

---

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Leisure Review: Rationalisation of sites  
**REPORT OF:** Alice Wiseman, Strategic Director, Public Health and Wellbeing

---

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides an update of the work carried out to review Leisure Services and notifies Cabinet of the outcomes of the extended comprehensive consultation process that commenced 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Cabinet is asked to consider the report and to agree to take forward the recommendations for the delivery of a financially sustainable Leisure Service.

### **Background**

2. For many years the Council has tried to reduce its funding of leisure services by implementing a range of initiatives to either increase income or reduce expenditure, however a significant amount of council funding has continued to be required as set out in various reports considered by Cabinet (see Background Information, below).
3. On [25 October 2022](#) Cabinet considered a report advising that the existing delivery model for Leisure Services was no longer affordable and that the service was continuing to significantly overspend its allocated budget provision. Cabinet agreed to procure an external delivery partner to manage the service in the future, however it was advised that it would be 18-24 months before the Council could expect to reduce its funding of Leisure Services via this route. Cabinet therefore agreed to explore the rationalisation of leisure centres and to commence a comprehensive consultation process to understand the impact of any leisure centre closures on users and local communities to influence a final evaluation exercise on which leisure centres should remain open and be included within the procurement process, and which should be considered for closure.
4. A comprehensive consultation process was conducted between 2 November 2022 and 20 December 2022, the results of which were reported to Cabinet on [24 January 2023](#) together with a recommendation to close Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, whilst at the same time continuing discussions with organisations that had expressed an interest in exploring community asset transfers.

5. As Birtley Swimming Centre had not previously been identified as a centre that was at risk of closure, Cabinet agreed at their meeting on [24 January 2023](#):
  - a. That public consultation to inform the review was to be re-opened for a period of at least three months, during which any new representations would be invited, particularly from the Birtley and Lamesley communities and users of Birtley Swimming Centre,
  - b. Over this period the viability of the potential to transfer the management of any of Dunston Leisure Centre, Gateshead Leisure Centre, Birtley Sports Hall and Birtley Swimming Centre on a Community Asset Transfer basis would be explored,
  - c. Cabinet would receive an additional report following the end of this further period of consultation with the final outcome of the Review, including any proposals for Community Asset Transfer of one or more of the four facilities mentioned above.
6. A further consultation process ran between 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 the results and comments from this consultation process were carefully considered however, they have not changed the outcome of the previous recommendations to Cabinet.
7. The report to Cabinet on [25<sup>th</sup> October 2022](#) triggered the requirement to commence statutory consultation with employees working in Leisure Services by issuing statutory consultation notices informing employees that they were at risk of redundancy. Extending the consultation period has led to employees being at risk of redundancy for more than 8 months which is a lot longer than initially anticipated.

## **Proposal**

8. The proposal is to rationalise the number of leisure centres operated by the Council to reduce the cost of the service to the Council and support the enablement of the service to operate within its agreed budget, whilst taking account of the impact on the Gateshead Community as set out in the [Leisure Review Consultation](#) Report.

## **Recommendations**

9. It is recommended that:
  - i. The Council proceeds with the closure of Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2023; and
  - ii. The Council continues to explore potential Community Asset Transfers with community organisations that have identified an interest in Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre for a further 6-month period to 31 December 2023, however this should not prevent or delay the closure of Gateshead Leisure Centre or Birtley Swimming Centre as recommended above.

For the following reasons:

- i. to deliver the £0.600m unachieved savings and to assist in enabling the service to operate within its allocated budget, ceasing the current overspend and thereby helping the Council to sustain a leisure offer;
- ii. to reduce the cost of provision of Leisure Services to as close to zero as possible in the longer term, whilst at the same time understanding the impact this will have on Gateshead residents and other users of the service by balancing the contribution of leisure centre provision with the financial sustainability of the Council;
- iii. to resolve the issue of Leisure Service employees being at risk for any period longer than necessary;
- iv. to enable the service to offer a comprehensive programme of activities throughout the school summer holidays;
- v. to enable the Council to procure a partner to operate and manage the remaining leisure centres at a reduced cost to the Council as close to zero as possible; and
- vi. to ensure that all viable alternatives have been fully explored to prevent the permanent closure of any leisure centres.

