<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>02/01/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Item</td>
<td>Grimsby Leisure Centre – Ice Rink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(title)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Notice</td>
<td>DN.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason(s) for</td>
<td>• This is the only ice rink in Lincolnshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Call-in</td>
<td>• Closure is contrary to the public health agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More transparency is required regarding usage/income/costs/alternative business plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continuity of provision required until another similar facility potentially becomes available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Closure calls into question the continued viability of Grimsby Leisure Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired outcome</td>
<td>Refer back to Cabinet for reconsideration or to Full Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>for Call-in</td>
<td>for a wider debate on the future of Grimsby Leisure Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intended</td>
<td>Reconsider the closure proposal</td>
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<td>Recommendation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>to Cabinet</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of estimated/actual cost</td>
<td>Currently unclear</td>
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<tr>
<td>To be referred to which Scrutiny meeting?</td>
<td>Tourism, Leisure &amp; Culture</td>
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</tbody>
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**SIGNATURES OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

(1) [Signature]

(2) [Signature]

(1) Cllr Keith Brookes

(2) Cllr Philip Jackson
This proposal achieves the necessary further efficiencies within the Health and Wellbeing portfolio, whilst seeking to protect community health and wellbeing outcomes through the continued delivery of other Lincs Inspire sport and leisure services at Grimsby Leisure Centre.

This proposal supports the Council’s strategic aims of Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities by directly delivering the identified efficiencies necessary to achieve the council’s Medium Term Financial Forecast.

Furthermore this decision allows the Council to support as cost efficient sport and leisure services as possible and in doing so maintain the Council’s focus on strengthening the local economy and the local community through an enabling and facilitating approach.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the process which the Council has been through in respect of securing an alternative commercial operator Ice Rink operator and reasons behind the proposal to close Grimsby Leisure Centre Ice Rink.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The Ice Rink at Grimsby Leisure Centre be closed as soon as reasonably practicable.
- That the Director of Health and Wellbeing take all necessary steps to ensure that the Ice Rink is closed as soon as reasonably practicable.
REASONS FOR DECISION

The council has been through an extensive process of engagement over a considerable length time, in an attempt to secure a commercially viable ice rink operation in the borough. Investing in, and continuing to operate a “temporary” ice rink for 2 years in order to allow further time for a commercial option to be achieved. (The 2 year period ended in August 2016)

The Ice Rink is operated at a loss and the council is currently absorbing costs in respect of the hire of the ice rink chillers and maintenance and repair which it cannot afford indefinitely.

The council needs to achieve further efficiencies within the Health and Wellbeing portfolio and this decision allows the council to support as cost efficient sport and leisure service.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 Grimsby Leisure Centre has been operational since 1975, the building is largely original, having only one major change during its life. The second sports hall was removed to enable the development of Grimsby Auditorium, opening in 1995. Since this date only operational/internal modifications have been made.

1.2 In 2008/09 the Council commissioned a strategic review of all its sports and leisure assets. The report followed the Sport England guidance at that time and provided a programme of replacement/refurbishment and removal, based on a needs assessment and future demographic profiling.

1.3 One of the recommendations within the review concluded that an ice rink was best served via a private sector/commercial development instead of public sector subsidy.

1.4 In 2013 the Council responded to the changes in refrigeration materials, from December 2014 the use of R22 gas became illegal. This substance was the main refrigerant of the Grimsby leisure centre ice rink. Cabinet decision undertook to not replace the ice rink, however did commit to hiring/leasing a temporary ice pad and refrigeration unit for a two year period. The aim being to give the commercial market a further opportunity to consider this area for investment.

1.5 The report recommending the installation of a temporary ice pad also noted the limited life span of the GLC and the associated maintenance costs for the fabric of the building.

