

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

<u>DATE OF DECISION</u>	Monday, 13 December 2021	<u>DECISION MAKER</u>
<u>DECISION REFERENCE</u>	E/13.12.21/7&13	Executive (Councillors A. Western, Adshead, Freeman, Hynes, Ross, Slater and Wright.)

RECORD OF THE DECISION

LEISURE STRATEGY REVIEW

- (1) That the Outcome of Stage 3 of the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model (SOPM) be noted.
- (2) That, following the successful completion of RIBA stage 2 for Altrincham, Sale and Stretford, approval be granted to continue with the proposed capital investment into the design of the refurbishment for Altrincham in the first instance, up to the end of RIBA Stage 3.
- (3) That it be noted that the outcomes of the RIBA Stage 3 report for Altrincham will be presented to the March 2022 Executive.
- (4) That it be noted that in parallel a full business case review will be undertaken for Altrincham, Sale and Stretford Leisure Centres and that these will be presented to the Executive in due course for approval to proceed to RIBA Stage 3 for Sale and Stretford.
- (5) That it be noted that Trafford has developed a refreshed Sport and Physical Activity strategy which informs its Leisure Investment Strategy and is being presented separately to December's Executive for approval to consult.
- (6) That it be noted that Trafford is developing an Active Travel Plan for 2021 that will include an integrated walking and cycling strategy and connectivity to the wider leisure estate including Altrincham, Sale and Stretford.
- (7) That the update on a new contract, operating agreement, and leases between Trafford Leisure CIC and Trafford Council be noted.
- (8) That approval be granted to explore the Community Asset Transfer for Old Trafford Sports Barn through an Expression of Interest process.
- (9) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the Corporate Director for Governance and Community Strategy to develop an approved EOI process for Old Trafford Sport Barn prior to a Community Asset Transfer.
- (10) That it be noted that prior to signing/sealing any CAT agreement for the Old Trafford Sports Barn Executive approval will be required.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Physical exercise plays an important part in improving the health and wellbeing of the general population helping people to live longer and in better health. This has a direct impact on reducing the growing burden upon the health and social care system. Research suggests that the proximity and access of a leisure centre has a bearing upon the amount of exercise taken and leisure centres play a vital role within the local community.

Trafford has one of the biggest swimming programmes in the country that is enjoyed by many young school children from an early age and it is of vital importance to the future health of children that these programmes can continue. Pools are not commercially viable when taking account of the capital costs associated so any loss in provision would not be met commercially through private sector operators. This would push residents towards more expensive options available in the market. Swimming is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and encouraging young people from an early age to use their local leisure facilities is key. This has been so successful in Trafford through school swimming programmes and family swimming sessions and lessons.

In recent years the declining asset base is leading to a loss of market share by Trafford Leisure and will also negatively impact on the ability to recover usage back to at least pre-COVID levels. Trafford Leisure was making annual and increasing losses prior the pandemic and a loan was agreed in 2019 by the Council to support Trafford Leisure cash flows. The Council is currently subsidising Trafford Leisure losses from revenue resources, estimated to be £700k+ in 2022/23 as a post-COVID estimate. This is expected to rise as the assets decline. Capital maintenance of £8+m has already been approved for essential statutory works and these will also increase over time. This is effectively the “do nothing” or minimal maintenance scenario. The recent refurbishment of Urmston has delivered improved facilities and improved usage and financial returns which pays back borrowing and reduced the subsidy the Council is making against Trafford Leisure’s overall losses. With the facilities in decline the strategic importance of this to the Council’s aims and corporate priorities is paramount.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED AT THE MEETING/BY MEMBERS

Do nothing - means ultimate closure of the leisure centres as usage continues to decline due to the extremely poor condition of the existing facilities. During the decline the Council will incur increasing annual revenue costs to subsidise Trafford Leisure CIC as a going concern over several years and will still need to undertake significant essential health and safety capital works during the same period. Strategic outcomes will not be delivered. Or, undertake short term ongoing maintenance works with associated costs required to ensure the centres can remain open. However, this would not drive key outcomes such as health and wellbeing or provide a revenue opportunity but would provide some maintenance cover for a zero-to-five-year lifespan. This has the same financial pressures as above and leads to ultimate closure as capital and revenue costs escalate. Or rationalise the leisure centre estate to reduce the cost of the redevelopments, and ongoing maintenance as well as release capital to fund the redevelopments.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED AND ANY ASSOCIATED DISPENSATION

None.

Scrutiny Call in Deadline

Thursday, 23 December 2021
(Decision can be implemented on the next working day, unless called in).

PUBLICATION DATE

Thursday, 16 December 2021



RECORDED BY:
Corporate Director, Governance & Community
Strategy