

OAKLEAF SPORTS COMPLEX NEW DEVELOPMENTS

AGENDA ITEM No. 8

MEETING: RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: 8TH JULY 2026

REPORT BY: SPORTS COMPLEX MANAGER

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on new developments relating to the Oak Leaf Sports Complex.

2.0 Previous Initiatives, Events and Staff Training Update

- 2.1 Set out below is an update on previous initiatives, events, and staff training held in the period since the last Recreation Committee Meeting.

Staff Training

- 2.2 This month, training has been delivered to staff on Martyn's Law and what it will mean for the Sports Complex.

CCTV System Upgrade – External Cameras

- 2.3 Four external cameras have been installed as part of the CCTV system at the Sports Complex. Members will recall that this was agreed at the October Policy and Resources Committee Meeting using the savings from the cancellation of the service level agreement with Durham County Council.
- 2.4 The cameras are of excellent quality and provide additional protection for the staff and Council assets at the depot, sports complex and golf complex.

St Oswalds Pre-School Father's Day Breakfast

- 2.5 The Sports Complex hosted St Oswald's Pre-School for a Father's Day event over two days in June. The event began in the sports hall, where fathers and children had the opportunity to run, throw, catch and kick balls around the hall. This was followed by breakfast in the function room. This was the second joint event between the pre-school and the sports complex and was a great success.

Mayoress at Home

- 2.6 On Tuesday 23rd June, the Sports Complex hosted the annual Mayoress at Home event in the function room. Thirty-two people attended the event, which received praise from those who attended.

Durham Roller Derby

- 2.7 On Sunday 28th June, the Sports Complex hosted Durham Roller Derby in the Sports Hall for the first time. The event was a success, with approximately 100 people attending. The organisers were extremely pleased with the event and assistance from the staff.

3.0 Bowls Hoover Replacement

- 3.1 The Sports Complex bowls hoover was nearing the end of its life expectancy and would have required replacement at an estimated capital cost of approximately £3,200.
- 3.2 However, a bowls member at the Sports Complex, who also sits on the Durham County Committee, arranged for a recently purchased hoover to be donated to the complex from Ferryhill Leisure Centre, following its closure. The hoover had been funded through a grant, and this generous donation has avoided the need for the Council to incur the replacement cost.

4.0 Woodham Academy Career Quest Visit

- 4.1 Woodham Academy students will be undertaking Career Quest visits on 6th and 9th July across Aycliffe Business Park. The visits are intended to give students a greater understanding of the range of employment, training and career opportunities available locally, and to highlight the potential career pathways that exist within their own community.
- 4.2 Officers from across Council services will support the visits by providing students with a brief overview of the work undertaken by the Council, together with an insight into the variety of roles, skills and progression opportunities available within local government and the wider public sector. The sessions will also help to demonstrate how public services support the local community and how young people may consider these sectors as future career options.

5.0 Moving Together

- 5.1 The Moving Together Newton Aycliffe Exchange was held at the Youth Centre on Wednesday 17th June. The Mayor, Councillor Neil Collinson, Councillor John Moore and officers attended the event, aimed at bringing partners and stakeholders together to share ideas, discuss local priorities and begin building a clearer picture of place.
- 5.2 Those attending provided valuable time, insight and contributions, which will help to shape the next steps and ensure that the work reflects what matters most locally. The information gathered from the session is now being collated, including transferring key points onto a large map, which will provide a strong starting point for future sessions.
- 5.3 Participants have been asked to complete a feedback survey to help shape future sessions, identify shared priorities and evidence the impact of the work to funders, including Sport England.
- 5.4 The Sports Complex Manager has proposed to the organisers that the next meeting takes place at the Sports Complex, this will allow the council to showcase the facilities to various partners involved in this initiative throughout the Town.

6.0 Sports Complex Events Programme

- 6.1 It has been decided to change the format of the quiz which has taken place on a weekly basis on a Tuesday evening. More focused events will take place on monthly basis with better prizes, utilising existing budgets to encourage more people to attend.
- 6.2 The first event was bingo and took place on Tuesday 30th June.

7.0 Sauna Proposal

- 7.1 The Sports Complex Manager has received a request from local residents seeking to establish a small mobile sauna business at the site. The proposal is inspired by a successful operation in Kent and aims to introduce a similar wellness offering in the North, with the long-term ambition of developing more permanent facilities. The initial setup would consist of a six-person sauna unit of a comparable design to existing models currently in operation elsewhere.



- 7.2 The sauna would be wood-fired using kiln-dried logs to minimise emissions, with the option of an electric unit if required. The proposal also includes two cold water dipping barrels requiring water supply and drainage, with lighting powered by a small rechargeable or solar system.
- 7.3 The business would initially operate on weekends, with potential to expand, and is expected to increase footfall at the Oakleaf, supporting wider site revenue with a pre-approved rental fee paid.
- 7.4 The project would be privately funded, and the applicants have indicated they are open to adjustments to help facilitate approval.
- 7.5 Members are requested to advise officers on whether they wish this proposal to be supported in principle, subject to officers ensuring that the various requirements have been met such as insurance cover and risk assessments, and that all paperwork is in place, and to provide any guidance or conditions they would like applied in any licence for use of the land.
- 7.6 Members may wish to consider engaging the Council's solicitors to assist in drawing up a relevant licence and a valuer in assessing an appropriate rent for use of the land. Consideration will be needed as to whether the costs of this advice is paid by the applicant or the Council.

8.0 Sports Complex Open Day

- 8.1 Following the successful open day held last September, the Sports Complex Manager recommends that Members consider holding another open day this September or October. The date will be confirmed once the capital works referenced elsewhere on this agenda have been completed.
- 8.2 The open day will again include local groups and sports clubs that use the complex.
- 8.3 It is proposed that local residents be given the opportunity to try the sports offered at the Sports Complex free of charge, as well as the opportunity to engage with the local clubs involved.

9.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- 9.1 Is any personal or sensitive data required for this proposal which may have any implications for GDPR? **NO**

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 It is recommended that Members:-
- i) Receive the update report.
 - ii) Advise officers if they would like to support, in principle, the proposal to establish a local mobile sauna business at the Sports Complex subject to:
 - Officers ensuring that the various requirements have been met such as insurance cover and risk assessments, and that all paperwork is in place;
 - Taking into account Member feedback on conditions they would like applied in any licence for use of the land.
 - Engaging the Council's solicitors to assist in drawing up a relevant licence and a valuer in assessing an appropriate rent for use of the land.
 - Determining whether the costs of this advice is paid for by the applicant or the Council.
 - iii) Consider the Sports Complex Manager's proposal to hold an Open Day at the Sports Complex in September or October with free sport offered to local residents and giving local clubs the opportunity to promote their sports.

Sports Complex Manager