Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel   **Agenda Item No. 6**

14 OCTOBER 2010

FINAL REPORT OF THE LEISURE CENTRES AND LIBRARIES WORKING GROUP

Ward(s)   All

Portfolios: Councillor A. Harris – Leisure, Culture and Environment

Report:

The Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel decided to establish a working group to consider a future leisure centre strategy during the 2010/11 municipal year at its meeting on 30 March 2010. The working group was confirmed at the Panel meeting on 8 June 2010. The remit of the working group was later expanded to include the future of the Library service at the Panel meeting on 13 July 2010.

Due the short timeframe available to complete the investigation the working group's final report including its key findings and recommendations is currently being finalised with Members and will be sent out before the Panel meeting. The Panel are asked to consider the report and approve the recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

Recommendations:

That:

1. **the Panel considers the report of the Leisure Centres and Libraries Working and determines whether it wishes to agree the findings for submission to Cabinet, and;**

2. **the Panel review the outcome of the Executives response and review progress with the implementation of the working group's recommendations after six months.**

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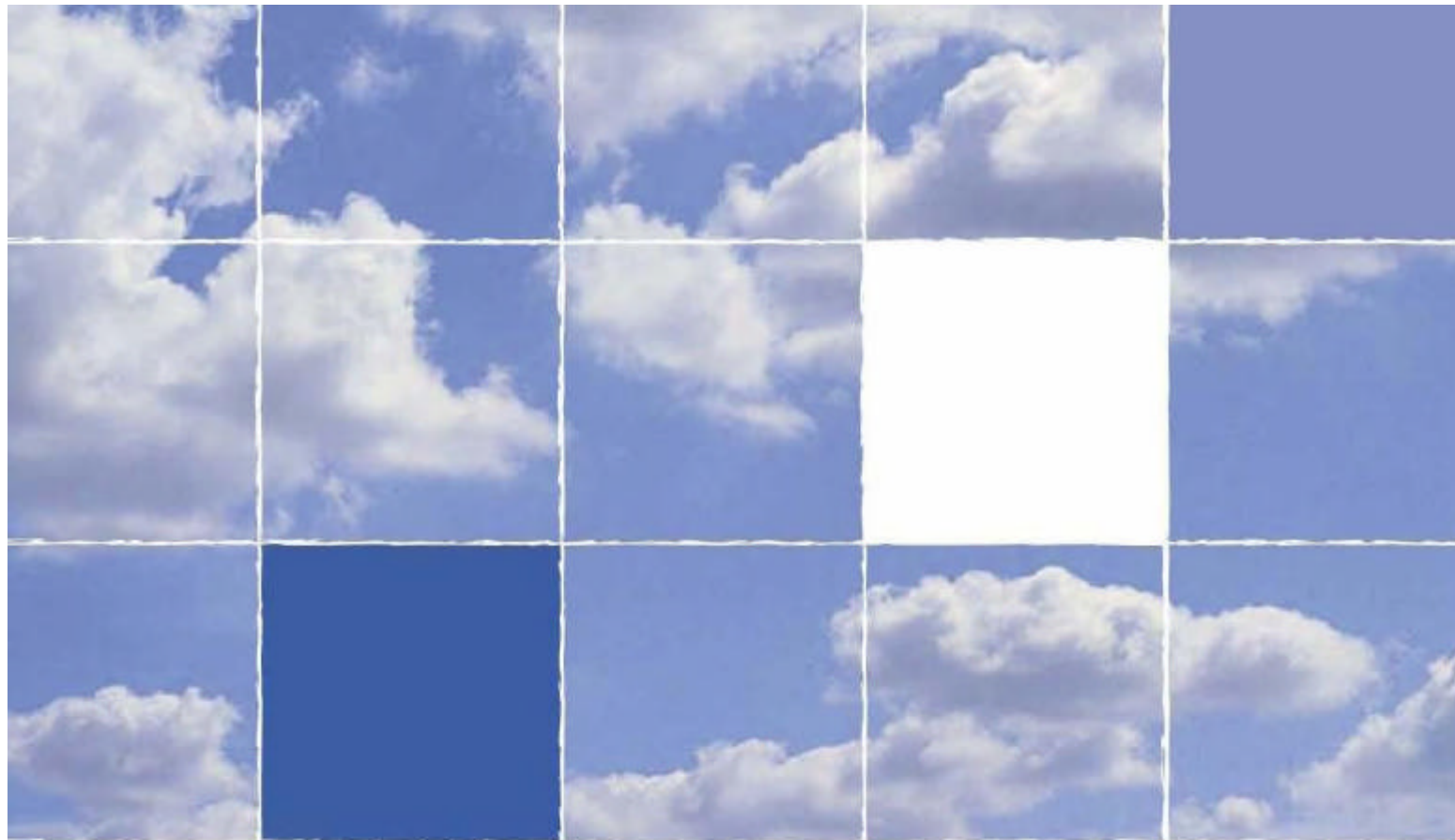
A Vision for the Future of Leisure Centres & Libraries

Report by the Leisure Centres and Libraries Working Group

To be presented to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel, 14 October 2010

Walsall Council

Chairs Foreword

Through our investigations the working group established that leisure centres and libraries are two very important council services that benefit all local residents. The two services make important contributions to key priority areas for the borough such as improving education and skills and reducing anti-social behaviour. With these factors in mind we are recommending to Cabinet that it is important that these services are modernised and protected for the future through new and innovative ways of working.

Our vision for leisure centres includes creating new state of the art 'Health and Wellbeing Centres', possibly managed by an external trust, where sports and leisure activities can partner with health related activities to help tackle the health inequalities that exist in our borough. In addition to this a number of school sports and swimming facilities should be made accessible to local residents to increase the number of available facilities open to local people.

Our vision for libraries is focused on maintaining premises within easy reach of local people and increasing opening hours by using volunteers or introducing new working practices such as self-service machines.   In this modern age access to computers and the internet has become increasingly important and the working group believe that provision for these services should increase in all libraries. In addition to this the service should monitor emerging digital technologies and introduce them to the local library offer of the future. To reflect the increasing importance of technology in local libraries we believe branches should be re-branded as: 'Libraries, Learning and Information Centres'.

I would like to thank my fellow working group members for their time, effort and input in completing this piece of work. I would also like to thank the many witnesses we have met and discussed issues with. Finally, I would like to thank the working groups support officers for their efforts in assisting Members complete this important piece of work.

Councillor Louise Harrison
Lead Member, Leisure Centres and Libraries Working Group
Chair, Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Councillor
Carl Creaney

Councillor
Keith Sears

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Background

The Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel decided to establish a working group to consider a future leisure centre strategy during the 2010/11 municipal year at its meeting on 30 March 2010. The working group was confirmed at the Panel meeting on 8 June 2010. The remit of the working group was later expanded to include the future of the Library service at the Panel meeting on 13 July 2010.

Terms of Reference

The working group established its terms of reference at its first meeting on 12 July 2010. The scope of the investigation was to include the following:

1. Plan across the entire "public" estate – including Council leisure centres, school / HE & FE and community facilities.
2. Achieve optimum value for money to secure & enhance the future provision of libraries, sport & leisure facilities.
3. Investigate ways of reducing the costs of delivering the library service while maintaining as much of the service as possible.
4. Identify opportunities to share resources.
5. Consideration of having fewer better quality leisure facilities (focusing limited resources on fewer sites) to deliver a net gain in provision.
6. Identify good practice examples from other authorities.
7. Consider future operating models, including Community Involvement Company and a Trust.
8. Develop recommendations for a report to Cabinet on the future provision of Libraries, Sport & Leisure facilities.

The terms of reference were presented to and agreed by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel at its meeting on 7 September 2010.

The full terms of reference for the working group are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

Membership

The membership of the working group was approved by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel at its meeting on 7 June 2010 and revised on 7 September 2010 as Councillor Doreen Shires withdrew from the working group and was replaced by Councillor Keith Sears.

