

**To: The Deputy Leader and Members of the
Community and Environment Board
(Councillors Smith, Bell, Davey, Hayfield,
Ingram, Jones, Hanratty, Smitten, Chambers,
Ferro, Lewis, Phillips and M Stanley).**

For the information of other Members of the Council

For general enquiries please contact Jenny Price, Democratic Services Officer, on 01827 719450 or via e-mail jennyprice@northwarks.gov.uk.

For enquiries about specific reports please contact the officer named in the reports.

The agenda and reports are available in large print and electronic accessible formats if requested.

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD AGENDA

29 June 2016

The Community and Environment Board will meet in The Chamber, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone on Wednesday 29 June 2016, at 6.30pm.

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure.**
- 2 Apologies for Absence / Members away on official Council business.**
- 3 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

4 **Public Participation**

Up to twenty minutes will be set aside for members of the public to ask questions or to put their views to elected Members. Participants are restricted to five minutes each. If you wish to speak at the meeting please contact Jenny Price on 01827 719450 or email democraticservices@northwarks.gov.uk

PUBLIC BUSINESS

5 **Arley Sports Centre – Consultation Feedback** – Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Summary

At its meeting held on 18 January 2016 the Board identified Option 1 (Full Closure) as its preferred option in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. At the meeting, Members also resolved to undertake Borough-wide consultation in respect of the preferred option. The community consultation period concluded on 22 May 2016 and this report provides an analysis of the responses received through this process.

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

JERRY HUTCHINSON
Chief Executive

Agenda Item No 5

Community and Environment Board

29 June 2016

Report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Arley Sports Centre – Consultation Feedback

1 Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 18 January 2016 the Board identified Option 1 (Full Closure) as its preferred option in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. At the meeting, Members also resolved to undertake Borough-wide consultation in respect of the preferred option. The community consultation period concluded on 22 May 2016 and this report provides an analysis of the responses received through this process.

Recommendation to the Board

That the Board notes the analysis of the responses received through the Borough-wide consultation programme undertaken in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre and requests that the outcome of this process be further considered by Full Council.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the Executive, Community and Environment and Resources Boards, the Safer Communities Sub-Committee, Members with responsibility for Young People, Health, Well-being and Leisure and Arley Ward Members have all had the opportunity to comment on the content of this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Community and Environment Board held on 18 January 2016, Members considered a report that set out a number of options relating to the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. A copy of the redacted report is attached at Appendix A. After a detailed discussion, the Board adopted the following resolutions:

- That Option 1 (Full Closure), as set out in the report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development), be progressed as the preferred option in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre;

- That Borough-wide consultation be undertaken in respect of the identified preferred option for the future of Arley Sports Centre, that the consultation be carried out in the manner proposed in paragraph 17.9 of the report of the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) and that the detail of the consultation programme be delegated to the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development), in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board; and
- That the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) write to Arley Parish Council to consult them on the options set out in the report.

4 **Community Consultation Programme**

4.1 Subsequent to discussion relating to the Sports Centre's future at Full Council on 24 February 2016, the programme of community-based consultation began on 1 March and concluded on 22 May 2016, thereby affording a consultation period one day short of 12 weeks. It was held that this period was proportionate to the matter that was the subject of consultation, namely the future of Arley Sports Centre, and that it allowed sufficient time for people to consider and respond to the related issues.

4.2 A copy of the information that supported the consultation process is attached at Appendix B. By way of clarification, paragraph 17.9 of the report considered by the Board in January 2016 read as follows: "Any consultation undertaken must be genuine, conducted at a formative stage of any decision and provide sufficient information to permit intelligent consideration, including all viable options. In this regard, any consultation undertaken in respect of the future of Arley Sports Centre should include current users of the facility and the local community, but should also be undertaken across the Borough (given that it is a North Warwickshire facility, which is financially supported by residents across the Borough) and within the context provided by the Authority's financial position". In pursuance of this advice, which was provided by the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council, it was imperative that the consultation was both legitimate and undertaken prior to a decision being made about the future of the Sports Centre. Whilst the supporting documentation made it clear that the Borough Council had adopted a "preferred option" in respect of the future of the facility, and the reasoning therefor, it also evidenced that it had yet to make a decision on this matter. Indeed, the consultation documentation stated that "Councillors want to hear from people who use the facility, the local community and the people of North Warwickshire before making a final decision on the Centre's future."

4.3 Before the commencement of the consultation process, the Council made public the previously confidential report relating to the Sports Centre that had been considered by the Community and Environment Board in January 2016. This report detailed six options relating to the future operation of the Centre. These options were also outlined in the consultation documentation, which additionally detailed the Authority's financial position.

4.4 The consultation information initially went live on the Borough Council's website. It was also made available at the Borough Council's One Stop Shop reception in Atherstone, within all Borough Council leisure facilities, local libraries and community hubs. Additionally:

- Posters were been displayed throughout the Arley and Whitacre Ward
- Emails or letters were sent to all known users of Arley Sports Centre, both individuals and organisations, including those users who live outside the Borough
- Letters were hand delivered to properties in Old and New Arley
- Consultation information and questionnaires were emailed to 452 people who have registered their interest in receiving leisure-related information from the Borough Council
- Emails and letters were sent to a random sample of 81 people on the Authority's People's Panel
- All Parish and Town Councils (with the exception of Caldecote) were emailed the consultation documentation
- Local and national organisations (stakeholders) were sent details of the consultation process, (including local schools, the Police, Public Health and Sport England)
- An article was placed in the Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) electronic newsletter, which is sent to community and voluntary sector organisations
- A brief article, directing readers to the consultation information, was placed in North Talk (the Council's newsletter that is delivered to every household and business in North Warwickshire)

4.5 Material sent to people included a covering letter, a background information document and a copy of the consultation questionnaire. In the circulation of information, priority was afforded to users of the Sports Centre and the communities of New and Old Arley. Thereafter, considerable efforts were made to engage with other interested stakeholders, parish and town councils and the wider community of the Borough. Subsequent to the distribution of North Talk to every residential and business property in North Warwickshire, more than a month was available for consultation returns.

4.6 In respect of the need to provide sufficient reason for its "preferred option" in order to allow for "intelligent consideration" and response, it was made clear that the Borough Council had a need to make revenue savings of £1.7 million over the next four years from within an overall annual budget of £8.8 million. It was identified that, as a consequence, all of its services would be subject to close scrutiny and that it was inevitable that some of these services would be affected by this process. It was highlighted that it was for this reason, the

need to make significant savings, that Councillors had asked for a specific report that focused on Arley Sports Centre.

- 4.7 In further pursuance of the Board's resolutions, a "private and confidential" letter concerning the future of the Sports Centre was sent to Arley Parish Council on 28 January 2016. A reply was received on 12 February, which requested an urgent meeting to discuss the "proposed closure" of the Sports Centre and the information "upon which this decision was based". A meeting between representatives of the two authorities, including Borough and Parish Councillors, was subsequently held on 2 March 2016. In the words of the Parish Council, "after a protracted exchange of views, no positive agreement could be reached between the respective Councils". Whilst the Parish Council welcomed the North Warwickshire-based consultation proposed by the Borough Council, it made clear its view that it did not agree with the context of the consultation, in that it was considering the future of Arley Sports Centre in isolation from other services and leisure facilities provided by the Authority.
- 4.8 At the Full Council meeting held on 24 February 2016, a question from a member of the public requested a meeting between Councillors and members of the "Keep Arley Sports Centre Open" (KASCO) group. The Chairman of the Community and Environment Board, Councillor Smith, agreed to this request and the meeting took place on 19 May 2016. The meeting was attended by Councillors Humphreys, D Wright, Smith, Bell and Hayfield and seven members of the KASCO group. At the Authority's request, the agenda was set by KASCO. The Borough Council updated the group on the progress of the consultation process, which was not complete at the time of the meeting, and on its very preliminary meetings with two organisations that had expressed a potential interest in the future operation of the Sports Centre. KASCO detailed the consultation work that it had undertaken and its organisation of a petition against any future closure of the Centre. The number of signatures collected was such that it was agreed that careful thought needed to be given to how best to ensure that the future of the Sports Centre was most appropriately considered by Councillors. Through subsequent dialogue with KASCO, Councillors agreed to hold this special meeting of the Board, immediately prior to a meeting of Full Council, in order to ensure that this important matter was appropriately and openly debated by Members, subsequent to receipt of any further input / questions from KASCO.
- 4.9 Understandably, KASCO took the opportunity to articulate a number of concerns held by its members, and within the community, relating to, for example, the programming, pricing and promotion of, not just Arley Sports Centre, but all of the Authority's leisure facilities and particular concerns relating to the impact of any future closure on existing users and the wider community. For their part, Councillors reminded KASCO of the financial difficulties being faced by the Authority, the need to make a significant level of revenue savings and the relatively lower levels of community use being made of the Sports Centre. The meeting, however, was undertaken in a constructive atmosphere and afforded an opportunity for further dialogue.

4.10 The KASCO petition, to which reference is made in paragraph 4.8 above and 5.1 below, was formally handed to the Leader of the Council at the “Big Day Out” event held in New Arley on 22 May 2016, the final day of the community consultation process.

