



Title of Report:	Recovery Plan for Sport & Wellbeing Facilities
Report Submitted To:	Council
Date of Meeting:	4 th August 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health
Lead Officer	Director / Head of Sport and Wellbeing

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	Sport and Wellbeing
Staffing Costs	n/a

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a

1.0 Purpose of Report

At the last Council meeting on 7th July Members were presented with a timeline for the reopening of all Leisure & Development facilities. Following this meeting, Leisure and Development held a Members Workshop on 22nd July to present three recovery options and the relative affordability of each in terms of the annual revenue budget for 2020/21.

The option emerging from this discussion was the 'Reduced Service Resumption' with the reopening of all Major/Minor Leisure Centres and Community Centres from the 1st September 2020.

This preferred option aligns services with affordability and maximises the permanent staff complement across all facilities, in conjunction with reduced opening hours for activities which best reflect peak demand periods, and compliance with current Covid-19 restrictions.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the additional detail requested by Members on the 'Reduced Services' option and to request approval for a phased recovery plan for the reopening of facilities from the 1st September.

2.0 Background

The following facilities are included within the scope of this paper:

- Coleraine Leisure Centre;
- Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre;
- Roe Valley Leisure Centre;
- Dungiven Sports Centre;
- Shesburn Recreation Centre;
- Jim Watt Sports Centre; and
- 18 Community Centres.

The six leisure/sport facilities above have previously been the subject of the 'Shadow Bid' process and ongoing in-house transformation. Unfortunately this decision was deferred in March because of the Covid-19 outbreak. It is noted that transformation mobilisation plans are continuing, however the In-House Bid itself will require comprehensive review in light of the new operating environment.

Council took the decision to close Leisure/Sport/Community Centres on Tuesday 17th March. Centre staff initially commenced an intense cleaning regime in the facilities, however it soon became clear that reopening of the sites would not happen in the short term so the vast majority of the staff were stood down.

All agency employed casual staff and coaches were Furloughed by Grafton Recruitment, followed by all agency staff filling vacant posts. Initially it was unclear as to whether or not Council staff could avail of the Government Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), so redeployment opportunities for Council staff was sought in the first instance.

As the implications of Covid-19 became clear Council's Sport & Wellbeing Staff became key in terms local delivery of the Department for Communities initiatives in relation to Community Support. This was most evident with the set up of Council's 'Community Hub' at the Flowerfield Arts Centre and the distribution of food parcels at 3 of Council's sites. Members have been kept informed of this work through the weekly situation reports supplied by the Head of Sport & Wellbeing.

The reopening of the Household Recycling Centre's resulted in a request from Council's Operations Department for Sport & Wellbeing Staff to assist with the process of allowing those facilities to return to operation. Twelve staff were initially redeployed to the sites to assist on

the ground, while the Business Support Staff deployed to the Community Hub operated a call centre for the Public to book their slots at the sites.

In June Council took the decision to avail of the CJRS, which resulted in all Sport & Wellbeing staff, not deemed essential to the operation of the 'Community Hub', redeployed to Household Recycling Centre's or those staff directly involved in Recovery Planning being furloughed.

At this point in time, the demands of the 'Community Hub' are decreasing with the expectation that there is no further requirement post 31st July. The Hub continues to facilitate bookings for the Household Recycling Centres and will initially be the coordination point for bookings for outdoor facilities, until such times as the Business Support Staff can return to their normal place of work in the Leisure Centre's.

In recent weeks Leisure Operations Managers have been anticipating announcements from Government and preparing sites for potential return to business, some of the work includes:

- Reception and physical restriction of designated areas;
- Industry guidelines for opening gyms and swimming pools;
- Intensive and deep cleaning regime;
- PPE sourcing and safe use; and
- COVID-19 checks and procedures.

Sport & Wellbeing's Business Support Manager & Commercial Manager have been working to ensure that our systems are such that they lend themselves to the operational adjustments required assist with Covid-19 protocols:

- Legend/booking systems;
- Contact and Trace compliance;
- Financial procedures;
- Communications; and
- Customers Journeys.

As the main facilities have been 'semi' mothballed, ie. Pool and pool hall temperatures dropped to a safe level to maximise the potential utilities savings and the majority of staff remain on the CJRS, an amount of work is required to bring the facilities back to their normal operating state. Likewise, there will be a process involved in bringing staff off Furlough, this coupled with the pre-opening cleaning and training requirements which marry with the indicative timescale for bringing the pool back into operation, potentially 3 weeks lead in time before opening.

Subject to Member approval Management are working on the planning assumption of reopening facilities on 1st September 2020.