Councillor Louise Harrison (Lead Member)	Conservative
Councillor Paul Bott	Independent
Councillor Carl Creaney	Labour
Councillor Sean Coughlan	Labour
Councillor Keith Sears	Conservative

Councillors S. Coughlan requested that it be noted that as he was unable to attend a number of meetings that he not be listed as a member of the working group. He felt that the Members completing the work should be credited with the report and its conclusions.

Councillor P. Bott requested they not be listed as a member of the working group as he was unable to support the working group's recommendations.

Methodology

The working group held seven meetings that included interviews with council officers and external witnesses. A full list of the witnesses the working group met with can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.

Members also undertook a number of site visits and on site interviews with staff at the following locations:

Aldridge Library
Blakenall Library
Lichfield Library
Pleck Library
South Walsall Library

Bloxwich Leisure Centre
Darlaston Leisure Centre
Gala Baths
Oak Park Leisure Centre
Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre

Report Format

This report is a summary of the activity and evidence that the working group considered split between leisure centres and libraries. Each section starts with the working group's vision and recommendations followed by a summary of evidence considered.

Leisure Centres

Leisure Centre Future Vision and Recommendations

Aspiration

In 2020 Walsall residents will be able to visit a 'Health and Wellbeing Centre' that is easily accessible. There will be strategic spread of facilities that will recognise the mix of offers provided by the public and private sector. 'Health and Wellbeing Centres' will be held together by a strong relationship between sport & leisure and health services. This partnership will help improve the health of local residents and seek to tackle the health inequalities that currently exist by recognising that physical activity is one of the key methods of improving the health of the borough.

The public sector element will be delivered by a Trust Organisation established by Walsall Council. The Trust will provide state of the art leisure centres that will be placed in convenient locations for the majority of residents. These centres will provide a holistic approach offering (amongst others): swimming pool, leisure pool, gym, dance studios, healthy cafes and links to the health service such as physiotherapy and rehabilitation services. These key centres will be supplemented by community access to sports facilities, including swimming pools and dry side activities, at selected local schools on evenings and weekends.

The Journey – Recommendations: Leisure Centres

The working group recognise the current financial climate and the likely budgetary challenges that are likely to occur. These factors have been a key consideration during the course of their investigations and the recommendations are made in this context.

1. **The current number of visits to Council Leisure Centres must be safeguarded as the minimum standard and provision must not be allowed to drop below this.**

2. **The aspirational goal should be to replace the four existing leisure centres with new leisure centres strategically located in the borough.**

3. **In lieu of major capital investment in new sport & leisure centres, the existing four leisure centres should be refurbished to extend their life and utility.**

4. **A study into leisure management options and specifically the feasibility of externalisation as a trust should be commissioned.**

5. **To produce individual medium-term business and asset management plans for each of the four existing leisure centres.**

6. **To engage key strategic partners in the planning for both the continued operation of the existing leisure centres and also the provision of future facilities.**

7. **A survey of local school sport and swimming pools take place to establish the range of facilities on offer to local communities and the potential to extend this. The survey should also consider access arrangements for all Members of the community including the disabled.**

8. **To designate six school swimming pools as "core" facilities to be retained alongside the remaining leisure centres and consider the remaining school pools "surplus".**

9. **To only support capital repairs on the school pools designated as "core" facilities and to no longer fund capital repairs on "surplus" school pools.**

10. **To change the allocation of devolved formula funding to schools to no longer compensate for the running costs of "surplus" pools and re-allocate this funding to improve quality and access to the "core" school pools.**

11. **If school pool closures do occur, schools will be supported to access alternate provision.**

12. **Wider issues associated with the management and operation of swimming pools be discussed with headteachers and governing bodies.**

13. **Leisure centres be considered as locations to offer customer service activities on behalf of the Council.**

14. **Leisure Centres be considered as locations to host other Council services including, but not exclusive to, libraries.**

15. **Any capital receipts received from the future sale of leisure centre assets should be ring fenced for reinvestment in the service.**

16. **Leisure Centres be re-branded 'Health and Wellbeing Centres'.**

17. **Partnerships with the health service be actively pursued.**

18. **Subsidised parking be provided for Council leisure centre users.**

Strategic Context

Leisure has a key role in tackling issues relating to health, health inequalities, improving adult activity levels, childhood obesity, as well as supporting community cohesion and social interaction and tackling anti social behaviour. Sport and leisure contributes to the following Council priorities:

- Improving health
- Reducing crime and feeling safe
- Developing strong and dynamic communities
- Improving education and skills
- Improving the quality of our environment
- Creating opportunity and potential
- Increasing enterprise and making Walsall a vibrant borough

The positive impact on the quality of life and health and well-being of all residents should be fostered at every opportunity through such leisure centres and should also aim to develop and foster a strong strategic alliance alongside and with NHS Walsall's community delivery services.

The working group believe that this benefit should be fully recognised and that the greater partnership working, including pooled budgets, should be explored with regard to leisure centres. This could also include the delivery of health activities from leisure centre sites.

The working group also believe that the wider community benefits of leisure centres should be recognised in the names for the facilities and recommended that leisure centres be re-branded: 'Health and Wellbeing Centres'.

The cross cutting impact is further demonstrated by the model on the opposite page.
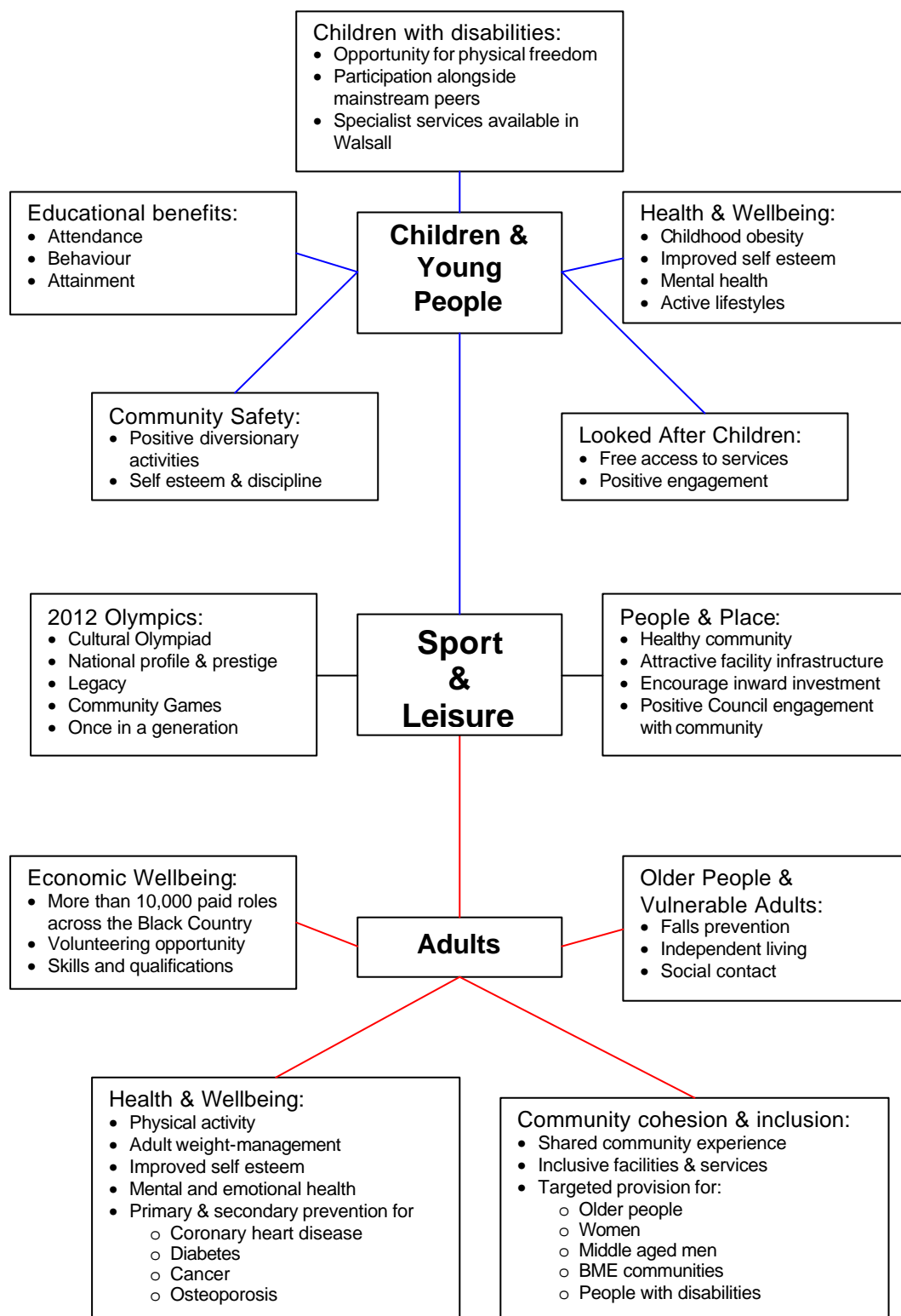
Children with disabilities:
- Opportunity for physical freedom
- Participation alongside mainstream peers
- Specialist services available in Walsall