5 Consultation Responses

5.1 Appendix C details the responses to the consultation programme that were received by the closing date of 22 May 2016. The following information, however, provides Members with a statistical breakdown of those responses and a brief summary of the comments received from consultees:

- The Borough Council received three petitions, with a cumulative total of 4,500 signatures, objecting to any future closure of Arley Sports Centre, as follows:
 - Ansley Parish Council 200
 - Keep Arley Sports Centre Open (Electronic) 531
 - Keep Arley Sports Centre Open (Paper) 3769
- A total of 721 responses were received through the consultation process, 20 of which were from organisations (as opposed to individuals)
- 701 responses, therefore, were received from individuals
- 249 respondents identified themselves or a family member as a user of Arley Sports Centre (this was not a specific consultation question, so the actual number of users who responded to the consultation is likely to be higher than this figure)
- 675 people opposed the Borough Council’s preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre
- 26 individuals agreed with the Authority’s preferred option
- Nineteen organisations opposed a closure of Arley Sports Centre. The additional response offered a balanced commentary, which could not be interpreted as being either for or against any future closure of the Centre
- 96% of respondents, therefore, opposed the Council’s preferred option (or 99.5% if petition responses are included within the calculation)

Key Issues raised by respondents. The figure in brackets refers to the number of times that the issue was raised by respondents

- Concern about the impact on children (389), older people (198) and families (232)
- The Sports Centre is a valued local asset (367, 82 people noted that it is listed in the Neighbourhood Plan as an asset)
- Concern about the impact on physical and mental health and well-being (341) and specifically obesity (136)
- Concern about a lack of public transport to other leisure facilities (283)
- Concern about the impact upon the community / community spirit (245)
- The discrepancy in service provision across the Borough – Arley has relatively little in comparison with other areas (133)

- Concern that Coleshill and Atherstone have centres that have been improved and the fact that there is to be a leisure review, but a decision to close Arley has come before that review (121)
- The decision is short-sighted and will have an adverse impact on other Government services, such as the NHS (121)
- Concern about creating a bored / disaffected youth (96)
- Arley is already a deprived community (70)
- A decision has been taken without proper consultation (50)
- Concern that the Recreation Ground will be built upon (33)
- Commentary relating to Arley's growing population and yet the Borough Council is considering the removal of services (27)

Suggestions to retain the Sports Centre / its services:

Retaining / Improving Facility / Operation

- Invest in promotion (124)
- More clubs (116)
- Close at quieter times (70)
- Update the facilities (54)
- Increase prices (45)
- Open for other functions (39)
- More classes / variety (37)
- Work with Gunn Hill School – after school classes (28)
- Put in café / hot food (27)
- Include Arley within the Exercise on Prescription programme (18)

Other Operating Models

- Local residents / volunteers take over (37)
- Collaborate with the NHS / other service providers (21)
- Sell to a private enterprise (21)
- Turn the Sports Centre into a Trust (16)

Wider Council Options

- Assess other non-essential services and re-allocate funding (32)
- Use professional fundraisers / sponsorship / grants (28)
- Raise the Council Tax (17)

From those who agree with the preferred option

- Do not use the Council Tax to subsidise others (5)
- Arley needs a large shop or supermarket (4)
- There are other centres that people can use (3)
- Other services are more important (2)
- Need to make savings, the Borough Council is not in a position to borrow (2)

- 5.2 A file containing every consultation response received has been made available to Councillors in their political Group rooms. These files additionally contain copies of the small number of responses received after the consultation closure date of 22 May. These responses have not been collated within the statistical analysis detailed above, but they have been made available to Members in view of the fact that they contain the views of local residents and / or interested parties regarding a service currently provided by the Authority.
- 5.3 As previously reported to Members, Officers have not sought to interpret or score the consultation responses. Rather, these are to be assessed and evaluated by Councillors, subsequent to which it will be for Members to make a decision relating to the future of the Sports Centre, taking into account the views of consultees. Members have previously made it clear that a decision relating to the future of Arley Sports Centre will only be taken by Full Council, which sits immediately after this special meeting of the Board. It is, therefore, anticipated that the Board will want to refer its considered views on the consultation responses to Full Council, in order that all Councillors can determine the future of the Sports Centre.
- 5.4 It is important to acknowledge that there have been four formal complaints relating to the manner in which the consultation programme has been undertaken, one of which was advanced to Stage Two of the Authority's Complaints and Compliments procedure. The Authority, however, maintains that its approach to the consultation process complied with the legal requirements, as set out by the Courts.
- 5.5 The Board will be aware that consultation has also been undertaken with staff potentially affected by any future closure of the Sports Centre. This formal process has involved detailed and individual discussions with 15 members of staff. As well as addressing matters associated with their employment with the Borough Council, the meetings also provided staff with an opportunity to air their views about the Sports Centre and its future. Again, these meetings were constructive and thought provoking. It was pleasing to hear that staff enjoyed working at Arley Sports Centre and for the Authority, which was viewed as being a good employer. There was an almost unanimous and understandable view that the staff would be disappointed if the Sports Centre closed. There was a relatively consistent view that the Sports Centre, perhaps because of its size and / or location, had not received the same level of attention or investment as the Authority's other leisure facilities. Further, and of concern, were repeated views that were similar to those received through the community consultation process, specifically that:
- Insufficient attention had been given to innovative activity programming, pricing and promotion
 - Activity programming had not taken account of the needs within the immediate community, and in particular for young or older people and also for families
 - There had not been enough engagement with the community to establish the needs of local residents. The facility should see itself as a community resource, not just a Sports Centre

- There was a need for better links with local schools and clubs
- Social media was not used effectively to promote sessions
- The leisure facilities were not working in support of one another. All too frequently, they were working in competition
- More attention needed to be given to quiet times in the programme. There was a need to try new activities and services
- There was a need to be more inclusive of ideas from staff

5.6 This feedback from the meetings with staff is not intended to be comprehensive. On the contrary, it provides a snapshot of the views received and provides evidence of a degree of consistency with the feedback received from within the local community. An account of the meeting with each member of staff is provided within the consultation files in political Group rooms.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Whilst Arley Sports Centre is a valued local amenity, both by users and the wider community, the Borough Council is faced with the need to make £1.7 million of savings over the next four years. Realisation of this need will require difficult decisions to be made in respect of a number of services provided by the Authority. Having due regard to the responses received through the consultation process, Members will need to determine how they wish to pursue the future operation of the Sports Centre.

7 Report Implications

7.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

7.1.1 There is no financial implication directly arising from the content of this report. The financial implications, and associated consequences, of a number of options relating to the potential future operation of Arley Sports Centre were outlined in the report on this subject considered by the Board at its meeting held in January 2016. These options were considered by Members within the context provided by the need for the Authority to make savings of £1.7 million over the next four years.

7.2 Safer Communities Implications

7.2.1 The provision of good quality and highly valued recreational services and opportunities has positive implications for the development of healthier and safer communities and leads to a reduction in the likelihood of criminal and / or anti-social behaviour.

7.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

7.3.1 There have been four formal complaints relating to the manner in which the Borough Council has conducted the Arley Sports Centre consultation process, one of which has been advanced to Stage 2 of the Borough Council's Complaints and Compliments Procedure. It is, however, the

Authority's view that the consultation process complies with the legal requirements, as set out by the Courts.

7.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

7.4.1 The provision of sporting and recreational opportunities is consistent with a number of corporate priorities, in that it helps the Borough Council's ability to maintain and enhance the quality, consistency and sustainability of communities. Related services also make a positive impact on individual and collective quality of life in North Warwickshire.

7.5 Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

7.5.1 Services provided within the Borough Council's leisure facilities have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individual participants and contribute to an enhancement in their quality of life. The services are also compliant with the county-wide Health and Well-being Strategy and its supporting Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

7.6 Human Resources Implications

7.6.1 The potential human resource implications of Option 1 (Full Closure) relating to the future operation of Arley Sports Centre were considered by the Special Sub-group at its meeting held on 08 March 2016. Subsequent to this meeting, a process of formal consultation has commenced with the staff at the Centre. The consultation period with staff will remain open until Councillors have made a decision relating to the future of the Sports Centre.

7.7 Risk Management Implications

7.7.1 A detailed risk assessment associated with the future of Arley Sports Centre was presented to the Board in January 2016.

7.8 Equalities Implications

7.8.1 An Equality and Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken and a copy of the associated template was appended to the report considered by the Board in January 2016.

7.9 Links to Council's Priorities

7.9.1 The provision of sporting and recreational opportunities has positive and direct links to the following corporate objectives:

- Responsible financial and resource management
- Creating safer communities
- Improving leisure and well-being opportunities
- Promoting sustainable and vibrant communities

7.9.2 Activity provided at Arley Sports Centre additionally contributes to the following priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skills
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Various	Community Consultation Responses	March to May 2016
2	Various	Staff Consultation Responses	March to May 2016

Agenda Item No 15

Community and Environment Board

18 January 2016

Report of the
Assistant Director
(Leisure and Community Development)

Arley Sports Centre – Outline
Options Assessment

1 Summary

- 1.1 In response to a required action in the recently adopted Corporate Plan, this report addresses a number of options in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre and seeks direction from the Board regarding the manner in which this important matter should be progressed.

Recommendation to the Board

- a That the Board identifies which, if any, of the identified options it wishes to progress in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre; and,
- b If, at any point, the Board determines to consider a closure, either in part or whole, of Arley Sports Centre that it undertakes community-based consultation in the manner proposed in paragraph 17.9 of this report and that the detail of the consultation programme be determined in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Board.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Opposition Spokesperson for the Executive, Community and Environment and Resources Boards, the Safer Communities Sub-Committee, Members with responsibility for Young People, Health, Well-being and Leisure and Arley Ward Members have all had the opportunity to comment on the content of this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Borough Council's recently adopted Corporate Plan identifies six key priorities, three of which have particular relevance to the Authority's leisure facility provision:

- Responsible Financial and Resource Management

Making the best use of our resources...to provide high quality services to our communities

- Improving Leisure and Well-being Opportunities

Providing opportunities to enable local people to enjoy their leisure and recreation and to improve their health and well-being

- Promoting Sustainable and Vibrant Communities

Working with local residents and partners to make our communities sustainable and viable, both in terms of facilities and lifestyle

3.2 Each priority has potential implications for the leisure and recreation services and facilities enjoyed by local residents. The “Leisure and Well-being” priority is underpinned by a key action to undertake a review of leisure facility provision across the Borough. Those facilities and services provided by the Authority positively contribute to the attainment of its priority commitments. They also support pursuance of the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities to:

- Raise aspirations, educational attainment and skill levels
- Develop healthier communities
- Improve access to services

3.3 The Borough Council manages four leisure facilities; Arley Sports Centre, Atherstone Leisure Complex (including Atherstone Swimming Pool and Memorial Hall, and both indoor provision and the Artificial Grass Pitch through a Management Agreement with Queen Elizabeth School), Coleshill Leisure Centre (through a Joint Use Agreement with The Coleshill School) and Polesworth Sports Centre (under a Dual Use Agreement with The Polesworth School, which concludes at the end of December 2018).

