

Contact Officer: Andrea Woodside

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CABINET

Tuesday 12th December 2023

Present: Councillor Cathy Scott (Chair)
Councillor Paul Davies
Councillor Graham Turner
Councillor Jackie Ramsay
Councillor Mussarat Pervaiz
Councillor Yusra Hussain
Councillor Moses Crook

Observers: Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

Apologies: Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds
Councillor Viv Kendrick

91 Membership of Cabinet

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kendrick and Reynolds.

92 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

93 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

94 Admission of the Public

Cabinet noted the submission of exempt information, as set out at Agenda Item 13 (Minute No.103 refers).

95 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

96 Questions by Members of the Public

Cabinet received the following question under Council Procedure Rule 11;

Question from Ken Shaw

“I am the longest serving gym member. I joined Kirklees gyms in 1973 and have gone nearly every week. I am disabled. If I did not go to the gym I would not be able to walk at all. That is why all gyms and sports facilities should be kept open. Who authorised the Stadium closure?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

97 Questions by Elected Members (Oral Questions)

Cabinet received the following oral questions under Executive Procedure Rule 2.3;

Question from Councillor J Lawson

“With regards to car parking charges, can I ask what arrangements will be made so that Cleckheaton Farmers Market and other open air markets held on car parks throughout the borough will be made so that they can continue to happen?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Greener Kirklees (Councillor Hussain).

Question from Councillor Marchington

“Why is the cost of KAL renting space at John Smith Stadium is not commercially sensitive information?”

A response was provided by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner).

98 Leisure Centre Offer 2024/2025

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which set out the findings of the leisure centre consultation process, and sought agreement for the rationalisation of the estate and withdrawal from specific Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) sites. It was noted that the consultation process had been undertaken for a period of six weeks from 29 September 2023 and there had been 17,860 responses.

The report set out the challenges that had been faced by KAL to achieve financial sustainability due to inflationary measures and other increases in operational costs. It was noted that the Council could no longer offer additional financial support and that from April 2024 only the core grant of £2.555m could be made available. Cabinet were advised that for these reasons KAL could not continue to manage all of the sites currently within its portfolio and that the closure of some sites was therefore proposed.

The report advised that it was proposed that (i) the following existing sites would remain open to the public for 2024/2025; Batley Sports and Tennis Centre, Bradley Park Golf Club, Colne Valley Leisure Centre, Holmfirth Pool and Fitness Centre, Huddersfield Leisure Centre, Leeds Road Sports Complex, Scissett Baths and Fitness Centre and Spen Valley Leisure Centre (including Princess Mary Stadium/Running Track) (ii) there would be a withdrawal of services at Dewsbury Sports Centre and Huddersfield Stadium and Fitness Centre, and that these sites would cease to continue operating and (iii) Deighton Sports Arena would remain open and continue to be operated by KAL in the short term whilst a longer term solution is sought.

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Cabinet gave consideration to the exempt information at Agenda Item 13 (Minute No. 103 refers) prior to the determination of this item.)

RESOLVED –

- 1) That (i) the findings of the six-week public consultation held between 29 September 2023 and 12 November 2023 (as attached at Appendix 1) (ii) the contents of the Integrated Impact Assessment (iii) the capital investment required for essential repairs and (iv) the proposed funding to KAL of the £2.555M, as set out in the budget book, be noted.
- 2) That the further work required to clarify the redundancy and other costs relating to the closure of facilities as identified in this report be noted.
- 3) That approval be given to the £2.555M leisure offer for 2024/25, specifically: Batley Sports & Tennis Centre; Bradley Park Golf Club; Colne Valley Leisure Centre; Holmfirth Pool and Fitness Centre; Huddersfield Leisure Centre; Leeds Road Sports Complex; Scissett Baths and Fitness Centre (subject to funding being awarded by Sport England); and Spen Valley Leisure Centre (including Princess Mary Stadium & Running Track).
- 4) That approval be given to Dewsbury Sports Centre (DSC), Deighton Sports Arena and Huddersfield Stadium Health & Fitness Club not being part of the leisure offer.
- 5) That Officers be authorised to continue discussions regarding the future use of Deighton Sports Arena, in order to enable options to maintain community access to the facility to be explored within the next 12 to 24 months.
- 6) That Officers be authorised to develop a future plan for physical activity across Dewsbury, which would contain a range of long term options, and that an assessment be made on the cost and feasibility of creating access to the dry-side facilities at Dewsbury Sports Centre.
- 7) That Officers be authorised to continue to work with Kirklees Stadium Development Ltd (KSDL) to try and attract another operator for the Stadium Health and Fitness Club to aid the financial viability of the site.
- 8) That approval be given to phase 2 of the Leisure Centre Transformation Programme, to focus on the future vision for sport and physical activity ensuring Kirklees citizens have access to a wide choice of activities.
- 9) That a further report be considered in 2024 regarding the property implications of the proposed changes to the leisure offer provision and its impact on individual sites.