3.0 Benchmarking Research & Industry Guidance

As the lifting of Covid - 19 restrictions gathers momentum, the NI Executive announced that indoor gyms can reopen on the 10th July, with Leisure Centre's to follow on the 24th July (revised). No further specific guidance has been issued to date by the NI Executive in relation to how these facilities can reopen, as such Council Officers have considered various sources of advice:

- NI Executive/DfC, Guidance on the Safe Phased Return of Sport, Leisure and Recreation in Northern Ireland;
- UK Government/DCMS "Working Safely during Coronavirus: Providers of grassroots sport and gym/leisure facilities;

- Sport NI “A Framework to guide progression towards a resumption of sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland”;
- UK Active “COVID-19 - A framework for the re-opening of gym, leisure centre and wider fitness industry during social distancing”;
- UK Active “COVID-19 Impact Report: The Fitness and Leisure Sector’s Path to Recovery”;
- CIMSPA – “Social distancing in the sport and physical activity sector”;
- CIMSPA – “Guidance on outdoor training and coaching in Northern Ireland”;
- EMD UK – “Guidance and Support for UK Group Exercise Instructors”; and
- QLM Health & Safety Industry Experts.

4.0 The Financial Approach During Recovery

The Council agreed net budget position for each directorate and service area remains as the 2020/21 annual target budgetary position. Furthermore budget management is allowing the corporate body to rebuild General Reserves. To offset the loss of income (and include contingency savings) an estimated £2.5m reduction in expenditure is necessary. Therefore stringent financial analysis and cost control are an absolute necessity as outlined below:

1. **Financial Analysis and Planning** - accurately understand the net budgetary shortfall by Directorate, Head of Service Area, Tier 4 Service Area and Programme/Project/Activity.
2. **The Reinstatement of Services** - no services, activities and programmes beyond those currently on-going during the Lockdown Period, are to be reinstated unless with the agreement of the Director / Council decision.
3. **Service Prioritisation** - the reinstatement of services, activities and programmes is based upon prioritised recovery themes.
4. **Pathway to Recovery** - the financial and practical planning necessary to allow for the considered reinstatement of facilities and activities based upon affordability and the basic essential functions to allow safe public use. Affordability options to be presented:
 - a. Option 1 - Closure. Remain closed for the entire year i.e. ‘hibernation’, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. 12 month loss of all income.
 - ii. Costs reduced to the essential minimum.
 - b. Option 2 - Normal Services Resume. Open the facility from a given date, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. ‘Baseline’ operating costs.
 - ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid 19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
 - iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
 - iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.
 - c. Option 3 - Services Aligned to Affordability. Consider the option of opening a facility based upon a reduced service to meet the target net annual revenue budget, calculating the net estimated position based upon:
 - i. A reduced service resulting in reduced operating costs to provide basic functionality.

