



Subject:	Leisure Transformation Programme: Assets Update
Date:	20 th September 2019
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan; Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This report updates Members on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the programme level update in respect of the new facilities under the leisure programme as outlined at 3.1-3.5

- note that site visits to the three new centres have been arranged for Tuesday 25th September and that all Members are encouraged to avail of this opportunity (see 3.6)
- note the update on communications around the opening of the new centres (see 3.7)
- note the update on employment opportunities as arising from the new centres (see 3.8)
- note the update on the Social Responsibility Plan which is being delivered (see 3.9)
- note the update around the next phase of the Programme with respect to proposed closure and start dates for Avoniel and Templemore (see 3.11 & 3.12)
- note the update with respect to a further leisure development at the Girdwood site as outlined at 3.13 and agree the request from DFC that the Council acts as Delivery Agent for the project under the current LTP Governance structures. Members are further asked to note that the next steps will include working up options (further options can be added), appointing Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and developing concept designs before carrying out public consultation. Members are asked to note that DFC are funding the appointment of the ICT
- agree that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the Council's leisure estate with a focus on Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill and Loughside with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course

3.0 **Main report**

Programme level

3.1 Members will recall that they have agreed the design cost limits and the citywide USP strategy for the Council's £105m leisure programme, which will ensure that the city has a unique offering in terms of its leisure provision and minimises any duplication of provision ensuring both balanced investment and value for money. A high level summary of the current status of all the projects is outlined below -

CENTRE	USP	BUDGET	STATUS
Olympia	Sports Village	£19m (£21.75m total - £2.75m DfC)	Centre opened January 2017. Continues to exceed performance indicators Phase 2 (outdoor space) officially opened at the end of May 2018
Andersonstown	Family fun leisure water	£25m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Lisnasharragh	Aquatic Centre	£20m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Brook	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£15m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Avoniel	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£8m	Centre will close and works will begin once Lisnasharragh opens
Templemore	Spa and heritage	£12m (£17m total - £5m HLF)	Heritage Fund funding secured. Planning secured. Detailed designs being developed

Girdwood	TBC	£6m	Discussions continuing with DfC
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Project Updates

Current builds

3.2 Works are well underway on the three new builds. All are currently on schedule and are moving towards construction completion. Members are asked to note that each new centre requires a period of commissioning following construction completion – this is to allow for testing of equipment etc. Following this period of commissioning each centre will have a ‘soft opening’ during which the centres will be open to schools, community groups etc. for taster sessions before the centre is officially opened to the public. A summary of the status is outlined below and photos showing ‘the current status of the builds are attached at Appendix 1.

Centre	Construction complete	Opening
Lisnasharragh	Mid October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Brook	End October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Andersonstown	February 2020	Soft opening March Official opening – April 2020*

** All centres will have an official opening – the dates of these are to be agreed and will be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.3 **Lisnaharragh-** Tiling to the main pool hall and changing rooms has been completed, the diving board structures have been installed and the flooring to the gym and sports hall is currently being fitted. Externally all utilities connections are in place and the 3G pitch and installation of fencing is almost complete. In addition, the community facility is now completed. The finished centre is due to be handed over to Council in mid-October. Following this there will be a period of approximately 6 weeks of mobilisation during which the centre will be furnished, machines installed, staff trained and systems tested. **The centre itself will then undergo a ‘soft opening’ in December where various groups will be invited to use the facility before it formally opens to the public at the start of January 2020.** Members will be aware that discussions are ongoing regarding the proposed facilities at the rear of the site and Members will be verbally updated on this at Committee.

3.4 **Brook-** Tiling to the ground floor is almost complete and the timber floor is being fitted in the sports hall. Third fix M&E is now underway with pool lights now installed. Externally groundworks continue with pathways being formed and 3G pitch carpets laid. The centre is due to be handed over to Council at the end of October. Following mobilisation period of approximately 4 weeks it is then envisaged that **the centre will undergo a ‘soft opening’ in early December before opening to the public at the start of January 2020.**