### Policy context and background

1. This report provides Cabinet with an updated position on the previous report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on [24 January 2023](#) where it agreed to continue the consultation process on the impact that recommended closure of leisure centres would have on users and other stakeholders and continue to explore the possibility of potential community asset transfers on a number of sites.
2. As a reminder:
  - a. 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, however, this had not been achieved despite the implementation of a range of initiatives to either increase income or reduce costs.
  - b. On [25 October 2022](#) Cabinet received a report advising that the existing model for delivery of Leisure Services is no longer deliverable within its budget and proposing the procurement of an external delivery partner to manage the leisure centres on behalf of the Council. The report also advised that it would be 18-24 months before the Council could expect to reduce its funding of Leisure Services via this route, and Cabinet therefore agreed to commence a comprehensive 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 which should be considered for closure. The report identified that based on a desk top exercise set out in a sustainability matrix and without any impact information, Gateshead Leisure Centre, Dunston Leisure Centre and possibly the sports hall at Birtley Leisure Centre were least sustainable.
  - c. On [24 January 2023](#) Cabinet received a report that provided the results of the consultation process and recommended that on 31st March 2023, Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre should close (not Dunston Leisure Centre or the sports hall at Birtley Leisure Centre), based on a revised version of the sustainability matrix which had been updated to take account of impacts on Gateshead Communities and feedback received during the consultation process. The report also recommended the continuation of the discussions that were taking place with organisations interested in exploring community asset transfers. There was concern amongst Cabinet members that some Birtley Swimming Centre users may not have responded to the earlier consultation as their leisure site had not been identified as being at risk of closure, therefore Cabinet agreed:
    - i. That public consultation to inform the Review should be re-opened for a period of at least three months, during which any new representations would be invited, particularly from the Birtley and Lamesley communities and users of Birtley Swimming Centre,

- ii. Over this period the viability of the potential to transfer the management of any of Dunston Leisure Centre, Gateshead Leisure Centre, Birtley Sports Hall and Birtley Swimming Centre on a Community Asset Transfer basis would be explored,
  - iii. Cabinet would receive an additional report following the end of this further period of consultation with the final outcome of the Review, including any proposals for Community Asset Transfer of one or more of the four facilities mentioned above.
3. The Council's financial plan ([Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)) makes clear the significant pressures on resources the Council is facing and requires savings to be considered across all Council services and the current Leisure Service offer is no exception.

### **Scope, Vision and Objectives**

4. This report considers the Council owned centres and swimming pools, namely Birtley Leisure Centre, Birtley Swimming Centre, Blaydon Leisure Centre, Dunston Leisure Centre, Gateshead Leisure Centre and Heworth Leisure Centre. Gateshead International Stadium is out of scope as agreed by Cabinet in October 2022 and is the subject of a separate report on this meeting's agenda.
5. The vision for Leisure Services has not changed since the previous report considered by Cabinet in [January 2023](#) and remains the delivery of the Council's Physical Activity Strategy, but within the current financial restraints.
6. The key objectives for the review also remain unchanged:
  - a. to deliver the unachieved savings and to support the service to operate within its approved budget by the end of 2023/24;
  - b. to reduce the cost of provision of Leisure Services to as close to zero as possible in the longer term, whilst at the same time understanding the impact this will have on Gateshead residents and other users of the service by balancing the contribution of leisure centre provision with the financial sustainability of the Council.

### **Outcome from the public consultation process**

7. Following the decision taken by Cabinet to continue to consult for at least a further 3-month period, the consultation process re-opened on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and closed on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
8. A summary of the process followed, and the full impacts of the potential leisure centre closures based on the 2 consultation periods are set out in the [Leisure Review Consultation Report](#). The extended consultation period enabled an additional 2100 responses to be made, which when added to the initial 7419 respondents totals 9519 over the two periods. Of the additional 2100 responses, 1642 were from Gateshead residents and 291 people indicated that they had previously responded to the consultation.
9. Considering this report and the impacts on users of the sites, and despite the 2100 additional responses being received and carefully considered, there is no additional

information gathered that would suggest a move away from the recommendation set out in the report considered by Cabinet in January 2023.

