

Appendix 4

KAL Consultation – Dewsbury Insight

Data and Insight Service
Kirklees Council



Overview

Consultation:

- The Leisure Centre Consultation was live for 6 weeks (29th Sept to 13th Nov).
- 17,860 responses were received.
- Mixed-methods approach: online/paper survey, engagement & drop-in sessions.
- Also received direct written correspondence (e.g. from Sport England, Swim England, Yorkshire Sport Foundation).

Respondents:

- 93% of respondents were Kirklees residents.
- Around 550 responses were 'on behalf of' voluntary, social or community organisations and/or other stakeholders including:
 - Sports clubs, OWLS, Community Associations, Academic Organisations, Scouts/Guides, local NHS services.
- 97% of respondents are current users of KAL leisure centres.
- 22% are parents of children using the centres for school swimming.
- 10% have been prescribed exercise by their GP to support health and wellbeing.
- Protected characteristics included: 66% female; 14% non-White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish; 22% with a health condition and/or disability; 19% from low-income households; 3% former military.



Dewsbury Insight

Respondents:

- 10% of respondents live in Dewsbury.
- 10% of respondents said they use Dewsbury Sports Centre.
- 28% are parents of children living in Dewsbury using KAL centres for school swimming.
- 13% are prescribed exercise by their GP to support health and wellbeing.

Use of Dewsbury Leisure Centre:

- Mainly used on a weekly basis by respondents.
- Most frequently used for: Swimming, Gym, Fitness classes (non-pool based), Swimming lessons, Fitness classes (pool-based).

Use of Other Leisure Centres:

- 7% of those who live in Dewsbury said they also use other leisure facilities, including private gyms such as JD Gyms, Health Club for Her, KWB Boxing and Fitness and the Nuffield Health Gym.
- 27% participate in other sport/fitness/leisure activities (outside of Dewsbury Sports Centre). These include recreational walking, sports (such as football, tennis, netball etc), running and cycling.



Proposals

Of those respondents living in Dewsbury:

- 43% agreed with the (Core Offer) proposals to keep Huddersfield & Spenn Valley open.
 - 47% disagreed.
- 31% agreed with the (Marginal Offer) proposals to keep named sites open whilst further funding is sought.
 - 44% disagreed.
- 5% agreed with the (Closure) proposals to close named sites, including Dewsbury Sports Centre.
 - 94% disagreed.

Dewsbury residents identified a number of impacts and barriers in relation to these proposals, particularly in relation to the potential closure of Dewsbury Sports Centre, including:

- Health and wellbeing.
- Access to alternative leisure provision/activities.
- Travel/transport.
- Impact on the community/local provision.

These are outlined in more detail overleaf.



Closure Proposal: Impacts & Barriers to Accessing Alternative Provision

Decline in mental and physical health and wellbeing, and quality of life

- Decline in mental health and wellbeing (increased depression, anxiety, self-harm).
- Decline in general health and fitness (and increase in illness, overweight/obesity).
- Decline in health conditions (e.g. mobility, disability, recovery from injury).
- Increased social isolation/reduced social connectedness (particularly children and young people, and older people).

Reduced access to, and participation in, sport and leisure activities

- Due to high demand/oversubscribed activities/less choice/provision at remaining centres.
- Particularly for swimming lessons and/or access to swimming and other pool-based activities (including school swimming).
- For all, but particularly children and young people, older people and those with a disability/additional needs.
- Due to increased costs of alternative/private provision.
- Due to travel/transport.

Travel/Transport

- Increased distance to access alternative leisure activities.
- Increased travel time (traffic/congestion and parking issues).
- Inconvenient/limited public transport options (incompatible with additional travel time/activity timings).
- Increased cost of travel and parking.
- Accessibility (some respondents not able to travel further distances; safety of travel for children and young people).



Closure Proposal: Impacts and Barriers to Accessing Alternative Provision

Impact on the community/provision of community-based facilities

- Significant (general/unspecified) impact on community and reduced 'sense of/heart of community'.
- Further loss of local facilities/provision (within deprived area).
- Perception of North/South divide (North Kirklees receiving unequal investment/provision).
- Decline in health of community (further health inequalities).
- Reduced multicultural connectedness and community integration (e.g. for refugees).