Educational benefits:
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Attainment

Children & Young People

Health & Wellbeing:
- Childhood obesity
- Improved self esteem
- Mental health
- Active lifestyles

Community Safety:
- Positive diversionary activities
- Self esteem & discipline

Looked After Children:
- Free access to services
- Positive engagement

2012 Olympics:
- Cultural Olympiad
- National profile & prestige
- Legacy
- Community Games
- Once in a generation

Sport & Leisure

People & Place:
- Healthy community
- Attractive facility infrastructure
- Encourage inward investment
- Positive Council engagement with community

Economic Wellbeing:
- More than 10,000 paid roles across the Black Country
- Volunteering opportunity
- Skills and qualifications

Adults

Older People & Vulnerable Adults:
- Falls prevention
- Independent living
- Social contact

Health & Wellbeing:
- Physical activity
- Adult weight-management
- Improved self esteem
- Mental and emotional health
- Primary & secondary prevention for
  - Coronary heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Cancer
  - Osteoporosis

Community cohesion & inclusion:
- Shared community experience
- Inclusive facilities & services
- Targeted provision for:
  - Older people
  - Women
  - Middle aged men
  - BME communities
  - People with disabilities

Table 1: Cross Cutting Impact of Leisure Services

Facilities Context

Walsall Council's stock of leisure facilities includes buildings varying in age from the early 1930s to its latest swimming pool built in 2000.
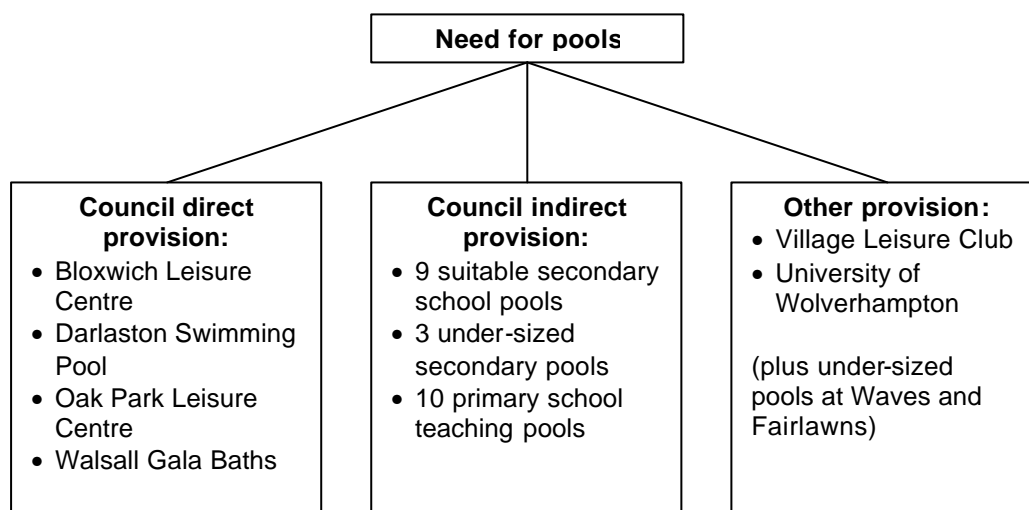
The facilities are:

Gala Baths site (including the Central Library and museum) (1961)
Oak Park Leisure Centre (1974)
Bloxwich Leisure Centre (1991, Hall – 1930s)
Darlaston Swimming Pool (2000)

Staff and Costs

95.3 full time equivalent staff are currently employed in Leisure Centres. This include future jobs fund and apprentice roles.

Employees	£1,696,486
Premises	£806,189
Supplies & Services	£278,000
Total Expenditure (excl Cost of capital, CSS & FRS17)	£2,780,675
Income	-£1,605,845
Net Expenditure (excl Capital,CSS & FRS17)	£1,174,830
Attendances 2009/10	797,763

There is little doubt that our current facilities are of very limited quality. The average age of the pools is approximately 30 years and some of the more extensively used facilities (Oak Park, Gala Baths) are much older. This year alone Oak Park (Walsall's busiest site) had to partially close for the removal of asbestos. There is however a relationship with other public and private provision within the Borough, particularly with regard to swimming pools.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │  Need for pools │
                    └─────────────────┘
              ╱                 │                  ╲
┌─────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Council direct  │  │ Council indirect│  │ Other provision:    │
│ provision:      │  │ provision:      │  │ • Village Leisure   │
│ • Bloxwich      │  │ • 9 suitable    │  │   Club              │
│   Leisure       │  │   secondary     │  │ • University of     │
│   Centre        │  │   school pools  │  │   Wolverhampton     │
│ • Darlaston     │  │ • 3 under-sized │  │                     │
│   Swimming      │  │   secondary     │  │ (plus under-sized   │
│   Pool          │  │   pools         │  │ pools at Waves and  │
│ • Oak Park      │  │ • 10 primary    │  │ Fairlawns)          │
│   Leisure       │  │   school        │  │                     │
│   Centre        │  │   teaching pools│  │                     │
│ • Walsall Gala  │  │                 │  │                     │
│   Baths         │  │                 │  │                     │
└─────────────────┘  └─────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
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The Council can only directly control the 4 leisure centres in box 1 and therefore the recommendations focus on this provision. However the Council also exerts some influence on the pools on school sites (box 2) through capital maintenance funding and the distribution of revenue funding; as such recommendations are included on the schools estate. The Council has no control over the pools in box 3, however these have been considered in the context of a wider network of provision and partnership opportunities.

There are a number of options available for the existing leisure centre stock; table 2 summarises these options including implications for development and approximate facility life. It must be noted that there will come a time when it will no longer be cost effective to continue maintaining the existing provision. Therefore this report contains long term recommendations for the replacement of the current leisure offer.
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Leisure Provision	Bloxwich Leisure Centre	Darlaston Swimming Pool	Oak Park Leisure Centre	Walsall Gala Baths
Option 1 'do nothing'	As is but building will not be fit for purpose in 3-5 years	As is but building will not be fit for purpose in 10 years	As is but building will not be fit for purpose in 3-5 years	As is but building will not be fit for purpose in 3-5 years
Option 2	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 5-7 years)	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 5-7 years)	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 5-7 years)

Option 3	Full Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)	Full Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)	Full Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)
Option 4	Redevelop around tank	Light Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)	Redevelop around tank	Full Refurb (which will extend life to 15 years)

Table 2: Capital Investment Needs of Leisure Centres

Swimming Pools including School Pools

Swimming pools underpin all leisure facilities that are operated by the Council. When considering the issue of swimming pools it is important to bear in mind the following issues:

- Swimming is by far the most popular participation sport locally, regionally and nationally.
- Swimming represents the majority of the throughput of our existing leisure centres.
- The provision of swimming pools represents the greatest use of both revenue and capital resources.

Existing Provision

There are currently **34** swimming pools in Walsall, **19** of which meet Sport England's size criteria (either at least 20m in length or 180m^2 in area). 30 of these pools are publicly funded – 5 leisure centres (comprising 8 pools), 12 pools on secondary schools and 10 on primary schools (27 pool sites).