- 3.5 **Andersonstown-** The slides and tower are now in place and internally the building is continuing to be fitted out with the children's splash adventure area and surf machine now installed. The underfloor heating is currently being installed and tiling to the main changing areas has been completed. The building is about to be made watertight which will allow completion of the main pool hall. Externally the 3G pitch is currently well underway. The centre is currently on schedule to be handed over to Council in February 2020 and following mobilisation **will undergo a soft opening in late March 2020 before opening to the public in mid-April 2020.**
- 3.6 **Site Visits-** visits to the three new builds have been organised for Members for next **Tuesday, 24th September.** A bus will leave City Hall at 10am for Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre and return at 12.30pm. The bus will then leave for Andersonstown and Brook Leisure Centres at 1.00pm and return to City Hall at approximately 4.30pm. All Members are invited to attend these site visits and are encouraged to take up this opportunity. Further visits can be arranged if these dates do not suit Members and if this is required then Members can contact the Physical Programmes Department.
- 3.7 **Communications-** Members are asked to note that a full communications plan to promote the opening of the three new centres is in place and BCC officers are working closely with GLL to coordinate its delivery. Regular updates on the progress of the builds are being provided on the Council website, Facebook and via social media and are receiving extremely positive feedback. In addition, information stands promoting the centres will be appearing in the Kennedy Centre, Victoria Square, Castle Court, Connswater and Forestside shopping centres over the coming weeks. GLL will also shortly be launching their formal 'pre-sales' offering allowing people to join the new centres prior to opening. An extensive outdoor advertising campaign will also be rolled out across the city.
- 3.8 **Employment-** The opening of the three new facilities will create up to 75 new permanent jobs and up to 100 casual positions for the city. This represents another very positive impact for the Leisure Transformation Programme and feeds directly into the ambitious job creation targets within the Council's Belfast Agenda. To date GLL have recruited all the management posts for the new centres, including General and Duty Managers and are now focusing on some of the more customer facing posts such as Customer Service Staff, Recreation Assistants and Fitness Instructors. Many of these posts will be recruited through the Council's newly established Leisure Academy (see below).
- 3.9 **Social Responsibility – Economic and social benefit clauses** - In line with Council policy our leisure contractor, Heron Brothers, have developed a **Social Responsibility Plan** which maximises the social, economic and environmental benefits of the contract through focusing on a number of areas including employment, promotion of local businesses and community

and social initiatives. Members are asked to note the following key outcomes which have been delivered to date under the Social Responsibility Plan –

- **Employment** - The creation of **employment opportunities** was a central component of the Social Responsibility Plan including employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, apprentices and tertiary level students. Employment outcomes are principally measured in employment weeks although additional indicators are also being monitored in terms of the number of jobs created, salary levels, duration of employment etc. In regards to the employment opportunities targeted at the unemployed and economically inactive, the Employability & Skills Team have co-designed and delivered a **Construction Employment Academy** targeted at supporting the contractor to fulfil the employment and employments weeks, ensuring optimum outcomes in specific relation to those unemployed, economically inactive, apprentices/trainees and higher-level students. As of September 2019 Members are asked to note that the following employment opportunities have been delivered as part of the Council’s leisure contract and **that the overall target number of weeks for employment, apprentices and paid placements has now been exceeded by over 35%.**

	Target	Weeks Delivered	Individuals Recruited
Employment for long-term unemployed or economically inactive	620	700 (up from 489 in Feb 19)	12
Apprentice	620	1435 (up from 1196 in Feb 19)	34
Paid Placement/Work Experience	1100	1040 (up from 746 in Feb 19)	15 (up from 14 in Feb 19)
TOTAL	2340	3175	61

- In addition to the Construction Academy the Council’s Economic Development Unit have recently launched a **Leisure Employment Academy** to provide support for those out of work or currently working under 16 hours to compete for the 75 new permanent jobs and 100 casual positions that will be created as part of the current phase of LTP. This Academy will provide participants with job specific skills and the relevant qualifications required to access the employment opportunities identified. GLL have recently been awarded the contract to deliver this training and the academies have been split into a number of different occupational areas as follows:
 - Wetside Employment Academy (National Pool Lifeguard NPLQ)
 - Wetside Employment Academy (STA Swimming Teachers)
 - Dryside Employment Academy (Fitness Instructor)
 - Dryside Employment Academy (Customer Service)

The investment per person involved in the Academy will be approximately £1,700 and each successful participant is guaranteed an interview with GLL. It is envisaged that approximately 40-50 permanent and casual posts will be filled through this route. The Academy has been widely publicised through a series of roadshows, radio ads and press articles and will commence delivery in late September.

- 3.10 In addition to this Heron Bros Ltd. have also taken forward a range of other initiatives under their Social Responsibility Plan including promotion of local suppliers and businesses, community initiatives and engagement, sports development and skills and health initiatives. Further details of these are attached at Appendix 2.

Next Phase

Plans are well developed to progress the next phase of the Programme as follows:

