

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report To:** Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee – 13 October 2009

**Subject:** Leisure Centres and Sports Development

**Report of:** Head of Sport and Leisure

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**Summary**

The report outlines the City Council's plans for the improvement and refurbishment of Leisure Centres in local communities and considers the City Council's activities to promote sports development across all wards in Manchester.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to consider the information contained in the report and either:

- Note for information
- Request further information
- Add the item to the Committee's work programme

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**Wards Affected:**

All

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Since the last review of Indoor Leisure in 2000 Manchester's sport and leisure offer has improved significantly, the growth of facility development within both the private and public sector has drastically changed the facility mix and sporting landscape. Some of these facilities are of a very high standard recognising Manchester's status as a major sporting city. However, there are still a number of ageing buildings that are increasingly becoming low value for money in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century leisure needs.
- 1.2 Manchester is already one of the UK's major sporting cities, and a leader in using outstanding facilities to increase participation across a wide range of sporting activities. The City Council uses sport to help re-build the social and community infrastructure which underpins sustainable communities, in this way sport and physical activity positively supports wide ranging Community Strategy core objectives.
- 1.3 On a UK wide level and over the next ten years, Manchester has an opportunity to build on this platform and respond to challenges and opportunities arising from the 'Golden Decade of Sport', which will include the 2012 Olympic Games in London, the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, the Rugby League and Union World Cups in 2013 and 2015 respectively and the potential FIFA Football World Cup in 2018.
- 1.4 This report sets out how the City Council is capturing opportunities to make progress on the improvement and refurbishment of leisure facilities across the City and separately outlines how the City Council is intending to promote sports and physical development across all wards in Manchester.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has maintained a long standing commitment to the development of a wide range of indoor leisure facilities. Utilising the opportunities of the Commonwealth Games over £100 million of capital investment into new community leisure facilities has been delivered since the Best Value Review of Indoor Leisure provision. Since the review the following new sport and leisure developments which offer wide ranging community access have been delivered:

- Regional Athletics Arena (Bradford Ward),
- Indoor Tennis Centre (Ancoats and Clayton Ward),
- Belle Vue Leisure Centre (Gorton North Ward),
- Northcity Family and Fitness Centre (Harpurhey Ward),
- National Squash Centre (Bradford Ward),
- Manchester Aquatics Centre (Ardwick Ward),
- Wright Robinson Sports College (Gorton North Ward),
- Woodhouse Park Active Lifestyle Centre (Woodhouse Park Ward),
- Gorton Gymnastics Centre (Gorton North Ward),
- Sporting Edge (Bradford Ward),

- 2.2 Wherever possible the City Council and partners have sought to develop a balanced portfolio of local authority, private sector and third sector developments, which provide for multi-purpose uses in order to maximise their value in terms of meeting community needs. It is important that these facilities meet the needs of all people in the City and as such they continue to be inclusive and easily accessible by public transport.
- 2.3 Manchester's current indoor provision consists of 40 community sports halls, 11 community swimming pools, 28 community health and fitness facilities and a range of centre's of excellence for sport, which includes centres for: athletics, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, swimming, squash and tennis. In addition, the private sector operators provide a further 12 swimming pools, 33 health and fitness facilities, 4 sports halls and a tennis centre.
- 2.4 The growth of facility development both within the public and private sector across Manchester over the last ten years has drastically changed the facility mix and sporting landscape. On the boundary of the City there have also been a number of new facilities which are now within a reasonable public transport time of a number of Manchester wards. These include large multi-use leisure centres at Middleton in Rochdale, Droylsden in Tameside, Broughton in Salford and Stretford in Trafford.
- 2.5 One of the major issues the City Council has to face is to identify the resources to maintain and improve the quality of the indoor sport and leisure stock. Research and bench marking undertaken by Sports England through the Active Places Survey has highlighted that Manchester's indoor sport and leisure provision is currently well provided for in purely numerical terms. Across a range of facility types including sports halls, health and fitness facilities and swimming pools, Manchester has a higher number of venues than both the England and the North West average when facilities are calculated on a per head of population basis. However, despite the strong number of facilities, the Sport England Active People's Survey has revealed that satisfaction with sport and leisure provision is below average in Manchester compared to both England and the North West.
- 2.6 The indoor leisure facilities at Chorlton (built in 1929), Withington (1911), Broadway (1932), Levenshulme (1931), Ten Acres (1991), Arcadia (1978), and Miles Platting (1978) currently sit within the lower quartile in terms of satisfaction and the contribution to leisure and health outcomes. Over the next decade these buildings will require considerable repair and maintenance investment, in addition, it is anticipated that without intervention these buildings will begin to cost more and only deliver marginal improvements in terms of facility usage.
- 2.7 Delivering capital investment into the above sites over the next ten years will prove to be particularly challenging. Sport England (Lottery distributor and major funding partner) have acknowledged that capital refurbishments and leisure centre investment will no longer be a major priority for them. In addition, the availability of resources through the Council's own capital programme or through planning gain opportunities will be limited to only a small

number of leisure projects. Consequently, any future facility replacements or refurbishments will need to demonstrate an innovative and partnership approach if investment is to be captured.

### **3 Leisure Centre Investment and Refurbishment**

3.1 There are a number of plans which are being progressed to ensure that the City's Leisure offer continues to improve, these include:

- Delivery of the Ongoing Asset Management Programme;
- Capital refurbishment works; and,
- An Indoor Facility Review

#### **3.2 AMP Programme**

3.2.1 The City Council's Asset Management Programme (AMP) ensures that any essential maintenance work to existing buildings is completed to maintain the current levels of operation. The AMP programme has recently delivered significant improvements at Levenshulme, the Manchester Aquatics Centre, Arcadia and the Sport Development Centre with over £1m investment over the last 18 months. Over the next period the AMP programme will deliver further improvements at the Centre's in Broadway, Chorlton, Harpurhey, Moss Side, and Withington.