Need

The Council has commissioned two separate and independent studies into swimming pool need for the borough. Both studies have used a range of data and formula to establish the following need in Walsall:

Sport England suggest 14,450 visits per week, which equates to 43% or our current 19 pools = **8 – 9 pools**

Strategic Leisure suggest 1,949m^2 = **10 – 12 pools**

Deficit / Surplus

There is clearly a surplus in the quantity of pools – Walsall needs at the most 12 and even if the 2 non-publicly funded pools (the Village and University of Wolverhampton) and the 13 under-sized pools are excluded, there is still a significant surplus.

At the same time there is a significant deficit in the quality of facilities.

Quality

Having visited the Council's existing leisure centres and the new facilities in other boroughs Members found a significant gulf between what Walsall can offer from its existing facilities and the service that can be delivered by new leisure facilities. The existing centres are well run and customer satisfaction levels are high, however they are old:

- Bloxwich Leisure Centre (1991 – hall 1930s)
- Darlaston Swimming Pool (2000)
- Oak Park Leisure Centre (1974)
- Walsall Gala Baths (1961)

In terms of throughput and facility standards local centres do not and cannot compare well against newer facilities such as Wolverhampton Swimming & Fitness Centre built in 2008 at a cost of £12.5m.

To maximise efficiency of operation and quality of service the best option would be to develop new large scale facilities to replace the existing centres. However one single facility would not be able to replace the current level of provision. Wolverhampton Swimming & Fitness Centre currently has 600,000 attendances – Walsall's leisure centres have combined attendances of 800,000. Also given the density of Walsall and the challenging transportation network it would be difficult to have a single facility meaningfully serve the whole borough.

The working group recommend that the long term aspiration should be replace the four existing centres with modern, state of the art facilities in easily accessible locations across the borough. The current number of visits to Walsall Leisure Centres (800,000 per year) must be safeguarded and this should be the minimum level of attendances the new centres can accommodate.

Schools

Although not directly within the Council's control, the sports facilities on school sites represent a major potential asset for the community and from an asset management perspective a major potential liability. The management and operation of each school pool is ultimately the jurisdiction of the governing body of each school. The health and safety of these facilities rests solely with the schools. The Council retains a limited responsibility for capital repairs and the revenue costs for the running of these pools are allocated to the schools as part of their devolved formula funding.

There are 11 pools on secondary school sites, 10 learner pools on primary schools and one at the Education Development Centre (EDC). The quality of the school pool stock varies considerably. The oldest pool is at Aldridge Community School built in 1950, the youngest is the 1985

pool at Barr Beacon Language College. Similarly they vary greatly in size – the primary pools are all small shallow pools and the secondary pools vary from a "standard" 25m x 10m pool at Barr Beacon to Aldridge's 15m x 7m pool. There is limited information on the condition of the secondary school pools, but those condition surveys that have been completed (for some of the schools previously within wave 6a of BSF) indicate that all school pools will require significant investment in the near future.

The cancelled Building Schools for the Future Programme highlighted the significant over-provision of pools on school sites and made the planning for the rationalisation of these pools a condition of funding.

The work completed by Sport England and Strategic Leisure suggests the borough "needs" no more than six of these school pools to supplement the Councils four leisure centres.

Which six pools are considered core should be decided based on their size, condition, location and their level of usage (both school and community). An initial trawl suggests that the six pools retained ***could*** be:

- Alumwell Business & Enterprise College (25m x 7m, 1972)
- Brownhills Community Technology College (25m x 12.5m, 1982)
- Barr Beacon Language College (25m x 10m, 1985)
- Education Development Centre (20m x 8m, 1978)
- Streetly Specialist Sports College (17m x 7m, 1960)
- Willenhall Sports College (25m x 7m, 1976)

The above list is an example only therefore: ***The working group recommend that a survey of school sport and swimming facilities takes place to establish the range of facilities available that could be offered to the local community. The survey should consider accessibility issues including disabled access and health and safety arrangements.***

As stated, the provision of school sports facilities is the province of school governing bodies and not Walsall Council; as such the designation of any pools as surplus does not and cannot dictate that pool's closure. However the working group advocate a strategic approach to the provision of sport & leisure across all "public" facilities and the focusing of increasingly limited resources where they will have maximum benefit.

One area where the Council retains a role in school sports facilities is major capital repairs. This is an area where the prioritisation and focusing of investment on core facilities would be of benefit.

Schools currently operating pools are compensated for the running costs of these pools through their devolved formula funding. The total

amount of funding devolved to schools is set; this funding cannot be diverted to other areas. However the Council can influence the formula by which this funding is distributed between the schools. If the schools with "surplus" pools no longer received compensation for their running costs, this funding could be re-allocated to the core pools to improve their quality and access by the community.

Although 10 pool sites should prove sufficient to service all Walsall schools, schools usage is currently based on there being pools at 27 sites. Most authorities provide specific support to manage school swimming (bookings, transportation, tuition); there is currently no such service in Walsall – likely in part due to the current over-abundance of swimming opportunities. If this work was to lead to the closure of a number of school pools, the schools currently using these pools would need assistance to access alternate provision.

An issue associated with the lack of centralised support for school swimming is that responsibility for school swimming currently rests with headteachers and governing bodies. This liability extends beyond the costs associated with the premises and includes health and safety issues relating to the management and operation of swimming pools; specialist matters for which schools may not have appropriately qualified staff.

Working Group Meeting with Schools

During the course of their investigations the working group met with a number of schools, Walsall College and Wolverhampton University to discuss community access to swimming pools. Members found that the majority of organisations they met with already provided community access to their swimming pools. However, with the exception of Wolverhampton University, none of the organisations at the meeting provided 'pay and play' use. The majority of organisations preferred pre-booked sessions as this guaranteed income.

Management Options

As aforementioned Walsall's leisure centres are old and in need of updating. Funding to create new state of art facilities is likely to be sparse for a number of years into the future. Therefore options need to be considered on how to create finance for capital investment to maintain the existing facilities moving forward.

The working group considered four different operational models as part of their investigations. There are pros and cons of each that are worth considering. However, the model itself is not really the key issue ~ there should always be the facilities and service that are delivered.

There are essentially four models of leisure management for local authorities:

1. In house management
2. Private sector partnership
3. Externalisation as a "Trust"
4. Hybrid

1. In house management

This is the default position for local authorities with the council directly managing its own facilities and is the model currently employed in Walsall.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Least disruptive – the status -quo	Risk of future revenue cuts to balance corporate budgets
No set-up costs	Limited ability to make savings (traditionally the most expensive model)
No client / contractor complexity	
No loss of management control	
Flexibility & ability to respond quickly to member issues	Limited access to funding
Stronger senior management / member interest	Vulnerable to political change
Balances commercial success & social inclusion	A lack of monitoring can allow quality to drift
	Not allowed to operate as a business
	Lack of speed to make major changes
	Central cost reallocation makes it expensive

2. Private sector partnership

As a result of Compulsory Competitive Tendering in the late 1980s some Council's chose to externalise their services so that the management was undertaken by a private leisure management operator.

The Council would appoint a commercial contractor (following a competitive process) to deliver the service for a given length of time and for a defined specification of service standards. The key advantage is that this option tends to be slightly cheaper as the operator takes a more commercial / entrepreneurial approach (for example more established marketing and training programmes), although this can be at the expense of social objectives.

The key disadvantage is the loss of control (both perceived and actual) with the relationship governed by a commercial contract with variations potentially expensive. As with trusts, liability for premises may be retained by the Council and in instances where this transfers to the contractor this will be reflected in a far higher contract fee. Closures due to unforeseen building failures (such as the asbestos-related part-

closure of Oak Park earlier this year) usually reflect in claims from the operator to the Council for lost income; both primary, secondary and tertiary. Such discussions often lead to a stretching of the partnership ethos that was intended.