### **Impact on Employees and Employee Consultation**

10. The report to Cabinet on [25 October 2022](#) triggered the requirement to commence statutory consultation with employees working in Leisure Services by issuing statutory consultation notices informing employees that they were at risk of redundancy. During the extended public consultation period, consultation has continued with employees and their Trade Union representatives.
11. Further employee consultation has taken place as follows:
  - a. consultation meetings have been held across all sites;
  - b. newsletters have been issued at appropriate times;
  - c. individual employee meetings have taken place to consider employees individual circumstances;
  - d. joint staff consultation meetings have taken place with the Service Director, Commercialisation who is leading the review of Gateshead International Stadium, for employees more likely to be impacted on the Gateshead International Stadium review.
12. Employees from those centres identified for closure or Community Asset Transfer would be reallocated to roles at other centres. Once the reallocation has taken place, any outstanding vacancies would be filled, and this would enable the remaining centres to be fully staffed and opening hours to increase at some sites.

### **Consultation with the Trade Unions**

13. Regular meetings have also taken place with the Trade Unions to keep them updated with progress and to seek their ongoing views on the consultation process and the Trade Union representatives have been very supportive during this difficult period for employees. The Trade Unions have requested the inclusion of the following comments and concerns:
14. *No-one wants to see leisure centres closing particularly the unions and our members working within Leisure. The TU's understand the financial position the council has been in and continues to be in due to many years of cuts to funding from national government and the need to look to review services either to make them more sustainable or to make savings and we have worked constructively with the council during this time.*

*However, the length of time the leisure review is taking, and lack of any decision making is becoming intolerable, causing tremendous stress and anxiety for the staff who are still at risk and is also undermining any effort to ensure the service has a future after the review.*

- *We currently have 166 employees sitting with 188 letters (at risk of redundancy). They have had this hanging over their heads since October and these letters need to be withdrawn as a matter of urgency. It is inhumane to extend the acute anxiety for these council employees (people) unnecessarily. They desperately need this resolving.*
- *There are excellent employees sitting with 'at risk' letters that will look elsewhere for employment if this uncertainty and angst continues.*
- *We have employees on temporary contracts that cannot be made permanent whilst there are employees at risk of redundancy.*
- *There is currently not enough staff to effectively run the leisure centres. The closure of 2 sites would enable the service to fully staff the remaining centres and have a fully functioning leisure service. Only by having this provision can the council begin the process of looking for a suitable partner and offering an attractive and viable service to a partner. The current situation is running the service into the ground, and we are in danger of having no service left.*
- *Further delay will not protect jobs or the service, it actually threatens them.*

*Whilst we acknowledge that jointly we are in a very difficult and unpleasant situation we desperately need to end the anxiety and uncertainty for 166 employees promptly and jointly build a leisure service that is viable and delivers to the residents of Gateshead.*

### **Health Impact Assessment**

15. The initial comprehensive Health Impact Assessment that was undertaken has not changed and can be found at Appendix 8 of the [24<sup>th</sup> January 2023](#) Cabinet report.

### **Alternative Options**

16. A number of alternative options were included in the [24<sup>th</sup> January 2023](#) report, the latest round of consultation has produced a further 2100 respondents these have been carefully considered, however they have not produced any further suggested options.

### **Community Asset Transfers**

17. A huge amount of work has been undertaken and is still ongoing to explore whether or not the leisure centres could continue to operate by being transferred to community groups via a community asset transfer. The two sites considered are complicated and although the proposals are making substantial progress and starting to look achievable, implementing a community asset transfer requires sufficient time to ensure that it is sustainable. Work has progressed through:
- Fortnightly meetings between officers, Councillors and interested groups.
  - Provision of huge amounts of information and data including financial information, job profiles, plans, site information, council policy documentation, etc.

- A half day community asset transfer workshop with a number of service directors presenting on expectations and requirements of any organisation operating a leisure centre, and additional officers available for one-to-one discussions.
- The development of a community asset transfer readiness evaluation matrix to enable both organisations to track the progress that they are making and to understand what work is required prior to any transfer being undertaken.
- Meetings on specialist areas including finance, pool and plant operations and governance arrangements.

