The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) commissioned through Sport England for the previous Vision for Leisure undertook an assessment supply and demand. The review considered future housing growth and population growth in Leeds. The key messages from this FPM were that there is an identified need to invest into swimming pool provision and health and fitness provision to meet current and future demands. Demand for pool space across the city will exceed current supply in 2024 by c.2-3 swimming pools. With current projected housing and population growth especially in the East the demand for swimming will grow and this is currently borne out with all swimming lessons now at 100% capacity. Active Leeds is exploring options to address this shortfall, through the proposals for the rebuild of a new Fearnville Well-being centre to incorporate a new splash pad and learner pool as well as consideration to expand pool space at John Smeaton as set out in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.7 respectively.
- 1.11 Nationally, since 2019, sixty-five pools have been closed permanently. Leeds, in taking proactive action as outlined above in 1.1 to date has meant that since 2019 Active Leeds through invest to save proposals have protected swimming pool provision, invested the remaining facilities by providing new and expanded gyms, flexible space usage creating activity rooms, spinning/dance studios, improved changing facilities, provision of online classes, alongside proactive marketing campaigns and competitive pricing. This has gone a long way to support the operational costs associated with providing swimming pools however further invest to save project will be required to deliver an increase in water space in the city.
- 1.12 For financial year 2023/24 the net managed budget for Active Leeds was set at £8.8m. This includes £6.8m of PFI charges, the centres for which those charges apply delivers c£3-4m of income, support functions and NNDR. The service achieved a higher income than budgeted of £22m overall. There were one off retentions against PFI of £1.8m over 2 years due to operator compliance failures as

well as significant increases in memberships and usage following delivery of successful investment propositions at several sites. This resulted in an actual net position of £5.32m, which contributed in part to the final underspend position of £1.6m achieved in City Development for financial year 2023/24.

- 1.13 Notwithstanding the proactive interventions taken by the service, additional income generation and the success of invest to save projects, the Council's current financial position will continue to challenge the service and there is a need to generate additional income and generate savings and efficiencies. In order to achieve this, a review and refresh of the Vision for Wellbeing centres is required to set the future direction for the Active Leeds Service and its offer moving forward.

## **2.0 What impact will this proposal have?**

- 2.1 This proposal will set out Active Leeds proposed facility developments, priorities and improvements to be delivered over the next 3 years to generate additional income or reduce current cost base to meet the requirements of the wider Council budget measures by reducing the Active Leeds managed budget by £2.5m by financial year 2027/28.
- 2.2 Active Leeds is split into three distinct areas – Sport Facilities (Leisure/Wellbeing Centres, Gyms, swimming pools etc), Business Management, Support and Development and Active Lifestyles.

## **2.3 Sport Facilities**

- 2.3.1 Active Leeds operates 17 Leisure Centres, 14 gyms, 22 pools across Leeds and offers over 400 exercise classes per week. There are 328 FTEs and casual coaches who are responsible for the operation, health and safety and coaching/instructing across all sites which are open to customers 7 days a week.
- 2.3.2 Pudsey Leisure Centre (Pudsey Baths originally) is the oldest centre currently operated by the Council. The buildings foundation stone was laid by the then King George VI and Elizabeth, the Queen Mother during the first royal visit to Pudsey. Middleton, Fearnville, Aireborough, Scott Hall, Wetherby, Kippax, Kirkstall, Rothwell and Garforth were all part of the next tranche of centre through the 1970's and 1980's with John Charles Stadium for Sport and the Athletics and Bowls Centre built in the mid 1990's, the International Pool at John Charles in 2005 and finally three PFI leisure centres for Armley, Morley and Holt Park built in 2010 and 2012 respectively.
- 2.3.3 The offer at each centre varies to meet user demand and commercial viability with retrofits to some of the facilities to include new gyms, activity rooms, spin/dance studios, creche facilities and to accommodate activities such as boxing, fencing, gymnastics, inflatables, training etc. Activities offered include studio cycling virtual and instructor led, Zumba, pilates, circuits, swimming sessions for all requirements, dance fit, walking football, body combat, hydrotherapy, step aerobics, circuits and many more. Two centres do not have swimming pool provision - Middleton Leisure Centre and Garforth Leisure Centre
- 2.3.4 Several of these centres are now either beyond end of life, such as Fearnville Leisure Centre or require significant investment to address condition and décor issues to protect the site from deterioration, ensure Health and Safety compliance, as well as maintain user expectations and current income levels.