1.6 The two year contractual period for the ice pad expired in August 2016. The contract is being extended on a short term basis, with the costs being met by the council, at the request of the Portfolio Holder to allow time to consider the views and proposals from key stakeholders, primarily the Grimsby Ice Hockey Club.
Commercial and/or 3rd Party Operation

1.7 Various models and commercial options have been proposed and reviewed over recent years and to date no option has come forward to replace the ice-rink at no cost or subsidy to the Council.

1.8 Since 2009 dialogue has taken place with a number of commercial ice rink operators including a proposed joint venture scheme being put forward in September 2012. As a result of the subsequent due diligence work, the Council determined that it would not be in its interests to enter into that arrangement and work on this proposal ceased.

1.9 The Council subsequently entered into further dialogue with other potential ice rink developers, two of which, when previously contacted in 2010/11 were not in a position to develop an ice rink in the area without a capital contribution from the Council. Both organisations expressed an interest in developing a facility within the borough and presented different models for development and operation. However, these options were based on the Council providing land or buildings at market value to facilitate the development, which consequently the Council has been unable to facilitate. Since the installation of the temporary pad there have been no proposal’s received by the council.

1.10 Following representations from the Grimsby Ice Hockey Club in July 2016, seeking clarification of the future of Ice rink, meetings were held to consider alternatives. As Lincs Inspire Limited are the exclusive contracted provider of the facility and solely responsible for revenue and pricing, the Ice Hockey Club were advised to work in conjunction with Lincs Inspire to generate proposals to maintain the Ice Rink as a viable going concern. Lincs Inspire have supported the Ice Hockey Club in this endeavour as best they can.

1.11 There has been extensive email correspondence between the council and Grimsby Ice Hockey Clubs.

1.12 The Grimsby Ice Hockey Club proposals are wide ranging in nature and make suggestions counter the drop-off in the number of people ice skating. In general the proposals require the Council to invest in anticipation that subsequent usage increases sufficiently to recover that investment.

1.13 The proposal from Grimsby Ice Hockey Club (see appendix 1) is progressive in its approach. However it was predicated on the following (summarised) changes:

- NELC capital investment into the facility infrastructure in excess of £115k (including tractor, new floor, Perspex protection, barriers, air-handling replacement, toilets refurbishment, new skates)
- Various changes to Lincs Inspire operational activity and further NELC investment into the site, some of which affected all Grimsby Leisure Centre, totalling an increased income of £25 - £27K and an unspecified further capital and revenue costs for NELC (including but not limited to the reinstatement of kitchen, café, car park charges) and operational costs/losses for Lincs Inspire (including but limited to new marketing
proposal, ice disco sessions and modification of skate and swim membership)
  o Potential isolation of the ice rink facility within the centre itself, including
    the necessary changes to site access and security in order to allow
    independent operation.

1.14 Many of the proposals from Grimsby Ice Hockey Club were considered at
Scrutiny in July 2016 (see Appendix 2). These primarily focussed on the
following themes:
  1. Income Generation
     2. Operational Management
     3. Facility and Access modifications
     4. Membership/Pricing/Promotional

1.15 The following section provides members with the specific details by theme of
the Council’s and Lincs Inspires response (in Italics) previously explained to
Grimsby Hockey Club in response to their proposals.

1.16 **Income Generation** - Grimsby Ice Hockey Club have proposed ideas
which include reinstating/reopening services/areas, e.g. the café, soft play, car park
charges and sports shop.

1.17 **Response to Cafe**:  
**NELC closed the previous café in 2000 (before that a licensed bar was also
closed), both as a result of loss making situations. The previous contractor
did look into the viability of re-introducing the facility and came to the same
conclusion. Insufficient footfall and spend levels did not provide a prudent
business case.**

1.18 **It is correct that Lincs Inspire does not allow clubs to bring their own food and
drink provisions on to site without prior consent. We have confirmed to the
Ice Hockey Club that if they wish to hold a one off fund raising/charity event
then we would look to be supportive providing all food handling/health and
safety requirements are met.**

