

TITLE OF REPORT: **Gateshead International Stadium – Options Appraisal**

REPORT OF: **Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health**
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Digital

Purpose of the report

1. This report seeks Cabinet approval to commence an options appraisal on the Gateshead International Stadium (GIS).

Background

2. In 2015, Cabinet agreed that Leisure Services would achieve the position of no longer being directly funded by the Council and would return an income to enable investment in Council priorities by 2020. During the 5 years from 2015/16 to 2019/20 the Council continued to fund Leisure Services, spending £18m with a further £5.5m funded through COVID Grants during 2020/21 and 2021/22. The aim of not funding Leisure Services has not been achieved and the gap between income and expenditure within the Service is widening due to the impact of COVID and the cost of living crisis.
3. On the 25th October 2022, Cabinet agreed the following (minute number C60):
 - i. Approved the consideration of the future operating model for the Gateshead International Stadium being undertaken separately to that for the wider leisure service and that the future of the Stadium will be the subject of a distinct review and future report to Cabinet.
 - ii. Approved the commencement of a procurement process to identify and contract with a service provider partner to manage the Council's leisure centres and swimming pools under a services contract.
 - iii. Approved the commencement of a comprehensive public and employee consultation process to understand the impact of any leisure centre closures in order to influence the final evaluation

exercise on which leisure centres should remain open and agrees to receive a further report following this further evaluation setting out proposals for the reduction of the number of Council leisure centres.

4. A separate report is being presented to Cabinet for consideration on the progress of the wider Leisure Review. This report sets out the proposed approach to an options appraisal of Gateshead International Stadium.

Scope, Vision and Objectives

5. The scope of this report is focused on the future service delivery options for the GIS. Whilst the GIS is managed within the organisational structure of Leisure Services, the facility has a wider and significantly different offer than the rest of the Leisure Services portfolio. Specifically built for international event spectating purposes, it provides a particular offer to its key tenants, supporting professional sport and a significant educational offer, which are stand alone to its leisure centre health and fitness provision.

Proposal

6. It is proposed that Cabinet agree to the commencement of an options appraisal.
7. The options appraisal is proposed to start on 1st February 2023 and a full engagement plan will be developed. A full analysis of the current use and users of the site will be undertaken. This information, along with the analysis of the results of the engagement plan will help inform any options. The key findings will be reported back to Cabinet for consideration in July 2023.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) Approves the commencement of an options appraisal on Gateshead International Stadium.
 - (ii) Agrees to receive a further report in July 2023 following the options appraisal.

For the following reasons:

- (iii) To provide options for the Council to consider.

Policy context and background

1. The Council is very proud of its sport and leisure offer and has built up a reputation for being a leader in this area with the GIS being a key iconic facility hosting a number of major sporting events over the years such as the World Transplant Games, the European Athletics Team Championships and Diamond League events as well as music concerts.
2. On the 25th October, Cabinet agreed to the consideration of the future operating model for the GIS being undertaken separately to that for the leisure centres and that the future of the GIS will be the subject of a distinct review and future report to Cabinet.
3. GIS has formal tenancy arrangements with Gateshead Football Club and Gateshead College in place alongside the international sporting arena and events. A wider community sport and leisure offer is provided for athletics clubs, football clubs and the general public via the athletics track, artificial turf pitches and gym. The gym also includes a specialist 'Speedflex' studio available to gym users. The full facility mix includes;
 - 100 station health & fitness suite, plus strength & conditioning
 - Studio (120m²)
 - Speedflex Fitness Studio
 - 8 lane floodlit synthetic athletics track with separate throws training area
 - Conference suite (1 x Single room or 5 x Classrooms)
 - Floodlit full-size grass football pitch (inside running track – home of Gateshead FC)
 - c.11000 capacity stadium with turnstile access points and supporting concession servery's.
 - Café/Kitchen area
 - 2 grass pitches (football and rugby union)
 - 2 full-size floodlit 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)
 - Full-size floodlit sand based AGP
 - 8 court multi use sports hall
 - Supporting changing facilities including steam room, first aid, physio room facilities,
 - Car Parking facilities

Consultation

4. All Cabinet Members have been consulted on this proposal.

5. Employee consultation has been ongoing for the wider Leisure review and employees have been informed that a separate exercise will be undertaken for Gateshead International Stadium. Employee engagement will commence with staff and their TU representatives on 1 February 2023 regarding the Gateshead International Stadium options appraisal.
6. As part of the options appraisal, engagement will also be undertaken with the following key stakeholders/user groups;
 - a. Current anchor tenants (such as Gateshead Football Club and Gateshead College) and others with regular bookings such as the Military Preparation Training College, Inspired Support, Little Movers.
 - b. Local sports clubs including, but not exclusively, athletics, netball and football clubs.
 - c. Community Football Clubs who hold service level agreements with the Council for use of the 3G artificial turf pitches. A condition of previous grant funding from the Football Foundation
 - d. Gym users
 - e. Other users of the site such as Northumbria and Newcastle University
 - f. Previous grant funders of the site
 - g. Event organisers who regularly use the site on an annual basis.
 - h. Schools and the Gateshead School Sport Partnership.
 - i. Other individuals/groups not listed above will be engaged through the process. This could include relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport.
 - j. The local community.

Alternative Options

7. Cabinet could make the decision to not approve the recommendations, however this may limit the potential future options of the Gateshead International Stadium.

Implications of Recommended Option

8. Resources:

- a) Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no immediate financial implications as a direct result of this report. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.
- b) Human Resources Implications** - There are no immediate human resource implications as a direct result of this report. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.

c) Property Implications – There are no implications arising as a result of this report. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.

9. **Risk Management Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.
10. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.
11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report for consideration.
12. **Health Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report for consideration.
13. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report for consideration.
14. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report for consideration.
15. **Ward Implications** – Whilst the Gateshead International Stadium is based within the Felling Ward, the facility is of borough wide importance. Any future recommendations devised as a result of the process will be considered in a further report.
16. **Background Information** – None.