

220315 Dorset Councillor’s Report to Cranborne & Edmondsham Parish Council

QE Leisure Centre

Dorset Council is currently subsidising the leisure centre facilities at Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre (QELC) by around £550,000 pa, and this equates to 33.3% of the overall leisure centres budget. This is far higher than any of the leisure centres owned by the Council; and raises the question whether this provides best value for money.

On 1/3/2022 Dorset Council Cabinet decided that the Council would withdraw from the management scheme on the 31/3/2024. The Council will continue to work with the school during this transitional period.

Officers will work with QE School to identify ways to maximise the availability of leisure facilities for school and community use. Dorset Council will include a bid for one-off capital funding up to a maximum of £150,000 in its 2023/4 capital budget, which money should be used as the Council’s contribution towards the replacement of the all-weather pitch. It is hoped this will help QES to raise money for a future sinking fund.

QES have raised concerns about being able to maintain the swimming pool, and options may be to explore the operating model at St Michaels Middle School in Colehill where a swimming pool is operating without additional funding the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Ferndown Leisure Centre

The Contract here expires on the 31/3/22 – the end of this month. Cabinet has instructed that this Contract be extended until 31/3/24, which will provide the Council with time to develop a leisure strategy setting out the future delivery of leisure sites. The Council will also align the contract dates at the Dorchester and Blandford Leisure Centres to the same date, for the same reason.

Highways

Dorset Council has 3,795Km of Highways, and has a legal duty under S41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain its public highway.

The current state of the highways in Dorset can be summarised as:

	Kms	Good condition	Fair condition	Poor condition
Principal	368.10	80.71%	17.21%	2.09%
Non-principal	1493.35	64.63%	28.79%	6.58%
Unclassified	1933.30	55.68%	31.51%	12.81%

This means that overall there are 353.61Km of carriageway classed as Poor – which is 9.32% of the Council’s roads.

The current status of our Roads is officially described as one of “Managed decline”.

The report to Cabinet identifies that this is the result of annual carriageway investment being less than required to hold the current condition.

A number of scenarios were presented to Cabinet

Scenario 1 £11.6million – Current funding with no capital top up Managed decline. Which means that we recognise DfT funding is below that required to hold road condition but implement maintenance strategies to minimise the impact on condition. We further manage our network through risk based assessments and planned safety inspections. This scenario would mean roads are deteriorating faster than we can repair them, and there is potential that reactive defects and costs will increase year on year, meaning an approach of becoming increasingly reactive. This could potentially pose a risk to the authority in performing it's duty to maintain the highway. This scenario shows that the indicator 130-01 (A roads where maintenance should be planned – red banding) could increase from 2% in 2020, to 4% over a five year period. The indicator 130-02 for B and C roads could increase to 15.9% requiring maintenance(red category).

Scenario 2 £16.2million – Maintain steady state Dorset Council can avoid further decline of its carriageway asset by investing an additional £4.8million of capital funding into carriageway maintenance.

Scenario 3 £21million – Clear backlog Dorset Council could return all carriageways in good 'green' condition by investing £21million per year, over the next ten years.