3.4 The facilities are relatively modest in scale and are distributed in a manner that serves the needs of a population dispersed throughout an extensive rural area. Their location, however, dictates that a significant number of users from outside the Borough use the facilities.

3.5 Arley Sports Centre is relatively structurally sound, but it is a neighbourhood facility with a localised marketplace. Its catchment area and population are comparatively small. The Centre comprises a three (badminton) court sports hall, a small health and fitness suite, which benefits from the use of second hand equipment received from other Borough Council leisure facilities, a single squash court and a small ancillary activity / meeting room.

3.6 The Sports Centre is budgeted to yield income of £100,150 in 2015 / 16, contributing to a net controllable budget of £118,990. Despite a growing membership base, it will be difficult to achieve this level of income. Sports hall users are being lost due to the poor state of the changing accommodation at the Centre.

3.7 In addition to the Corporate Plan commitment to review leisure facility provision across the Borough, Members will also be aware of the need, reported to the Executive Board in September 2015, for the Authority to make revenue savings of £1.7 million in the four years to 2019 / 20. In this respect,

the cost of all services will be subject to close scrutiny and leisure facility provision is one of the areas in which Members may wish to make cost savings.

4 Context Provided by Sport England

- 4.1 In 2013 Sport England undertook a National Audit of “sports hall” provision. An assessment of the National Audit and Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model provides contextual information of relevance to the provision of sports halls in North Warwickshire.
- 4.2 At that time, Sport England considered North Warwickshire to have five sports halls that were accessible to the local community, in Arley (NWBC), Coleshill (NWBC), Polesworth (NWBC), Hartshill (School) and Kingsbury (Trust). Community access was also available to the sports hall at Queen Elizabeth School in Atherstone, but, for some reason, was not included in Sport England’s Audit. The number of accessible sports halls was fewer than in the neighbouring urban areas of Nuneaton and Bedworth (11) and Tamworth (six). The five sports halls provided 19 courts, 15 of which were assessed as being publicly available at peak periods, which is slightly lower than national, regional and county levels, using an assessment of the number of courts available per 10,000 population. Sport England’s “supply / demand” model indicated a need for 17 courts at peak periods, thereby resulting in a peak period deficit of two courts in North Warwickshire.
- 4.3 Within its 2013 assessment, Sport England maintained that the sports halls in Coleshill, Polesworth and Kingsbury were operating at optimum capacity, but that the facilities in Arley (60%) and Hartshill (50%) were not. A significant proportion of use was by people from outside the Borough, which was considered to be a reflection of the location of the facilities. It considered the stock of sports halls to be ageing, although this position has been improved by the development of a new Leisure Centre in Coleshill.
- 4.4 Taken on its own, Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model suggests a need for 4.5 publicly accessible four-court sports halls in the Borough (or 18 courts). Whilst this need could be perceived to be met locally, community access is restricted at the facilities in Hartshill and Kingsbury, and an under-supply would be evident with either a restriction on public access or withdrawal of any of the facilities subject to Sport England’s assessment.

5 Benchmarking

- 5.1 In 2013 / 14, the Borough Council undertook a benchmarking exercise with 15 rural local authorities considered to share a number of similar characteristics to those of North Warwickshire. The starting point for the exercise was a perception that the Borough Council’s staff to income ratios within its leisure facilities were high in comparison to those of other providers.
- 5.2 The benchmarking exercise took account of the size, rurality and population of the 15 local authority areas, the size, age and nature of the facilities incorporated within their leisure centres and the approach taken to the

management of their sites. Subsequent to desk-based research, site visits were undertaken to three local authorities with “dry” facilities and three with “wet” provision.

- 5.3 Four of the local authorities had four leisure centres of one form or another, whilst a further four had three sites. Six of the local authorities managed their facilities through an “in-house” operation, six had “in-house” trust arrangements and three were run by private sector operators.
- 5.4 Arley Sports Centre was one of very few dry sites that only had a three-court sports hall, its fitness suite was the smallest of those subject to the exercise and only one other facility offered a single squash court (where squash was provided).
- 5.5 The benchmarking exercise concluded that whilst the Borough Council’s staffing costs were similar to those of the other providers, its levels of income generation were generally lower than those secured in the other areas. This was not surprising, given that the Borough Council’s facilities were older than the majority of the other centres, in many cases smaller and subject to considerably more competition from other providers in neighbouring areas. Subsequent to the exercise it is likely that the opening of the new Coleshill Leisure Centre will have significantly improved the Borough Council’s overall comparable performance, but improvements have also been made to the quality of health and fitness provision at each site, to the schedule of fitness classes and an expansion of the swimming lesson programme has also been approved by the Community and Environment Board.
- 5.6 Nevertheless, there is a need for consideration to be given to the long-term future of leisure facility provision in the Borough. In any event, there is an early need to increase levels of attendances and income, to enhance levels of customer retention and to improve operational viability.

6 Condition

- 6.1 Arley Sports Centre was constructed in 1980 / 81 by Shepherd Construction, through a Design and Build contract.
- 6.2 The three-court sports hall is a concrete portal frame construction. The lower portion of the external walls is a cavity brick and block construction, with the upper portion being profiled steel and insulation panels. The roof is clad with asbestos cement profile roof sheets and insulation panels.
- 6.3 In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was considerable interest in squash and, as a consequence, during the design and build process, it was determined that the Centre should incorporate a single squash court, which, in effect, was simply “bolted on” to side of the sports hall.
- 6.4 The ground floor comprises a small reception area and office, a disabled toilet and a small fitness facility. Approximately five years ago, the fitness suite was formed by converting the storage space off the sports hall. The scheme

also incorporated improvements for disabled users. An external prefabricated garage was provided to replace the lost storage provision.

- 6.5 The first floor footprint is limited and accommodates male and female changing accommodation and toilets. Access to the squash court is via a staircase off the first floor viewing corridor. There is also a compact multi-function room, which is used for spinning classes and meetings, etc.
- 6.6 The overall condition of the structure of the main building is reasonable for its age, although the concrete portal frames are exhibiting early signs of cracking, which will require closer future investigation. The wall and roof cladding, whilst in fair condition, are now 35 years old and, with this in mind, it is not unreasonable to expect problems / water ingress to occur more frequently in due course. Within the next five to ten years replacement of the wall and roof cladding will be necessary (at a currently projected cost of £600,000).
- 6.7 Although no anticipated life span was attached to the squash court at the time of its construction, it has probably now exceeded its life by several years. The floor, walls and roof all require repair / replacement, but due to its proprietary prefabricated construction this will be difficult to achieve. Replacement is likely to be the only option proposed by relevant professionals.
- 6.8 The prefabricated garage / store is not fit for purpose and alternative storage provision is required in the short-term.
- 6.9 The overriding internal problem is the design / layout of the Centre. The ground floor is cramped and has only basic toilet facilities and office space. The first floor is only accessible via stairs, which means that people with mobility issues cannot gain access to the multi-function room, toilets, changing rooms or squash court. The toilets and changing rooms are dated, poorly arranged and require complete reconfiguration and refurbishment. Any future work would have to meet the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, which would probably entail the installation of a platform lift in order to provide comprehensive access to the first floor of the building.
- 6.10 The heating, ventilation and electrical installations have all exceeded their recommended life expectancy and will require replacement in the not too distant future. The hot water installation, in particular, is unable to cater for the football teams which hire the changing rooms for matches on the adjacent pitches or those groups that use the sports hall for five-a-side football.
- 6.11 Within the Unapproved Capital Programme, a (2016 / 17) sum of £1 million has been identified as being required to refurbish the inside of the Sports Centre, subject to Member approval of the need to retain the facility. This figure includes a minimum sum of £50,000 to effect basic improvements to the Centre's changing accommodation.
- 6.12 In summary, therefore, whilst the majority of the Sports Centre is in reasonable structural condition, the internal services, layout and parts of the fabric require refurbishment / replacement in the near future. These works

would require substantial financial investment (approximately £1.6 million) if the facility is to remain fit for purpose and meet current and future customer expectations of a modern sports facility.

7 User / Member Analysis

7.1 Arley Sports Centre currently has a “contact list” of 862 people (as at the end of September 2015). Of the Centre’s 862 “contacts”, 146 pay for some form of direct debit membership (Annual [£220], Contract [£20 per month] or Non-contract [£25 per month]). Customers can also use the facility on a “pay as you go” basis. The Centre attracted just over 56,000 visits in 2014 / 15. Whilst these numbers are small in comparison to Atherstone Leisure Complex (3,318 “members” and 198,200 visits) and Coleshill Leisure Centre (2,759 “members” and 105,000 visits), they need to be seen in the context of Arley’s much smaller catchment population and the extent and quality of the facilities provided within the Centre.

7.2 The facility’s usage base is predominantly “local”, although there is use of the facility by people living outside the Borough. The main areas in which Arley Sports Centre customers live are as follows:

- Galley Common 163
- Old Arley 156
- New Arley 143
- Hartshill 93
- Nuneaton 91
- Ansley 39

7.3 The age breakdown of members is as follows:

- 0 to 16 41%
- 17 to 21 8.8%
- 22 to 30 12.3%
- 31 to 40 9.5%
- 41 to 50 12.6%
- 51 to 60 6%
- 61 to 100 4.2%
- Age Not Known 5.6%

7.4 Very few users also attend other Centres managed by the Authority, although a small number occasionally travel to Coleshill Leisure Centre. Despite being a neighbourhood facility, less than 4% of users walk to the site. Almost 74% of users travel less than 10 minutes to use the Centre, whilst 98% of users travel for less than 10 miles to do so.

8 Local Groups Using Arley Sports Centre

8.1 Local groups currently using the Sports Centre include:

- ARC Church End (Behavioural School) – Ansley. Note that this group is moving to the old Herbert Fowler School
- ARC Ansley (Behavioural School) – Ansley

- Oakwood Special Needs School
- Pat Poulton Fitness (Over 60's Fitness Class) – Arley

9 Community Issues

9.1 Big Local

9.1.2 The Big Local is a Big Lottery Fund programme that is being managed by a Local Trust. In December 2012, Old Arley, New Arley and Ansley Village became one of only 150 Big Local areas across England.