18. Progress to date on each of the sites is as follows:

Birtley Swimming Centre

19. Two swimming clubs, Gateshead and Whickham Swimming Club and Birtley Swimming Club have come together to develop a proposal to operate what would be known as Birtley Aquatics Centre under a community asset transfer. A high-level business plan has been developed and they are working towards the more detailed plans that will be required before the site could be operational under their control. The main focus of the work has been to develop a business case which demonstrates that Birtley Swim Centre can generate an operating surplus on a sustainable basis. The business case assumes that the Centre would reopen at the start of April 2024, following a three-month period during which:

- Staff would be recruited and trained
- Processes and systems would be implemented
- Operating expenditure would be incurred on marketing, recruitment and staff training
- Capital investment would be required on IT, pool and safety equipment and signage.

After reopening, the business case assumes that the income from swimming clubs and schools would commence immediately, and the income from public activities would ramp up over the first four months, reaching the level which will be sustained into 2025 and beyond by August 2024.

Dunston Leisure Centre

20. Gateshead and Whickham Swimming Club were keen to explore a community asset transfer of Dunston Leisure Centre when it was at risk of closure, however the report to Cabinet in January 2023 removed that risk. The club identified that through the potential closure of other pools, their allocated water time would be likely to reduce, and they began to explore the potential of a community asset transfer of Birtley Swimming Centre as this site would be easier for them to manage, operating as a swimming centre only. There is no further interest in a community asset transfer of Dunston Leisure Centre, and it will remain open and be included in the procurement of a service delivery partner.

Gateshead Leisure Centre

21. Gateshead Active was formed by local Councillors alongside local residents at the time they became aware of the potential closure of Gateshead Leisure Centre. The current board has



a wide range of experience, skills and backgrounds from events to engineering.

The group have worked with the Council officers and their consultants Social Enterprise Acumen in developing a strong and robust business, social and financial plan for the Centre. They are all excited about the future the centre can have. From re-opening the café and Clip and Climb to expanding the event program to make it a vibrant site full of activity that helps it become financially viable. The group is working alongside several funding partners, many of whom have already committed funding in principle.

The vision for the Centre means becoming more diverse and more open, expanding delivery including new services such as E-Sports. Encouraging more community activities in the Centre is hugely important to the group as expressed in their plan to have a Community Engagement Officer upon opening. Keeping the diverse range of users for the Centre is also key, ensuring culturally safe spaces where required and working with a wide range of partners and organisations to ensure equality at all levels of their organisation.

There is some way to go with the plans, however Gateshead Active firmly believe that they have a strong team and with continued work and collaboration with the Council's team they are sure they can complete a successful asset transfer in the coming months.

#### Maintaining and protecting the assets

22. If the two sites are to close as recommended consideration has been given to the level of decommissioning that should take place and how the buildings are maintained in preparation for potential Community Asset Transfers. The pools at both sites are the oldest out of all the centres, draining these pools can lead to problems and costly repairs (that could delay a transfer). It is proposed that the pools would continue to be treated, but not heated and filtered while the buildings are closed, and this would allow a quick reopening of the facilities once the transfers are ready. Consideration has also been given to security arrangements in order to protect both assets, preventing damage that could delay a transfer and opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

### **Other considerations**

#### Swimming pool access

23. Work has been undertaken to consider access to swimming pools if the closure of Birtley Swimming Centre and Gateshead Leisure Centre were to proceed as recommended. All schools have been surveyed to better understand their needs, preferred pool, and time slot. A working group of Head Teachers was established to look at the timetabling and different options on how lessons are delivered. Schools have stressed how important it is that they can meet their statutory obligations with regards to school swimming. All school swimming can be accommodated in the 3 remaining Council operated pools, although during school swimming lessons two pools may be closed to the public between the hours of 9.15am – 12 noon and 1.00pm - 3.15pm Monday to Friday, term time only. A pool timetable has been created to ensure that there will always be one pool available for public swimming within the Borough during school swimming times which was identified as important to communities from the public consultation. Pools are likely to be busier and there may be a reduction in swimming club allocated time, however continuing to operate 5 pools across the Borough is no longer affordable for the Council. The two

Community Asset Transfer groups have also engaged schools and offered to provide pool access and swimming lessons to schools when they take on the running of the sites. Meetings have also been held with groups who hire the pools to offer them time in the remaining centres. This includes groups with protected characteristics.