1.19 **We can also confirm that Lincs Inspire has not been approached by a café
operator wishing to lease this space. We have been approached with regard
to franchise arrangements, however these are costly and the minimum sales
levels required would be difficult to achieve.**

1.20 **Response to Soft Play**:  
**Lincs Inspire piloted a crèche/soft play area in partnership with NELC’s
Community Learning Service, including discounted access to fitness classes.
This was undertaken at both Cleethorpes and Grimsby leisure centres. The
take up was very low and didn’t cover CLS staff costs (based on qualified
childcare staff).**

1.21 **NELC spent a significant sum of money refurbishing the bowls hall and to add
any equipment on to the surface would risk damage. In addition the bowls
hall is well used throughout the year and we would not want to displace users.**
1.22 **Response to Car Park charges:**
All surrounding land and car parking is the responsibility of NELC. Councillors previously considered charging for parking to assist with the cost of funding the new leisure facility. This proposal was considered a costly one to manage in terms of compliance/cash collection and was seen as detrimental to encouraging the community to be active.

1.23 Lincs Inspire does not issue car park passes currently for any leisure facilities. Users of Cleethorpes Leisure Centre receive free parking within a public pay and display car park operated by NELC. The system requires members to provide their registration number which is logged with NELC’s car park service. This ensures the equitable use of all leisure facilities. We are not aware that this causes any problems for Cleethorpes participants. Users with a different registration number (i.e. change of family car) could pay for a ticket and reclaim it within the centre, providing the purpose of their visit is to use the leisure centre.

1.24 **Response to Sports shop:**
Various sports shops have rented space in the building, all of which ceased when leases ended (and before Lincs Inspire time). Stock displays from retailers have also been previously available, however there is currently no demand that we are aware of. However if the Ice Hockey Club could provide details of interested third parties then we would be happy to discuss hire/lease arrangements.

1.25 **Operational Management** - Grimsby Ice Hockey Club have proposed ideas which including changes to the facility/service, e.g. external skate grinding, vending machine operations and the use of the party booking slot as general skating when not booked.

1.26 **Response to external skate grinding:**
The statement made by the Ice Hockey Club is inaccurate. The skate grinding room was condemned by NELC’s maintenance partner back in December due to poor air condition/circulation. Therefore the grinding facilities could not be used. In the interim Lincs Inspire needed to have hire skates sharpened and therefore brought in a third party as a temporary measure.

1.27 **Response to vending machine operations:**
The assumptions made by the Ice Hockey club are inaccurate. A contract with Pelican Rouge to supply and fully manage vending provision at all centres is in operation. This was introduced earlier this year, early teething problems have been addressed and a fully maintained system is in operation. This saves the company time and money as staff are not being used to service vending machines. In addition a profit share arrangement is in place however the details are covered by a confidentiality agreement.

1.28 **Response to using the party booking slot as general skating:**
We only have one party slot on a Saturday 4.30 to 6.30pm and this is already advertised for party bookings or club/group use. This is a very quiet time in
the centre and often if there is interest the earlier public session is extended so the ice is not empty, however depending on usage this is also a good time to resurface the ice. There is very little down-time on the ice, currently we provide, per week:

- 43 hours public skate
- 23 hours figure skating
- 12 hours ice hockey clubs
- 12 hours for course/coached sessions
- 2 hours for party or group bookings

1.29 **Facility modifications** - Grimsby Ice Hockey Club have proposed facility modifications, e.g. reuse the internal areas and pool area for other sports or café, reinstate the outdoor courts and ceiling mounted cannons.

1.30 Response to reuse the internal areas and pool area for sports or café: NELC decommissioned the pool hall upon the opening the new swimming pool. The old pool has been left as a drained pool. The area would need considerable work to create a re-usable space. Members will be aware that this building suffers from significant amounts of asbestos and much of the plant and equipment is original and at the end of its practical life. Therefore any construction work will be costly and require lengthy periods of closure. Integrity of the roof is also an issue of regular repair, again due to age and condition.