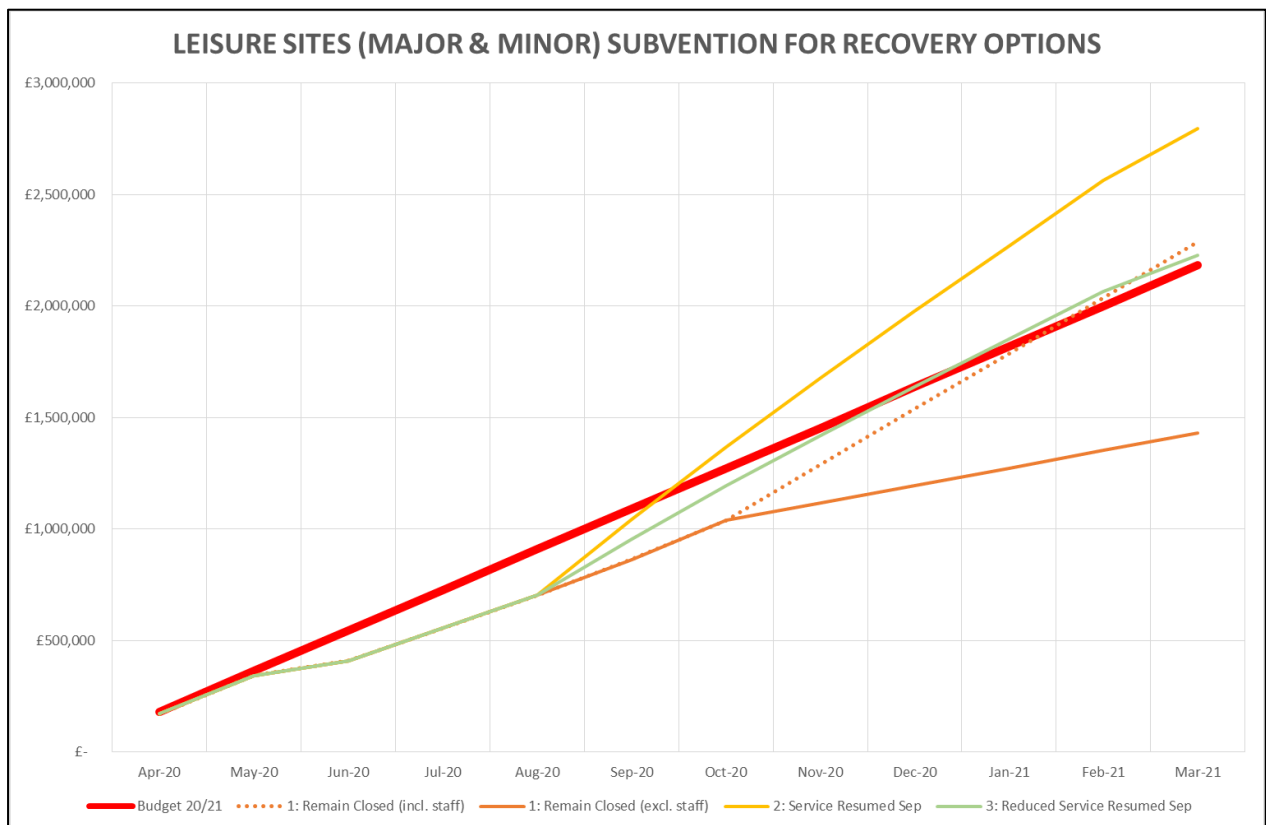
- ii. Estimated increased operating costs to comply with the ongoing Covid 19 social distancing requirements and increased infrastructure / decontamination / hygiene regimes.
- iii. Loss of income from 1 April 20 to the date of opening.
- iv. Reduced income estimate for the remaining annual period, considering the restricted income opportunities.

5.0 Affordability Analysis

On the basis of the corporate direction outlined above, the Sport & Wellbeing Unit has fully appraised the three options:

- Option 1: Remain closed.
- Option 2: Service resumed.
- Option 3: Reduced service resumed.

The preferred option emerging from the Members Workshop was Option 3 ‘Reduced Services resumed from 1st September. This option depicted by the green line in the graph below requires an annual subvention of £2.227m representing a small overspend of £46k against the annual budget of £2.181m. This annual subvention is broken down as £1.926m for the three Major Leisure Centres and £0.301m for the three Minor Sports Centres.



The ‘Reduced Services’ option for Community Centres has a projected annual subvention of £413k representing a small underspend of £38k against the annual budget of £451k.

6.0 Reduced Service Resumed

It is recognised in the industry that a phased approach to opening will be required to ensure control measures can be put in place to manage the risk of Covid-19. In terms of affordability the management of phased opening will give Officers the flexibility to remain within budget.

There are potentially multiple sub-options around reduced service (in terms of hours/sites/facilities) and phased timing for the return of services. However, this would be very difficult to plan and coordinate particularly in terms of the return of permanent staff and maintaining equality in access to service provision right across the Borough. Therefore it is proposed to resume with basic and essential service provision across all facilities as follows:

- Bring back all permanent staff to determine reduced service capability (requiring flexibility to move across all six sites);
- Bring back agency staff as required to cover leave/sick and other adhoc permanent staff absence.
- Reduced opening hours across sites (to cover peak usage/demand);
- Focus on gyms and memberships utilising halls/studios to accommodate additional space (no other hall use/income in short term);
- Only major pools reopen in short term (loss of schools income in minor pools);
- Community centres focussed on covid-19 response and local support services initially.

Members should note that to ensure Council meets it's obligations in terms of implementation of Covid-19 guidance, operational changes will be in place during the initial phase of reopening. These may include but are not limited to:

- All activities will need to be booked and limited to individual use;
- Bookings will be unavailable during programmed cleaning;
- Re-configuration of gyms due to Social Distancing Guidelines;
- Swimming is likely to be restricted to lane swimming only;
- Exercise classes which limit the use of equipment will be on offer; and
- Limited changing facilities will be offered.

The recovery phase is currently 1st September 2020 – 31st March 2021 and is therefore seen as short term interim measure requiring no permanent changes to structure or staffing requirements. The planning assumptions for next year will be kept under review and Council advised accordingly.

