

TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
15 FEBRUARY 2017

EDGBARROW AND SANDHURST SPORTS CENTRES – EMPLOYMENT IMPLICATIONS
(Director of Environment, Culture and Communities)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To consider the proposed redundancies arising from the change of usage of Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centres beyond April 2017.
- 1.2. It is brought to the Employment Committee to seek their views on the staffing implications arising from the closure of both sports centres.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That approval is given to the deletion of the posts identified in Exempt Appendix B with effect from 31 March 2017.
- 2.2. That, subject to any redeployment opportunities offered to those affected, the post holders are declared redundant in accordance with the terms set out in the Exempt Appendix B with the costs being met from the Structural Changes Fund.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. The closure of Edgbarrow and Sandhurst sports centres (as public pay-as-you-go facilities) in March 2017 will mean that all permanent staff currently employed will be made redundant.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. One of the options considered was for the schools to effectively take over the current operation of the sports centres and adopt the current staffing structure. However, that option was not considered suitable to the forward planning of either school.

5. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1. Community access at Edgbarrow and Sandhurst sports centres is currently delivered by the Leisure Services section within Environment, Culture and Communities. The existing arrangements for the provision of community access are intended to remain in place until 31st March 2017.
- 5.2. As a result of the growing pressures for teaching space at Edgbarrow school all daytime, term time access to the sports facilities ceased as of 5th September 2016. In addition, Edgbarrow School has commenced a project to re-develop the two squash courts in to an alternative teaching space. There have been no service changes at Sandhurst Secondary School. The loss of all daytime access at Edgbarrow coupled with the revenue costs associated with managing both sports centres and the relative uncertainty of the future partnership between Leisure Services and the schools focused minds on the future operation of both sports centres.

- 5.3. Discussions between Leisure Services and both schools regarding the future arrangements for community provision beyond April 2017 resulted in two realistic management options being identified.

Option one: Leisure Services to continue to deliver community access at both leisure centres. Under this scenario Leisure would continue to staff both facilities and provide community access on weekday evenings (term-time), weekends and during school holidays.

Option two: the schools to manage community access themselves. In practice this would mean the removal of fully staffed leisure facilities and a move towards groups hiring facilities for their own purposes via a direct booking arrangement with either school.

The net cost of operating the two centres is £179,000 per annum (excluding recharges, pension costs and capital charges). Were the Council to cease running the centres this sum would be realised as a revenue saving.

- 5.4. The Council had recognised early in the deliberation process that any decision regarding the future operation of Edgbarrow and Sandhurst sports centres would have an impact on the staff. The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities and his management team undertook regular communications with the staff throughout the process, this included staff briefings to which the relevant Trade Union was invited. In addition FAQs were produced and distributed to staff who were also notified that a dedicated HR Adviser was on hand to support them with any queries they may have.
- 5.5. The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities was also focussed on maintaining business levels and ensuring that sufficient staff would remain in employment until the point the facilities potentially closed down. As a result, permanent staff were told that a 10% loyalty payment (on basic pay and overtime earned during the period 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2017) would be paid to them if they remained in employment up to closure date.
- 5.6. Given the anticipated differences that option two necessitated (the schools managing community access), Leisure Services and the Schools undertook public consultation regarding the future delivery models for both sports centres. Consultation questionnaires were duly made available for the period from 1st August to 30th September 2016. Unsurprisingly the responses indicated overwhelming public support (79.5%) for current arrangements (option one) to continue. However, given the tough financial decisions facing the Council and a general willingness from both schools to take full management control of their sites the Executive approved the transfer of ownership of the facilities from Leisure Services back to the schools at their meeting on 15 November 2016. In keeping with the Council's Organisational Change Protocol the existing permanent staff team members were put at risk of redundancy as per the timetable set out in Appendix A.
- 5.7. The number of staff being proposed for redundancy totals five; four full time and one part time employee. No appeals were lodged against their "at Risk" status. Consistent with the Council's Organisational Change Protocol, where possible, staff will be offered re-deployment where available. Staff have also been offered support with training, CV writing, interview skills and finding alternative employment.
- 5.8. The sensitive management of the workforce has been paramount throughout this process and support from ECC HR has helped deliver us to this point. The

Employment Committee are now asked to approve the redundancy packages for the affected staff (as set out in exempt Appendix B) subject to no redeployment opportunities being sought for those involved.

6. ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The legal criteria rendering the posts redundant under the Employment Rights Act 1996 has been established due to the closure of the pay as you play operation at both establishments. The Council is following its procedures for managing staff reductions including consideration of alternative employment via its redeployment procedure.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The costs associated with the proposed redundancies are set out in Exempt Appendix B. These represent the worst case scenario. The actual cost is likely to be less but will depend upon the successful redeployment of some staff currently at risk. The redundancy costs will be met from the Cost of Structural Change Reserve.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 As attached at Appendix C.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The Director, Environment Culture and Communities recognised that maintaining the current operation leading up to the facility closures was key in terms of the Council being seen to deliver consistent community access. The decision to offer existing staff a loyalty bonus payment should they remain in post until 31st March 2017 reflects this.

Chief Officer: Human Resources

- 6.5 Throughout the process ECC HR has supported employees and liaised closely with Unison. The support to employees will continue up to 31 March 2017.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1. Principal Groups Consulted

Edgbarrow & Sandhurst Sports Centres Joint Management Committee

Environment Culture and Communities Department Management Team

Corporate Management Team

Council Executive

Staff and the Trade Unions

7.2. Method of Consultation

Reports from the Director ECC to the groups identified above.

Unrestricted

The Director of Environment, Culture and Communities held three staff briefings for all staff based at Edgbarrow and Sandhurst.

Permanent Edgbarrow and Sandhurst staff were issued with “at Risk” letters explaining their situation on Monday 21st November 2016.

Representations Received

None received.

Detailed Background Papers

Executive 15th November 2016 – Future Community Access at Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centres

Contact for further information

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APPENDIX A

Edgbarrow & Sandhurst Sports Centres

8. Redundancy Process and timescale:

- 8.1 Where posts are designated as “At Risk”, the following process will be followed. Please note that employees can appeal on two grounds (a) against the decisions to put them “At Risk” and (b) the selection for redundancy:

“At Risk” letters issued	21 November 2016
* Appeals against “At Risk” status lodged by	28 November 2016
* Appeals against “At Risk” status heard	5 December 2016
Employment Committee	15 February 2017
Formal notification of redundancy issued, if applicable	16 February 2017
Last day Employment	31 March 2017