9.1.3 Big Local will provide a £1 million investment into the approved area over a 10 year period. It is not a grants programme; the funding will be used to support projects identified by the local community, although the funding must enable the area to meet the four Big Local outcomes of:

- Communities are able to identify local needs and take action in response to them
- People will have increased skills and confidence so that they can continue to identify and respond to need in the future
- The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises
- People will feel that their area is a better place to live because of Big Local

9.1.4 Unlike other funding schemes, residents will make the decisions about how the money will be spent and they will be at the heart of the process throughout. This provides the community with a genuine opportunity to enhance its own locality. There is a Big Local pathway, which each programme is required to follow. The steps are as follows:

- Getting people involved
- Exploring the Big Local vision
- Forming the Big Local partnership
- Creating a Big Local plan
- Delivering the Big Local plan
- Collecting the evidence
- Reviewing the Big Local plan and partnership

9.1.5 A Big Local Development Worker has supported the community to advance the first four stages of the programme. The Big Local plan was expected to be available in December 2015. Consultation work undertaken as part of this process has raised a number of issues of relevance to the future of Arley Sports Centre.

9.1.6 Members of the Big Local partnership distributed approximately 2000 questionnaires to the community of Arley and Ansley Village. Whilst only 130 questionnaires were returned (6.5%), 80 additional suggestions / comments were received through “cards” collected from local shops / outlets. 26% of respondents were young people and 11% were from retired / older people. Fourteen respondents made specific reference to providing a bigger, more

extensive Sports Centre / fitness provision, whilst a further 26 referred to an extension of leisure / sports provision for the community, including for young and older people. Nineteen people wanted a swimming pool in Arley and one respondent wanted a sports centre in Ansley Village. Whilst the number of respondents was not high, the return is relevant in the context of considering the future of Arley Sports Centre.

10 Arley Neighbourhood Plan

- 10.1 On 9 November 2015, the Planning and Development Board approved a proposal to circulate the Arley Neighbourhood Plan for public consultation. The covering report notes that “any proposed development that threatens a “listed asset” must indicate how that asset will be protected or replaced” and that “the village should not be left without a facility that the villagers have identified as being essential to village life”. Arley Sports Centre is identified as a listed asset. Whilst not threatened by a proposed development, contextually the Neighbourhood Plan will provide those people who argue for the retention of the Sports Centre with more evidence relating to its significance for local community life.

11 Alternative Provision

- 11.1 The Borough Council has very good quality leisure provision in Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth, and a small number (less than 10%) of current users of Arley make use of the facilities in Atherstone and Coleshill in particular.
- 11.2 Sports and leisure facilities are also provided in Nuneaton and Bedworth, whilst additional community-based opportunities are available in various facilities in Arley, including Arley Community Centre (Mums and Babies, Martial Arts, Yoga, etc.), The Methodist Church Hall (Gentle Exercise, Line Dancing, Youth Activities, etc.), The Old Barn (Coffee Mornings and Social Events, etc.) and Rowland Court (Indoor Bowls).

12 Health Issues

12.1 Both the Borough Council and the North Warwickshire Community Partnership have adopted health and well-being related priorities. In this regard, as assessment of relevant health indicators serve to indicate that particular needs are evident in Arley and Whitacre. Notably, the Ward ranked highest (worst) in the following indicators:

- General health of the population
- The percentage of obese Year Six children
- Deaths from all cancers (people under 75 years of age)

12.2 The indicators were also poor in respect of the incidence of all cancers, and deaths from both circulatory and coronary heart disease in people under 75 years of age. The percentage of obese Reception aged children was also high.

12.3 Clearly, sport, recreation and leisure provision has a positive role to play in respect of both the prevention and improvement of the identified health conditions.

13 Options and Implications

13.1 Service

13.1.2 Arley Sports Centre is currently open at the following times:

- Monday to Friday: 9:00 to 22:00 (Peak time is 16:00 to 22:00)
- Saturday and Sunday: 8:30 to 18:00

13.1.3 In consideration of its future, a range of options have been considered, as follows:

13.2 Option 1 – Full Closure

13.2.1 Full closure of Arley Sports Centre would realise a revenue cost saving of approximately £99,000 per annum. Due account, however, would need to be taken of the potential redundancy implications (£47,847) highlighted elsewhere in this report.

13.2.2 Further, whilst a detailed cost estimate has not been undertaken, when consideration has been given to the potential demolition costs of both the former Coleshill Leisure Centre and the Pavilion in Abbey Green Park, the cost of demolishing Arley Sports Centre could be in excess of £100,000.

13.3 Option 2 – Reduction in Opening Hours

13.3.1A review of opening hours that had a very limited impact on direct service provision has been undertaken, in respect of which the following changes have been considered:

- Open at 9:30 instead of 9:00 on weekday mornings
- Close at 20:30 instead of 22:00 on a Friday evening
- Reduce by one the number of weekend party bookings, meaning that Duty Managers can finish at 16:30, rather than 18:30
- Start Reception shifts at 17:00 instead of 16:00 on weekday afternoons

13.3.2 These changes would realise a saving of £7,385 per year.

13.4 Option 3 – Closure During the Daytime on Weekdays

13.4.1 A closure of the Sports Centre during the daytime on weekdays (Monday to Friday) has provisionally been assessed, in respect of which an approximate saving of £37,000 per annum would be realised. Assumptions have had to be made about the consequence of any such closure, for instance in respect of the likely loss of members and income, and no account has been taken of any impact on Central Support or Capital Charges in arriving at this figure. Any closure of this nature would have potential redundancy implications, which have not been reviewed for this option.

13.5 Option 4 – New Fitness Suite

13.5.1 Consideration has been afforded to the development of a new fitness suite in the current squash court. This would require a capital outlay in the region of £25,000, an additional staffing requirement of almost £7,000 and the loss of squash income (and users) of £5,100. A 50% increase (70) in the current level of direct debit memberships would be required to achieve a cost neutral position for Option 4.

13.6 Option 5 – New Fitness Suite and Reduced Opening Hours

13.6.1 A development of the existing fitness suite and the provision of a new free weights service in the current squash court, as well as a reduction in opening hours (see Option 2), would require a higher level of capital investment (£40,000), but could result in a lower revenue cost for the facility. With an additional 70 direct debit members, the cost of the Sports Centre could reduce by almost £7,500 per annum.

13.7 Option 6 – Asset Transfer

13.7.1 A further alternative in respect of the future operation of the Sports Centre would be to establish whether or not an “external” organisation wanted to operate the facility. Initial research has not identified a sufficiently well-established third (voluntary and community) sector organisation capable of undertaking such a significant task. It is, however, possible that the Parish

Council may be interested in reviewing the option of managing the Sports Centre, although no discussions have taken place to this end.

13.7.2 Significant asset transfers can involve a long and sometimes difficult process, but it can lead to the retention of valued community services and, in this case, a potential revenue saving to the Authority. Drawing on the experience of others, however, asset transfers, also require the following key components:

- Buy in, commitment and leadership from both sides of the “partnership”
- Shared purpose, objectives and goals, and a recognition of the contribution to the process being made by both parties
- An understanding of the needs of the local community
- Open, honest and well-informed communication at all times
- The development of a good business plan by the organisation seeking to acquire the asset and its approval by, in this case, the Borough Council
- Recognition from the outset that the process will take time to succeed
- Careful management of expectations. Realism is essential at all times

13.7.3 Over many years, the Borough Council has invested considerable time and resource into the provision of public services at Arley Sports Centre. It is, however, faced with the need to make a series of difficult decisions if the revenue savings are to be made that will allow the Authority to meet its Medium Term Financial Strategy objectives. Only Options 1, 3 and 6 above afford an opportunity for a significant contribution to be made to the Borough Council’s savings target. Members, therefore, may want to explore the option of an asset transfer, prior to determining to close the Sports Centre, either in whole or in part.

14 **Effect of Any Closure on the Recreation Ground**

14.1 There would be no direct and immediate impact on the adjacent Recreation Ground of any of the options identified above, although experience would suggest that a building that remains vacant for a significant period of time does attract undesirable, anti-social behaviour of one form or another should the decision be taken to close the Sports Centre. This point is particularly relevant given the building’s proximity to the play area in the Recreation Ground. Additional impacts are difficult to predict and, in part, would be dependent upon any future use made of the building.

15 **Planning**

15.1 Arley Sports Centre is in the Green Belt and it is going to be very difficult to find an appropriate re-use of the facility, should it be determined to close for its current purpose. The Planning Officer has indicated that the building would be difficult to convert to any form of alternative use and that storage / commercial use would not be supported because of the consequent traffic and environmental issues.

15.2 Redevelopment could be an option. Whilst there has been a significant level of recent activity in support of the 2011 Arley Housing Needs Survey, a need

remains for social rental and shared ownership properties. There is a brand new Medical Centre in the village and the schools have also been redeveloped.

- 15.3 Once a decision has been made about the future of the Sports Centre, one option could be to look at whether alternative leisure or sporting facilities might be required by the community, or a contribution towards them, as part of any future housing development that might take place in Arley. As Members are aware, the Borough Council is currently undertaking a Green Belt Review and additionally looking at options for accommodating some of the shortfall in housing provision from the Birmingham Housing Market Area. Significant additional housing sites, therefore, may be required and it may be possible, subject to viability assessments, to consider requiring contributions towards the needs of the settlements where that housing is provided. There is also the possibility of using the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to meet related needs, when it is introduced.

16 **Staffing**

This section has been redacted.

17 **Consultation**

- 17.1 An initial review has been undertaken by the Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council into the need, or otherwise, to undertake community-based consultation when potentially significant changes may be made to an existing service.
- 17.2 The Courts have found that there is no general duty to consult and that the need to consult will only arise in one or more of four circumstances:
- Where there is a statutory requirement to consult (as with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme)
 - Where there has been a promise to consult
 - Where there is an established practice of consultation
 - In exceptional cases, where a failure to consult would lead to conspicuous unfairness
- 17.3 Clearly, in the case of Arley Sports Centre, there is no statutory duty to consult nor has there been a specific promise to do so. The third and fourth options above, therefore, require closer scrutiny.
- 17.4 The Borough Council has not previously contemplated a decision to cease to provide a major service, although it could be argued that the consultation undertaken prior to the development of the new Leisure Centre in Coleshill creates a practice that consultation is undertaken when major changes to leisure provision are envisaged. Additionally, the Authority has committed to public consultation with regard to aspects of service provision in Polesworth and, therefore, it is not difficult to see the Courts taking the view that there is an established practice to consult on matters such as the future of Arley Sports Centre. The Borough Council is also a signatory to the Warwickshire

Compact, which may be used to suggest that the Authority has a practice of consulting on major change proposals, and it has adopted the Warwickshire Local Council's Charter, which has consultation with parish and town councils as one of its four themes.