## **Invest to Save Proposals**

## **2.4 Fearnville Wellbeing Centre**

- 2.4.1 The existing Fearnville Leisure Centre site is 28.45 hectares in size and is located between Foundry Lane and South Parkway to the south, Oakwood Lane to the west and Wykebeck Valley to the east. The site is one of the city's largest areas of green space with 8 playing fields allocated to local teams and clubs (Leeds Maccabi juniors, Gipton Juniors and Shadwell Juniors), a full size all- weather pitch (now defunct), a large multi-use games area (MUGA) and tennis court area, a skate park, bowling greens (leased to a local club), a new bike hub with large BMX track, allotments and of course Fearnville Leisure Centre.
- 2.4.2 Its access is from Oakwood Lane which is a relatively busy route; however, the Leisure Centre suffers significantly from a lack of street presence and frontage.

- 2.4.3 Fearnville has continued to serve the people of Inner East Leeds since 2009 following the closure of East Leeds Leisure Centre. In 2016/17 visits were at 175,869 which declined to 130,000 in 2022/23 and is now around 100,000. This is a consequence of the condition of the building not meeting user expectations. Although this is low compared to the newer leisure sites, the role the existing centre plays in its local community is vitally important from a health and wellbeing perspective as shown through Community committee data for the Inner east as;
- 88% of population are classed as being within the top quintile of deprivation.
  - All-cause mortality for both men and women under 75s is significantly above the Leeds average and the area is the highest of all in Leeds.
  - Smoking, obesity and diabetes rates are all significantly above the Leeds average, and higher than all other Community Committee areas (it is estimated that 40% of all early mortality is due to lifestyle factors) .
  - National Child Measurement Programme data shows obesity rates in the Inner East cluster are higher than the Leeds average and by year 6 the area has obesity rates of 23.5%, compared to 15.6% in the most affluent areas of the city.
- 2.4.4 Fearnville Leisure Centre currently provides a main and learner pool, a sports hall, a 15 station gym, a dance studio/multi use room and squash courts along with associated changing provision and car parking. The current leisure centre already provides swimming lessons for 25 local schools as well as swimming lessons for 735 children out of school, as well as being a base for activity for national Governing Bodies of Sport for triathlon and cycling. The centre is currently used as a day care facility for Aspire and sessions are being developed to deliver weight Management / Heart Watch and Cancer Rehabilitation through links with Leeds Rhinos Foundation.
- 2.4.5 Due to its location, close to one of the largest housing growth areas of the city, the East Leeds Extension which includes 2 new primary schools, new local centres and other housing developments – as well as the high levels of deprivation and local usage, it was proposed as part of the 2016 Vision for Leisure and by Executive Board in September 2017 to progress with a proposal to deliver a new Fearnville Wellbeing Centre on the current leisure centre site (King George the V playing fields).
- 2.4.6 Following the unsuccessful Levelling Up Bid, the scheme has been reviewed and redesigned to fit a budget envelope of c£25m, which aligns with the Capital Programme funding and potential grant funding/business case development. The Wellbeing Centre proposals (See Appendix 1 ) include the construction of:
- a large swimming pool, water confidence area and splash pad.
  - a learner pool.
  - a changing village.
  - fitness gym – 120 stations, studio spaces, spin room and cycle hub.
  - adult day centre.
  - new reception and café area, adventure play and office space
  - replacement all-weather pitch.
  - skate park, Multi Use Games Area, tennis courts and play zones
  - New woodland planting and biodiversity areas.
  - cycle and footpath linkages to increase connectivity to the wider Wykebeck Valley
- 2.4.7 The importance of the redevelopment of the new Fearnville Wellbeing Centre from a health and wellbeing perspective is clearly understood. From a commercial perspective it is essential to Active Leeds and the Councils financial position that the new centre is commercially viable and sustainable.
- 2.4.8 Investment into Fearnville Wellbeing Centre would more than double current use within the centre. This is based on independent work carried out by The Leisure Database Company, who reviewed the demand catchment for the facilities. Alongside the new all-weather pitch and cafe, the forecast is that the new wellbeing centre will deliver a 35-40% increase in revenue, which would see the centre move from its current deficit to a net positive position of c£200-300k per annum.
- 2.4.9 The updated Fearnville Wellbeing Centre scheme has now secured planning approval and has moved into the next stages of a formal procurement of which a 2-stage design and build procurement process will be undertaken. The new Wellbeing Centre proposals are attached at Appendix 1 and it is anticipated that the scheme will start on site during 2025.