1.31 Response to reinstating the outdoor courts: NELC used the outdoor courts for construction compound purposes. The courts were at the end of their life and originally the objective was to use the courts as a compound for 18 months and to then refurbish them as part of the overall new leisure centre facility. Unfortunately and as reported in the media NELC had additional works to address resulting in an overspend. This did not enable the courts to be refurbished as the cost was estimated to be well in excess of £50k.

1.32 Lincs Inspire agrees that courts would generate income and be welcomed by other users, however this would require significant landlord investment.

1.33 Response to reinstating the ceiling mounted foam cannons: NELC we believe took the cannons out of use in 2000 due to the problems with the ‘bubble’ chemicals creating pitting on the ice. We do not regularly use a portable device for similar reasons and especially as this is a hired facility.

1.34 **Membership/Pricing/Promotion**- Grimsby Ice Hockey Club have proposed a range of membership, pricing and marketing/promotion issues, e.g. memberships are confusing, an additional ice membership is required and signage and advertising improvements.

1.35 Response to memberships are confusing; an additional ice membership is needed:
Our most popular membership is the family scheme which includes two adults and two children for £50 per month giving unlimited use to all facilities. We do offer a range of memberships/school holiday passes which are based on encouraging participation across a range of activities. However an ice skating only membership could be introduced however we believe a better understanding on the future of the ice rink would determine the viability of this option.

Our £15 a month Junior membership, valid for those aged 8 to 15, gives young people access to public ice skating sessions at Grimsby Leisure Centre, the junior gym at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre and public swimming sessions. Therefore it is inaccurate that the £20 swim and skate membership is the only membership covering those aged 8 to 10 years old.

Response to Improve signage and advertising: All external signage is provided by NELC and an extensive installation programme has been implemented for the whole site, including ice rink signage from the front main car parks.

With regard to advertising, the ice rink is incorporated in much of our promotional literature. For example:

- Junior Summer Pass poster (this includes ice-skating as an integral part of the offer). This is also included in a summer holiday leaflet which will be going directly to a number of local schools.
- Mini Active Membership poster (a new membership which aims to get young people using the ice rink)
- Junior Gym poster (for those aged 8 to 15)
- Polar Cubs and Bears posters from Christmas and Easter.
- The Ice Meltdown Disco was featured on the reverse of Lincs Inspire Parties flyer
- The disability sports taster day includes reference to the ice rink
- Previous Viking FM radio campaign

A full copy of Lincs Inspire responses to proposals of Grimsby Ice Hockey Club presented to the July 2016 Scrutiny Panel is provided in Appendix 2.

Correspondence

The Council has continued to correspond with Grimsby Ice Hockey club over the recent months and Grimsby Ice Hockey Club has raised a number of issues/concerns. The council has endeavoured to work with Grimsby Ice Hockey Club to address issues and explain the council’s position as they arose.

In an email on the 29th Nov. a Grimsby Ice Hockey Club representative indicates that they were encouraged to work with Lincs Inspire and therefore the proposal they have submitted states that “Lincs Inspire are happy to continue running the ice rink”.
The Director for Health and Wellbeing responded on the 5th Dec stating “I encouraged you to work with Lincs Inspire Ltd because contractually they are the exclusive operator of the ice rink. As it stands nothing could be done without their agreement, therefore it was sensible to work with them to see if something could be found that could make the ice rink viable. To say that Lincs Inspire are happy to continue running the ice rink needs a second part to that statement which would read if the Council want us to and they will subsidise its operation. This is because the Ice Rink operates at a net loss”

In the same email on the 29th Nov. a Grimsby Ice Hockey Club representative indicated that “our proposal completely covered the entire amount required for the lease itself and a no-cost plan for tractor replacement”

This statement is misleading and rejected. The Grimsby Ice Hockey Clubs proposal identified a range of potential additional income streams most of which either required further investment from the Council and ultimately did not cover all the necessary expenditure to ensure that the ice rink is commercially viable. Furthermore Grimsby Ice Hockey Club proposal in respect of the ice rink required further investment into a second hand tractor which have continued liabilities.