- 17.5 Cases under the fourth point above are described by the Courts as being very rare. One recent example was the decision to halt the Building Schools for the Future programme, where extensive discussions had taken place with a Council, but then the project was abruptly stopped without any further consultation. Other cases suggest that the removal of a direct benefit might fit into this category, although those have tended to be direct services to disabled people, rather than leisure-specific cases.
- 17.6 It may be, therefore, that no duty arises to consult in the case of the future of Arley Sports Centre, although the Borough Council's record in respect of leisure provision in Coleshill and Polesworth is highly relevant. A decision not to consult, therefore, could be subject to a number of risks. Firstly, the Courts have held that there is an overriding duty for public authorities to act fairly. Secondly, whilst the Authority may be able to successfully defend a challenge, legal advice ought to be directed towards avoiding a challenge in the first place, rather than relying on the chances of winning such a case. Thirdly, a decision not to consult will almost certainly raise a number of community-based objections.
- 17.7 Further, the Borough Council must have regard to the public sector "equality duty" in the Equality Act 2010. The Authority must afford consideration to how any proposal affects people with protected characteristics. Gathering evidence relating to how the Authority has had regard to this duty as the decision making process evolves is vital. The duty must be "exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind". Clearly, a good source of evidence is to have consulted with those people affected by any such decision in order to understand the needs of those with protected characteristics.
- 17.8 The Assistant Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council concludes that his advice would be to undertake community consultation.
- 17.9 If the decision is made to consult then there is a separate raft of cases on how to do so fairly. Whilst further advice might be required, any consultation undertaken must be genuine, conducted at a formative stage of any decision and provide sufficient information to permit intelligent consideration, including all viable options. In this regard, any consultation undertaken in respect of the future of Arley Sports Centre should include current users of the facility and the local community, but should also be undertaken across the Borough (given that it is a North Warwickshire facility, which is financially supported by residents across the Borough) and within the context provided by the Authority's financial position.

18 Conclusions

- 18.1 Whilst Arley Sports Centre is a valued local amenity, both by users and the wider community, the Borough Council is faced with the need to make £1.7

million of savings over the next four years. Realisation of this need will require difficult decisions to be made in respect of a number of services provided by the Authority. Despite its community value, Arley Sports Centre carries with it the lowest number of users and members and the highest subsidy per user of any of the Borough Council's leisure facilities. Within this context, it is reasonable for the Borough Council to consider its long-term future, alongside its consideration of other aspects of service provision. The Board may wish to explore the option of transferring the asset to the local Parish Council. Should this option not prove to be palatable to either party, however, Members are asked to determine which, if any, of the identified options it wishes to pursue in respect of the future operation of the Sports Centre.

19 Report Implications

19.1 Finance and Value for Money Implications

19.1.1 Section 13 provides an outline of a number of options in respect of the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. The table below summarises the financial implications of these options. Consideration of these options needs to be undertaken within the context provided by the need for the Authority to make savings of £1.7 million over the next four years

Option	Description	Revenue Saving (per annum)	Capital Required	Implications
Option 1	Full closure	£99,000	Potential demolition cost	Complete loss of service and redundancies
Option 2	Reduction in opening hours	£7,385	None	Minor impact on service
Option 3	Closure during the daytime on weekdays	£37,000	None	Significant loss of service and redundancies
Option 4	New fitness suite	Cost neutral	£25,000	Enhanced service, capital required
Option 5	New fitness suite and reduced opening hours	£7,500	£40,000	Enhanced service, but capital required
Option 6	Asset transfer	£99,000	None	Need for detailed and possibly protracted negotiations with, for example, Arley Parish Council

19.1.2 Members need to be aware of the staffing implications and potentially related costs of any future decision to close the Sports Centre. These are detailed in section 16 above. Similarly, a decision to close the Centre would give rise to the need to consider its possible demolition, which could cost in excess of

£100,000, although there would be a consequent reduction in Non-domestic Rates of £11,100 per annum.

19.2 Safer Communities Implications

19.2.1 The provision of good quality and highly valued recreational services and opportunities has positive implications for the development of healthier and safer communities and leads to a reduction in the likelihood of criminal and / or anti-social behaviour.

19.3 Legal and Human Rights Implications

19.3.1 The legal and human rights implications related to consideration of the long-term future of Arley Sports Centre are detailed in the main body of the report.

19.4 Environment and Sustainability Implications

19.4.1 The provision of sporting and recreational opportunities is consistent with a number of corporate priorities, in that it helps the Borough Council's ability to maintain and enhance the quality, consistency and sustainability of communities. Related services also make a positive impact on individual and collective quality of life in North Warwickshire.

19.5 Health, Well-being and Leisure Implications

19.5.1 Services provided within the Borough Council's leisure facilities have a positive impact on the health and well-being of individual participants and contribute to an enhancement in their quality of life. The services are also compliant with the county-wide Health and Well-being Strategy and its supporting Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

19.6 Human Resources Implications

This paragraph has been redacted.

19.7 Risk Management Implications

19.7.1 .The risks of the different options relating to Arley Sports Centre have been covered within the body of the report, In summary, removing indoor leisure provision in Arley would reduce the Councils ability to provide local leisure opportunities for people around the Arley area, and could impact on the ability to achieve the corporate priorities of providing leisure and well being opportunities, creating safer communities and promoting sustainable communities. However, removing indoor provision would directly assist with the corporate priority of responsible financial and resource management.

19.8 Equalities Implications

19.8.1 An Equality and Impact Needs Assessment has been undertaken and a copy of the associated template is appended to this report.

19.9 Links to Council's Priorities

19.9.1 The provision of sporting and recreational opportunities has positive and direct links to the following corporate objectives:

- Responsible financial and resource management
- Creating safer communities
- Improving leisure and well-being opportunities
- Promoting sustainable and vibrant communities

19.9.2 Activity provided at Arley Sports Centre additionally contributes to the following priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Raising aspirations, educational attainment and skill levels
- Developing healthier communities
- Improving access to services

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Powell (719352).

Background Papers

Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D, as substituted by the Local Government Act, 2000 Section 97

Background Paper No	Author	Nature of Background Paper	Date
1	Sport England	National Audit of Sports Halls	2013
2	Sport England	Facilities Planning Model	
3	Arley Parish Council	Arley Neighbourhood Plan	2015

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Sheet

Please complete the following table, summarised from the Equality Impact Assessment Form. This should be completed and attached to relevant Board reports.

Name of Policy / Procedure / Service:	Arley Sports Centre – Outline Options Assessment
Officer Responsible for Assessment:	Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Does this policy / procedure / service have any differential impact on the following equality groups / people:

- (a) Is there a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contribute to promoting equal opportunities and improve relations or:
- (b) Could there be a negative impact on any of the equality target groups i.e. disadvantage them in any way?

Equality Group	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Reasons / Comments
Racial			
Gender			
Disabled People		Yes	The facility is not fully accessible under the requirements of the Equality Act. As well as members of the public who use the Centre because of its facilities, three local schools that cater for young people with disabilities would be affected by any future reduction in service. Under the Act, employers and organisations have a responsibility to make sure that disabled people can access jobs, education and services as easily as non-disabled people. This is known as the "duty to make reasonable adjustments". Disabled people can experience discrimination if the employer or organisation does not make a reasonable adjustment. This is known as a "failure to make reasonable adjustments".
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual People			
Older / Younger People		Yes	Approximately 50% of the facilities users are less than 21 years of age, with 41% being between the ages of 0 to 16 years
Religion and Beliefs			
People Having Dependents with Caring Responsibilities			
People Having an Offending Past			
Transgender People			

If you have answered **No** to any of the above, please give your reasons below:

See reasons given above

Please indicate if you believe that this document should proceed to further Impact Assessment:

Additional work, through consultation, may be required in relation to the potentially negative impact of any future reduction in service upon disabled and young people.



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Simon Powell BA
Assistant Director (Leisure and Community
Development)
The Council House
South Street
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 1DE

Appendix B

Address

Switchboard : (01827) 715341
Fax : (01827) 719225
E Mail : ASC-Consultation@northwarks.gov.uk
Website : www.northwarks.gov.uk
This matter is being dealt with by
: Simon Powell
Direct Dial : (01827) 719352
Your ref :
Our ref :
Date : 03 March 2016

Dear Name

Arley Sports Centre - Borough-wide Consultation

At its meeting held in January 2016, the Borough Council's Community and Environment Board gave detailed consideration to a report that outlined a number of options relating to the future operation of Arley Sports Centre. On 24 February, Councillors determined to make the report publicly accessible and it can now be viewed at www.NorthWarks.gov.uk/ArleySportsCentreConsultation or within a number of public buildings (see the enclosed consultation document for details). Councillors also decided that this important matter should be the subject of Borough-wide consultation.

The Borough Council needs to make revenue savings of £1.7 million over the next four years from within an overall budget of £8.8 million. This represents a very significant challenge. In order to make these savings, all services provided by the Authority will be subject to careful scrutiny. It is inevitable that some of these services will be affected by this process. In view of these financial circumstances, Councillors preferred option is to close the Sports Centre, and save almost £100,000 a year by doing so, unless a financially viable alternative can be established. Councillors, however, want to hear from people who use the facility, including user groups such as your own, the local community and the people of North Warwickshire before making a final decision on the Centre's future. You are, therefore, invited to comment on the Borough Council's currently preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre. You can do so by completing and returning the enclosed brief questionnaire, which can also be completed online at www.NorthWarks.gov.uk/ArleySportsCentreConsultation. Instructions for responding to the consultation are detailed in the attached document.