Advantages	Disadvantages
More entrepreneurial approach	Current market capacity and interest in the scale and scope of the opportunity
Surety over future funding	
Access to capital	Commercial focus unless effectively monitored
Potential revenue efficiencies (central support)	
	Contractors profit margin may increase costs
Benefits of large company backing for skills and marketing	Inability to attract tax-based savings
Council steps back from all operation issues	Loss of control of day to day management
Single, agreed, monthly management fee	No council representation at "Board" level
	Relationship regulated by contract (10 to 15 years)
	The council becomes just another of many clients
	Difficult to make service changes etc without incurring variation charges
	Parent company can be sold or fail
	Building failure / facility closure leads to claim for lost income

3. Externalisation as a "Trust"

This involves the operation of the facilities transferring to an arms-length trust which could also be awarded "charitable" status. The trust will usually be an Industrial and Provident Society or a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Council could be represented on the trust "Board", but representation is capped at 20%, usually representing no more than two or three Councillors.

The most explicit advantage is the mandatory 80% Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) relief that can be released for investment into the trust or taken in part or fully by the Council as a saving. A further part of the remaining 20% rate relief may be made as a discretionary decision however this does need to be funded by the Council.

A trust has the ability to save on VAT and pay it on expenditure rather than income, which can be advantageous as 60% of operational expenditure is staffing and already VAT exempt. The trust could also procure central support services (HR, finance, payroll) externally at a more cost-effective rate than through the council (currently Sport &

Leisure Services' annual central support charges are in excess of £700k).

The other key benefit is that it formalises the relationship between the service and the Council over a contract period (10-15 years) providing greater management (and funding) stability.

The initial disadvantage is the time and cost in setting up the trust. This can be expected to take 12 months and £100k in one-off set up costs. From a Council perspective there can also be a perceived loss of control.

Externalising the service would not externalise all risk as the liability for the premises (major repairs) would usually be retained by the Council – especially in cases such as Walsall where the facility stock is aged and not in great condition.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Potential to free up the 80% NNDR	High start up costs
Use of the NNDR as an opportunity to fund an improvement programme	Loss of Council control of day to day management Small size of organisation / lack of critical mass
Potential VAT saving	Doesn't externalise all risk (premises liability)
Greater stability with budget regulated by management agreement (10/15 years)	Council representation at "Board" level (up to only 20%)
Opportunity to procure support services more cost-effectively	Recruiting good quality trustees can be difficult
Engagement with local community through Board structure	Financial sustainability of the trust is the Council support grant is cut
Council representation at "Board" level (up to 20%)	Central Government may close the NNDR benefit
Possible access to external funding	Assets usually need to be either new or in very good condition
Independent yet linked to Council priorities and public service ethos	Seen as an easy way to save money in the short-term
Non-profit making – any surplus is reinvested in service	
Building management and planned and preventative maintenance can improve	

The disadvantages around the set-up and being of limited size could be overcome by partnering with an existing trust; Sandwell currently have their facilities managed by a trust and Wolverhampton are currently exploring this option. However this exacerbates concerns regarding loss of control and identity. Clarity is also essential to ascertain the terms of

any cross-boundary surplus or loss; and in particular if one side of the shared trust fails.

4. Hybrid Trust

This is essentially a combination of options 2 and 3, whereby the Council contracts with a commercial partner who then manages the service through its own arms-length Trust (the contractual arrangement is actually between the Council and the provider's Trust).

Essentially this offers the advantages of option 3 with many of the advantages (particularly the tax-based savings) of option 2. Nationally this model is currently in favour as the most likely means of externalisation with all the major commercial providers offering this option.

The working group recommend that a full and complete study takes place to fully investigate leisure management options including the feasibility of externalising the Councils leisure centre provision through an external trust. If an external trust is established as the best future option then any tax savings created by the establishment of the trust should be ring fenced for capital investment in leisure facilities.

Section 106 – Planning Gain

The working group wanted to explore the possibility of accessing section 106 planning gain money to help fund future service remodelling. Members were advised that the Council was not prevented from requiring section 106 contributions from developers so long as the contributions met the statutory obligations, namely:

(a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;

(b) directly related to the development; and

(c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

When considering new obligations it is also important to consider the following rules:

- Planning permission may not be bought or sold. It is therefore not legitimate for unacceptable development to be permitted because of benefits or inducements offered by a developer which are not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

- The Obligations must also be so directly related to proposed developments that the development ought not to be permitted without them – for example, there should be a functional or geographical link between the development and the item being provided as part of the developer's contribution.

- Planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision or to secure contributions to the achievement of wider planning objectives that are not necessary to allow consent to be given for a particular development.

Conclusion

Sport and leisure is an important part of the offer that the Council provides to local residents that has an impact on a significant number of key priorities for adults and children. Walsall currently has a good spread of four leisure centres that should be retained. However, the facilities are old and in need of capital investment if they are to continue to be fit for purpose in the next ten years.

There is an overprovision of swimming pools in the borough, particularly in schools. This is supported by two independent studies. The swimming pools located in schools, as with leisure centres, are generally old and in need of capital investment if they are to remain fit for purpose for the next ten years. Retaining every current school swimming pool would be unaffordable for the Council in the current financial climate. Therefore work should take place to reduce the number of school swimming pools ensuring that a suitable number are retained to provide sufficient access to swimming provision for all schools. When deciding which school swimming pools to retain access to the local community when not in use by schools should be a key consideration.

The Council needs a long term vision for leisure centre provision. This should include reviewing the management arrangements and planning for the long term replacement of the existing leisure centres with modern, state of the art facilities suitable for the 21st century.

Libraries

Libraries Future Vision and Recommendations

Aspirations

In 2020 all Walsall residents will be able to visit a 'Library, Learning and Information Centre' within easy reach of their homes. The centres will, provide free access for all local residents to information, knowledge and recreation which will supplement, and provide alternatives to, formal education. 'Library, Learning and Information Centres' will be recognised for the opportunities they provide to local residents and the social capital they create. Residents will also be able to access a range of council and partner counter services from libraries in their localities.

'Library, Learning and Information Centres' will be open the majority of the week including evenings and weekends. The centres will be fully engaged with new digital technologies and contain computer suites providing high speed internet access. Volunteers will add value to activities, such as children's clubs and computer classes, for all ages. Local people will use self service machines and issue books, search catalogues and reserve items themselves. 'Library, Learning and Information Centres' will vary in shape and size ranging from stand alone centres, to those that share premises with other services or may even be offered through micro-centres which should be located in premises that are already open for public access.

'Library, Learning and Information Centres' will be supplemented by a small fleet of mobile vehicles that will replicate the main centre offer of computer and internet access, books, learning opportunities and council and partner information.

The Journey – Recommendation: Libraries

The working group recognise the current financial climate and the likely budgetary challenges that are likely to occur. These factors have been a key consideration during the course of their investigations and the recommendations are made in this context.

1. **the existing library network be maintained, where possible, with all residents residing within a maximum 2 mile radius of their nearest library;**

2. **Libraries should increase their opening hours by considering the following methods:**

   a. **Self service machines;**
   b. **Using volunteers to deliver added value activities;**
   c. **Offering additional council and partner counter services;**
   d. **Co-locating with other services and/or businesses;**

3. the mobile library service should be retained with the following alterations:

   a. reconfigured timetable for longer stops;
   b. additional computer and internet provision should be added;
   c. Customer service facilities should be included;

4. the First Stop Express customer service bus should be reconfigured to act as both a mobile library and a customer service vehicle;

5. computer provision and web access should increase within all Libraries;

6. Libraries fully engage with emerging electronic and digital methods of communication and learning to ensure the offer of an appealing, credible and sustainable service in the future;

7. Libraries should share buildings and facilities with other businesses, schools and/or Council/Partner services where possible;

8. a feasibility study should take place to establish suitable models of community ownership and management;

9. a potential long term regional partnership for operating libraries be pursued with neighbouring local authorities;

10. Any capital receipts received from the future sale of library assets should be ring fenced for reinvestment in the development of the service.

Strategic Context

Local Authorities have a legal obligation under the 'Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964' to provide a Library Service that is both 'efficient and comprehensive'. Previously there were a number of library standards that local authorities were asked to adhere to were possible but these have recently been withdrawn. Therefore there is currently no Government guidance on what an 'efficient and comprehensive' library service should look like.

