

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## Property Sub Committee

14 November 2022

### THE FUTURE USE OF RODNEY CENTRE

Report by Head of Business & Resources (Communities)  
(Report No. 22/274)

#### 1. PURPOSE

1.1 Council of 22 June 2022 approved the withdrawal of gym and fitness services from Rodney Centre (Report No. 22/139 refers). Alongside this, officers were requested to consider:

- alternative public service uses for Rodney Centre and options for future use of the building for consideration by Property Sub-Committee.
- the potential for Rodney Centre to be used as an annex to Kinnoull Primary School.

1.2 This report covers these requests.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Sub Committee:

- notes no service requirement for the site from the Council or the Health and Social Care Partnership.
- notes that a review has been undertaken to establish if Rodney Centre is required to be used as a nursery or an annex for Kinnoull Primary School. This review has demonstrated that there is no requirement as sufficient provision is provided within the existing school and partner providers.
- notes the two Expressions of Interest in the site and sets a reasonable time period for developing these into formal Community Asset Transfer (CAT) applications (May 2023).
- approves the marketing of the Rodney Centre to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning and Development and the Head of Legal and Governance, should no formal CAT application be received by May 2023.

### **3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background/Main Issues
- Section 5: Proposals
- Section 6: Conclusion
- Appendices

### **4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

4.1 Council of June 2022 (Report No. 22/139 refers) approved the withdrawal of the Gym and Fitness Service by Live Active Leisure from the Rodney Centre. Officers were also requested to bring options for the future use of the building for consideration by Property Sub-Committee later in 2022. These options were to include the potential for the Rodney Centre as an annex to Kinnoull Primary School.

4.2 The most recent condition survey (2019) identified the building as in satisfactory condition. However, the survey also indicated significant spend will be required to bring the building up to current standards, particularly in the areas of mechanical and electrical infrastructure, climate mitigation and building fabric. The current estimate for this work is in the order of c.£600k (excluding climate mitigation). Further significant investment may also be required to upgrade the building for any change of use.

4.3 Responsibility for maintenance sits with the Council and annual property costs are currently around £40,000 per annum. Business rates (from which LAL were exempt) are around £26,572 per annum.

#### **1140 Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)**

4.4 During the 1140 Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), eleven ELC communities were created across Perth and Kinross. Each community provides a range of ELC options for families to access the full 1140 hours ELC entitlement from the local authority, partner providers or childminding provisions.

4.5 ELC provision in South Perth and Earn which is the Kinnoull Primary ELC community includes 6 Local Authority nurseries and 1 Early Childhood Centre; 8 partner providers; and 3 childminding services who all offer the full 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare to families in the area.

4.6 Local Authority infrastructure projects and partnership working with nurseries in the private and not-for-profit sector and childminders will ensure that capacity within South Perth and Earn ELC Community is sufficient to provide all eligible children with their full entitlement.

4.7 For families seeking local authority provision specifically, the table below demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity within the ELC community.

## South Perth and Earn Community

Type	Capacity	Uptake 2020/21	Uptake 2021/22	Registered for 2022/23
Local Authority	344 (+ 20 Strong Starts)	296 (+15 SS)	316 (+20 SS)	269 (+17 SS)

- 4.8 This is complemented by the spaces offered by partner providers working in partnership to deliver 1140 hours, offering more choice and flexibility to families who require it. Four of these providers are also currently approved to deliver high-quality funded Strong Start 2 ELC places for eligible two-year-olds, with six further settings willing to meet this need if required in the future. All ELC settings are supported by members of the PKC Early Years team to ensure quality assurance and that the levels of care, support, and learning provided to all children is consistent across the authority.

### **Potential for Rodney Centre to be used as an annex to Kinnoull Primary School.**

- 4.9 As outlined in paragraph 4.4 above, the Council delivered the 1140 Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) using existing and extended provision at current ELC settings locations and by utilising partner providers as recommended by the Scottish Government. There is surplus capacity of 75 places in the South Perth & Earn Community based on 2022/23 registrations.
- 4.10 The use of the Rodney Centre by the school is not required as there is sufficient space and capacity for the school's needs in the current building with an upgrade project undertaken in 2014 with £1.6m of investment.

## **5. PROPOSALS**

### **Potential for Use by Health and Social Care Partnership**

- 5.1 The Health and Social Care Partnership has considered the potential to use the building as a site for the co-location of a number of healthcare and wellbeing services. However, this was discounted because of the size and extent/costs associated with the refurbishment required to bring this up to clinical and care standards.

