

SUBJECT:	<i>Extension to the GLL Contract to manage the Evreham Centre</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder – Councillor Paul Kelly</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Martin Holt – Head of Healthy Communities</i>
REPORT AUTHOR	<i>Martin Holt – 01895 837354 – Martin.Holt@SouthBucks.gov.uk</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on the review of the Evreham centre and to consider an extension to the GLL contract in relation to the operation of the Evreham Centre

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the advice of the Policy Advisory Group the Portfolio Holder is recommended to recommend to the Cabinet:

1. To continue to operate the Evreham Centre until 2021, in accordance with the terms of the joint User Agreement.
2. To extend the current contract with GLL to operate the centre until 2021
3. To undertake the mechanical, electrical and structural survey funded from the joint maintenance budget.
4. To establish a joint project group to deliver replacement leisure and community facilities and meet the affordable and supported housing needs as identified in the local plan.

2. Content of Report

- 2.1 The Council is responsible for the operation of the Evreham Centre to provide leisure facilities for use by the community until 2021 on behalf of both Buckinghamshire County Council, and South Bucks District Council. The Joint User Agreement between with both parties also requires that the direct operating costs are shared jointly. The Council and BCC jointly contribute to the direct costs of the operation of centre which for 2017/18 is a forecast budget of £103,942 (£51,971 per authority). The User Agreement may be terminated early subject to both parties being in agreement.
- 2.2 The Centre is managed by Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) on behalf of South Bucks District Council in accordance with the current contract, which ends 1st April 2017 or may be extended to October 2021. The facility is in good condition with fitness, dance, sports hall, and all weather pitch facilities. However due to its location and proximity to alternative facilities the current membership is low with limited throughput. GLL has advised the centre is being subsidised by the company circa £30,000/annum. The current user figures are detailed in Appendix 1
- 2.3 There is no significant capital expenditure required at the centre however if the contract was extended a mechanical, electrical and structural survey would be required to ensure the planned preventative programme was maintained.

- 2.4 GLL have advised that whilst the centre is currently costing the company £30,000 they would be prepared to continue to operate the centre until the end of the extended contract term in 2021 or earlier, but would require a variation to the annual management fee, which for 2017/18 would be £58,331.71 per annum – to be inflated by RPI as per existing contract. Any decision to extend the contract with GLL would have to be notified to GLL before 1st January.
- 2.5 The budget options appraisal 2015/16 identified the possibility of delivering savings in 2017/18 should the User Agreement be ended and the building transferred to BCC. This would coincide with the end of the current GLL contract for the centre. Officers were asked to identify if it was possible to end the joint User Agreement in April 2017 releasing savings to the Council a position supported by the Evreham Management Committee.
- 2.6 Following discussions with BCC it was agreed the following actions be undertaken to inform future decision making.
- **To undertake a leisure facilities study to identify the needs in SBDC without Evreham Centre.** This study has now been commissioned and Strategic Leisure has reported that without the Evreham Centre to meet future leisure needs there would be a requirement to re-provide the fitness facilities, badminton courts (sports hall provision), and the all-weather pitch within the district. The report further advises that a phased approach to the redevelopment of these facilities should occur with the Evreham Centre recommended to remain in use until the re-provision of facilities is provided
 - **To undertake an open spaces strategy to identify the needs in SBDC without the Evreham Centre.** Strategic Leisure has concluded that there would be a need to re-provide the all-weather pitch elsewhere in the district and that the Council should make provision for alternative facilities before closing the centre. Strategic Leisure has yet to report on Playing Field quality and provision within the district, as the inspection process has to be with National Governing Body requirements which for football pitches mean that pitch inspections cannot occur until February.
 - **To seek to remove the Evreham Centre and adjoining fields from the Green Belt, as part of the Local Plan review, enabling potential development.** Advice from Planning is that it is not currently proposed to remove the site from the Green Belt. *The National Planning Framework (NPPF) allows for partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. This means that the existing buildings can be replaced providing the footprint remains broadly similar and the height remains broadly similar. In terms of South Bucks Planning Policy we would need to be assured that replacing a community building with housing would not involve the loss of that facility. It is suggested that if there was an overall community strategy which suggests replacing the centre with an enhanced facility elsewhere within the District, that would overcome any policy objections.*

On the land in public ownership (off Martindale) which is in the Green Belt with no redevelopment possibility I would suggest that it has potential as a rural exception site. These are small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity on land which would not normally be

used for housing. These sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection with the local area. A survey carried out within the Parish would determine what the need is locally together with identifying people with a local connection from the housing waiting list. The NPPF states that small numbers of market housing may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

- **To identify development options for the site through the study that BCC was commissioning with Carter Jonas.** Following planning advice BCC are now able to identify options for the current adult education and leisure centre site.
- Further discussions would occur between August –October as to the opportunities to close the centre, ending the User Agreement early or to keep the centre open till 2021.