Responses must be received by 22 May, and I would urge you to contribute the views of your group on the future of the Sports Centre. If your group has already corresponded with the Council on this subject it does not need to do so again, unless it wishes to add any new information to its submission.

Please take the time to read and respond to the information detailed in the enclosed document. I know that Councillors will value and appreciate the thoughts of your group on the future of Arley Sports Centre and, on their behalf, I thank you in anticipation of your contribution to the consultation process.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)

Arley Sports Centre Consultation

North Warwickshire Borough Council's recently adopted Corporate Plan identifies six key priorities, the first of which is to ensure "responsible financial and resource management". In this respect, the Authority needs to make revenue savings of £1.7 million over the next four years from within an overall budget of £8.8 million. This represents a real and huge challenge. In order to make the savings, all services provided by the Borough Council will be subject to close scrutiny. It is inevitable that some of these services will be affected by this process.

Within this acute financial context, the Borough Council has also committed to undertake a review of its leisure facility provision across North Warwickshire, including its centres in Arley, Atherstone, Coleshill and Polesworth. In pursuing this task, Councillors requested, and have considered, a number of options relating to the future management and operation of Arley Sports Centre, upon which a final decision has NOT been made.

Arley Sports Centre, which comprises a three badminton court sports hall, a small health and fitness suite, one squash court and a small ancillary / meeting room, is a neighbourhood facility, with a localised marketplace. Its catchment area is comparatively small.

Whilst the majority of Arley Sports Centre is in reasonable structural condition, the internal services, layout and parts of the fabric of the building will require refurbishment / replacement in the not too distant future. These works would require substantial financial investment if the facility is to remain fit for purpose. Indeed, given the nature of the facility a full refurbishment could cost in the region of £1.6 million. The Borough Council would need to borrow this money, which would add £97,600 to the annual cost of operating the Centre. This equates to a Council Tax increase of £4.88 or 2.35% (in a Council Tax Band D property). Based upon the cost incurred in building Coleshill Leisure Centre, a like for like replacement of Arley Sports Centre could cost in excess of £1.55 million, which would increase its cost by approximately £96,100 per annum. This would equate a Council Tax increase of £4.80 or 2.32% for a Band D property. An additional consequence would be the need to increase the level of savings required within other areas of Borough Council service provision.

Whilst membership of the Sports Centre is growing slowly, the number of members currently stands at 160. The figure for Atherstone is 782, Coleshill has 823 members and Polesworth 338. The number of visits a year equates to approximately 160 a day, or around 15 people an hour. The budgeted subsidy per visit is also significantly higher at Arley than it is at any of the Borough Council's other leisure facilities (£3.57 per visit at Arley, as opposed to £2.48 at Coleshill and £1.78 at Polesworth, the Authority's other "dry" facilities).

The options considered by Councillors included:

- 1 Full closure, which would realise a saving of almost £100,000 per annum
- 2 A reduction in opening hours that had a very limited impact on service provision, which would achieve a saving of just over £7,000 a year
- 3 Daytime closure on weekdays, which would lead to a saving of approximately £37,000 per annum

- 4 Development of a new fitness suite in the current squash court. This option would require capital funding, additional staffing and the loss of squash users and it would require a 50% increase in the current level of membership to achieve a cost neutral position
- 5 Development of a new fitness suite and a reduction in opening hours, which would require capital funding support. A 50% increase in membership could achieve a cost saving of £7,500 a year
- 6 Asset transfer to a third party

A copy of the report considered by Councillors can be viewed on the Borough Council's website at www.northwarks.gov.uk/ArleySportsCentreConsultation. Copies of the document are also available and can be read at any of the Borough Council's leisure facilities (including Arley Sports Centre), any of the community hubs around North Warwickshire (including the Arley Community Hub, which is located at the Arley and St. Michael's Community Centre, Gun Hill, Arley, CV7 8HA), in your local library and the Authority's One Stop Shop at the Council House in Atherstone. The following brief consultation questionnaire can be viewed at these locations also.

Given the financial circumstances faced by the Borough Council, Members are minded to close the Sports Centre, and save almost £100,000 a year by doing so, unless a financially viable alternative can be established. Councillors, however, want to hear from people who use the facility, the local community and the people of North Warwickshire before making a final decision on the Centre's future. You are, therefore, invited to comment on the Borough Council's currently preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre.

- 1 Given the previous information, do you support the Borough Council's preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre and save approximately £100,000 per annum by doing so?

YES / NO

- 2 Please explain your view below.

- 3 Do you have any suggestions about how the Sports Centre and / or its services can be retained?

Responses must be received by 22 May, subsequent to which they will be considered by the Councillors. Anyone who has already corresponded with the Borough Council on this subject does not need to do so again, unless they wish to add any new information to their submission. The form can be handed in at your local North Warwickshire Borough Council leisure facility or sent to:

Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development)
North Warwickshire Borough Council
Council House
South Street
Atherstone
Warwickshire
CV9 1DE

If you prefer to complete online, please do so at:

www.NorthWarks.gov.uk/ArleySportsCentreConsultation

If you require any additional information or have any further queries, please direct them to:

ASC-Consultation@NorthWarks.gov.uk

Equality Questionnaire (Optional)

You do not need to fill in this part of the questionnaire, but we do hope that you will as we will use the information to monitor the responses to the consultation to ensure that we treat everyone in a fair and equal way. The questions have been designed to gather data about respondents, in relation to the characteristics protected by the law under the Equality Act 2010.

We will keep the information from this questionnaire confidential and store it in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. By submitting such sensitive information to us you are only consenting to the collection and processing of this information to enable us to check that our consultation method has been inclusive.

1 Are you:

Male Female Prefer not to say _____

2 What age group are you in?

Under 25 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65 and over

Prefer not to say _____

3 Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes No Prefer not to say

If yes, what is your disability? _____

4 Are you:

Single Separated Divorced Widowed Married or in a civil partnership

Prefer not to say _____

5 What is your religion or belief?

Buddhist Muslim Christian Sikh Hindu No religion

Jewish Agnostic Other Prefer not to say _____

6 Is your gender the same as the gender identity you were born with?

Yes No Prefer not to say _____

7 Which ethnic group do you consider you belong to? (Tick one box)

White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
White: Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
White: Gypsy or Irish traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
White: Any other background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Asian British: Any other background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed: White and black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or black British: Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed: White and black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or black British: African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed: White and Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or black British: Any other background	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed: Any other background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arabian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other ethnic group: <i>Please state</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

P.T.O

Arley Sports Centre Consultation

- 1 Do you support the Borough Council's preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre and save approximately £100,000 per annum by doing so?

YES / NO (please circle)

- 2 Please explain your view below.

- 3 Do you have any suggestions about how the Sports Centre and / or its services can be retained?

Post Code: _____

Optional Questions

Name: _____

Telephone Number or Email: _____

ALL RESPONSES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 22 MAY 2016

P.T.O

Arley Sports Centre Consultation Report

(22 May 2016)

1. Consultation Methodology

1.1 As the Councillors preferred option was determined at Community and Environment Board on 18 January 2016, the decision was taken to provide background information to consultees as to why this was the decision Councillors came to and to ask the following questions:

Q1 Given the previous information (*contained within the background document*), do you support the Borough Council's preferred option to close Arley Sports Centre and save approximately £100,000 per annum by doing so?

Q1.1 Please explain your view.

Q2 Do you have any suggestions about how the Sports Centre and / or its services can be retained?

1.2 The consultation began on 1 March 2016 and finished on the 22 May 2016. A covering letter, a document containing background information, the questionnaire and posters were drafted and distributed as detailed in table 1.

Table 1

Date	What
01/03/2016	Consultation live on website
02/03/2016	Information to 3 Hubs (including Arley)
03/03/2016	Information to Libraries (Kingsbury, Dordon and Atherstone)
02/03/2016	Information to leisure facilities
02/03/2016	Information in Council House Reception
02/03/2016	Emails to individual users
03/03/2016	Letters to individual users with no email
04/03/2016	Letters to user groups (internal)
04/03/2016	Letters to user groups (external - football etc.)
02/03/2016	Posters (distributed throughout Arley and Whitacre Ward)
02/03/2016	Door to door delivery to Old Arley (completed 04/03/16)
04/03/2016	Delivery to New Arley (completed 10/03/16)
04/03/2016	Information to 1 Hub (Lori)
04/03/2016	Email to town and parish councils (all except Caldecote)
08/03/2016	Start Questions and Answers
07/03/2016	Monday - Fri 10 remaining Hubs
07/03/16 - 08/03/16	Letter to organisations: (see table 2)
08/03/2016	Letter to local schools.
08/03/2016	Letter to sports organisations: Sport England, Gove bodies of sport

04/03/2016	Article in North Talk agreed - out to all residents by 18 April 2016
08/03/2016	Article for WCAVA Newsletter
16/03/2016	Emails to 452 NWBC website users requesting 'leisure' update
24/03/2016	People's Panel - emails sent
29/03/2016	People's Panel - letters sent

Table 2

Date sent	Organisations and schools
07/03/2016	Warwickshire Police
07/03/2016	WCC - Public Health
07/03/2016	WCC - Localities Team
08/03/2016	Big Local
08/03/2016	WCAVA
08/03/2016	Older People's Forum
08/03/2016	Sport England
08/03/2016	Arley and St Michael's Church
08/03/2016	Warwickshire North CCG
08/03/2016	Governing Body of Sport - England Squash
08/03/2016	Governing Body of Sport - Badminton England
08/03/2016	Governing Body of Sport - British Gymnastics
08/03/2016	Governing Body of Sport - England Netball
08/03/2016	Arley Primary School
08/03/2016	Arc School Old Arley
08/03/2016	Hartshill School
08/03/2016	Oak Wood Primary & Secondary School
08/03/2016	St Benedict's Catholic Primary School
08/03/2016	St Anne's Catholic Primary School
08/03/2016	St Thomas More Catholic School & Sixth Form College

- 1.3 In addition to the above, the Assistant Director (Leisure and Community Development) has received **99 letters**, numerous e-mails, **four** official complaints (all relating to consultation), one of which has gone to stage 2 and **fifteen** official (and varied) Freedom of Information requests.
- 1.4 All information is being collated to provide an overview to Members of the views being received. To ensure that Members get a true, unbiased understanding of the comments being made, all responses are being made available in the Member Group Rooms (with details of individuals redacted).