The Director for Health and Wellbeing responded on the 5th Dec stating “This is a decision about the ice rink alone but any examination of public council documents indicates that the lifespan of Grimsby leisure Centre is time limited. Whatever the decision by Cabinet in December 2016 will have implications for the wider building.”

A point of accuracy should be noted that within their correspondence Grimsby Ice Hockey Club reference “35,000 people using the ice rink facility”. As indicated in this paper (in Section 1.53 -1.54) there has been a halving of usage since 2009 to approx. 35,000 uses which will be a mixture of casual and specialist uses and by no mean reflects 35,000 people using this facility.

Grimsby Ice Hockey Club’s email of the 30th Nov queries, “why on earth were we told not to form a charitable trust?”

The Director of Health and Wellbeing in an email response of the 5th Dec addresses this point by clarifying that the issue was more to do with timescale and feasibility. Charitable status in itself would not achieve a commercially viable ice rink proposal.

The issue of whether to begin applying for charitable status or not is secondary to the council recognition that isolating the ice rink impacts on the council’s contractual relationship with Lincs Inspire, requires considerations whether or not it is practically possible and inevitably increases investment costs for the council.
Usual

1.52 Lincs Inspire Limited are the contracted exclusive Ice Rink operator. As such they are best placed to advise on usage, types of usage and pricing policy.

1.53 In 2008/09 the operator of the ice rink SLM was reporting an annual usage figure of 66,668 visits to the ice rink. These visits will have been a mixture of casual users, more regular weekly users and the more specialist users with multiple weekly use.

1.54 Lincs Inspire Ltd has reported to the council including scrutiny the performance of the Ice Rink since the installation of the temporary ice pad is as follows:

- July 2014 - July 2015 21,270 visits
- July 2015 - July 2016 30,963 visits

1.55 Members will note over an approximately 8 year period the number of visits has more than halved. This sadly reflects a national decline in the interest in ice skating, not specific to North East Lincolnshire. Not all of the visits will have been made by NEL residents, although it is not possible to gauge the numbers coming from outside of the borough.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 There is a significant un-resourced financial risk (i.e. cost pressure) to the Council in the continuation of the hire of ice rink chiller and the ongoing maintenance and repair of the Ice Rink facility (i.e. barriers, flooring air handling).

2.2 There is reputational risk in the closure of the ice rink as this will mean the only facility of its type within the borough ceasing operation permanently. However it is the Council’s considered view that it has allowed sufficient time and invested further resource for a limited time (over the last 2 years) in an attempt to seek a commercially operated and financially viable Ice Rink.

2.3 The council recognises that the delay in the closure and extension beyond the 2 years of the hire (of the ice rink chillers), has required commitments to be made by members of Grimsby Ice Hockey club (i.e. insurance and membership fees) in order for them to continue operating in local leagues.

2.4 The Council will have to comply with the existing contracts and relevant procedures in relation to termination.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 Option 1. Do Nothing – This requires the Council to agree that the Operation of the Ice Rink is retained as part of the Lincs Inspire contract indefinitely.

3.2 This option has been rejected as the cost implications are prohibitively expensive as outlined in the financial implications of this report.
3.3 This option exposes the council to further potential investment burdens in respect of the ice rink, flooring, replacing barriers in order to maintain a safe environments for the public

3.4 The council is out of contract with the current two year arrangement and would have to be mindful of its procurement obligations on further continuation.

3.5 **Option 2 – Further Investment** – This option would see the council undertake works to improve the facility (including potential extension of the Ice Plant chillers contract). This would require the council to invest significant sums of capital resource (as yet undefined), to alter and improve the building including ice chilling, to allow community stakeholders to collaborate with Lincs Inspire to generate sufficient revenue to recover costs. Again, the Council would need to follow relevant procurement processes.

