

**HUNTINGDON LEISURE CENTRE  
REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MTP FUNDING**

**(Report by Chief Officers Management Team)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Medium Term Plan approved by the Council contains a scheme to extend the Impressions suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre. At their meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006, the Cabinet deferred consideration of a request to release funding for design work for the scheme, pending the submission of a business plan and a report containing a further business plan for all the Leisure Centres and fitness suites and addressing issues associated with potential options for the future delivery of leisure services.
- 1.2 Progress is being made on the latter but it is anticipated that it will be some time before a detailed report can be submitted to Cabinet. In the interim, Cabinet are invited to consider the release of funds for the scheme for the reasons outlined in this report.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Council approved the Corporate Plan 'Growing Success', one of the primary aims of which is Healthy Living with an objective of promoting healthy lifestyle choices by providing for and encouraging participation in active leisure pursuits. Statistically, British people are now the most overweight in Europe with growing levels of child obesity. The trend is unlikely to be reversed without positive action to encourage the population to become more active.

**3. IMPRESSIONS EXPANSION**

- 3.1 Of the 48 local authorities in the Eastern Region, Huntingdonshire rates 41<sup>st</sup> in terms of the number of pieces of fitness equipment per 1000 population. (2.94 compared with the regional average of 4.64). Nationally Huntingdonshire is 304<sup>th</sup> out of 354 (national average of 4.94). In addition to increasing the number of fitness stations however, the scheme has a much broader target audience and is designed to appeal to children and teenagers. It involves the conversion of one badminton court and the further internal re-configuration of the Sports Hall to provide -

- 'Vibro' training studio equipped with vibration training exercise equipment now growing in popularity and for use by medical referrals and the disabled;
- 2 treatment rooms for sports injuries and the provision of health services;
- dedicated and permanent soft play structure for young children;
- dedicated interactive play zone for teenagers between 13 and 16 years of age;
- relocation and upgrading of the sauna/steam area from the pool building to provide spa-type facilities;
- expansion of the fitness studio; and
- improved changing facilities.

- 3.2 Conversion of one badminton court will result in a loss of 1,400 attendances and £2,000 income per annum, while still retaining 4 out of the 5 original courts. The development forecasts an increase in attendances of approximately 45,000 per annum and income of over £200,000 in the first full

year of operation. A robust business case and financial analysis over a 15 year period predicts a net revenue surplus to the Council of £3.2 million, rising from £142,000 in year 1 to over £300,000 p.a. at the end of the period. The scheme has been subject to independent examination by consultants engaged by the Council who have endorsed the attendance projections.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 A release request form is attached as Annex 'A'. The scheme will make a positive contribution towards achieving the objectives of Growing Success and improve attendance levels and the financial performance of the Leisure Centre.
- 4.2 The Council's Financial Strategy makes provision for a reduction in forecast expenditure in future years. The scheme is included in the approved MTP and the additional income predicted is incorporated in the budget for the current year.
- 4.3 The scheme is not subject to a contribution from the County Council as partner in the Leisure Centre dual use agreement and the development will enhance the value of the Centre, irrespective of any future decision by the Council on delivery options for the leisure service.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is therefore

##### **Recommended**

that the Cabinet release funding for this scheme as set out in Annex 'A' attached.

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##### **Background Documents:**

Impressions Fitness Demand Analysis October 2005 – Matrix Consultants Ltd  
Sport England Active Places statistics  
Council budget and Medium Term Plan