

**CABINET**

**7 OCTOBER 2019**

**Index**

**Friary Grange Leisure Centre .....2**

**FRIARY GRANGE LEISURE CENTRE**

**1. Decision:**

- 1.1 That the petition be formally received.
- 1.2 That option 2 as set out in the Cabinet report be approved: to keep Friary Grange Leisure Centre (FGLC) open without the all weather pitch and sports hall with a new lease with Staffordshire County Council with a view to replacing FGLC with a new facility as soon as possible, subject to a cap in capital expenditure on FGLC of £695,000 for the five year period.
- 1.3 That Cabinet recommends to Full Council to amend the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in line with the financial implications set out in the Cabinet report.
- 1.4 That Cabinet recommends to Full Council to amend the MTFS further by adding a contribution of £5m to the capital programme to provide for future leisure facilities in Lichfield.

**2. Statement of Reasons:**

- 2.1 Following a decision to close FGLC from 1 April 2020, taken by Lichfield District Council's Cabinet on 9 July 2019, a petition was set up by a local resident. In line with Council policy the petition must be considered by Cabinet. The Council therefore took the decision to review the closure decision and look again at all options for the continuation of the Leisure Centre, considering the impact on the community as well as the financial impact.
- 2.2 The Council reviewed the financial implications of the options set out in the original Cabinet report (9 July 2019). The main material change since the original decision was that Staffordshire County Council was prepared to offer the Council a lease of less than 10 years, on significantly more favourable terms and conditions. This gave more flexibility and reduced the financial risk the Council would be exposed to if it were to continue to occupy the premises post April 2020. The implications for this were assessed as part of option 2 in section 4 of the Cabinet report.
- 2.3 Other changes included the potential for S106 income (generated as a result of development in the District) that could be used to support any refurbishment, and the potential removal of the threat of repayment of a Sports England grant if the Council continued to operate FGLC until a new facility was available.
- 2.4 The Council had considered all options for the future provision of services at the Leisure Centre and had held discussions with Staffordshire County Council, The Friary School, Lichfield Swimming Club and other interested parties.
- 2.5 The Council had also considered comments, contributions and complaints received from residents, customers and stakeholders.
- 2.6 Two viable options had emerged and were assessed in the Cabinet report (see section 4 of the report). Option one was to stop operating Friary Grange Leisure Centre and hand the property back to Staffordshire County Council in May 2020, with any future provision being addressed through the Local Plan process. Option two was to keep the leisure centre open, with a new lease, but without those facilities that are to be handed to The Friary School (all-weather pitch and sports hall), whilst a new facility could be built.

- 2.7 The first part of the Cabinet Meeting was set aside for members of the public, clubs and other organisations to have their say. Speakers included local residents, members of swimming and triathlon clubs, local ward Members, gym users, the NHS and the County Council.

<b>3. Any Alternative Options:</b>
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The Council has had discussions with the School, SCC, Planet Ice, BTIC and Lichfield Swimming Club to see if there are any other potential solutions. It has also explored through potential partial closures whether it could operate and or lease specific parts of the leisure centre such as just the swimming pool. However no viable alternatives to those proposed have been identified.

(COUNCILLOR PULLEN DECLARED A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST IN THIS ITEM AS HIS WIFE WAS A COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND NOTED THAT HE HAD BEEN GRANTED A DISPENSATION TO CONSIDER THE MATTER BY THE MONITORING OFFICER)

(COUNCILLOR LITTLE DECLARED A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST IN THIS ITEM AS HER HUSBAND WAS A COUNTY COUNCILLOR AND NOTED THAT SHE HAD BEEN GRANTED A DISPENSATION TO CONSIDER THE MATTER BY THE MONITORING OFFICER)

(MR C N TURNER DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THIS ITEM AS A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY WAS A MEMBER OF LICHFIELD SWIMMING CLUB).