## **2.5 Aireborough Leisure Centre**

2.5.1 Aireborough Leisure Centre formed part of the delivery proposals for the 2016 Vision for Leisure for Active Leeds. The proposals delivered in 2018/9 included:-

- Swimming changing rooms - enhance access and include cubicles and improved shower / toilet facilities within a 'village' style change area
- Pool hall – retiling the pool deck and improving the walled areas
- Reception – making it modern and welcoming
- Exterior – reorienting the entrance to link to the car park and improving the façade of the building, to include an outdoor terrace with seating.
- Relocating the Library into the Leisure Centre to create a Community Hub with a new Café facility. The Café outlet is to be managed by the LCC Catering section

2.5.2 Since re-opening, Aireborough's Health & Fitness memberships has grown to 2,850, a 40% growth since 2020, which is putting pressure on the current gym provision. Aireborough has the highest use per gym station across the portfolio and 511 of these members are juniors or students which can cause capacity issues between the hours of 3-6pm. Inability to satisfy demand has led to increased dissatisfaction across the membership base and will eventually lead to increased cancellations. The service has identified that an improved bigger fitness product is required to satisfy the growing demand in the area.

2.5.3 This demand is to be met by increasing the size of the current gym by extending into the activity hall. Two squash courts are to be removed, with repairs and upgrade works taking place on the two remaining courts. The squash viewing balcony is also to be extended. The disused climbing room, located behind the two squash courts is to be removed and the two spaces combined to create a large purpose-built dedicated fitness class studio to replace the activity hall where the current fitness classes take place. The building is also being made more energy efficient with improvements to roof insulation and LED lighting. The roof will also allow the provision of solar panels to be fitted later to improve the energy efficiency further.

2.5.4 A business case was supported as part of an invest to save for a Phase 2 development in May 2024.

2.5.5 Phase 2 proposals consist of:-

- Larger and better equipped Gym.
- Squash courts to Squash England Standards.
- A new Activity Studio.
- Improved heating and cooling within these spaces.
- Building remedial works including roof works.

2.5.6 The proposals are estimated at c£1.02m. Work started on site in June 2024 and will take 6 months to complete with works phased to ensure minimal disruption on the site programme of activities. This will mean the facility will be fully open ready for the New Year which is the perfect time to maximise the new year interest in health and fitness memberships and ensure the service maximises the first quarter of the year in terms of health and fitness sales and therefore income.

2.5.7 Based on the latent demand and population data and based on the additional 22- gym station and new larger fitness studio is it proposed that the membership level will increase by 500-800 taking the membership level to between 3,300-3,600 members. The potential income generation for the site based on the increased users/memberships could generate between £120-220k per annum. The proposals are shown at Appendix 2

## **2.6 John Charles Centre for Sport – Outdoor Facilities**

2.6.1 The outdoor sports facilities at JCCS currently comprise 1 full size, sand dressed all-weather pitch, 10 five-a-side all-weather pitches, 6 tennis courts, 1 full size grass training pitch and an old grass throwing area. The full-size all-weather pitch has not been in use/bookable for almost 20 years and is unusable. The 5-a-side pitch usage has declined significantly over the last 5 years as the condition of the pitches has declined and the courts are now suffering from acts of vandalism. The grass training

pitch is used by Hunslet RL and other local teams for training purposes and has limited use due to its condition.

