

Report To: Education and Communities Committee **Date:** 4 November 2014

Report By: Corporate Director Education,
Communities and Organisational
Development **Report No:**
EDUCOM/87/14/JA

Contact Officer: John Arthur **Contact No:** 01475 714263

Subject: Ravenscraig Sports Barn - Community Consultation

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the results of the Community Consultation on the future use of Ravenscraig Sports Barn.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the Inverclyde Council meeting of 20 February, 2014 as part of the process setting the budget for 2014/16, officers were instructed to keep Ravenscraig Sports Barn open, pending a business plan from Inverclyde Leisure for the future use of the facility and further consultation with the local community. One off costs of £600,000 were agreed to support any further development, which included an allowance of £62,000 to meet the running costs of the facility for 2014/15, with any ongoing revenue costs from 2015/16 being met for the Pressure Contingency.
- 2.2 Inverclyde Leisure commissioned a feasibility study into the options for development of Ravenscraig Sports Barn, which was concluded in March 2014. The feasibility study presented a strong case for the development of a 'value' fitness gym and 'Vertigo/ Clip and Climb' and adventure play/ urban gym facility in Inverclyde, to meet local needs, fill gaps in local leisure provision and attract visitors from the wider West of Scotland area (typically with 30 minutes' drive).
- 2.3 On the basis of the feasibility study proposal, Inverclyde Leisure commissioned a community consultation on the proposals. The survey included 300 interviews of residents in the local area and a separate online survey of current users of the facility.
- 2.4 The main findings of the residents' survey are: 83% would like to see Ravenscraig undergo refurbishment, 65% wanted improved facilities at the centre and 63% wanted a better range of facilities and equipment. Of those wanting more than one area refurbished, 61% would like to see an affordable gym, 57% would like to see a soft play area and 48% would like to see a vertical climbing facility. Only 9% of residents surveyed were current users of the facility.
- 2.5 The main findings of the users' survey are 67% would like a new affordable fitness gym, 56% would like a soft play area, 64% would like a vertical fun climbing wall, 36% would like to see a café, and 68% would like to see a multifunction dance studio.
- 2.6 Inverclyde Leisure propose to joint fund the capital required for the development of this facility with the Council, estimated at £1.2 million on the basis that the facility will be self-sustaining and require no revenue support from the Council on completion.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That members:-
- 1) Note the results of the community consultation for the future development of Ravenscraig Sports Barn,
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, to progress the project in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure and bring a final report to the Committee in due course.

John Arthur
Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Ravenscraig Sports Barn is in need of significant investment to ensure its compliance with basic modern standards and provide a facility fit for future use. The facility has also suffered year on year reductions in use and has been running at an operating loss for some time.
- 4.2 As a result, Inverclyde Leisure and Council officers suggested the closure of the facility as part of the budget process for 2014/16. In considering this option, members required officers to bring forward alternative proposals for the continued provision of the facility, and to consult the local community on its future use.
- 4.3 Inverclyde Leisure commissioned a feasibility study, concluded in March 2014, into the sustainable uses of the facility, which concluded that an extension of the fitness gym and the provision of a fun vertical climbing/ indoor adventure facility would meet local demand, extend the range of fitness and activity options available in Inverclyde and provide a potential to attract visitors from outside Inverclyde to the facility.
- 4.4 On the basis of that proposal, Inverclyde Leisure also commissioned a community survey of residents and current users of the facilities, the main findings of which were as follows:-

Residents' survey

- 83 % of those surveyed would like to see Ravenscraig undergo refurbishment
- 65 % wanted improved facilities
- 63 % wanted a better range facilities and equipment

Out of those surveyed wanting more than one area refurbished:

- 61 % would like to see a new affordable gym
- 57 % new soft play and
- 48 % vertical climbing
- Price perception for vertical climb and soft play was split 60% from £5 with a further 32% stating £5-£8.