2.7 Conclusion of the Leisure Facilities Study

- *Evreham Sports Centre is not used to capacity, but the all-weather pitch on site is well-used. Although the existing sports hall could be closed, population growth increases demand for sports hall provision, so the badminton courts at Evreham cannot be lost, but will need to be replaced. It therefore makes sense to retain existing provision to 2021, and start to plan now for the replacement of the facility through the known development opportunities and sites in the District.*
- *The replacement of the Evreham facility will require capital investment. The development opportunity at Farnham Park offers significant potential both to replace the all-weather pitch, and at least 2 badminton courts, and a further 2 courts could be replaced at Wilton Park in any proposed community hall*
- *To mitigate the demand for additional badminton courts there is potential to negotiate pay and play provision at Beaconsfield High School Sports Facilities which currently utilises only 46% of its potential capacity similarly there is scope to explore similar arrangements for pay and play access with Davenies School, Teikyo School and the Beaconsfield School*
- *There is insufficient provision of community accessible fitness facilities to meet current and future demand, and therefore a need to consider how best to address the current under supply of 41 fitness stations and the future under supply of 80 fitness stations. The priority should be to develop new provision as part of any new leisure developments in the District, funded through S106/CIL.*
- *The development of any new provision should include fitness facilities to provide a revenue stream and support sustainability of the site; it will also be important to ensure accessibility for those without private transport, and who may find membership fees a barrier to participation. A new fitness suite at Farnham Park could address both these issues.*

Discussion

2.8 Both the County and District Portfolio Holders have met with officers 20th October 2016 and agreed that delaying the closure of the Evreham Centre until 2021 would enable a joint approach to be considered in relation to the site, whilst at the same time enabling partnership working to deliver a One Public Estate approach to any re-provision of facilities.

2.9 The risk associated with the early closure of the facility would include;

- Poor PR resulting from the closure of the facility without any re-provision or plan to re-provide
- Whilst savings may be achieved by both Councils arising from not operating the leisure centre there would be continued financial expenditure by BCC arising from Business Rates and maintaining an empty site.
- Unauthorised access to the site and buildings, leading to environmental concerns or damage to facilities

2.10 Portfolio Holders recommended that a managed exit from the Evreham Centre would be the preferred option and that the Centre should continue in use until the end of the joint User Agreement in 2021.

2.11 It was further recommended that a joint Project Group be established undertake a project to consider a phased approach to the re-provision of leisure and community facilities by 2021, and to deliver the enabling development on site.

3. Options

3.1 To jointly agree to end the Joint User agreement in 2017 and manage the demobilisation of the Evreham Centre

3.2 To continue to operate the Evreham Centre until 2021 and manage the closure of facilities at that time taking in to account the local plan requirements for replacement leisure facilities. The management costs would be continued to be shared 50/50 basis with BCC, which would be estimate at £103,942 (£51,971 per authority). this option would require an extension of the current contract with GLL until 2021. GLL would require a variation to the annual management fee, which for 2017/18 would be £58,331.71 per annum – to be inflated by RPI as per existing contract.

4. Corporate Implications

Reports must include specific comments addressing the following implications;

4.1 Financial - The management costs would be continued to be shared 50/50 basis with BCC, which would be estimate at £103,942 (£51,971 per authority)

4.2 Legal – the User agreement would require both parties to terminate the agreement before 2021. The contract with GLL would require to be extended until 31st October 2017.

5 Links to Council Policy Objectives

Sustainable Community Strategy:

- Promote Healthy Lifestyles
- Reduce Health Inequalities

- Improve the Quality of Life for an Ageing Population
- Improve the Quality of Life for Children and Young People
- Well Connected Communities

6 Next Step

- a. To recommend to Healthy Communities PAG and Cabinet to continue to operate the Evreham Centre until 2021
- b. To agree an extension of the contract with GLL until 2021
- c. To establish a project group to consider how facilities may be re-provided in 2021.

Background Papers:	
---------------------------	--