- 2.6.2 At the tennis centre outdoor court usage is relatively low, with only a real need for 4 courts during the key competitions running 3 weeks of the year (Yorkshire County Championships etc). Competition formats and scheduling can be adjusted to continue delivery of these events on 10 courts if the 6 indoor courts are also utilised. This provides the site with the opportunity to consider how it could accommodate alternative sports/uses on the space of 2 of the outdoor tennis courts to increase the variety of offer at the centre.

The proposals to the outdoor pitch areas consist of:-

1. **Full Sized All-Weather Pitch** - Conversion of the full-sized sand dressed all-weather pitch to a new 3/4g rubber crumb pitch with a new shock pad, fencing and floodlighting.
2. **5-a-side pitches** - Conversion to six-a-side pitches and relocation in part and replacement of the 3G rubber crumb carpets and surround fencing.
3. **Outdoor Tennis Courts** - Retention of 4 existing tennis courts and the conversion of 2 to 6 padel courts which is being part/fully funded by an interest free loan of £250k from the LTA. Padel is currently one of the fastest growing sports in the world, but with very little in existence in Leeds. Padel at JCCS would complement tennis provision and attract usage from non-tennis users and has the potential to generate £300k pa. A part year saving of £150k has been put forward as part of the Directorates savings proposals for 25/26.
4. **Grass Training Pitch** - Conversion of the grass training pitch into a 3/4g full sized rugby league standard all-weather pitch (subject to match funding through RFL and Hunslet RL. The pitch would be fully lettable and would be one of the few rugby league standard pitches in the city and as such demand for use would be high.
5. **Grass Throws Area** - Conversion of the grass throws area to 4 outdoor cricket nets which is fully funded by the ECB and is due to open in 2024 in advance of the other works highlighted above.

- 2.6.4 As part of the wider scheme it is proposed to revamp the indoor tennis centre reception, café and seating areas, repositioning them to a more prominent location that is visible from the new padel courts and pitches and expand the changing facilities bringing more footfall through the café into the tennis centre.

- 2.6.5 Funding for the scheme is expected to be secured in part through the Football Foundation (a 60-70% contribution similar to the 'Parklife' approach), a Padel/LTA contribution of a £250k no interest loan, £75k funding of the cricket nets through the ECB and Prudential Borrowing as part of the Business case development for the facilities.

- 2.6.6 The Football Foundation, in partnership with Active Leeds, have developed a business case for the scheme and with the additional facilities outlined above, there is the potential to generate between £350k to £500k pa in additional income. The details of the proposals are attached at Appendix 3

## 2.7 John Smeaton Leisure Centre

- 2.7.1 The 2016 Vision for Leisure and Wellbeing Centres identified 3 'refurbishment' proposals that would bring a more commercial focus to the service offer and deliver a net annual surplus after borrowing costs. Two of these Aireborough (phase 1) and Middleton Gym have been delivered. Due to pressure on swimming pool provision the third proposal, to expand/widen the swimming pool at John Smeaton Leisure Centre is now in development. The proposals include a gym expansion, new learner swimming pool and upgraded all-weather pitch. With swimming lessons now at 100% capacity and John Smeaton being at the centre of the East Leeds Extension housing growth area, it is essential to bring this feasibility forward as an invest to save business case.

- 2.7.2 The feasibility works have been commissioned and a high-level scheme is under preparation to enable a full business case to be prepared and prudential borrowing to be undertaken. It is anticipated that when delivered the proposals combined could deliver c£250-300k pa in additional income. It is proposed to take the outcome of the feasibility to FPG where a review of the business case robustness will be undertaken before any further progress is made.

## 2.8 Kippax Leisure Centre



- 2.8.1 Kippax Leisure Centre currently provides a 25m pool, a 4 court sports hall and changing rooms. The centre is c 50 years old and its condition is deteriorating. In addition there is no lift within the building and access to the upper floors is limited.
- 2.8.2 Notwithstanding the current issues with the building, Kippax Leisure Centre is an important part of the Active Leeds offer. The growth in demand for swimming across the city is high with provision across all bookings at 100% capacity. Any potential reduction in swimming provision in Leeds would put severe strain across all centres, especially in East Leeds where future housing growth will increase demand further.
- 2.8.3 Based on the current requirements for swimming provision across east Leeds and the service as a whole, it is proposed to review Kippax Leisure Centre and a potential future offer that could protect a swimming offer, provide potential opportunities for co-location of assets, provide a state-of-the-art gym and provide a wellbeing offer that is more sustainable longer term. The review will explore potential models that have been delivered recently across the country which align to the requirements of the locality and local community needs.