#### Sports hall access

24. Gateshead Leisure Centre has one of the largest sports halls in the Borough, matched only by the one in Gateshead International Stadium (which is also under review). Neither sports halls are fully utilised, but when in use, they are used by a range of groups for activities such as football, badminton and netball. Discussions are taking place with schools that have large sports halls to encourage them to increase their community access outside of school hours in order to fill any shortages in the short term, in the event of closure and until Gateshead Active are able to take over the site through a community asset transfer.

#### Procurement

25. Good progress on the Leisure Operating Contract is being made which is in line with the project plan. Further progress is dependent on the sites that will be part of the procurement being finalised. The work to date has included workshops with officers of the Council to develop the contract documentation which is due to be completed by the end of June 2023. Following the appointment of additional legal support (June 2023), the key tasks over July and August 2023 will be to (i) publish the procurement notice to prospective bidders with all the contract information, (ii) invite bidders to an open day, (iii) evaluate the pre-qualification, and (iv) select the shortlist of bidders for the next stage. There are no risks at this stage that would change target date of June 2024 for the commencement of the new operating contract.

### **Summary of recommendations**

26. Despite the impact to users as set out in the Leisure Review Consultation Report, it is recommended that the Council proceeds with the closure of Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre on 21st July 2023 and continues to explore potential Community Asset Transfers with community organisations that have identified an interest in Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre for a further 6-month period to 31 December 2023, however this should not prevent or delay the closure of Gateshead Leisure Centre or Birtley Swimming Centre.

### **Implications of Recommended Options**

The implications of progressing with recommended options are as follows:

#### **Resources:**

27. Financial implications – The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, confirms that the recommendation will allow the Council to meet the remaining undelivered savings of £0.600m and assist in enabling the service to operate within its allocated budget, thereby helping the Council to sustain a leisure offer.

28. There will be costs associated with decommissioning, holding, and recommissioning the buildings when they close and before they transfer to the community organisations. It is estimated that the holding costs would be in the region of around £14,000 per month. One off costs for boarding and fencing of the buildings could total around £50k.
29. Human Resources implications - If the recommendations are approved, this will allow for the Section 188 At Risk of redundancy letters to be withdrawn from the 166 employees across the service.
30. The service have appointed to vacancies on a temporary basis, which has allowed for greater flexibility to redeploy staff across the remaining facilities, this has ensured that no compulsory redundancies will be made as an outcome of the proposals. A huge amount of employee consultation has been undertaken with employees across all Leisure facilities (including Gateshead International Stadium) as leisure employees hold a contract that enables them to work from any Gateshead Leisure facility. The consultation has included:
- The proposed new service offer and ways of working
  - Opening times of the remaining Council operated facilities
  - A revised structure
  - New rotas
  - Revised job profiles
  - Where the proposed new rota results in a permanent loss of earnings (i.e. an employee has been asked to work fewer hours) a one-off compensatory payment will be paid in line with the Council Compensatory Payment Calculator
31. Alongside their permanent contracts of employment, all staff, regardless of where they work will be given the opportunity to hold a casual contract to work additional hours at all remaining Gateshead operated sites including Gateshead International Stadium and Birtley Leisure Centre
32. As there are different review paths the proposals and staffing implications per facility are as follows (should the recommendations be approved):

#### **Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swim Centre**

Staff would work their last shift within these facilities on 21 July 2023. From 22 July 2023 staff would be redeployed to the remaining council operated facilities. Discussions with staff currently based at these facilities have already commenced to discuss proposed working/contractual arrangements with effect from 22 July 2023 and consider their personal circumstances.

#### **Blaydon, Dunston and Heworth Leisure Centres (remaining Council operated facilities)**

From 22 July 2023, new extended opening times and staffing rotas would be implemented across the 3 remaining facilities. All employees would be issued with a peripatetic employment contract/job profile which would allow them to work flexibly across the remaining Council operated facilities. Employees transferring from sites recommended for closure would begin to work from the remaining Council operated sites.