Public libraries in the UK have are unique in that they provide access to knowledge, information and learning in a way which directly benefits local people, is essentially free at the point of delivery and is open to everyone. They act as 'gateways', providing comprehensive and impartial access to resources, facilities and other services and often for customers who would not otherwise be able to access them.

Nationally, libraries have been recognised as having a crucial role to play in supporting adult learning and in delivering national targets for digital inclusion, which is defined as "empowering citizens' lives and life chances, particularly the socially disadvantaged, through the benefits of digital technologies". At a local level, libraries also play a key role in providing information to support local businesses and delivering many of Walsall Council's stated priorities.

Libraries have a key role in supporting: education and lifelong learning as well as supporting community cohesion and social interaction and tackling anti social behaviour. Libraries contribute to the following Council priorities:

- Improving health
- Reducing crime and feeling safe
- Developing strong and dynamic communities
- Improving education and skills
- Reducing worklessness and creating opportunity and potential
- Increasing enterprise and making Walsall a vibrant borough

The positive impact on the quality of life and well-being of all residents of the library service is difficult to quantify but difficult to deny.

The table on the opposite page demonstrates the cross cutting nature the library service has on local residents.
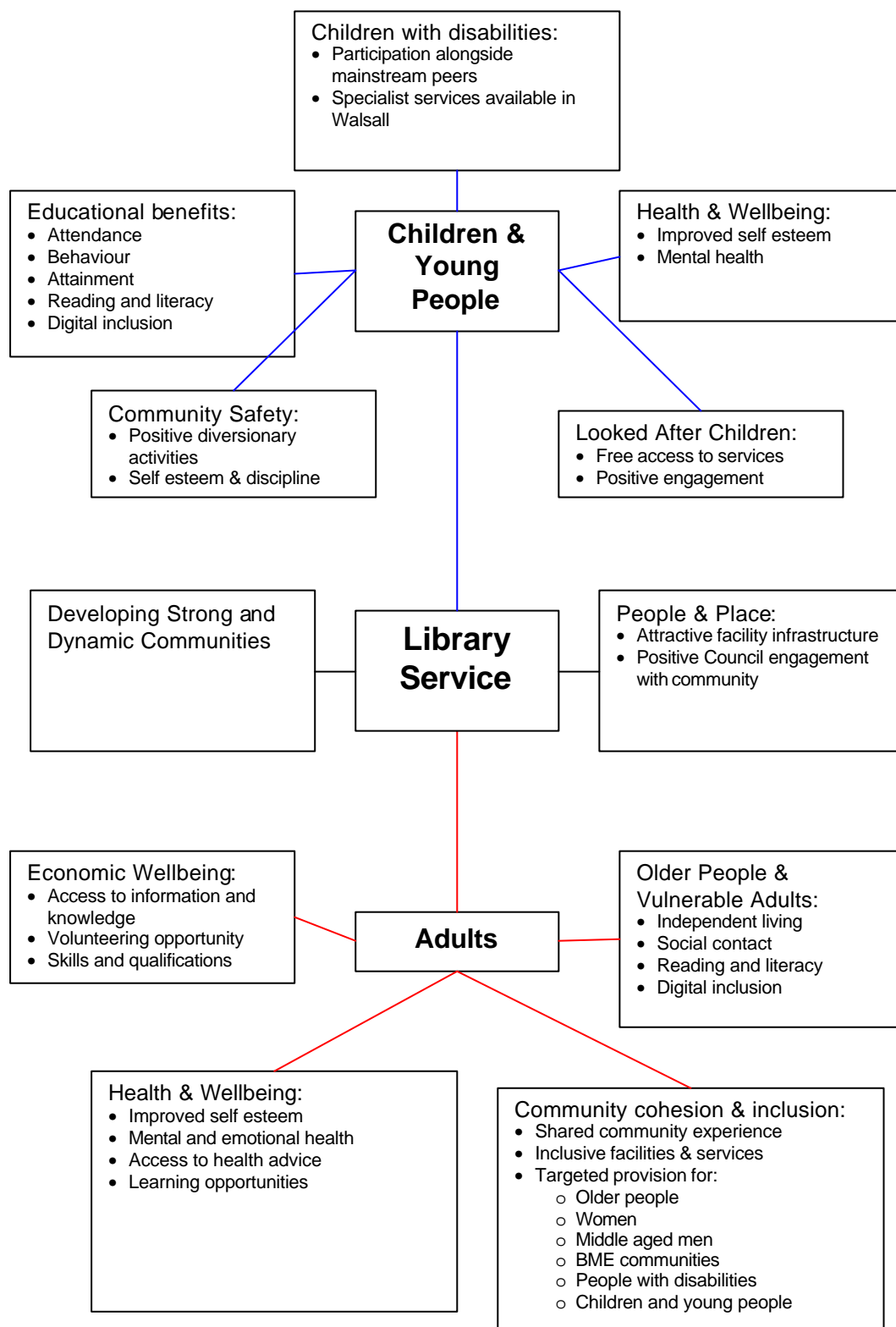
Children with disabilities:
- Participation alongside mainstream peers
- Specialist services available in Walsall

Educational benefits:
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Attainment
- Reading and literacy
- Digital inclusion

Children & Young People

Health & Wellbeing:
- Improved self esteem
- Mental health

Community Safety:
- Positive diversionary activities
- Self esteem & discipline

Looked After Children:
- Free access to services
- Positive engagement

Developing Strong and Dynamic Communities

Library Service

People & Place:
- Attractive facility infrastructure
- Positive Council engagement with community

Economic Wellbeing:
- Access to information and knowledge
- Volunteering opportunity
- Skills and qualifications

Adults

Older People & Vulnerable Adults:
- Independent living
- Social contact
- Reading and literacy
- Digital inclusion

Health & Wellbeing:
- Improved self esteem
- Mental and emotional health
- Access to health advice
- Learning opportunities

Community cohesion & inclusion:
- Shared community experience
- Inclusive facilities & services
- Targeted provision for:
  o Older people
  o Women
  o Middle aged men
  o BME communities
  o People with disabilities
  o Children and young people

Table 4: Cross Cutting Impact of Libraries

Facilities Context

Costs

Library budget 2010-11

Employees	£3,500,670
Premises	£378,383
Transport	£19,070
Supplies & services (inc. books)	£879,593
Central Support Services	£1,024,885
Charges (income)	(£248,756)

The full costs of each library and the number of visits can be found in Appendix 4.

Locations

Walsall currently provides 16 libraries of varying sizes across the borough, namely:

Central
Aldridge
Bloxwich
Brownhills
Darlaston
Willenhall
Beechdale
Blakenall
New Invention
Pelsall
Pheasey
Pleck
Rushall
South Walsall
Streetly
Walsall Wood

In addition to this there is a mobile library service (a weekly service to over 40 sites throughout Walsall), library link service (a monthly library service to people in residential Homes, Day Centres s, Sheltered Accommodation and Training Centres) and a home library service (a library service to people in their own homes who find it difficult to visit their local library due to illness, disability or if they are a carer).

In 2009/10 the libraries above received 1,301,841 visits per year, loaned 1,059,919 books and delivered 274,592 computer sessions.

Previous Government guidance recommended that residents should be no further than two miles from their nearest library. ***The working***

group would like to recommend that this policy is adhered to in Walsall, where possible, in the future.

Staffing

Currently, libraries across Walsall are open for a total of 610.5 hours a week and employs 235 full time equivalent staff. All libraries are staffed with a minimum of 2 people (for safety and security reasons) at all times they are open. Some service points require higher levels of staffing because of their levels of business (e.g. Central), because of the nature of building (e.g. Darlaston is on 2 floors) or because activities are taking place (e.g. cradle clubs or reading groups). Staffing levels have to take account of lunchtime cover, annual leave, sickness, training and development and posts left vacant to meet vacancy management targets (currently at 7.5%).

Library Usage

Prior to a recent modernisation programme, Walsall had seen a slow but steady decline in library usage, in line with national trends. The opening of new library buildings and the refurbishment of others has tended to reverse this decline, as measured by book issues, and visitor numbers.