Only 9% of residents were current users of the facility

Users' survey

- Most of the respondents lived in Greenock and Gourock (85%)
- The majority are currently Gym and Fitness Class users
- The two most popular options for development were the multi-functional dance area at 68% whilst 67% stated that they would be interested in using a "budget" type gym (around £25 per month for unlimited use)
- 56% stated that they would be interested in using a soft play area
- 64% stated that they would be interested in using a vertical fun climbing area
- Price perception for the new climbing centre per hour was split evenly between £5-£6 and £7-£8

- 4.5 Officer from Inverclyde Leisure presented the proposals for the development of the facility, together with the results of the residents' and users' surveys to a meeting of the Larkfield, Branchton and Braeside Community Council and received unanimous support from those present.
- 4.6 The Chief Executive of Inverclyde Leisure has met with the owners of a soft play facility to discuss the proposal and is confident that there will be no adverse effect on this business, on the grounds that the proposed facilities are sufficiently different from the current private sector business, and, importantly, the price point being considered is comparable with their charges.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 On the basis of the work done by Inverclyde Leisure to date, a jointly funded project is proposed which will:-

- Completely refurbish the fabric of the building to modern standards
- Extend the fitness gym on the first floor by the creation of a mezzanine floor extending into the current games hall area and run on a 'value gym' basis
- Provide a 'Clip and Climb' facility with associated soft play area for younger children – this will be the first such facility in Scotland
- Provide a self-service café and facilities for children's parties
- Provide user access to Ravenscraig Stadium.

An outline illustration of the proposed facility is attached at appendix 1.

5.2 Initial discussions have been held with Inverclyde Leisure on the optimum framework for procuring and funding the project. The Council's contribution will be the balance (after deduction of 14/15 revenue costs) of the £600,000 one off funding already agreed.

5.3 On completion, it is not anticipated that the Council will provide ongoing revenue support for the facility. On current projections, the surplus generated at the facility is likely to contribute a sustained reduction in the management fee paid by the Council.

5.4 Full details of the proposal, final design and funding arrangements will be presented to the Committee for approval.

5.5 The current facility will remain in operation until the refurbishment works commence.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications:

The one off funding of £600,000 to support this proposal was agreed at Full Council on the 20 February, 2014. Any revenue funding to support the continued operation of the facility in 2015/16 will be met from contingencies, as per the decision at that meeting of the Council.

6.2 Human Resources:

None

6.3 Legal:

None at this time.

6.4 Equalities:

When delivering services to our customers, full cognisance is taken of equality and diversity processes and procedures.

6.5 Repopulation:

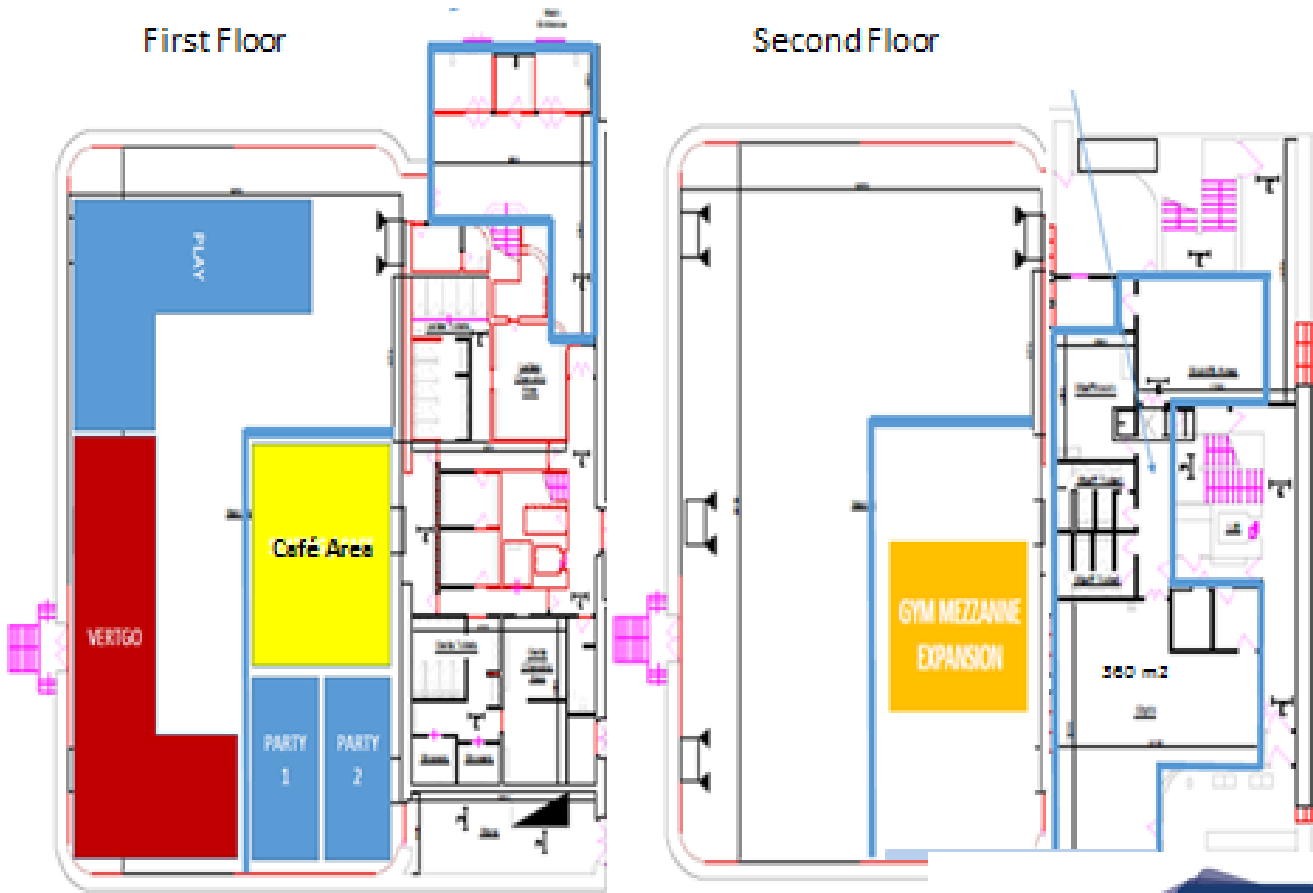
Good quality leisure facilities are critical to attracting inward migration to Inverclyde and in retaining current residents. This facility will also attract visitors from a wide catchment in the West of Scotland. The nearest similar facility in Carlisle, regularly attracts repeat custom from an hour's drive away.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