An exact timeframe cannot be projected for each phase. The timeframe between phases may be short, but will ultimately be driven by the lifting of restrictions (avoiding local 'lock downs' / possible second wave), governing body/club evidence of compliance and the facilities and staffing capacities to manage potential increased footfall and adhere to Covid-19 operating procedures.

Critically, management require the flexibility to increase or reduce the level of service according to local demands and facility constraints. The phased re-opening may operate on differing timescales for each leisure centre, sports centre and community centre.

The Phased Recovery Plan is summarised in the following Table 1:

FACILITIES	NO SERVICE	REDUCED SERVICE: 1 SEPTEMBER - 31 MARCH			FULL SERVICE	
		PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3		
		➔	➔	➔		
1. Leisure/Sports Centres	Tier 1 & 2 closed	Tier 1 & 2 Open			Tier 1 & 2 Open	
Leisure facilities:						
Reception	All facilities currently closed. Deep cleaning and essential maintenance ongoing. Opportunity for physical adaptations to spaces / staff training / member comms etc....	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	Opened with reliance on Legend MIS	All facilities returned to 'normal use' subject to ongoing review against Covid-19 restrictions	
Gym		Booked sessions with limited numbers	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Booked sessions with limited numbers		
Studios/Classes		Limited class offering	Return of Exercise Referral Classes	Return of wider class offering		
Main Hall		Re-purposing of space for gyms	Use of space for Gym training/classes	Club usage subject to governing body		
Minor Hall		Re-purposing of space for gyms	Use of space for Gym training/classes	Club usage subject to governing body		
Dry Changing		Closed initially	Opened for changing and no showers	Full usage of changing		
Main Pool		Lane swimming and club usage	Swimming lessons and family swims	Full use of pool		
Minor Pool		Closed initially	Swimming lessons and family swims	Water slides / childrens parties		
Health Suite		Closed initially	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Full use of health suite		
Wet Changing		Swimmers come 'beach-ready'	Opened for changing and no showers	Full usage of changing		
Soft Play		Closed initially	Booked sessions with limited numbers	Full usage of soft play / childrens parties		
Café		Consulting with leaseholders				
Leisure Opening Hours:						
Leisure Centres	Closed	Mon-Fri: 6:30-21:00 / Sat: 8:00-16:30 / Sun: 11:00-16:00 (intermittent closure for cleaning and staff updates)			Normal Hours	
Sport Centres	Closed	Mon-Fri: 15:00:21:00 / Sat: 8:00-16:30 / Sun: closed (intermittent closure for cleaning and staff updates)			Normal Hours	
2. Community Centres	Closed	Covid-19 response/support services	Wellbeing Services: exercise/childcare	Full use of hall space	Normal Use	
3. Changing Pavilions	Closed	Site specific reopening based on demand and risk assessment of compliance with Covid-19 guidance			Normal Use	

To support the above Phased Recovery Plan a number of key actions are required:

Governance	Lead	Timeline
1. Members Workshop on Recovery Options 2. Full Council ratification on 'Reduced Service' resumption	L&D Director	22 July (complete) 4 August
Affordability		
3. Initial analysis of 3 options to make recommendation 4. Ongoing review against management accounts	L&D Director (support of Finance)	22 July (complete) As required
Staffing		
5. Return of permanent staff and capacity across 6 sites 6. Return of agency staff as required to cover sickness/leave 7. Updates/training/induction and staff welfare	Head of Service / General Manager (support HR)	August
Operational		
8. Government/Industry guidelines noted above 9. Reception and physical restriction of designated areas 10. Cleaning regime / PPE sourcing / COVID-19 procedures	General Manager / Leisure Operating Managers	August
Marketing		
11. Members Communications 12. General promotion activities (toolkits available)	Commercial Dev. Manager	August/September
Business Support		
13. Legend/booking systems 14. Contact and Trace compliance 15. Financial procedures	Business Support Manager	August/September
Estates/Premises		
16. Facility adaptations 17. Essential maintenance	Head of Service / General Manager (support of Estates)	August/September

7.0 Recommendation

On the basis of the additional analysis and detail provided above, 'Reduced Service' resumed on 1st September is the preferred option for recommendation to Council.

This option is financially challenging to deliver this year within budget, however it allows essential services to be delivered across all sport and wellbeing facilities and most importantly for improved health and wellbeing outcomes to be realised in local communities across the Borough.

Given the uncertain operating environment it is also recommended that the Recovery Plan is implemented in three phases with ongoing performance monitoring and review points at the end of each phase (in accordance with the 'Phased Recovery Plan', Table 1).