Other Impacts:

- Missed education (due to increased travel time for school swimming; water confidence/safety; core life skills).
- Impact on public services (e.g. NHS, Primary Care).
- Impact on environment due to additional travel/emissions.
- Job losses/redundancies.
- Increased crime, anti-social behaviour amongst young people.

Several respondents also commented that they would cease their KAL membership.



Some Views from Dewsbury Residents

Theme	Comments
Mental Health	<i>"My mental health has struggled considerably with not being able to go to the gym..."</i>
	<i>"Closing Dewsbury will have a massive impact...I use the site to help me cope with depression"</i>
	<i>"Isolating already lonely people who don't have the transport or financial means to access remaining facilities"</i>
Physical Health	<i>"I use the facilities to manage a chronic health condition...without it my health will suffer significantly"</i>
	<i>"My wife has a disability - the local pool is a lifeline. Diminished quality of life..."</i>
Access to Alternative Provision	<i>"Swimming lessons are already oversubscribed and difficult to access"</i>
	<i>"There is no availability...classes are already fully booked"</i>
Impact on the Community	<i>"Children in the Dewsbury area have so few facilities for leisure, not all families have transport or can afford to travel"</i>
	<i>"Dewsbury is a hub for multicultural mixing...this would leave a gaping hole in the community"</i>
Travel/Transport	<i>"Travelling further afield is simply unaffordable"</i>
	<i>"Cannot access other facilities easily due to lack of reliable public transport"</i>
Other	<i>"My daughter is missing approximately 45 minutes of core learning due to additional travel to Batley for curriculum swimming. That's 25 hours minimum a year of missed learning...they've already missed so much due to Covid"</i>
	<i>"There is the potential for kids to have nothing to do and end up in bad situations"</i>

Some Views from Dewsbury Residents

"I have no reason to visit Dewsbury for shopping/banking/food or social events anymore. I have no opportunity to meet other people, exercise in a safe and suitable facility and keep mind and body in shape. I feel forgotten/disappointed that my daily routine has ended and depressed as I have no-where to go. I have sought advice from doctors/social prescribing team and been unable to find alternative activities/classes at the remaining centres as there are limited places and they are oversubscribed. I cannot afford to pay to go to alternative classes at other gyms or groups"

"I'm scared I will become lonely"

"Devastating, my life will be ruined, my health, my mental well-being, I will be lonely, have nothing to support me being a carer...my lifestyle will collapse, it will be unbearable, my health will deteriorate, everything will feel hopeless"

"Another reason for people from anywhere else around not to visit Dewsbury as it will have, by the culmination of this closure, no attractions or facilities whatsoever!"

"Marginalising a large ethnic demographic accessing health facilities"

Dewsbury, Batley and the wider North of Kirklees require spaces for community, leisure and integration more than most other areas. It's reasonable/logical to expect that removing these facilities will impact on local public health, community cohesion and crime in the area. Especially when compounded with the feeling of communities being subject to managed decline. Large derelict community buildings will represent financial failure and local government which cannot support its residents' needs"



Overall Findings - Suggestions for Reducing the Deficit & Attracting Investment

- Increase costs (and range of) of memberships/activities (swim only; affordability based).
- Review wider Council spend (street furniture; other funded projects e.g. Blueprint) & re-allocate.
- Source funding (Government, NHS, The National Lottery, Sport England, LTA, Football Association, Charities)
- Improved financial/operational management (run like private gyms, reduce staffing & management (use of local volunteers), upskill management).
- Private investors/partnerships (corporate sponsorship, local businesses).
- Community ownership/partnerships (sports clubs, local community organisations).
- Advertising and promotional activity.
- Fundraising/crowdfunding.
- Increase rental opportunities (sports clubs, private instructors, pool hire, parties).
- Reduce energy costs (lower water temperature, sustainable energy sources, energy efficient lighting).
- Increase provision (range and availability of activities, classes, swimming).
- Partial closure (swimming pools, high-cost areas).
- Events (competitions, markets, car boot sales, charity events, fetes and fairs).
- Combined provision (cafes, libraries, pharmacies, shops).



