

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

26 April 2022



**Subject:** Handsworth Wellbeing Centre (WBC) Roof Repairs  
**Report of:** Rob James, Managing Director City Operations  
**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Councillor Ian Ward, The Leader  
Councillor Tristan Chatfield Finance and Resources  
**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Councillor Mick Brown, Health & Social Care  
Councillor Mohammed Aikhlaq, Resources  
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Are specific wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Handsworth		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :		

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The large swimming pool at Handsworth Wellbeing Centre (WBC) was closed to the public in Autumn 2021 following storm damage which exacerbated existing damage to the roof above the main swimming pool, presenting an immediate health and safety risk. This report seeks approval to funding the necessary repairs at a one-off cost of £0.386m, including fees and contingency, from Corporate Capital Contingency.

- 1.2 It may make sense to extend the project to include applying a waterproof covering the remainder of the roof to avoid further potential repair costs at a later date, at an additional cost of £0.129m. This will require a professional evaluation and in order not to delay the start of work on site and the re-opening of the swimming pool any longer than is necessary, Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to the Managing Director City Operations to explore if extending the project in this way would be cost effective and, if so, the authority to order the additional work.
- 1.3 A Full Business Case is attached at Appendix 1, along with an Options Appraisal at Appendix 1 A.

## **2 Recommendations**

That Cabinet :

- 2.1 Approves a programme of repairs to the Handsworth WBC swimming pool roof at a cost of £0.386m to be funded from the Corporate Capital Contingency budget, and a potential extension of the project to include applying a waterproof covering to the remainder of the roof at a further cost of £0.129m, also funded from the Corporate Capital Contingency budget, if a cost benefit analysis supports it.
- 2.2 Authorises the Director of Council Management to set aside a capital sum of £0.386m from Corporate Capital Contingency to fund the repairs, with a potential further £0.129m to extend the project if a cost benefit analysis supports it.
- 2.3 Delegates to the Managing Director City Operations the authority to extend the project to include weatherproofing the entire roof at an additional cost of £0.129m if it can be demonstrated that this represents value for money for the Council.
- 2.5 Authorises the Acting City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer to negotiate, execute and complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Handsworth WBC is a large purpose-built leisure centre dating to the 1970's located off Holly Road within the footprint of Handsworth Park. Parts of the roof above the swimming pool area had begun to deteriorate and the service was in the process of exploring potential remedies when adverse weather caused one of the roof panels to slip from its fixings presenting an immediate health and safety issue, resulting in the pool being closed to the public in November 2021.
- 3.2 Owing to the immediate Health and Safety risks and the loss of a public amenity the project has moved straight to Full Business Case supported by an Options Appraisal.

- 3.3 The Centre incorporates a large swimming pool, a smaller children's/learner pool, gyms, sports hall, steam and sauna room, dance studio, an adjacent play centre, and a function/conference room. The Centre is a major hub for people within the local community and provides a wide range of activities, including gym, swimming, aqua aerobics, badminton, club sports and group fitness classes.
- 3.4 The Centre is located in Handsworth Ward which records some of the highest levels of deprivation in the country (top 10% IMD) and where residents experience the poorest health outcomes. The 2019 profile of Perry Barr shows male life expectancy is 5.5 years less than the national average, and 2.1 years less for women. The customer base reflects the surrounding locality with most customers living within 1 mile of the Centre, and 90% being from BAME groups.
- 3.5 Covid19 highlighted existing health inequalities in communities such as this and the importance of having opportunities to maintain physical and mental wellbeing is critical to community recovery post pandemic.
- 3.6 The project seeks to repair the roof above the large swimming pool at Handsworth WBC to:
- protect a Council asset from deterioration and, potentially, escalating repair costs;
  - allow the local community and local schools to continue to access the social and health benefits of regular swimming; and
  - improve the customer experience.
- 3.7 The cost of the work can be accommodated within the Corporate Capital Contingency budget.
- 3.8 The large swimming pool is currently closed to the public and the availability of other facilities may be affected during the work to the roof which it is estimated will take up to 18 weeks.

#### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal (Option 2)**

A full options appraisal has been appended to the report (Appendix 1 A).

##### **4.1 Option 1 – Replace Like for Like Panels**

Complete the programme of roof repairs removing the translucent roof light damaged panels and **replacing them with like for like panels** and apply waterproof coating to damaged areas at a cost of £0.317m, including fees and contingency.

##### **4.2 Option 2 – Replace with Rigid Steel Panels**

Complete the programme of roof repairs removing the translucent roof light damaged panels and **replacing them with rigid steel profile panels** matching

the rest of the roof and apply waterproof coating to the damaged areas at a cost of £0.342, including fees and contingency.

#### 4.3 **Option 3 – Replace with Rigid Steel Panels and Upgrade Internal Lighting** **(Recommended Option)**

Complete the programme of roof repairs removing the translucent roof light damaged panels and replacing them with rigid steel profile panels matching the rest of the roof, apply waterproof coating to the damaged areas, **and upgrade the internal lighting to LED** at a cost of £0.386m, including fees and contingency.