## **2.9 Middleton Leisure Centre**

- 2.9.1 Middleton Leisure Centre is located off Middleton Ring Road and has a studio, squash courts, under 8's soft play gym and full-size all-weather pitch. As part of a concentrated programme of leisure centre/pool closures, PFI new builds and a development of a more commercial focus to Active Leeds, in 2009 a decision was made by Executive Board, to close the swimming pool at Middleton Leisure Centre. This was related to the delivery of the new International Pool at John Charles Centre for Sport and a need to reduce the operating costs of the centre. Currently the centre has a net deficit of £222k with its main income generation from the adjacent Laurence Calvert Academy.
- 2.9.2 The 2016 Executive Board report identified the potential to develop a commercial opportunity to the site in the form of a new stand-alone gym which was delivered in 2018/19.
- 2.9.3 As the gym proposal was under development, Executive Board approved the disposal of the adjacent site, the Council owned Middleton Depot, to the Department for Education for a new secondary free school (Laurence Calvert) which would be operated by Cockburn MAT. The school opened in September 2022 and is the main user of the leisure centre to deliver its physical activity curriculum as well as using meeting room and other space as required.
- 2.9.4 Without prejudice discussions have been held between Cockburn MAT and the Council to explore whether there is interest from the MAT to take over the operations of the building thereby ensuring the facility and its offer is retained within the local community but the ownership and liability for the centre no longer sits with LCC. The existing user rights would be protected and the implications for staffing would need to be resolved however, this may be a positive outcome for both parties. This approach is being explored due to the high running costs of the centre and the need to focus of the operation and management of the other leisure centre in the ward, John Charles Centre for Sport to improve its financial sustainability.
- 2.9.5 It is important to note that this approach supports the first Vision for Leisure Executive Board report ambition in 2009, which recommended that opportunities to explore a community asset transfer to an appropriate end user. The opportunity has been unachievable until now due to the complexity of the operation of a leisure centre and its location. Having the school located adjacent to the centre and also being the centres largest user has enabled the proposal to be brought forward at this time.
- 2.9.6 Should this approach be supported by Executive Board It is proposed to hold further discussions with ward members, stakeholders and users to understand and mitigate any concerns before any draft disposal Terms are developed. This proposal would lead to a net cost reduction of c£222k.

## **2.10 Wetherby Leisure Centre**

- 2.10.1 Wetherby Leisure Centre is located on Lodge Lane in Wetherby. It is a busy centre with a bodyline gym, 25m swimming pool, learner pool, fitness studio and a functional training area. The centre sits

high above lodge lane and access for disabled users is challenging. The centre is showing signs of deterioration and will likely need replacement within the next 3-5 years.

2.10.2 The challenge to be addressed relates to where any new centre in Wetherby could be relocated. Currently Wetherby High School will be rebuilt under the DfE's Schools Rebuilding Programme. Proactive discussions with the DfE have taken place to explore the potential to relocate the existing leisure centre to part of the existing school site, which is oversized for a school of its size. The DfE has recently completed its feasibility for the school rebuild and this has confirmed that there is sufficient space for a replacement leisure centre within it. Securing funding for feasibility is underway and high level proposals will be developed in 2025.

## **2.11 George Street Hotel Development and City Centre Gym**

2.11.1 In September 2022 the Executive Board gave approval for the redevelopment of George Street, with the City Council taking the role of developer of a 143-bed hotel over ground floor commercial units and the potential for a Council operated gym. Further feasibility has been undertaken on the gym proposal and a business case has been developed to support the implementation of a gym as part of the development.