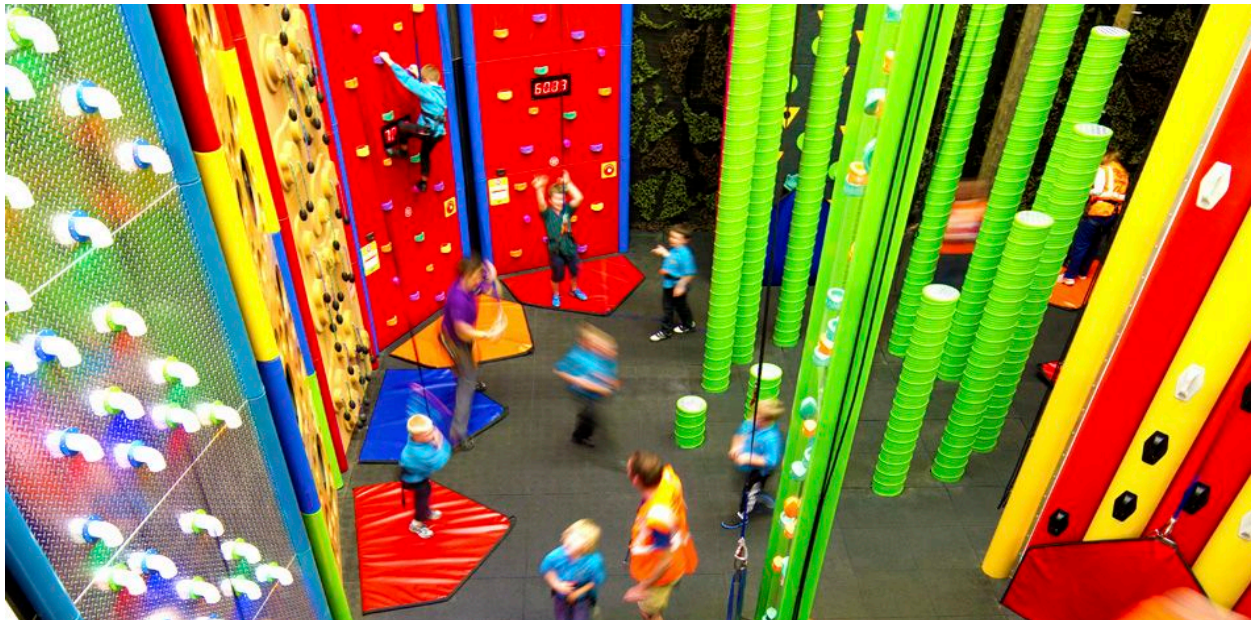
7.1 As detailed in section 4 of the report.

First Floor

Second Floor



Inverclyde
council



Appendix 1

Affordable Gym Concept



Inverclyde
council



 The Design



CLIENT: Alliance, Ravenscraig

DATE: 12 / 06 / 2014



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