

Dewsbury Neighbourhood Board

Date: 1st May 2025

Title of report: Response to questions and suggestions from Town Board members regarding Dewsbury Sports Centre

Purpose of report: To respond and update members on matters regarding Dewsbury Sports Centre

Officer recommendations and reasons: Board Members note the update

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes no issues

1. Summary

Background

On the 5th November 2024 Kirklees cabinet received a report regarding the condition of Dewsbury Sports centre, which closed in September 2023 due to health and safety concerns owing to the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Prior to its closure, the centre had been loss making, (c £1.113m per annum and required significant investment for repairs.

In December 2023, Cabinet came to a decision to reduce the leisure centre offer to eight centres throughout Kirklees, which did not include DSC. An Integrated Impact Assessment was conducted at that time to evaluate the implications of the closure. The assessment underscored the necessity of identifying a solution to aid the local community in enhancing health & wellbeing outcomes. As it was apparent that while some individuals utilised the facilities within DSC to improve their health and wellbeing, a sports centre is not the preferred option for everyone

At the 5th of November 2024 Cabinet meeting it was resolved: -

1) That approval be given to permanently close Dewsbury Sports Centre and declare the existing buildings surplus to the Council's requirements.

2) That, subject to the approval of capital funding in the Council's revised Capital Plan at Council on 5th March 2025, approval be given to demolish the wet side facility

- 3) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place to initiate negotiations with the Landlord of the dry side building regarding the existing lease and the potential future redevelopment of the building and wider site.
- 4) That authority be delegated to the Service Director Legal, Governance and Commissioning to enter into and execute any necessary documentation or instruments in relation to the above matters.
- 5) That authority be given to write off KAL's outstanding borrowing costs of £126k for 2024/25 and a total cost of £697k until 2035 and that the adjustment be made to the Treasury Management budget to accommodate the change.
- 6) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources to: -
 - (i) work with partners, including funders such as Sport England and sporting governing bodies, to secure external investment enabling a programme of physical activity opportunities to be delivered in Dewsbury, and
 - (ii) begin a promotional campaign to highlight existing activities in the area, with proposals aiming to deliver a new style of provision to enhance health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 7) That authority be given to commission a strategic needs assessment to explore approaches to effectively address the health, well-being and social needs of the Dewsbury population.
- 8) That the Integrated Impact Assessment which was appended to the considered report be noted.

Response to Town Board questions, suggestions and requests for update.

1. The MP Mr Mohamed indicated there were suggestions from the community that the impact of the closure of the Dewsbury Sports Centre should be considered in the Long-Term Plan.

Response

- On the 28th Nov 2024 the board recognised that funding secured by the Town Deal, could not be used to fund the re-opening of Dewsbury Sports Centre and any future funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Funding would be far short of the funds needed. It also recognised the centre was a matter for the Council to respond to. It stated that the focus of Dewsbury Town Board remained the delivery of committed projects to support regeneration and on a programme of interventions to be brought forward through a long-term plan to support economic growth.
- At the same November meeting of the Board Richard Thorpe from the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities at the November meeting explained how the funding could be spent. The council has written to MHCLG to request confirmation of the funding parameters in writing ahead of the May board.

2. Mr Mohamed supported a proposal put forward by his constituents, that up to 30% of the Town Investment Plan funding could be repurposed for projects and activities which could include Dewsbury Sports Centre.

Response

- Notwithstanding the position on the funding and the focus of the Board in the previous answer the revenue and capital costs required to bring DSC back into use exceed the funding streams available.
- Kirklees Council Cabinet decision and Cabinet papers for Dewsbury Sports Centre are available on the Kirklees Council website and include details of all costs.

3. Mr Mohamed suggested that if funding was not provided by Central Government, Dewsbury Town Board should consider at least funding £400,000 capital costs to reopen the dry side.

Response

- Notwithstanding the position on the funding and the focus of the Board officers don't recognise the £400k capital costs quoted above, whilst a formal estimate has not been prepared for dry side opening on its own. The report to cabinet contained the following information. In order to explore the option of re-opening the dry side of DSC, the following assumptions were made:
 - A new main entrance would be required (to replace the existing main entrance that is attached to the wet side building), with subsequent remodelling of parts of DSC to accommodate the new build
 - As the building has been closed for a significant period of time, necessary health and safety works would be required including fire safety issues, works to the sports hall floor and the re-commissioning of all services required to operate the building
 - To prevent the need for a future closure of the building once re-opened and to undertake major condition works, all major fabric, mechanical and electrical works that would be required over the next 5-10 years would be undertaken prior to re-opening. Therefore, guaranteeing the building an extended life of 25 years plus. The technical study concluded that the cost of re-opening the dry side of DSC in line with the above assumptions would be £5.713m.

4. The chair asked Officers to provide an update on resolution 7- "That authority be given to commission a strategic needs assessment to explore approaches to effectively address the health, well-being and social needs of the Dewsbury population" be provided to the Board

- On the 7 April 2025 the council put out a request for tender for a specialist consultation partner to engage with local people and groups over the coming months to get detailed views from residents about the ways they want to improve their health, wellbeing and connections with

their community. The results of the engagement, along with data on local health outcomes, will be used by the council to plan sports and health provision in the town for the future and make sure any new services can make the biggest impact on local people's health.

- As part of the consultation, which is expected to start in May, the council will talk to residents, councillors, community groups and healthcare partners online and face-to-face to identify gaps in provision and get a full picture of the needs of the community. This will give the Council the best possible platform to make decisions on how to increase provision and reduce health inequalities
- The tender is expected to close on 22 April 2025 a verbal update can be provided on the tender progress at the May board meeting.

2. Information required to take a decision

N/a

3. Implications for the Plan for Neighbourhoods

3.1 Working with People

This report provides an update to Board regarding the council's engagement with residents in Dewsbury and the surrounding area and the intention to use that engagement to understand how to support residents to improve their health and wellbeing.

3.2 Working with Partners

The Town board should note the council's intention to engage a partner to undertake the consultation. The council will ensure the board receives feedback on the consultation.

3.3 Place Based Working

Dewsbury Sports Centre sits within the area for the Plan for Neighbourhoods; however, the board recognises that provision of sports and Leisure sits with the council.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

n/a

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

It is noted that engagement with residents will include children and young people and ensure their voice is heard.

3.6 Other (eg Legal, Finance, Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

n/a

4. Consultation/Engagement

None on the report, however the report updates on the council engagement with residents on health and wellbeing.

5. Options

That the board note the information within the report.

6. Next steps and timelines

n/a

7. Contact officer

Joanne Bartholomew Service Director for Development

8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Board Minutes from 28th Nov 2025

Council Cabinet 5th November 2025

9. Service Director responsible (If applicable)

Joanne Bartholomew Service Director for Development