

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2020

Title:

Leisure Centre Investment, Farnham: Call In

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Liz Townsend, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Leisure and Dunsfold Park

Head of Service: Kelvin Mills, Head of Commercial Services

Key decision: No

Access: Open

1. Purpose and summary

- 1.1 On 3 March 2020, the Executive approved the recommendation set out in the report "Leisure Centre Investment, Farnham". The report (attached at [Annexe 1](#)) provided an update on the previously agreed capital scheme to extend Farnham Leisure Centre and expand the facilities. Specifically, the report recommended changes to the proposed facilities, to be met from the approved budget, namely extended adventure (soft) play, larger café and seating, new energy efficiencies and closure of the crèche.
- 1.2 On 9 March 2020, a call in of that decision was received from Cllrs Kevin Deanus, John Robini and Jenny Else, of the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Their reasons for calling in the decision are detailed in the call in form ([Annexe 2](#)). The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that this is a valid call-in under the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
- 1.3 Shortly following the call-in of the Executive decision, the UK entered a period of Covid lockdown on 23 March 2020. As part of the lockdown, all leisure centres were required to close. Farnham Leisure Centre re-opened on 17 August 2020. The pressure on staff resources during the initial Covid lockdown delayed the collation of the additional information requested by Members to understand the Executive decision, and the delay in scheduling this call-in meeting. Cllrs Deanus, Robini and Else have confirmed that they wish to proceed with the call-in as their concern focus on the level of detail in the information available to support the Executive decision, rather than the decision itself.
- 1.4 [Annexe 3](#) provides additional information from Officers to support the recommendations to the Executive on 3 March 2020.
- 1.5 The Committee should note that due to the adverse impact of the Covid pandemic on the operations of the Leisure Centre contractor, Places Leisure, the planned investment in the Farnham Leisure Centre is no longer going ahead. This has

been explained in the report to the Executive meeting on 8 September 2020.

2. Recommendation

That, having considered the call in, the Committee agrees to one of the following options:

EITHER:

1. To resolve not to refer the decision back to the Executive;

OR:

2. To resolve not to refer the decision back to the Executive but nevertheless to make such recommendations to the Executive as it sees fit;

OR:

3. To resolve to refer the decision to the Executive for reconsideration with a written explanation setting out the nature of the committee's concerns;

OR:

4. To resolve to refer the matter to Full Council if it is felt that the decision is contrary to the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

3. Reason for the recommendation

In accordance with the constitutional provisions relating to call in (Part 4 – Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules) this report presents a call-in relating to the Executive report "Leisure Centre Investment – Farnham", which was approved on 3 March 2020.

4. Background

4.1 At the meeting on 17 July 2018, Full Council considered recommendations from the Executive on a new round of capital investments in Waverley's leisure centres and resolved to agree that a capital budget of £3.22m be agreed and officers progress with more detailed specification and procurement of the Farnham and Godalming leisure centre schemes, subject to negotiations with Places for People (now Places Leisure) on future management fee payments.

4.2 In relation to Farnham, a needs analysis of indoor leisure facilities carried out by SLC concluded:

Farnham Leisure Centre is showing a current and future oversupply in health and fitness, general swimming and swimming lessons, which indicates that the current facility is suitably sized. However in order to differentiate the centre from other competitors there is an opportunity to diversify its offer by providing new facilities to attract a younger and more family orientated market. There is an identified demand for indoor adventure play and climbing models that provide opportunities for children and young people to be more active.

4.3 It was therefore proposed that the Council would fund an extension to the Farnham leisure centre to incorporate children's soft play and "clip and climb" facility, with the addition of a larger café area. The report stated that the "local supply of such facilities appears to be low in the surrounding area therefore offering an opportunity for Farnham Leisure Centre to improve and diversify the current offering."

- 4.4 On 3 March 2020, the Executive approved the recommendation set out in the report “Leisure Centre Investment, Farnham”. The report (attached at Annexe 1) provided an update on the previously agreed capital scheme to extend Farnham Leisure Centre and expand the facilities. Whilst the “clip and climb” facility was no longer an option, due to the specialist operator having approved installations in Alton and Fleet, further negotiation with Places Leisure had identified a number of options to deliver enhanced facilities and improved revenue position.

5. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan

- 5.1 The call in process is a statutory role of the Overview and Scrutiny function and an important part of holding the Executive to account. It supports the corporate priority of ‘open, transparent and participative governance’.

6. Implications of decision

6.1 Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)

There are no financial implications arising as a direct result of this report. The financial implications of the original decision are set out in the Executive report (Annexe 1).

6.2 Risk management

N/A

6.3 Legal

The legal implications of the Executive decision taken in March 2020 are set out in the report at Annexe 1.

6.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion

There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. An Equality Impact Assessment of the recommendation to close the crèche at the Farnham Leisure Centre was carried out in March 2020.

6.5 Climate emergency declaration

There are no climate emergency implications arising as a direct result of this report. The climate emergency implications of the original decision are set out in the Executive report (Annexe 1).

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 N/A

8. Other options considered

8.1 The arrangements for a call in meeting of Overview and Scrutiny are set out in the Constitution (Part 4 – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

9. Governance journey

9.1 This may end with the Community Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be referred back to the Executive, or be referred to Full Council.

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Executive report “Leisure Centre Investment, Farnham” (3 March 2020)

Annexe 2 – Call in form dated 9 March 2020.

Annexe 3 – Information requested relating to the call-in of the Executive decision

Annexe 4 – Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2017-2027

Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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