2. Consultation Results

2.1 Three petitions have been received (a total of 4,500 signatures)

1	Ansley Parish Council	200
2	Keep Arley Sports Centre Open (electronic petition)	531
3	Keep Arley Sports Centre Open (paper petition)	3,769

2.2	Number of consultation responses:	721
	Number of organisations responding	20
	Number of organisations against the closure	19
	Number of organisations agreeing with decision	0
	Number of organisations neither agreeing or disagreeing	1

2.2.2	Number of individuals responding	701
	Number of individuals against the closure	675
	Number of individuals agreeing with the closure	26

96% (695/721) of respondents do not agree with the Councillors preferred option to close the facility. (99.5% if you include the petition responses).

2.2.3	Number of people identifying themselves or family member as a user (this was not a set question, so we only know if people have stated this in their response)	249
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2.3 Key issues identified (in order of number of times raised as a concern):

- 389 Raised concerns about the impact on **children** (198 raised concerns about older people, and 232 raised concerns about impact on families)
- 367 **Valued asset** (82 people noted that it is listed in the Local Plan as an asset)
- 341 Raised concerns about **health** (including physical and mental wellbeing and the impact of isolation with a removal of services. 136 specifically raised the issue about obesity)
- 283 Raised concerns about **transport** (252 relating to the lack of service and 166 relating to the cost and time constraints, 20 relating to the increase in pollution)
- 245 Raised concerns about the impact upon the **community** / community spirit / social aspect – that would be lost
- 133 The discrepancy in service provision across the borough – Arley has little
- 121 Raised concerns that Coleshill and Atherstone have centres that have been improved and the fact that there is to be a review but a decision to close Arley has come first
- 121 Commented that the decision is short-sighted, and that it will have further impact on other Government services such as NHS
- 96 Were concerns about creating further bored / disaffected youth – not enough for them already (and the resultant potential impact on crime levels was raised by 27)
- 70 Raised concerns about the fact that it is already a deprived community
- 50 Raised that the decision has been forced without proper consultation
- 33 Are concerned that the playing fields will be built on
- 27 Commented up on the fact that Arley will have a growing population and yet the Council is considering taking remaining services away
- 13 Commented that its services are poorly advertised
- 5 people commented that it is the only thing to do of an evening in Arley that does not involve alcohol
- 2 Council are public servants, more support is required from Council and its elected members.
- 1 Would not have been elected if in manifesto

2.4 Suggestions to retain the Sports Centre / its services:

Retaining / Improving Facility / Operation

- 124 Invest in promotion (possibly look at using a consultant / identify target market)
- 116 More clubs (*1)
- 70 Close at quieter times (not in holidays, possible only one or two days as that is when unemployed / elderly can access)
- 54 Update the facilities (a further two suggesting investing in a new building possibly with the school)
- 45 Increase prices (4 suggested reviewing charges / charging more for those from outside of the Borough / 1 suggested reducing DD cost for gym / 4 – more attractive deals for families and singles)
- 39 Open for other functions (*2)
- 37 More classes / variety (some have long waiting lists)
- 28 Work with Gunn Hill School – after school classes
- 27 Put in café / hot food (possibly with second hand book shop – place for people to meet / soft play area)
- 18 Include exercise on prescription / health rehabilitation (e.g. falls prevention, stroke and cardiac, diabetes, back pain) / slimming world
- 9 Collaborate with local groups / Age UK
- 7 Should be more than a leisure centre (community hub for physical activity and health and well-being / 1 additional person suggested turning into a sports and adventure centre)
- 6 Open shop inside and use profits to subsidise the centre
- 5 Offer 'health and well-being' service to local businesses (e.g. JLR)
- 3 Provide personal trainers
- 3 Train staff to run more sessions – be more than administrators
- 2 Set up a liaison group with staff / customers to find out what people want
- 2 Remove silo mentality between centres
- 1 Install solar panels on the roof
- 1 Advertise when you send out Council Tax bills
- 1 Provide more flexibility with bookings (not just blocks)
- 1 Staff don't know what's on offer

***1 – Suggestions – More clubs:**

- ...for children / teenagers / for older people and for those with disabilities or less able / do family activities
- More holiday clubs (and for longer hours – run proper child care in holidays) / put on a crèche for mums / baby sensory music and movement
- Club suggestions - dance / bingo / slimming world / netball and basketball and tennis lessons / keep fit / Pilates / yoga / walking football / hire out for craft / sewing / things for community - whisk drives / bridge club / walking club / roller disco / soft play nights / Soul cycle / boxing

***2 – Suggestions – Open for other functions:**

- including weddings / films / café / meetings / soft play / NCT baby clothing sales / craft fairs / events (dinner dances) / market stalls / have a summer BBQ / car boot sales.

Other Operating Models

- 37 Local residents / volunteers take over
- 21 A collaboration with the NHS / other service providers / on-line retailer
- 21 Sell to a private enterprise
- 16 Turn it into a Trust
 - 6 Have some private run areas (sub-let gym to a franchise)
 - 2 Get a business sponsor – put in a climbing wall (e.g. Jacksons)
 - 2 The paid staff could form a co-operative
 - 1 Put small business units on the site provide training / education / healthy eating etc. as well as sports
 - 1 If Hartshill School had a gym could use that

Wider Council Options

- 32 Assess other non-essential services and re-allocate funding (Arley has little enough already)
- 28 Professional fundraisers / sponsorship / grants (28 includes: 2 suggesting crowd funding, 2 business sponsors, 3 run a 100 club)
- 17 Raise Council Tax
 - 3 Make people pay for parking (50p / £1 all day – whole borough)
 - 2 Is there a need for both old people centres?
 - 1 Collect unpaid Council Tax
 - 1 Use considerable Council reserves

Other External Options

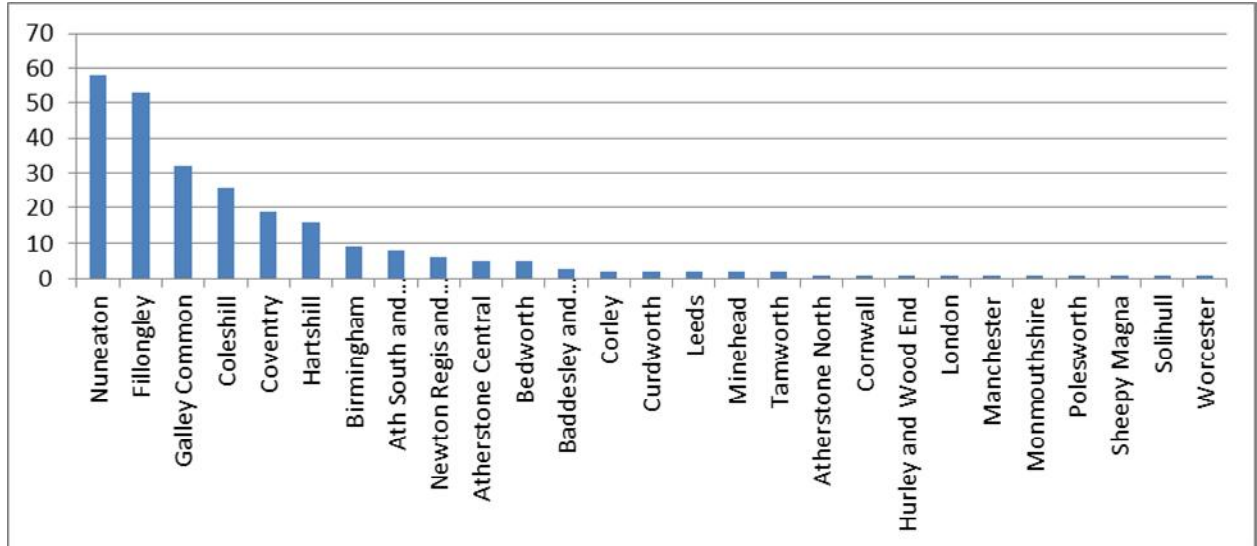
- 8 Fight Government for money for a healthy nation
 - 1 If Housing is put on site, get money from developer for new facilities
 - 1 Parish Council to provide a financial contribution
 - 1 Big Local to invest some of its money

2.5 From those who agree with the closure comments included:

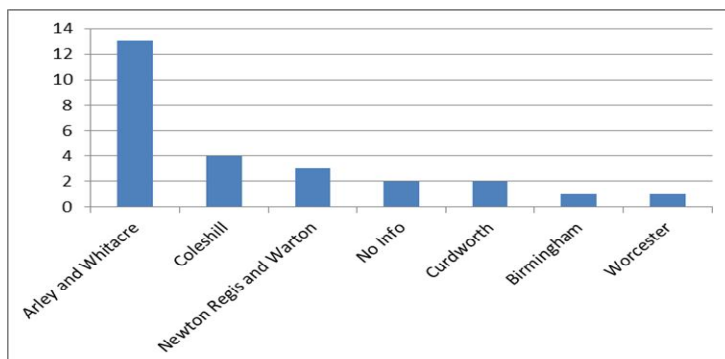
- 5 Don't use Council Tax to subsidise others
- 4 Arley needs a large shop or supermarket
- 3 There are other centres people can use
- 2 Other services are more important
- 2 Need to make savings. Council is not in a position to borrow

3. Area where response have come from (where known)

The vast majority of responses have come from **Arley and Whitacre Ward (370)**. Responses from other areas (where known) are detailed below/



Of the **26** respondents who agreed with the Council proposal to close the facility, **two** did not provide location information. 50% of respondents were from Arley.