- 3.11 **Avoniel** – Members agreed in April 2016, that Avoniel would become a ‘dry’ centre with a focus on outdoor soccer facilities and that Templemore would become the ‘wet’ centre for inner east Belfast. Members will also be aware that a comprehensive consultation and engagement process was held in relation to the development proposals for Avoniel and Templemore between November 2017 and January 2018. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 97% of respondents expressing support for Templemore and 85% expressing support for Avoniel. As part of the planning process for Avoniel a further consultation event was held in Avoniel Leisure Centre on Wednesday 20th March from 3pm - 8pm. This event produced 31 individual responses with 49% expressing support for the project and 32% expressing opposition. There was significant representation at the event from the Avoniel ‘Over 50s’ group with 66% of respondents coming from the 55+ age group. Several clubs also attended the consultation including Glentoran FC, East Belfast FC and two local hockey clubs, all of whom expressed strong support for the plans. The main comment from those opposed to the plans was a request to keep Avoniel open until the redevelopment of Templemore is complete. Members have previously considered and rejected this request, as any deviation from the previously already agreed phasing would have serious financial and contractual implications on the delivery of the Programme. Members had also previously reflected that officers relook at the design and cost implications to see if it would be possible to incorporate a café within the new Avoniel. Members are asked to note that officers have looked at this and given that the facilities mix has been signed off and ‘design freeze’ is in place that the costs of this and the wider impact on the design would be prohibitive within the budget envelope. The development of a café would also compromise the design in that it will require losing one of the two multi-purpose rooms which has been designed in to ensure that the building is as flexible as possible and can deliver a range of activities and classes.

It is planned that works will commence at Avoniel in January 2020. Council officers are working closely with GLL on their demobilisation plans for Avoniel. As agreed, there will be no disruption to the continuity of swim provision in East Belfast and **Avoniel will not fully close until Lisnasharragh is fully operational.**

- 3.12 **Templemore** – Following the decision by the ‘Heritage Fund’ (HF) (previously the ‘Heritage Lottery Fund’) to fund the project, officers have been working closely with HF to secure formal ‘Permission to Start’. Planning Permission for the project was granted in June and the formal paperwork has just been received. This completes HF’s requirements and Permission to Start notification is expected before the end of September. The Design Team are now working on Stage 4 designs and these should be completed before the end of this year. Contractor procurement (PQQ) is due to commence before the end of September with the ITT then going out before Christmas. It is expected that the contractor will be in place by mid-April 2020 and following mobilisation construction will commence in June 2020. In order to maximise leisure provision in East Belfast and ensure the building remains operational as long as possible **it is proposed that the current facilities Templemore remain open until May 2020.**

Council officers and GLL are currently liaising with the Templemore Users Trust (TUT) to help ensure they have access to facilities to provide continuity of provision of their services for the period that Templemore Baths is under development. These discussions are ongoing and a further update will be brought to Members in due course. As with previous centres, a full demobilisation plan for Templemore will also be developed in due course.

- 3.13 **Girdwood Phase 2** – Members will be aware that officers have been in discussions with DfC, as the land owners of Girdwood Park, around options for a further leisure development at the Girdwood site. A high-level options paper has been developed by DfC, which outlined 3 options with regard to the facilities mix. These options included (i) Indoor Basketball Arena + community pool, (ii) High performance boxing facility + community pool and, (iii) Specialist Climbing Facility + community pool. These options were presented to a cross-party (political) group in December 2017 and the Girdwood Community Forum in May 2018; no issues or constraints outside of financing and statutory approvals were identified. **It is therefore proposed that these options are taken forward for viability assessment.** This will involve the engagement of an Integrated Consultant Team (ICT) to further test the options and develop concept designs, which will then be subject to consultation. **It is important to note that at this stage DfC have not ruled out the potential to explore further options should these emerge during the development process, providing they still reflect the broad objectives for the site as outlined in the options paper.** The proposed facilities mix for this facility must also take into account the Council’s other facilities across the city (both current and planned), particularly in terms of USPs, usage, catchment area and revenue implications.

3.14	<p>Given the Council's capacity and experience with respect to the delivery of leisure facilities, the current governance structures already in place for LTP, and its current £6m commitment to the project, DfC have now formally requested that Council act as the Delivery Agent for this project. DfC have ring-fenced budget to cover the costs of ICT engagement and have requested that Council lead this procurement. The estimated costs for the new indoor sports facility are currently projected at £14m and consideration for DfC to fund the balance of the project (£8m) will be subject to the outcomes of the Business Plan process, budget priorities and availability of Ministerial approvals. A high level timeline for the new Girdwood facility which is indicative only at this stage is - Concept design 2020/21, Planning and detailed design 2021/2022, Construction 2022/2023-2024 (18 months build).</p> <p>Other leisure facilities – Members will be aware that there are a number of other leisure facilities across its estate which have not been part of the Leisure Transformation Programme. A number of these are aging and to ensure that leisure continues to be looked at on a city-wide basis it is proposed that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the leisure estate with a focus on Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside given the age of these facilities. Members are asked to agree that a feasibility is now undertaken with further detail to be brought back to Committee. The costs for this feasibility will be met from the Feasibility Fund.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Financial – The design costs limits for each centre were agreed by Committee in April 2015 as part of the overall £105m leisure programme.</p> <p>Costs for taking forward the feasibility studies for the</p> <p>Resource- relating to Council acting as Delivery Agent for the designs development stage of Girdwood II using the existing LTP Governance structures</p>
3.16	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality implications</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Photos – Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Brook Leisure Centres</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Detail of other initiatives taken forward under the Leisure Social Responsibility Plan</p>