2.11.2 The proposal is to include an accessible 60-65 station council operated (Active Leeds) gym facility which will offer a functional training space, small range of pin select resistance equipment, regular cardiovascular equipment range and a small High Intensity Training space on the ground floor as part of the George Street hotel scheme. The scheme is looking to create an addition entrance to Kirkgate Market and improve connectivity and linkage with the Victoria Gate development, Leeds Central Bus Station and beyond to the new developments on Quarry Hill. The proposal will include accessible changing room spaces with toilets and possible access to the space being 24/7 to match in with the hotel and needs of the area at an affordable price. There is also the opportunity to work with the market event space to activate this space for fitness classes and other activities that will further aid physical activity opportunities for people visiting, working and living in the area.

2.11.3 The proposal is to enable the gym to be delivered as part of the main contract. This will allow fit out costs to be secured in competition, utilising one team to design and construct the development. The gym proposal along with the hotel secured planning approval in November 2023 and is currently in its procurement phase.

2.11.4 The gym would be staffed core hours 9am-1pm 3-8pm. The facility will be accessed via digital means with turnstile gated access with CCTV monitoring outside core staffed hours.

2.11.5 This will provide a City Centre facility as part of the portfolio of Active Leeds facilities across Leeds where there is currently a gap in provision for a local authority affordable health and fitness services. The location is in Little London and Woodhouse wards but close to the boundaries of priority wards of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Hunslet and Riverside where physical inactivity rates are high and these wards face complex, challenging and interrelated health inequalities.

## **3.0 What impact will this proposal have?**

3.1 Based on the savings and income generation opportunities and continued growth identified in this report, Active Leeds is on target to both generate new income for the Council as well as making efficiencies and savings. Whilst this will be challenging and is dependent on delivery of the facilities identified, proposals are well underway with the facilities due to be delivered in 24/25 and works will continue to up to 27/28 and beyond.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

## **4.0 Health and Wellbeing**

- 4.1 These proposals contribute directly to Leeds being a Marmot City Health and Wellbeing through the operation of the facilities managed and operated by Active Leeds set out earlier in the report however the Active Lifestyles team in Active Leeds play an important role in engagement and delivery of physical activity programmes, many of which are supported financially by Sport England, Public Health and the NHS.
- 4.2 The Active Lifestyles team lead on the City's the Physical Activity (PA) Ambition for Leeds alongside Public Health. The PA sets out that physical activity remains a key priority for Leeds City Council and is embedded throughout city policy and strategy. Physical Activity is a priority within the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 'A city where everybody can be more active, more often' and contributes to reaching our vision to be a healthy and caring city where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest. It is also highlighted as a key theme within the Big Leeds Chat, as well as contributing to the Leeds Marmot City Commitment to create a fairer, healthier city for everyone.
- 4.3 There are now several workstreams set as part of the PA. Updates on their progress are described below.
- **Children and Young People: Young Minds Get Active (YMGA)**  
This workstream focusing on young people and mental health is being led in partnership across Yorkshire Sport Foundation, Public Health, Children and Families, Active Leeds and third-sector physical activity partners (supported by Street Games and Voluntary Action Leeds), and mental health specialists including MindMate Ambassadors and local schools.
  - **Ageing Well**  
The focus on the Ageing Well priority came from a Rapid Health Needs Assessment that identified inactivity levels had risen during the Covid-19 pandemic for those aged 65 years and above. In particular strength & balance activity was reported to have decreased. Modelling also predicts that 110,000 more older people are projected to have at least one fall per year because of inactivity (OHID, 2021).
  - **LEAP - Leeds Encouraging Activity in People**  
'Leeds Encouraging Activity in People' is a pilot targeted exercised referral programme with the primary aim of increasing physical activity levels of inactive people who have a long-term health condition. LEAP targets 4 specific health conditions within the NHS Core20PLUS5 approach: mental health, diabetes, COPD and hypertension. Physical activity is known to positively affect or help manage these conditions. The pilot project is currently in four Primary Care Network areas which are: West Leeds, Armley, Middleton and Hunslet, and HATCH (Chapelton, Burmantofts, Harehills and Richmond Hill).
  - An assessment report for LEAP is currently in draft with Leeds Beckett University with some of the preliminary key messages:
    - Most referred clients were inactive before LEAP, 80% of whom became active after joining the programme.
    - LEAP is effective in helping individuals who are ready to become physically active to make this a reality.
    - LEAP is especially effective in helping people living with multiple morbidities to become more physically active. 73.9% physically inactive clients with multiple morbidities became regularly physically active
    - When participants become more active, they report an improvement in their mental health.
    - 76.3% of all clients achieved statistically significant improvements in SWEMWBS (Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale) scores.
    - Those who join LEAP with a mental health condition experience the highest mental health benefits, moving positively 5.6 points up on their SWEMWBS scores.
  - **Get Set Leeds Local**