#### **3.3 Capital Refurbishment**

3.3.1 In 2001-2003 over £7m was invested in Community leisure facilities to introduce high quality Health and Fitness Centres and to upgrade the general quality of the customer experience, and £22m was invested into a complete refurbishment of the Wythenshawe Forum Centre which re-opened in 2004.

3.3.2 In April 2009 the City Council committed to the Free Swimming Modernisation Fund, which has resulted in the City Council receiving 139k of capital investment for the Council's swimming pools. This funding is currently being invested at Levenshulme and Abraham Moss. Over the next 3 years further funding will be released through this initiative to help refurbish and modernise local authority swimming pools.

3.3.3 Leisure Services will prioritise future Free Swimming capital funding on the basis of value for money, this will take into account three key factors: facility need; refurbishment cost and anticipated increase in participation, and the sport and health benefits as a result.

#### **3.4 Indoor Facility Review**

3.4.1 During the financial year 2009/10 Leisure Services will commence the next generation indoor leisure review in preparation for when the current contract arrangements with Serco through the Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust finish in 2014. This will help to determine Manchester's facility plan for the next ten years. This will include undertaking a detailed assessment of the future need of the indoor leisure provision across Manchester, based on

facility planning model evidence, supply and demand data plus the projected changes in Manchester's population and leisure and physical activity participation levels.

- 3.4.2 As part of the review, Leisure Services will be seeking to adopt a planning standard for the provision of a range of indoor sport and leisure facilities, including sports halls, health and fitness centres and swimming pools. Also as part of this review, the City Council would look to lever investment through partnerships i.e. health/education etc and in doing so it is anticipated that this in turn would lead to improved leisure and health outcomes and more efficient and higher quality of provision.

#### **4 Sports Development**

- 4.1 The City Council's commitment to Sports Development since the introduction of Manchester's first Sports Policy in 1996 has led to extensive investment from government agencies, sports governing bodies and commercial organisations. Manchester now has an extensive team of Sports and Community activity Officers who work in partnership with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport and the Health Services to establish a sustainable structure.
- 4.2 Running in parallel with this, Leisure Services has established an extensive Community Activity programme which seeks to create the conditions to enable all sections of the community to improve their health, self-esteem and economic prospects. Community Activity Officers seek to increase participation in physical activity through the delivery of targeted interventions that also contribute to tackling health, education, inclusion, crime and disorder, and community cohesion issues.
- 4.3 Through extensive partnership funding the Sport Development Team is now focusing heavily on developing the following priority sports:

Athletics	Basketball	Badminton	Boxing
Cricket	Cycling	Football	Gymnastics
Hockey	Netball	Squash	Rugby Union
Swimming	Tennis	Water Polo	Disability sport

- 4.4 In addition to the above, over the next 12 months Leisure Services is exploring partnership opportunities to support the development of other emerging sports such as: BMX, Lacrosse, Taekwondo, Rugby League and Extreme Sports.
- 4.5 Until recently the geographic coverage of the Sports Development Team and the Community Activity Team was limited to either sport specific facilities or neighbourhoods located in regeneration areas. Consequently, there were large areas of the City which were not prioritised for activity and interventions by sports and community officers.
- 4.6 In September 2009, Leisure Services undertook a restructure to ensure that all areas of the City were covered by a team of community activators and sports

officers. Going forward this will result in sport and community activity being co-ordinated through a district administrative model, in line with the provision and co-ordination of Children's Services activity. This will result in areas such as Burnage, Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield and Whalley Range receiving better coverage and also receiving increased year round programme's of activities.

4.7 Over the next five years Leisure Services will be working at a neighbourhood level throughout the City to deliver the following Sports Development priorities:

4.7.1 **a leading school sport system** – Leisure Services will be seeking to channel Investment to ensure that every School in Manchester is offering 5 hours of high quality school sport and PE. This will include expanding out of school hours programmes in every school and providing a coherent school competition and talent identification programme.

4.7.2 **a seamless pathway from school to community sport** – Leisure Services recognises that Sports Clubs are an area of real challenge, the number and range of voluntary sector quality assured sports clubs available to Manchester communities is significantly less than the North West average and the country as a whole. Therefore Leisure Services will be seeking to capture investment to provide a world class club coaching programme, enabling children and young people to migrate seamlessly from the school environment to community sport.

4.7.3 **support structures for those individuals with talent** – Leisure Services will be encouraging more young talented athletes to reach their full potential, including those from diverse backgrounds.

4.7.4 **improved skills and knowledge** – Leisure Services is seeking to establish Manchester as a hotbed for skill development, connecting residents to job opportunities supporting the establishment of the City as a knowledge capital for sport and coaching excellence.

4.7.5 **an extensive volunteering programme** – Despite the significant improvements in recent years, Leisure Services recognises that Manchester still has some of the lowest sports volunteering rates in the UK. Therefore Leisure Services will be developing stronger relationships with NGBs to enable the City to establish one of the most extensive volunteering programmes of its kind in the UK.

4.7.6 **a coherent competition programme** – Access to competition remains an important element of engagement in sport. Therefore developing strategies for increasing competitive opportunities at every level from school sport to recreational sport and elite sport is a high priority for Leisure Services.

## 5. Conclusion

5.1 The City provides a wide range of sports facilities either through the Manchester Sport and Leisure Trust, the National Cycling Centre and High Schools. This is supported by a wide range of voluntary sector and private

sector provision. The key investment strategies moving forward need to focus on our older building stock, increasing participation among all sections of the community and supporting our voluntary sector sport and activity clubs.