For example: annual visitors at Brownhills went up from 57,000 in 2005-6 to over 95,000 in 2007-8 and at New Invention from 29,000 in 2007-8 to 33,000 in 2008-9 (in spite of its smaller size).

In 2009-10, following the introduction of Monday closing, those visitor figures fell back to 88,000 and 27,000 respectively.

Book issue figures also show that, over the whole network, issues of books to children went up in 2005-06 and stayed at a consistent high level until 2008-09. Nationally children's book issues have continued to rise, but in Walsall during 2009-10 they fell by 10%, which coincides with the introduction of Monday closing.

The primary role of the Library Service is to provide every person in Walsall with free access to knowledge and information to help with personal development and improve their quality of life. This is no longer depends on books as the only medium and much of the service is designed to provide access to computer-based information and learning (including the internet) and advice, guidance and training on how to best use these resources.

Opening Hours

Libraries in Walsall are open for a total of 610.5 hours per week across all sites. All libraries are closed on Mondays and most libraries, other than the Central library are closed additional days. Beechdale, New

Invention, Pheasey, Rushall, South Walsall and Walsall Wood are all closed four days a week.

The working group recommend that opening hours in libraries are increased, including evening and weekend opening. Members recognise that budgets are unlikely to be able to provide additional staff so therefore recommend consideration of the following options to help extend library opening hours.

Libraries as part of multi-service centres

The library service operates from a network of 16 buildings located across Walsall. In recent years they have benefited from significant investment in their fabric and décor, in internet connectivity and computer work-stations. Libraries could provide hot desk work stations for mobile council staff, such as social workers. A customer service role is also possible: libraries have staff trained in information search and retrieval and who have high levels of resource development and management, as well as customer service and community engagement skills.

Library buildings could be shared with other council and local services to deliver benefits directly within the local area. In this way, both premises and staffing costs could be shared. For customers, it means that a number of objectives can be done in a single journey; for services there is the added value that can be provided by working together. For example: Brownhills Library is located at Park View Centre which also houses a health centre and community function rooms run by the Brownhills People's Alliance. Working together these partners have run activities to promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness of cancer screening.

There are advantages to further developing the co-locations of services either in an existing library building or for the library service to move to other community buildings elsewhere. Shared buildings provide one stop access to a number of services, give services a presence within the heart of local communities and thereby provide focus for local people.

Volunteers

Volunteers in libraries are not a particularly new idea – previously Walsall Libraries worked in partnership with the WRVS who delivered collections of books to housebound readers on our behalf. The WRVS withdrew and that service was subsequently incorporated into the Home Library Service to ensure a reliable and professional service continued.

From the point of view of community engagement there are advantages in involving local people in the running of the library services and there are many skills which could be drawn upon and used to the benefit of the service.

There are several ways in which volunteers could be used in libraries. The first is to enhance existing services – i.e not replacing paid staff but supplementing and adding value to what they already do. Two examples of this would be for people who are confident in their ICT skills to act as 'computer buddies' to people who are struggling with computer 'taster' sessions and for teenagers to encourage and help younger children to take part in the summer reading challenge. Volunteers in these and other similar categories are already widely used in library authorities across the England.

Volunteers are used to add value to Council services in Staffordshire where there is a pool of over 300 volunteers.

A more radical option would be to hand over parts of the service to volunteers. This is a model which as been tried with some success in Cambridgeshire and some other county authorities, where the library service has ceased to maintain particular branch libraries but has handed them to local communities to run. In such a model, the Council could retain ownership of the building and the library service could provide a basic collection of books and a specified level of support and advice. The local community would take over responsibility for running the library and staff it with volunteers. There are many variations of community ownership and management that could be implemented depending on what levels of support, if any, would be required from the local authority. The working group heard that the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council was currently conducting a piece of research into different types of community ownership/management.

It should also be noted that there are costs involved in recruiting, training and supervising volunteers and in obtaining CRB clearance.

In the first instance the working group recommend the introduction of a library volunteer programme whereby local residents are recruited to provide added value services, such as (but not exclusive too) computer courses, that paid library staff do not have time to deliver. This will increase the value of services provided by the library service and consequentially could create additional opening hours due to an increased presence on the library floor.

The working group were interested in the idea of community ownership and/or management and recognised that it was a much preferable manner of making financial savings compared to closing a library. However, Members recognised the complex and varying nature of these types of arrangements and recommend that different models are reviewed to establish their suitability for local introduction if required in the future.

Self Service

Technology is now available (known as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems) which enables library users to issue their own books and to discharge them on return. Such systems also allow the library to manage its stock more efficiently. In the context of budget reductions, they would enable the larger libraries to be operated with fewer staff. This would require a one-off capital investment, plus an on-going maintenance charge.

In smaller libraries, where two people are needed to provide staff cover, it is debatable whether such technology would be a worthwhile investment, but at Central and at a number of larger and medium-sized libraries, it could produce significant savings. A fully-costed evaluation would need to be undertaken, but an initial indication suggests that for every machine in use at busier libraries, approx 1.2 posts could be deleted.

Other set-up costs are involved (e.g. all stock has to be tagged) and a rough estimate for installing RFID self-service terminals, with payment facilities, at all current libraries in Walsall indicates that the operation could cost between £632k and £750k. This of course would be proportionately reduced if it were restricted to only the busier libraries. Any evaluation of such a development would need to take into account the jobs which still need to be undertaken manually, e.g. returning books to the shelves and processing reserved books. A self-service machine (not an RFID system) has been trialed in the Central Library in Walsall but few customers have made use of it voluntarily.

RFID machines were installed in Staffordshire to help remodel the service a few years ago in larger libraries. The machines have allowed the numbers of staff to be reduced but interestingly staff roles have been altered to take in more floor walking and other engagement activities such as adult learning. The RFID machines cost £437,667 to introduce in 13 Libraries but have created £450,000 of savings over two years (by year end 2010/11). Over 80% of the county's loans are currently made through self-service.

Mobile Library

The current mobile library schedule is designed to allow the service to visit as many parts of Walsall as possible and consequently the stops at each venue are short (mostly half an hour or less). At present the mobile library is on the road for 4.5 days each week and visits over 40 venues. While the service offered is a good one for those residents living in the immediate vicinity of the stop, it should be recognized that, at half an hour a week per location access to the mobile library for the majority of local residents is difficult.

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Members believe the mobile library service should timetable fewer, longer stays across the borough. The working group also feel that the mobile library service should offer computer and internet access as this is one of the library services most popular services. The mobile library service could also undertake customer service duties similar to those delivered through the First Stop Express (FSE).

First Stop Express

The working group felt that as well as there being potential for the mobile library to take on a customer service role that there was also an opportunity for the First Stop Express customer service bus to take on elements of the library service. This could include transporting books, receiving returns, providing access to computers and the internet or any other library service role.

There are aspects of FSE which overlap with services already provided by library services. At present the FSE visits 6 locations a week, but 2 of those (Darlaston and Pheasey) are actually outside existing libraries. Many of the services it provides involve information which is readily available in libraries.

However, the FSE is not the same as a library and clearly has its own special role but, it may be, that working more closely would benefit both services and residents and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Digital Future

When libraries were established in 1851 their purpose was to give ordinary people access to knowledge, information and learning opportunities. At that time the book was the best medium to deliver this aim and libraries offered free access to this knowledge. Over the years books have remained the key medium for libraries to deliver their ongoing role and also to provide pleasure, relaxation and informal learning to residents. Now, however, things are changing rapidly and libraries are changing to meet new and emerging technologies, for example, through the provision of computer and internet access.

The working group believe that access to computers and the internet is becoming increasingly more important and recommend that additional computer and internet access is provided in all libraries. The internet has become an essential source of information and knowledge so providing this access, even at the expense of book space, will still be meeting the primary aims of the library service.

In addition to this the working group were conscious of emerging technologies and recommend that the library service monitor and include new digital technologies in their offer as and when they

develop. This could include things such as: e-books, downloadable books and other new emerging technologies.