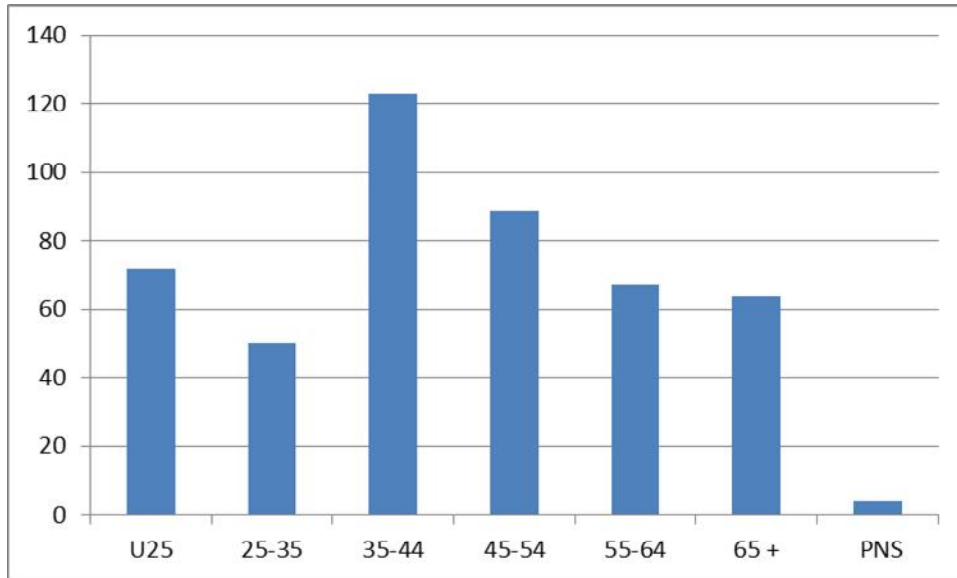


4. Equalities Information (where provided)

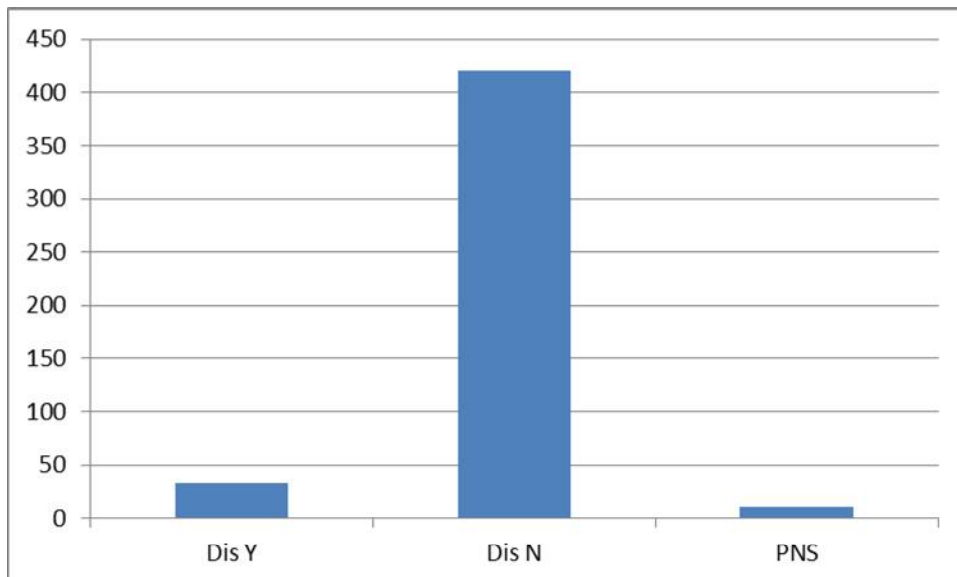
Total respondents answering question = 465

Gender of respondent	Male	159	Female	297	PNS	9
		34%		64%	(Prefer not to say)	2%

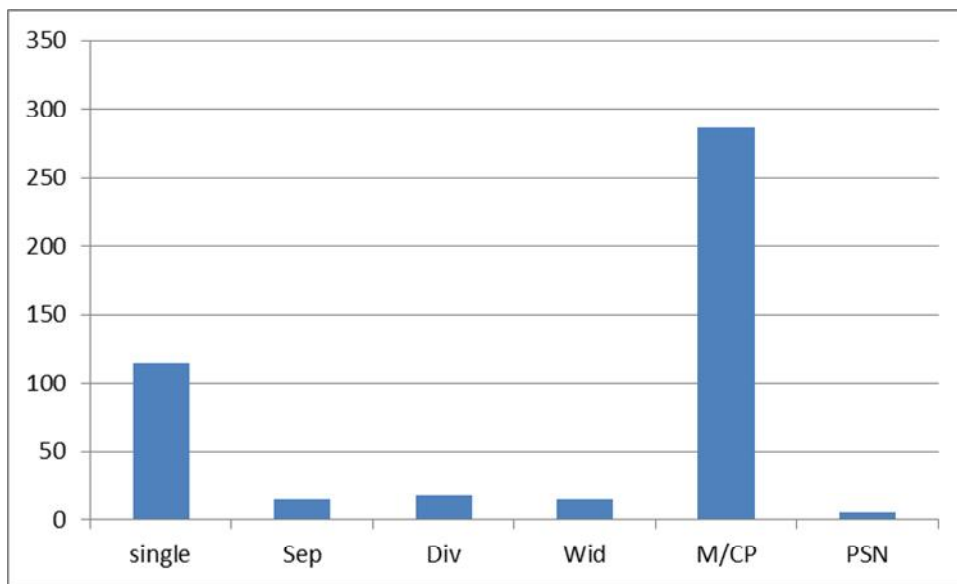
Age of respondents:



Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

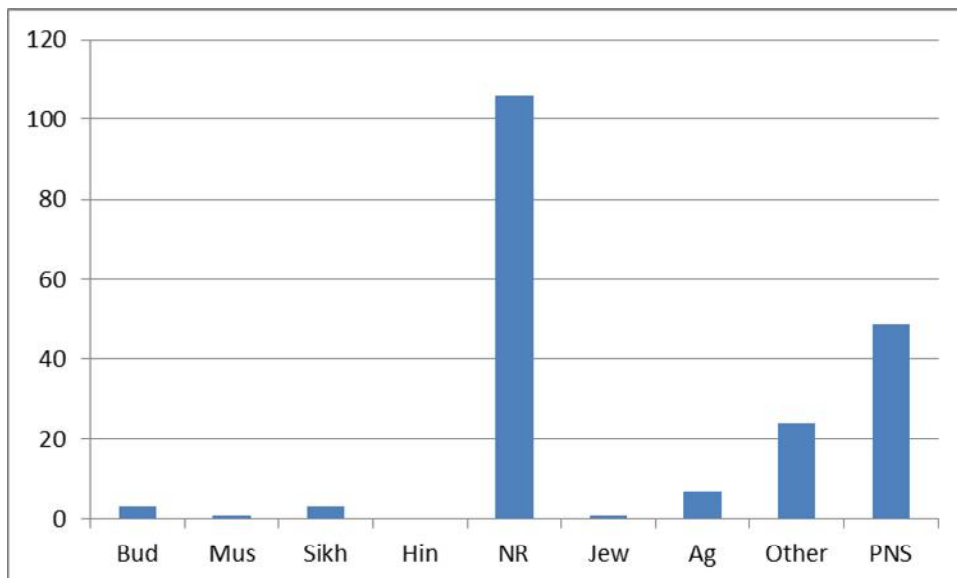


Marital Status



Religion or belief

The vast majority of respondents are Christian (258), other religions / beliefs are detailed below/

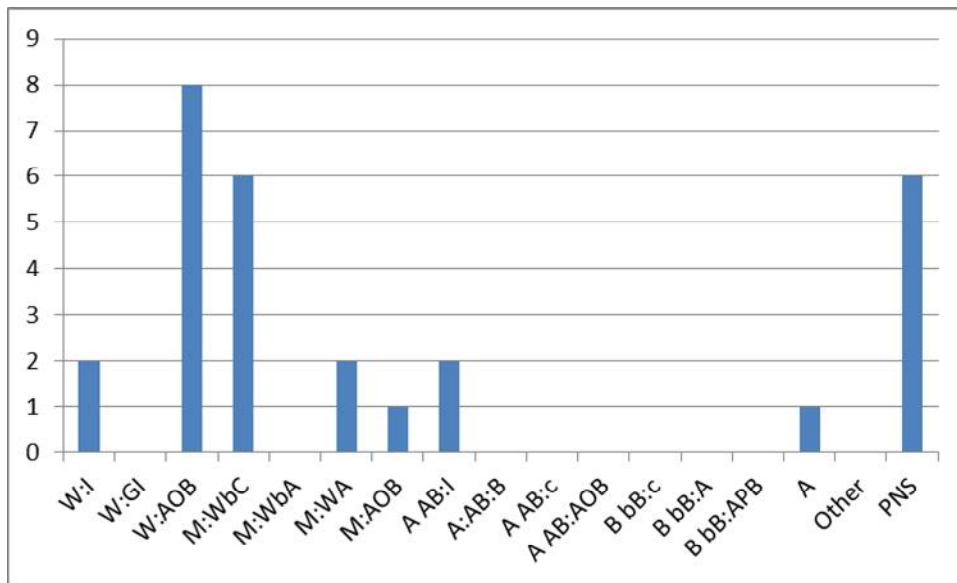


Is your gender the one you were born with?

Gender the same?	Yes	438	No	2	PNS	19
		95.4%		0.4%	(Prefer not to say)	4.1%

Ethnicity

To date, **424 respondents** are in the category **White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British**. Other ethnic group responses have included:



Key

- | | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|----------|--|
| W:I | White: Irish | A AB:B | Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi |
| W:GI | White: Gypsy or Irish traveller | A AB:V+C | Asian or Asian British: Chinese |
| W:AOb | White: Any Other Background | A AB:AOb | Asian or Asian British: Any Other Background |
| M:WbC | Mixed: White and black Caribbean | B bb:C | Black or black British: Caribbean |
| M:WbA | Mixed: White and black African | B bb:A | Black or black British: African |
| M:WA | Mixed: White and Asian | B bb:AOb | Black or black British: Any Other Background |
| M:AOb | Mixed: Any Other Background | A | Arabian |
| A AB:P | Asian or Asian British: Indian | Other | Any other ethnic group |
| A AB:P | Asian or Asian British: Pakistani | PNS | Prefer Not to Say |

(White:AOb has included Polish and German respondents)