#### 4.4 **Option 4 – Replace with Rigid Steel Panels, Upgrade Internal Lighting and Waterproof Entire Roof (Recommended if demonstrated to be cost effective)**

Complete the programme of roof repairs removing the translucent roof light damaged panels and replacing them with rigid steel profile panels matching the rest of the roof, **apply waterproof coating to the entire roof**, and upgrade the internal lighting to LED at a cost of £0.515m, including fees and contingency. **This option will be explored further to establish if the additional expenditure offers better value by protecting the remainder of the roof and thus avoiding potential future repair cost.**

#### 4.5 **Option 5 – Do Nothing**

Pending repairs being completed the swimming pool cannot be re-opened to the public. To do nothing would allow a BCC asset to fall into disrepair, deprive a local community of access to a valued facility that supports their physical, social and emotional wellbeing, and potentially cause reputational and financial damage to the Council.

### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Ward Councillor for Handsworth has been consulted and is fully supportive of the work being undertaken to bring the swimming pool back into operation.
- 5.2 The local community has previously indicated through Ward Forums, petitions and correspondence their enthusiastic support for the Centre, and on-going enquiries from customers suggest there is a strong desire to see the pool re-opened as soon as possible.
- 5.3 The FBC was presented to Capital Board on 04.03,22 and Option 3 was supported with the caveat that Option 4 should be explore further and adopted if the expenditure could be justified by avoided future repair costs if the work was not done.

## **6 Risk Management**

A risk register is included in the FBC (Appendix 1). The main risks identified are :

- 6.1 The health and safety risks are primarily those related to undertaking construction work at height and will be mitigated by the contractor's compliance to their own health and safety policies and safe working practices. The pool is already closed to the public because of the risk presented by roof panels which have slipped from their position.
- 6.2 Contingency sums have been included in the cost of the project to mitigate any unforeseen additional costs in respect of the physical works and to reflect the current level of cost inflation in the building industry.

## **7 Compliance Issues:**

### **7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

The proposal supports the Birmingham City Council Plan 2018-2022 (as updated in 2019) by contributing to the Council's Key Priorities, specifically :

#### **7.1.1 Outcome 2 Birmingham is an aspirational city to grow up in :**

Learning to swim is a key target within the schools' curriculum and the Centre offers access to school swimming lessons, normally accommodating 21 local primary and secondary schools, averaging nearly 2,000 lessons annually, for an estimated 60,000 children; in addition to free swimming for all under 18's.

#### **7.1.2 Priority 3 Birmingham is a fulfilling city to age well in;**

The Centre also delivers the Be Active Plus initiative whereby GP refer clients with long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and depression for one to one support to enable people to manage their chronic conditions better, and improve or even relieve their symptoms altogether.

#### **7.1.3 Outcome 5 Birmingham residents gain the maximum benefit from hosting the Commonwealth Games :**

##### **Priority 2 We will encourage citizens of all abilities and ages to engage in physical activity and improve their health and wellbeing**

The swimming pool provides local residents with the opportunity to gain the social, physical and mental health benefits of physical exercise. The Be Active programme offers free access to facilities and classes for local residents from 09.00 until 17.00 on weekdays and at specified times at weekends. The programme, along with other externally delivered schemes on site, targets those sections of the community who are traditionally least physically active with a view to supporting their social, mental, and physical wellbeing through exercise and group activities. In the 12 months pre Covid, the Centre recorded almost 49,000

individual attendances to the pool for swimming, aquacise and lessons for adults, in addition to those attending Swimming and Water Polo clubs.

- 7.1.4** The proposal also supports the **Property Strategy 2018/19 – 2023/24** by putting forward a solution whereby a Council asset is maintained, and an operational property is re-opened to the public.

## **7.2 Legal Implications**

- 7.2.1** Under S.2 Local Government Act 2000 the Council is empowered to do anything which it considers is likely to further the social wellbeing of its area. Repairing the roof to allow the swimming pool to re-open to the local community and local schools will further the wellbeing of local residents.

## **7.3 Financial Implications**

The project will be funded through the Corporate Capital Contingency budget at a cost of £0.386m, with a potential further £0.129m from the same budget, if the expenditure can be justified against avoided future repair costs.

## **7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)**

There are no procurement implications with the recommendations of this report. The procurement strategy for the works to undertake a further competition exercise using Acivico Ltd's Constructing West Midlands Building Fabric Framework Agreement was approved in the Planned Procurement Activities report to Cabinet dated 22 March 2022.

## **7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)**

There are no direct human resource implications.

## **7.5 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 7.5.1** An initial impact assessment has been completed EQUA848

**7.5.2** The Wellbeing Centre is located in an area of the City where the population and the clientele, is predominantly of BAME origin and thus owns protected characteristics relating to race. Over 83% of users are of Asian/British Asian, Black or Mixed/Other ethnic groups, compared to 42% for Birmingham as a whole, therefore should the work not proceed people of BAME origin would be disproportionately adversely affected by loss of access to the facility.

**7.5.3** The Centre supports local schools to deliver the national curriculum requirement relating to swimming proficiency. When open the facility accommodates 21 local primary and secondary schools with an estimated 60,000 attendances by school children annually. Together with the free swimming offered to all under 16's in Council funded facilities via the Be Active scheme there would be a disproportionate adverse impact on younger citizens if the pool were not re-opened.

7.5.4 There would be no adverse impact on individuals with protected characteristics should the work to repair the roof and re-open the facility proceed, as recommended.

## **8 Background Documents**

8.1 None

### **List of appendices accompanying this report:**

Appendix 1 Full Business Case

Appendix 1 A Options Appraisal

Appendix 2 Consultation Matrix

Appendix 3 Environmental & Sustainability Assessment