Regional Partnership

It is possible that a group of local authorities could work together to establish a partnership that operated libraries on behalf of those local authorities who were members. A partnership, for example at a Black Country level, would be able to make savings in a number of areas including management and administration. This type of partnership would probably require funding to kick-start in terms of ensuring that all partners were using the same operating systems so should be seen as a long term option.

Conclusion

The library service provides a valuable and important service to all members of the local community regardless of age, ethnicity disability and social background. The libraries are not just about providing books but about providing learning opportunities for people of all ages from all backgrounds. Libraries are increasingly becoming an access point for computers and the internet. The need for increased and more sophisticated information technology is only likely to increase in the future. It is important that the library service is fully engaged and responsive to the digital revolution if it is to remain relevant to local people and provide an 'efficient and comprehensive' service as required by the 1964 Museums and Libraries Act.

It is important that the library service of the future remains accessible in local neighbourhoods with opening hours to suit local residents including evenings and weekends. Different ways of working are required to increase opening hours without increasing staff costs. Methods such as: regional partnerships, self service, using volunteers, sharing buildings, providing additional services and revising the mobile library offer should all be considered to achieve this.

Terms of Reference

Work Group Name:	Leisure and Libraries Working Group
Panel:	Community Services
Municipal Year:	2010/11
Lead Member:	Councillor Harrison
Lead Officers:	Chris Holliday and Sue Grainger
Scrutiny Officer:	Craig Goodall
Membership:	Councillor P Bott Councillor S Coughlan Councillor C Creaney Councillor L Harrison Councillor D Shires

1.	Context
	A number of issues have highlighted the need to review leisure facilities: • The general deterioration of our existing Leisure Centres. • Financial constraints question the sustainability of current levels of provision. • Research questions the need for the current level of provision (swimming pool modelling indicates provision is double need). • The need for high quality sport & leisure provision to improve health & physical activity, raise aspirations and help address obesity & anti-social behaviour. • BSF specifically identified an over-provision of school pools (22) that needed addressing – a cessation of BSF doesn't lessen this problem. A number of issues have highlighted the need to review library facilities: • Nationally, libraries are recognised as having a crucial role in supporting adult learning and in delivering national targets for digital inclusion • At a local level, libraries play a key role in delivering many of Walsall Council's stated priorities. Local access is crucial in reaching local residents and their families • The library service has already closed some libraries and significantly reduced opening hours in recent years • New financial constraints question the sustainability of even current levels of provision

2.	**Objectives**
	9. Plan across the entire "public" estate – including Council leisure centres, school / HE & FE and community facilities. 10. Achieve optimum value for money to secure & enhance the future provision of libraries, sport & leisure facilities. 11. Investigate ways of reducing the costs of delivering the library service while maintaining as much of the service as possible 12. Identify opportunities to share resources. 13. Consideration of having fewer better quality facilities (focusing limited resources on fewer sites) to deliver a net gain in provision. 14. Identify good practice examples from other authorities. 15. Consider future operating models, including Community Involvement Company and a Trust. 16. Develop recommendations for a report to Cabinet on the future provision of Libraries, Sport & Leisure facilities.
3.	**Scope**
	Walsall Central Library, 15 branch libraries and mobile library Walsall Adult and Community College Walsall Council First Stop Express Walsall Council Leisure Centres Walsall school sports facilities Community Association facilities Walsall College Wolverhampton University Resource Centres Community Associations
4.	**Equalities Implications**
	Careful consideration will be given to ensure that the working groups report and recommendations does not unfairly disadvantage any resident under the six strands of equality. In addition to this the working group will consider deprivation levels in the borough.
4.	**Who else will you want to take part?**
	Schools (primary and secondary) Visit to Walsall Council facilities Walsall College Wolverhampton University Community Associations Property Services (AM2010) National Governing Bodies of Sport Sport England Strategic Leisure Swiss Cottage Wolverhampton Council

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		Rotherham Council Bolton Council Community Associations Other Leisure Operators (Community Involvement Companies/Trusts) MLA (Museums Libraries and Archives Council) Society of Chief Librarians National Literacy Trust Other Library authorities
5.	**Timescales & Reporting Schedule**	
	Report to Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 14 October 2010.	
6.	**Risk factors**	

Risk	Likelihood	Measure to resolve
Engaging a wide range of stakeholders and delivering report and recommendations in time for 2011/12 budget setting.	Medium-Low.	Programme a schedule of meetings to assist in planning and completing the review.
Aspiration to plan across the whole "public" estate means planning for some facilities over which Walsall Council has no direct control / limited means of influence.	Medium	

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List of Witnesses

External Witnesses

Alex Lofthouse	Director of Curriculum, Walsall College
Dev Danny	Walsall College
Avril Walton	Serco, Assistant Managing Director
Marc Brady	Sports Manager – Wolverhampton University, Walsall Campus
Bev Broll	Assistant Headteacher – Willenhall Sports College
Elaine Maher	Headteacher – Bentley Drive School
Jim Clarke	Headteacher – Pool Hayes School
Michelle Sheeny	Headteacher – Millfield Primary School
Shaun Brazier	Assistant Headteacher – Millfield Primary School
S. Anderson	Millfield Primary School
Helen Pearcey	Headteacher – St James Primary
Janene Cox	Chair, Society of Chief Librarians Assistant Director, Staffordshire County Council
Michael Cooke	Museums Libraries and Archives Council, West Midlands Regional Manager
Valerie Lovitt	Lichfield Library

Council Officers

Keith Stone	Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Sue Grainger	Head of Libraries, Heritage and Arts
Chris Holliday	Head of Leisure and Community Health
Kevin Kendall	Head of Property Services
Ben Percival	Sports and Leisure Service Manager
Steve Law	Service Manager Estates & Property
Leesha Chetty	Asset Management Consultant
Jane Hyett	Business Analyst

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Appendix 3 Leisure Centre Performance 2009/10

	Bloxwich	Darlaston	Gala Baths	Oak Park	All Centres
Employees	£469,283	£350,342	£408,049	£468,813	£1,696,486
Premises	£203,120	£221,696	£188,339	£193,034	£806,189
Supplies & Services	£66,942	£71,586	£72,906	£66,566	£278,000
Total Expenditure (excl Cost of capital, CSS & FRS17)	£739,345	£643,624	£669,294	£728,413	£2,780,675
Income	-£402,714	-£320,659	-£403,448	-£479,024	-£1,605,845
Net Expenditure (excl Capital,CSS & FRS17)	£336,631	£322,965	£265,846	£249,389	£1,174,830
Attendances 2009/10	194,679	143,606	178,825	280,653	797,763
Subsidy per user (excl Cost of capital, CSS & FRS17))	£1.73	£2.25	£1.49	£0.89	£1.47
Average subsidy per user (excl Capital)	£1.47	£1.47	£1.47	£1.47	
Subsidy per user variance from average	£0.26	£0.78	£0.01	-£0.58	

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Library Statistics, showing usage and costs for 2009-10				
Library	**Customer Visits**	**Books borrowed**	**Computer sessions**	**Est Cost of service**
Central	522178	224494	117192	**£709,409**
Aldridge	82561	115577	18644	**£227,415**
Bloxwich	90861	80395	16123	**£260,963**
Brownhills	88102	72237	13956	**£225,242**
Darlaston	129138	85528	37974	**£260,738**
Willenhall*	60837	56824	20218	**£230,020**
Beechdale	26124	20324	4801	**£90,009**
Blakenall	38963	27738	10279	**£143,440**
New Invention	27901	36137	2919	**£69,662**
Pelsall	48667	61390	7643	**£95,310**
Pheasey	27502	40745	3649	**£81,011**
Pleck	35998	33774	7029	**£76,850**
Rushall	24267	18223	2685	**£71,995**
South Walsall	16991	39021	3257	**£76,101**
Streetly	49414	68722	5160	**£109,002**
Walsall Wood	19820	28695	3063	**£72,135**
Mobile(ex LL/HLS)	12517	50095	n/a	**£127,042**
Totals	**1,301,841**	**1,059,919**	**274,592**	

* Willenhall Library was closed due to central heating failure and asbestos removal

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