99 Implementing Integrated Community Approaches

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which sought approval for a service redesign which was part of a phased approach to develop an integrated model of support across Kirklees communities. The report advised that the model proposed to streamline community and access service functions in order to provide a more cohesive support network and achieve better outcomes and improved efficiencies. It identified the impacts and mitigating actions upon employees, residents, the voluntary and community sector and place based working approaches. The report explained that the model would focus upon working in a more integrated holistic way, supporting transformational conversations, reacting to emerging community needs, and increasing local community knowledge.

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Cabinet were advised of changes to three service and function areas; (i) integration of community facing teams during 2024 resulting in new multi-disciplinary teams (ii) integration of the Council's individual telephone contact centres during 2024 and (iii) a reduction in grant distribution from the community plus grants scheme used to distribute external funding from April 2024. It was noted that the proposal provided cumulative savings of £519k, and a reduction of 12.5fte.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the overall approach to integrate currently segregated community services from across Community and Access Services be approved.
- 2) That approval be given to commence a service change process to reduce management and staffing capacity by the required amounts to achieve integration and savings.

100 **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Rent and Service Charge Setting and Key Housing Challenges**

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which set out the financial context and basis for the annual setting of rents and service charges and sought a decision regarding the annual rent and service charge increases for 2024/2025, which would form part of the budget proposals.

Cabinet were advised that, in order to comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to have a balanced Housing Revenue Account, it was proposed that social housing rent charges be increased by 7.7% (an average of £6.10 per week) and service charges also at 7.7% with effect from 1 April 2024. The schedule of proposed weekly rent and service charges for 2024/2025 were set out at Appendix 1. The report indicated that tenants would be advised of increases in payment by letter in accordance with the statutory four week notice period.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That approval be given to increase rents by an average of £6.10 per week (7.7%) and service charges payable by between 0.08p and £1.52 per week (7.7%) for social housing from 1 April 2024.
- 2) That approval be given for charges for Extra Care Services – Intensive Housing Management to increase by between £2.05 and £5.22 (7.7%) and Extra Care Services – Night Care Service to increase by £1.58 per week (7.7%).
- 3) That the national and local financial challenges as outlined in the report, in preparation for the HRA budget discussions in January 2024, be noted.

101 **Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review 2024/2025**

Cabinet gave consideration to a report which sought a decision to revise the existing council tax reduction scheme, to be effective from 1 April 2024. It advised that the current scheme had been in operation since 1 April 2018.

Cabinet were advised that a consultation exercise upon a number of options had been undertaken from 16 August to 11 October 2023, and that 717 responses had been received. The options proposed were; (i) make no major changes (ii) reduce

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protection for all working age households (a 25% scheme) and (iii) remove the protection and have a standard 15% council tax reduction working age scheme. The responses to the consultation were set out at Appendix 4.

The report proposed the adoption of option (ii), whereby all protection would be removed and the charge would be increased for all working age households to at least 25% of liability, whilst retaining other features of the current scheme. The report advised that the revised scheme would cost £31.7m, which would reflect a reduction of approximately £4.33m.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the Discretionary Reduction Policy be amended so that it no longer excludes any person that does not already receive a reduction under the main reduction scheme, and that it be noted the responsibility in relation to care leavers is to age 25.
- 2) That the report be submitted to the Meeting of Council on 13 December 2023 with a recommendation that; (i) the existing Council Tax Reduction scheme be reviewed and that Option 2 to reduce protection for all and implement a 25% scheme be adopted in accordance with the scheme as set out in Appendix 5, and that it take effect from 1 April 2024 (ii) that the administrative easement, as set out at Option 4 be adopted and developed in order to ensue smooth administration (iii) the findings of the statutory consultation exercise, as set out at Appendix 4, be noted and (iv) that the results of the Integrated Impact Assessment be noted.

102 Exclusion of Public

RESOLVED - That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

103 Leisure Centre Offer 2024/2025

(Exempt information in accordance with Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 namely it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of a third party. It is considered that the disclosure of the information would adversely affect KAL and therefore the public interest in maintaining the exemption, which would protect the rights of an individual or the Authority, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information and providing greater openness in the Authority's decision making.)

The exempt information was noted prior to the consideration of Agenda Item 8 (Minute No. 98 refers).