

**CABINET
3 DECEMBER 2019**

DOLPHIN CENTRE TEN PIN BOWLING

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Lorraine Tostevin, Health and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To release funding for the Dolphin Centre to:
 - (a) Install a five-lane ten pin bowling alley
 - (b) Extension to the existing soft play facility

Summary

2. The Dolphin Centre has long been a cornerstone of the town centre and a key facility to draw in families and young people. Following the decision by Cabinet last year to not relocate the Library to the Dolphin Centre, work has been ongoing on developing proposals to introduce a range of facilities that improve the family and teen offer within the building.
3. This work has resulted in the proposals within this report to install a five-rink Ten Pin Bowling Alley and extension to Soft Play as well as introducing other facilities for young people/teenagers.
4. The Town Centre Strategy received a number of comments stating support for a Ten Pin Bowling facility in Darlington.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members approve the alterations to the Dolphin Centre with the introduction of new facilities and release £1million, which will be funded from additional revenue.

Reason

6. The recommendation is supported to enable the alterations to the Dolphin Centre with the introduction of Ten Pin Bowling and extensions to Soft Play alongside additional offer for young people/teenagers.

**Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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CD

S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report will not impact on crime and disorder but does provide positive activities for young people.
Health and Well Being	The Dolphin Centre is the Council's key facility for providing opportunities for residents to participate in an active and health lifestyle.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There will be a positive impact on carbon reduction as a result of installing modern, efficient mechanical and electrical installations.
Diversity	No specific group with a protected characteristic is adversely affected as a result of this report.
Wards Affected	The Dolphin Centre is located within Park East Ward.
Groups Affected	No particular group is affected as a result of this report or proposed changes.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Dolphin Centre has a positive impact on a number of outcomes within One Darlington: Perfectly Placed, particularly Children the Best Start in Life, More People Healthy and independent, A Place Designed to Thrive, and More People Active and Involved.
Efficiency	Investment in new mechanical and electrical installation will have a positive impact on efficiency.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Proposal

7. Following the decision last year by Cabinet not to relocate the Library to the Dolphin Centre, officers have been looking at options to extend the family/teen offer within the building. There has been for a while a desire to include Ten Pin Bowling within the Dolphin Centre. This has also been borne out by the recent Town Centre Strategy Consultation where there were strong suggestions of support for the development of a Ten Pin Bowling Alley within the town centre.
8. Currently there are three Squash courts within the Dolphin Centre. In recent years, squash has continued to see a decline in participation nationally and this continues to be the case at the Dolphin Centre. This is a result of a greater choice of exercise for people, such as the gym, exercise classes and a greater range of organised activity taking place outdoors. The Squash income for the Dolphin Centre has reduced in recent years from £24,000 per annum to just under £18,000 in 2018/19. The indications for 2019/20 is this will further reduce. The overall utilisation of the three Squash courts is currently on average; weekday evenings 40%, available capacity; weekday daytime 8% of available capacity, and on a weekend only 13% of available capacity.
9. Whilst it will be disappointing to existing Squash users at the Dolphin Centre, there is the opportunity to close the three Squash courts, converting the space to accommodate at an upper level on a mezzanine floor, a five-rink Ten Pin Bowling Alley and at ground floor, extending the Soft Play facility.
10. There are four courts still available in Darlington at Darlington Squash Club, which is based on McMullen Road. Early discussions have taken place with the Squash Club who would be keen to work with Dolphin Centre management to encourage existing Squash customers to utilise that facility.
11. Attached at **Appendix 1** is the layout of the proposed alterations within the Dolphin Centre, which creates the five-rink Ten Pin Bowling Alley and extension to the existing Soft Play area.
12. The Ten Pin Bowling Alley will be located on the first floor and accessed through the Bistro onto what was the Squash Court Viewing Gallery. This allows easy access to the Bistro where drinks and refreshments can be purchased to take through into the bowling facility thereby increasing secondary spend.
13. In addition to these changes, it is also proposed to create a Teen Drop-in Area at the front of the Dolphin Centre in the current hub/old DAD offices. Within this area it is intended to include Pool, Air Hockey and other appropriate facilities and activities for young people.

Mechanical and Electrical Installation

14. The mechanical and electrical installations that cover the majority of the areas proposed for redevelopment were to be updated as part of the original Library project. Cabinet had previously released £600,000 on 17 January 2017 to enable this work to take place, therefore at the same time as introducing Ten Pin Bowling

and updating the Soft Play, the mechanical and electrical installations covering these areas will also be replaced.

Financial Implications

15. The overall cost of this work is estimated to be £1.6million; £600,000 for mechanical and electrical installations and £1million for building alterations and installation of Ten Pin Bowling and extension to the Soft Play facility.
16. As mentioned earlier, the £600,000 allocation for mechanical and electrical installations is already built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan and has been released by Cabinet in January 2017. The cost of the additional borrowing for the building work and equipment will be covered from additional income received through the new facilities.
17. Once all additional costs are taken into account for staffing, consumables, marketing, repairs and maintenance, loss of income from squash, as well as appropriate licences and borrowing costs, there is an anticipated surplus based on the industry average of 100 games per day at £7 per individual of £74,000.
18. Sensitivity analysis has been carried out on a range of games per day and is shown in the table below;

Games per day	75 Games	100 Games	125 Games	150 Games
Income Bowling	£157,400	£209,900	£262,400	£314,800
Income Catering	£56,200	£74,900	£93,600	£112,300
Gross Expenditure	£94,700	£101,200	£107,800	£114,300
Operational Expenditure	£109,600	£109,600	£120,100	£120,100
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	£9,300	£74,000	£128,100	£192,700

19. As can be seen from the sensitivity analysis the new facility will provide a small surplus of £9,300 based on 75 games per day but it is anticipated that the average games per day will be in equal or in excess of the industry average of 100 games.

Legal and Procurement Advice

20. The Localism Act 2011 includes a 'general power of competence' which gives local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited which includes the power to provide and charge for leisure services to cover the cost of provision, and so the Council has the power to deliver the new services.
21. The alterations to the building will be carried out by the in-house Building Services Team.

22. It is proposed that the procurement of the Specialist Equipment and other required Works and Services (including as required maintenance services for the specialist equipment) is to be added to the Procurement Annual Plan and designated as non-strategic and that the decision for the contract award be delegated to Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services subject to procurement process in accordance with the Council Contract Procedure Rules.
23. Due diligence checks of the contractors will be carried out in accordance with the mandated Cabinet Office Selection questionnaire including a full health and safety assessment. Appropriate bonds/ warranties will be required as a part of the contract in accordance with the Council Contract Procedure Rules and good industry practice.

HR Implications

24. There is a requirement to employ additional staff to manage the new facilities which will happen in due course in line with Council procedures.

Consultation

25. As mentioned earlier in this report, consultation was carried out across the Borough as part of the Town Centre Strategy work there is strong support for the introduction of Ten Pin Bowling within the town centre.
26. Existing Squash users of the Dolphin Centre have all been written to with regard to the proposals, which are obviously subject to Cabinet approval after which a meeting will be held with interested individuals. Officers will continue to work closely with Darlington Squash Club as an alternative facility for Squash customers.