

To: Cabinet
Date: 10 July 2024
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Leisure Investment Programme

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	Yes
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Katherine Miles, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford and Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Support Thriving Communities
Policy Framework:	Thriving Communities Strategy
Recommendation(s): That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to Scrutiny recommendations

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 02 July 2024 to consider a report on the Leisure Investment Programme. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 10 July 2024, recommends that Cabinet grants project approval for the Leisure Management Programme; recommends to Council the approval of an additional capital budget of £1.04m, above the £2m already agreed in the capital programme, necessary to deliver the Leisure Investment Programme; and agrees various delegations of authority related to the Leisure Investment Programme.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Chewe Munkonge (Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford) and Hagan Lewisman (Active Communities Manager) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Councillor Chewe Munkonge, Cabinet Member for a Healthy Oxford introduced the report. The report sought approval for a programme of improvements at the Council's leisure facilities. The Committee was advised that the Council had successfully completed its transition to the new leisure provider, More Leisure, and was now moving from contract mobilisation to contract management.
4. The Committee asked a range of questions, including questions relating to current usage of the sports hall at the Leys Leisure Centre in the evenings; maintaining adequate access to a variety of leisure facilities; communications with and feedback from residents/user groups on the proposals; provision for emerging sports (e.g. padel and pickleball); accessibility and inclusivity in relation to the athletics club; the proposed new state of the art inflatables included in the plans; and interdependencies between the Leisure Investment Programme and Leys Youth Hub.
5. In particular, the Committee was concerned that the proposal to develop half of the sports hall at the Leys Leisure Centre into soft play including Tag Active would negatively impact user groups which currently used the space in the evenings. While the report outlined that the sports hall was generally underutilised in the day, there was no consideration within the report regarding the impact on evening users, when the sports hall was better utilised. While noting responses to questions that the sports hall was not fully booked in the evenings, the Committee agreed that the Council should undertake a thorough analysis of sports hall usage during all opening times, including the evenings, to understand the impact that the proposal would have on all user groups. It also agreed that the Council should actively engage with users regarding appropriate alternative provision in the event that they could no longer use the sports hall; and put in place mitigations to protect against disproportionate impacts of the proposals on active user groups.

Recommendation 1: That the Council undertakes a thorough analysis of the Leys Leisure Centre sports hall usage during all opening times, paying particular attention to evening usage, to understand the impact that the proposal would have on user groups; actively engages with users regarding appropriate alternative provision; and ensures that appropriate mitigations are put in place to protect against disproportionate impacts of the Leys Leisure Centre sports hall proposals on active user groups.

6. The Committee recognised that, as a result of previous failings, it would be useful for the Council to publish information on the Leisure Investment Programme, and progress on its delivery, in a prominent place on the Council's website. The Committee agreed that this may help provide public reassurance and transparency in relation to leisure provision.

Recommendation 2: That the Council publishes high-level information on the Leisure Investment Programme and progress on its delivery in a prominent place on the Council's website in order to provide public reassurance and transparency.

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