Get Set Leeds Local (GSSL) is a Sport England funded project which combines a place-based approach with community-based co-production. The project began in December 2019 and is funded until November 2025. The total Sport England funding committed to the project to date is £832K. Our place-based approach ensures we work in an asset-based way to bring people together to develop innovative community projects that meet local need and help create environments to maintain healthy lifestyles.

GSSL supports Leeds City Council's locality-based approach focusing work in areas within the top 1% most disadvantaged. Work is currently focussed in four of our priority localities in Leeds; Seacroft, New Wortley, Beeston and Holbeck. In addition to this over the next year GSSL Project Team will begin to embed its approach within Gipton and Harehills ward.

- **Active Workplaces**

This project focuses on working with employers & employees to co-design projects that focuses on their health and wellbeing challenges using physical activity. This is a new priority workstream within the Physical Activity Ambition.

The aims of this work are:

- To support organisations with their health and wellbeing challenges using physical activity approaches.
- To support individuals within the workplace to improve their mental and physical health.
- To develop a flexible Active Workplaces model with robust evaluation. Learn how to co-create work-based projects and share learning to scale.
- To create and develop a network of relationships with organisations in the city and increase the connectivity to the physical activity system in Leeds.

The Active Workplaces project has been supporting a range of Leeds City Council internal teams & services by working with the internal 'Be Well' approach. A variety of supporting activity includes interactive health and wellbeing events, direct delivery of 1-2-1 health and wellbeing check in's and the co-design of projects that support increased physical activity in the workplace. The innovative

- **DfT Active Travel Social Prescribing Project**

Active Leeds, Public Health, Leeds Integrated Care Board and partners have been successful in securing funding from the Department of Transport (DfT) for a 3-year revenue project (£1.3 million across 2022 - 2025) to implement an Active Travel Social Prescribing project in the Burmantofts, Harehills and Richmond Hill (Primary Care Network) area of the city. The project is based on community and partner engagement, centred around several interventions including:

- communication,
- a focus on the physical and social environment,
- the development of three urban trails (one in each of the ward areas),
- a range of walking activities such as led walks and buddying schemes,
- learn to ride sessions,
- development of bike hubs
- a bike voucher scheme.

Achievements to highlight are:

- Walking commissions have been set-up with Health for All and Touchstone.
- Cycling group has recently started with Shantona Women's Group.
- 15 walk leaders have been trained from the local area.
- Cycle North and British Cycling are adapting offers to better meet need.
- Love Exploring App in all three wards.
- Active Travel Master Plan and Complementary Measures guidance developed.
- 3 Urban Trails developed.

## **5.0 Zero Carbon**

### **5.1 Decarbonisation Works**

5.2 Active Leeds sites at Aireborough, Kirkstall, John Smeaton, Kippax, John Charles Centre for Sport, Rothwell, Wetherby and Scott Hall have had 3,141 solar panels, 22 air source heat pumps, LED lighting and BMS systems upgrades installed as part of the Councils Decarbonisation Programme. These together make an annual carbon saving of 2,361 tonnes. Work to continue the decarbonisation roll out and reduce reliance on gas is ongoing with more proposals in development.

## 6.0 Inclusive Growth

6.1 This proposal will support the Inclusive Growth Strategy Big Ideas through connecting and strengthening our communities through our leisure estate and community based health and well being programmes as set out above.

