

**COMMUNITIES, LEISURE AND
ARTS POLICY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

9 JANUARY 2024

**Reference from Council – Notice of Motion – Maidstone
Leisure Centre**

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee	9 January 2024

Wards Affected	All Wards
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Executive Summary

At the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023, a motion relating to Maidstone Leisure Centre was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor Coates.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.9.3, at the conclusion of the debate, there being no proposal to refer the matter directly to the Cabinet, the Mayor referred the motion to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee.

**This reference makes the following recommendation to the Communities,
Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee:**

That consideration be given to the motion relating to Maidstone Leisure Centre with a view to making a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts.

Reference from Council – Notice of Motion – Maidstone Leisure Centre

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 At the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023, the following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor Coates:

At the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee held on 5 March 2019 (minute 146) a report was presented on the Future of Sports and Leisure Provision. This was the start of an active process to look at future options for the Maidstone Leisure Centre in Mote Park. This work was conducted with support from the National Sports Council. Over 2019 into early 2021, it became clear that the options were a major refurbishment or a new build for the leisure centre to have a long-term future. During 2021 site visits were undertaken to other new leisure centres and a consensus was developing towards the need for a new building. Since the move to a Cabinet structure in May 2022 the process has slowed or stopped. There is no clarity now on the way forward and the current management contract is coming to an end with no proposals for the future of the Leisure Centre.

In the 2022/23 budget an additional provision of £1m a year was put into the budget to reflect the aging building and its increasing costs with a view that by 2029/30 there would either have been a major refurbishment of the building, parts of which date to the 1970's or a full rebuild. Despite this issue and a request for an update, there are no proposals for the continuation of a leisure centre into the middle of the century.

In February 2023 the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee received a report on the impact to the Council of the long-term revenue costs of the Leisure Centre, including doing nothing, refurbishment and new build. In revenue terms if there is no refurbishment to the Centre and it remains largely as now the yearly costs to the Council by 2039/40 will be around £2.3/2.4m and increasing yearly, whilst a new build would only cost £0.5m (and reducing yearly), saving £1.8/1.9m every year.

At that meeting it was stated that to do anything would be too costly to the Council, and that there was no provision in the capital programme. All that was agreed was for a minor scheme to improve circulation space and energy efficiency to be implemented next year.

That was 9 months ago, the problem will not go away by simply ignoring it. What we are asking for is that this issue be taken forward by the Council and a full progress report to agree a timetable on the process to when a final decision and either a full refurbishment or new build is proceeded with is submitted to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee.

It is therefore proposed that:

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts provide a full progress report on the options to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee, no later than its meeting in February 2024, including agreeing a timetable on the process and a key decision-making timeline as to when a final decision is required to ensure that either a full refurbishment or new build is completed by 2031.

- 1.2 In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.9.3, at the conclusion of the debate, there being no proposal to refer the matter directly to the Cabinet, the Mayor referred the motion to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND WHY NOT RECOMMENDED

Not applicable.

3. REPORT APPENDICES

A copy of the Briefing Note which was prepared to assist Members in their consideration of the motion is attached as Appendix A.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 29 November 2023.