### **Potential for Use by Council Services**

- 5.2 There has been no other service requirement identified within the Council for the future use of the Rodney Centre.

### **Community Asset Transfer**

- 5.3 Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives appropriately constituted community groups the right to request to take on the ownership, lease, management or other use of public assets. Perth and Kinross Council has a two stage process for supporting groups with CAT, the

first of which is an Expression of Interest (EoI). This asks for some basic information on the group, the asset they are interested in and what they would propose to do with it. Council officers, working as part of the CAT Team, can then provide feedback and work with the group to identify and work towards the best solution for them. One of these options can be to submit a full Community Asset Transfer Request. The EoI stage is not part of the legislation and, therefore, the legal provisions of the Community Empowerment Act do not come into force until a full and valid Community Asset Transfer Request is received.

- 5.4 The high profile of the Rodney Pavillion generated considerable interest from community groups. All community group enquiries were supported by the Council's Communities Team and from these initial enquiries, Expressions of Interest have been received from two groups regarding developing the Rodney Pavillion. These proposals relate to the creation of a new riverside social enterprise café and training opportunity, as well as developing a new site for river borne and other outdoor activities.
- 5.5 The CAT Team met with representatives of these groups on 15 September 2022 to discuss their proposals in more detail and consider the next steps in the process. This will involve the groups undertaking building surveys and feasibility work to establish the requirements and costs of bringing the building up to the required standard.
- 5.6 The CAT process also requires the applicant to submit a formal business case which describes a sustainable model for the development and long term management of the building. If the development time for this business case is lengthy, there is a risk that, during this period, the Council will be liable for the ongoing maintenance and security of the building.
- 5.7 It is proposed the site is declared surplus and provided no formal Community Asset Transfer Request has been received by May 2023, thereafter market to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning and Development and Head of Legal and Governance.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 A review has been undertaken to establish the potential use of the Rodney Centre to be used as a nursery or an annex for Kinnoull Primary School. This has demonstrated that there is no requirement to use the site, as there is sufficient provision within the existing school and partner providers.
- 6.2 There has been no other service requirement identified within the Council or Health and Social Care Partnership for which the Rodney Centre could be utilised.
- 6.3 There have been two Expression of Interest regarding the potential for Community Asset Transfer, however, no formal requests have been received. Developing the two Expressions of Interest into formal Community Asset Transfer Requests is potentially a lengthy process. The Council will be liable

for the maintenance and management of the building during this time. As such, in similar situations, the Council has previously approved a specific time period within which this work is undertaken.

- 6.4 If the CAT Expression of Interest is withdrawn or no formal CAT Request is received by May 2023, the site will be marketed to the satisfaction of the Head of Planning and Development and Head of Legal and Governance.

#### Authors

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#### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Communities)	24 October 2022

#### APPENDICES – None

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>None</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>Yes</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>None</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>None</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>None</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>Yes</b>
Risk	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>None</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>None</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report contributes to the following objectives in the Community Plan:

- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

#### Corporate Plan

1.2 This report contributes to the following objectives in the Corporate Plan:

- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

### 2. Resource Implications

#### Financial

2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted on this report with regard to financial implications for maintenance and repair that would be required to be met by the Council if the property is maintained long-term by the Council. Work is however underway to assess the suitability of the property for alternative use by the Council or another public sector partner, and/or potential disposal.

### Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 The Head of Property Services and the Estates team have been consulted on this report and market appraisal will be prepared for consideration by Property Sub Committee.

## **3. Assessments**

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The Future Use of Rodney Centre was considered under the Council's Integrated Appraisal Toolkit. No impacts on equality were identified and so a full Equality Impact Assessment was not required.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 No action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### Sustainability

- 2.5 Under the provision of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. These proposals have been considered and assessed as not relevant to Council's sustainability objectives.

### Legal and Governance

- 3.6 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on this report in respect of Council statutory duties relating to Following the Public Pound and Best Value.

### Risk

- 3.7 There are financial and reputational risks for the Council if the property is not disposed.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 We have consulted with colleagues in Community Planning & Policy, Education and Childrens Service, Estates, Health and Social Care Partnership and Housing in the development of the proposals.

### External

- 4.2 None.

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 None.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2.1 None.