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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: 14 July 2021

Record of Decisions taken by Cabinet – Tuesday, 13 July 2021

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 13 July 2021 the following decisions were reached on the items listed in the attached schedule.

The implementation of any key decisions are suspended until the call-in period has expired without a call-in being validly invoked.

Under the Rushcliffe Borough Council Constitution, call-in is available in respect to key decisions only.

The call-in deadline for any key decisions contained in this Decision Notice is before the end of the working day on Thursday, 22 July 2021. Subject to any call-in request being received, all the decisions will be actioned after Thursday, 22 July 2021.

Any Member of the Council shall be entitled to call for a decision to be suspended. To effect the call-in procedure, the appropriate form should be completed and returned to the Chief Executive by the end of the working day on Thursday, 22 July 2021.

FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21

It was RESOLVED that

- a) the 2020/21 revenue position and efficiencies identified in Table 1 and the Covid related variances in Table 2 be noted, and the carry forwards in Table 6 be approved;
- b) the associated changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at Appendix B including the newly created Collection Fund Reserve as stated in paragraph 4.2 be approved;
- c) the re-profiled position on capital be noted and the capital carry forwards outlined in Appendix C be approved; and
- d) the update on the Special Expenses outturn and loan position at paragraph 4.13 and in Appendix D be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To accord with good financial governance and the Council's Financial Regulations.

RUSHCLIFFE ARENA FACILITIES REVIEW

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the closure of the current indoor bowls facility be approved;
- b) a basic conversion of the hall to a multi-functional sports and event space at a cost of £60k be approved; and
- c) officers' work in mitigating the loss of the facility in its current format be supported, by offering further support to remaining Bowls Club members including exploring the introduction of short mat bowls at the Arena.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

Rushcliffe Indoor Bowls Club who are the primary users of the indoor bowls hall have struggled to increase membership since the new Arena was built despite best efforts, the support of Lex Leisure and the Council's Sports Development Officer. They face the challenge of declining numbers, a largely aging demographic and an inability to break even.

Indoor bowls appeals to a relatively small demographic with only a small number of members (around 170) benefiting from the space. This leaves the hall sitting empty for large parts of the year, unlike the sports hall that enables a vast array of clubs and users to benefit from the space for a multitude of uses.

As well as supporting the return of a greater number of leisure users, it should be noted that bowls income generated from casual play, equipment hire and memberships prior to Coronavirus generated £25k of income/annum compared to £70k generated by the sports hall.

During national Coronavirus restrictions throughout 2020/21, the bowls hall was temporarily re-purposed to enable socially distanced group exercise and the Rushcliffe Indoor Bowls Club placed itself into hibernation. Group exercise is key to gym membership retention and with memberships forming the bulk of the operator's income protecting memberships was, and remains, essential to reducing the impact of Coronavirus and supporting the overall recovery of the Arena leisure centre.

A basic conversion, essentially changing the floor covering of the existing bowls rinks along with some cosmetic improvements of the space allows the use of the facility for other sports uses, mitigating loss of memberships and appealing to a wider demographic whilst offering an attractive payback period compared to a more substantial conversion involving the removal of the bowling gullies, perimeter wall and installing lighting and audio systems. A simple conversion at the outset enables the success of the new space to be reviewed whilst providing comfort that it could be reverted should that ever be required.

A potential larger scale conversion of the space would form part of a further report

once the overall recovery of the leisure industry and its future is better understood.

Whilst recognising the adverse effect on the Bowls Club by converting the area to a more multi use facility, such a conversion would support the wider return of users and would be in line with the Council's current Leisure Facilities Strategy vision "to provide high quality, financially sustainable leisure facilities to support Rushcliffe residents to enjoy healthy active lives" (RBC, Leisure Facilities Strategy, 2017).

In line with our leisure strategy, when changing a facility's primary use it is important to note that Sports England would support such changes based on the Council's desire to enhance the facility by "supporting improvement to existing sport and physical activity provision where they are needed" and "encouraging and securing wider community use of new and existing sport and physical activity provision" (Sports England, Planning for Sport Guidance, 2019).

COVID-19: UPDATE REPORT

It was RESOLVED that the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19 be noted.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To update the Cabinet on the current impact of Covid 19, how this has changed since the last update in May 2021, and how the Council and its partners are responding to the pandemic.

The report is correct at the time of writing but as we have experienced, the situation can change quickly. It is important, therefore, that we remain flexible and responsive to these new challenges, and the report reflects the need to do this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Sull', written in a cursive style.

Sanjit Sull
Monitoring Officer