### **Gateshead International Stadium – subject to a separate review**

Employees currently working at Gateshead International Stadium have been included in the consultation with all Leisure employees in conjunction with the lead officer for the Gateshead International Stadium review as they currently hold a contract of employment enabling them to work at any leisure facility (including Gateshead International Stadium). Employees have been offered the opportunity to remain at Gateshead International Stadium and be issued with an employment contract with the work base of Gateshead International Stadium only or transfer to work peripatetically across the 3 remaining Council operated facilities from 22 July 2023.

### **Birtley Leisure Centre – contract in place with Competition Line UK until 2027/28**

Birtley Leisure Centre is already managed through a contractual arrangement with Competition Line UK until 2027/28, however within this contract, the Council are required to provide the employees. In line with the other facilities, meetings have been held with staff. Employees have been offered the opportunity to remain at Birtley Leisure Centre and be issued with an employment contract with the work base of Birtley Leisure Centre only or transfer to work peripatetically across the 3 remaining Council operated facilities from 22 July 2023.

33. Property implications – The recommended option will lead to the short-term closure of 2 leisure centres whilst further work is undertaken to secure suitable community asset transfers for Gateshead Leisure Centre and Birtley Swimming Centre.

### **Risk management implications**

34. The risk management implications are being managed as part of the overall project management, to continue with the current delivery model leaves the Council exposed to the risk of having to continue to fund the Service, with an estimated £4.3m funding requirement forecast which is likely to increase further with the growing impact of inflation, rising energy costs and possible reduction in income due to the cost-of-living crisis.

### **Equality and diversity implications**

35. There is evidence that the leisure service is used by specific protected groups, including young people, older residents, and residents with disabilities.
36. Any change in current leisure service delivery including the closure of some leisure centres may have an impact on equality and diversity. An Integrated Impact Assessment looking at the proposed closure of each specific local leisure centre has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 2. The impact assessments have been reviewed and updated following the second phase of consultation.
37. The consultation response analysis is set out in the following documents:

- a. updated [Leisure Review Consultation](#) Report which includes responses to the February to May 2023 consultation.
- b. the Report from Launchpad Research (appendix 3 of the [January 2023](#) Leisure Review report)

This has helped the Council to define and understand the impact of closure on service users with protected characteristics and to consider our statutory requirements relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

38. The impact of new service delivery models (such as pool timetabling / activity timetables) on people with protected characteristics, if closure of the 2 leisure centres is agreed, will be reviewed in an integrated impact assessment prior to the new service commencing in July 2023.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

39. Some of the leisure centres already attract anti-social behaviour and vandalism and the short-term closure of 2 of the buildings may increase the opportunities for crime and disorder at these buildings when they are vacated. The Council will take steps to try to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour and vandalism and to protect the buildings during their closure.

### **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications**

40. A Sustainability Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the two sites recommended for closure and was attached at [Appendix 7](#) in the January 2023 Leisure Review report. There has been minimal change to the Sustainability Impact Assessment and the latest version is available upon request.

### **Health implications**

41. The closure of any leisure centres will have a negative health impact as evidenced by a large number of responders to the consultation process who informed us that the biggest impact would be to their physical and mental health. A health impact assessment has been undertaken and was attached at [Appendix 8](#) in the January 2023 Leisure Review report. There has been no change to the health impact assessment.

### **Human Rights implications**

42. There are no human rights implications resulting from the recommendations in the report.

### **Ward implications**

43. Whilst it is acknowledged that the closure of any leisure centres may have an impact on residents from any ward as they may use any leisure centre, and all leisure centres will be impacted to a greater or lesser degree; there is a more direct impact on the wards

where the leisure centres that are recommended for closure are located, namely Saltwell Ward (and surrounding wards) where Gateshead Leisure Centre is located and Birtley Ward (and surrounding wards), where Birtley Swimming Centre is located.

### **Background Information – key documents**

- [The Consultation Report May 2023](#)
- Report to Cabinet on [24<sup>th</sup> January 2023](#)
- Report to Cabinet on [25 October 2022](#)
- Report to Cabinet on [25 January 2022](#)
- Report to Cabinet on [24 February 2015](#)
- [The Council's Indoor Built Facilities Strategy](#)
- [The Council's Physical Activity Strategy](#)
- [Making Spaces for Growing Places](#)
- [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#)