## 7.0 What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Gipton and Harehills, Crossgates and Whinmoor, Killingbeck and Seacroft, Guiseley and Rawdon, Middleton Park, Kippax and Methley, Wetherby

Have ward members been consulted?  Yes  No

7.1 The Executive Member for Adults Social Care, Active Lifestyles and Culture has been briefed and is supportive of the proposals.

7.2 Ward members impacted by the proposals have been briefed and are supportive of the proposals, noting in particular that Middleton Park members were supportive of the proposed lease of Middleton Leisure Centre to Laurence Calvert Academy. Meetings are to be arranged between the school and members to discuss the detail of the proposals and a site visit is also to be arranged for members and the school.

## 8.0 What are the resource implications?

The resource implications are:-

- The Project Management capacity required to support across the programme of work required which has been reviewed and through the Vision for Wellbeing Centres will be proactively managed with the appropriate governance in place to ensure successful delivery.
- The minimisation of impact from an operational and income viewpoint. This will be managed through careful programming of schemes brought forward as well as where possible, ensuring that either new or expansion proposals are delivered where possible, with minimal or no impact on the existing wellbeing centre.
- The grant funding to be secured to deliver match/part funding for the works. There are positive ongoing discussions with grant providers for the allocation of external funding for the schemes being brought forward. the projects will be designed to deliver against grant funding objectives to ensure funding can be secured.
- The business cases and prudential borrowing required to support delivery. There is ongoing work to develop robust business cases aligned to the projects identified to ensure that they deliver the returns required.
- The capacity from the broader directorate and Legal Services to document and execute all changes to the estate including leasing out.

## 9.0 What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

9.1 The risks are:-

- Delivery of a complex and challenging procurement and construction programme at a time of inflation instability. Discussions are underway with procurement regarding support and advice relating to the frameworks to be utilised to assist with the most appropriate procurement routes and delivery of each scheme. Investigations have been undertaken as to recent delivery of wellbeing centres across the country to align the construction frameworks appropriately for each scheme.
- Inflation pressure across a wide ranging and complex construction programme. This will be monitored and managed through the budget setting process to ensure sufficient contingency is allocated to each scheme prior to contract award.
- Quality of build and delivery to programme and budget – this will be managed proactively through the Vision for Wellbeing Centres project board from the procurement using a cost/quality threshold for the appointed contractor, as well as robust project and contract management ;
- Delivery of customer focused facilities to ensure that the user/membership numbers continue to grow as well as investment in other areas of the facilities which are non-income generating – such as changing facilities The facilities are demand led and need to align with customer satisfaction, appropriate charging to ensure competitiveness and sustainability

The work programme has a governance process and Vision for Wellbeing Project Board in place to oversee the whole programme of works across all sites and provide and seek input from relevant specialisms at the appropriate times.

## **10.0 What are the legal implications?**

- 10.1 The legal implications relate directly to the lease development required for the Middleton Leisure Centre proposals once terms are drafted.

## **11.0 Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **11.1 What other options were considered?**

There has been a thorough review of the Active Leeds service as a means of updating the Vision for Wellbeing Strategy to meet the Council best City Ambition. In addition, the service has been requested through the Financial Challenge process to identify proposals that will reduce the Active Leeds net managed budget. As a result the service considered:

- Do nothing – this approach is unlikely to achieve the financial challenge ask and more likely will result in increased pressures across the service from a finance perspective.
- Close Leisure Centres – as a key pillar within the Best City Ambition, it was considered that Health and Wellbeing outcomes were a key outcome for the city, therefore closure alone at this time, an option. In addition, with school swimming at 100% capacity, any reduction in provision would add significant pressure in Childrens and Families in meeting their statutory duty.

### **12.0 How will success be measured?**

- 12.1 Success will be measured through the successful delivery of the proposals identified in this report

### **13.0 What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

- 13.1 The timetable is programme over the next 3 years and the Head of Active Leeds and the Chief Officer for Active Leeds, Operations and Culture is responsible for its implementation.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 Fearnville Wellbeing Centre Proposals

- Appendix 2 Aireborough Leisure Centre Proposals
- Appendix 3 John Charles Pitch Proposals
- Appendix 4 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) Screening

#### **Background papers**

- None