

Cleator Moor Leisure Centre – Facility Mix Rational September 2024

Town Deal Funding

In 2020 Copeland Borough Council had the opportunity to secure £22m Town Deal Funding for Cleator Moor. A Town Deal board was established who was responsible for developing a programme of projects to be funded through the opportunity. The board comprises of various representative of the Cleator Moor community who have a deep understanding of the towns investment requirements and needs. A flagship project for Cleator Moor was a new leisure facility to replace the current facility offering indoor bowls and a small fitness suite. A business case for the programme of projects was submitted to central government and Town Deal funding was secured in summer 2021.

Cleator Moor Leisure Facility

The current leisure facility is managed by leisure operator GLL and requires an annual subsidy from the Council to maintain its operation. This is required as the income generated does not cover the cost of running the facility. The facility is predominately used for indoor bowls, where an ongoing trend of user numbers have reduced over time. Indoor bowls is utilised in the winter for offseason play where users would travel to the facility to play bowls. To increase participation, revenue and provide an extended offer to the residents of Cleator Moor GLL installed a small 20 station fitness suite within the building. The current facility is still predominantly used for bowls and their community, Other activities including the fitness suite has less use, which is likely due to the quality of the fitness offer and the facility being perceived as a bowls hall. The facility has even less use in the summer season where bowls is predominately played outdoors.

The Town Deal board were tasked to develop a new, economically sustainable facility that would increase participation in a wider range of sport, target a wider demographic and reduce the ongoing subsidy burden for few health outputs. It was likely that without intervention the facility would not be sustainable over the future years and could result in closure.

The project Healthy Town was established to allocate much needed investment in physical activity facilities for the local community, to address the lack of physical activity, address deprivation and improve public health outcomes of the whole town's population not just one specific group or sport.

Cleator Moor Leisure Redevelopment

A dedicated project team was established which included a specialist Leisure Consultant, Strategic Leisure Limited. Their role was to undertake facilities need assessment for Cleator Moor and advise on the facility mix following extensive consultation with the community. The findings of this study were;

- Bowls – In 2021 when consultation was conducted there were approximately 150 bowlers that were using the facility. The number of bowlers that use the facility

have diminished over time, with reports of 300 member in 2001. Currently there are 93 members and 45 none member/casual users that use the bowls hall. Most of the members travel from within a 11-mile radius from towns such as Workington, Seascale, Egremont and Whitehaven, while none member players travel 10+ miles from locations such as Cockermouth and Seaton for example.

- Within the Copeland area there was sufficient supply of sports hall courts, but this was reliant on users driving to facilities, with the nearest offer in Whitehaven. For users without access to a car a locally accessible facility was essential.
- Sports hall use in Cleator Moor will be focused on community level sport and a provide a flexible space to accommodate a wide range of activities.
- The wider community that didn't currently use the facility expressed that the centre does not meet the needs of the community, there were lack of facilities, variety of sport and the facilities are outdated.

Options Appraisal

When developing the project facility mix with feedback from the community it was determined that a flexible spaces for wide variety of community level sport was required. The options needed to be appraised against capital and revenue cost estimates. The team appraised various options including;

- Option 1 - Retaining 3 bowls rinks and converting 2 rinks into two badminton courts, extension to accommodate COSC, Studio, Fitness and changing. (this option didn't work as the courts would be located at the lowest roof point instead of the current design where the net is located at the apex).
- Option 2 - Retaining the bowls and building an extension to accommodate two court hall, COSC, Studio, fitness and changing
- Option 3 - Retaining the bowls and building an extension to accommodate four court hall, COSC, Studio, fitness and changing
- Option 4 - New build – 4 court sports hall, COSC, Fitness, Studio and changing
- Option 5 - Remodel existing building to accommodate COSC, fitness, studio and changing and building a two court hall
- Option 6 – Remodel existing bowls hall into a four court hall, COSC and provide an extension to accommodate fitness, studio and changing.

All options were appraised against its activity outputs, estimated capital and revenue costs. Unfortunately, no option that retained an element of competition standard bowls were affordable in both capital and revenue projections. Whilst a new build provided the best solution in terms of revenue it was unaffordable from a capital perspective. The next best solution was option 6, the current proposed redevelopment of the facility. This facility has been developed in detail and presented to the community in pre-planning consultations in 2022 and 2023.

Sports Hall

Once redeveloped the Community Level Sports Hall that is planned to replace the indoor bowls rink will accommodate a range of different community level sports and

activities. The specific activity mix will be dependent upon the operator (currently GLL) but could include:

- Badminton
- Indoor bowls using long mats (3x 32m length mats which are 4m in width)
- Indoor football (5 aside).
- Indoor cricket.
- Gymnastics
- Basketball
- Netball.
- Martial Arts
- Group exercise
- Soft play

The space is designed to be as flexible as possible, with the ability to subdivide the hall with netting to maximise the flexibility and use of the space.

Working with the operator, Cumberland Council will explore opportunities for a range of different sports and physical activities to cater for the needs of the local community.

Bowls in the new facility

Below are indicative images of the carpet bowls system that will be available in the new facility.





- Rolled carpet - 4m width to client specified length.
- Omni-directional having no conventional pile
- Set up and store by building operator when activity programmed
- Ends secured down with fenders similar to those used in short matt.



Decision Making

Records of the Town Fund Documents and Minutes since 2020 to present day can be found here <https://www.copeland.gov.uk/towns-fund-cleator-moor>

Overview of decision making Copeland re. Town Deals:

1. Accelerated Funding and Town Deal Boards: Executive August 2020 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
2. Accelerated Funding and Town Deal Board appointments: Full Council Sept 2020 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
3. Cleator Moor and Millom Town Investment Plans: Executive January 2021 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
4. Town Deal Heads of Terms for Cleator Moor and Millom: Full Council June 2021 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
5. SL funding for Cleator Moor and Millom Town Deal Business Case development: Executive September 2021 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
6. LAF for Cleator Moor and Millom Town Deals: Executive December 2021 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
7. Project confirmation for Cleator Moor and Millom Town Deals: Full Council December 2021 [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
8. Business Case Summary Document submission and assurance for Cleator Moor Town Deal: Executive June 2022: [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
9. Business Case summaries and Town Deal match funding for Cleator Moor Town Deal: Full Council June 2022: [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
10. Business Case Summary Document submission and assurance for Millom Town Deal: Executive July 2022: [Minutes Template \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)