

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.