4. **REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

4.1 The decision to close the Ice rink will have very significant reputational implications. Members will be aware that the local campaign was launched in 2009 to 'save the ice rink' which resulted in a petition of 30,000 signatures being presented to the Scrutiny Panel covering Culture, Leisure and Tourism in July 2009.

4.2 This report presents to members the extensive process of public and 3rd party engagement which the council has been through to try allow the necessary time and opportunity to secure an alternative financially viable model of operation, (outlined in section 11).

4.3 It is likely members will receive significant resistance from the clubs and individual users of the Ice Rink and the council and its Lincs Inspire must work together to support the clubs and users to find alternative opportunities as far as is practicably possible.

4.4 Members will be aware that the Ice Rink is the only facility of its type in the borough and beyond and therefore users of the site will be required to travel outside of the borough if they wish to continue their recreational ice skating or Ice Sport.

5. **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 Lincs Inspire Ltd reports losses in respect of their operation of the Ice Rink (income less expenditure which includes staffing and internal house-keeping) approximately £9k in 2014/15 and £10k in 2015/16. This excludes the Council's hire costs for the ice-pad and refrigeration equipment, property maintenance costs (Council expenditure) and ice tractor repair costs.
5.2 Furthermore, during 2016/17 Lincs Inspire has replaced a proportion of hire skates and funded a third party skate sharpening service in order to safely operate the ice rink.

5.3 The annual costs of maintaining the ice rink, without consideration of any other part of the site, are calculated as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire of chillers</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of utilities (estimate)</td>
<td>£32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance (estimate based on last 2 years)</td>
<td>£14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincs Inspire annual losses ([inc. staff] less income)</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Tractor financing costs of replacement</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£81,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0

5.4 It is important to be clear that the Ice Rink pricing structure is set by Lincs Inspire Limited and, more importantly, any revenues received from the use of ice-rink facilities are received by Lincs Inspire Limited and not the Council.

6. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINITY

6.1 Members will note the consultation with Scrutiny Panel Environment, Culture and Tourism since 2009, detailed in Section 11. The Lincs Inspire Ltd response to the outline proposals were considered by Scrutiny in July 2016 (see appendix 2).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The savings quoted are cost savings and not budget savings in that all budget held by the Council in respect of maintenance and utilities for the Ice Arena were removed with effect from the start of the financial year 2015-16. Should the Ice Rink remain open unfunded costs will need to continue to be absorbed.

7.2 The council is required to cover redundancy cost arising from this decision in line with the Council’s contractual arrangements with Lincs Inspire.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council’s contract with Lincs Inspire Limited includes a clause allowing the Council to close the Ice Rink. However, the Council is responsible for mitigated losses incurred as a result of the closure. However, it is noted that Lincs Inspire have been making a loss in respect of the Ice rink.
8.2 Other contracts may well have exit provisions that will need to be complied with.

9. **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The proposal outlined in this report may have potentially significant human resource implications for Lincs Inspire staff. Employment matters will be dealt with in accordance with established HR procedures in order to achieve the proposal identified by the report and the decision taken which may include redundancy (the appointments committee process will be adhered to as it is a Council decision affecting the funding of Lincs Inspire). Staff will need to be informed of the proposal being considered prior to any public announcements or public decisions. Staff will need to be kept engaged throughout the respective processes with consultation as appropriate in accordance with the procedural and legal requirements.

10. **WARD IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The implications of this decisions affects all wards in the borough.

11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Members will be aware that the council has been seeking a viable cost effective solution to the issues related to the cost of the operation and maintenance of the ice rink. The table below sets out the process to this point.

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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Title/Context</th>
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<tr>
<td>16/7/2009</td>
<td>Scrutiny Panel Environment, Culture and Tourism</td>
<td>Report on Leisure Review proposals</td>
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<td>16/7/2009</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Question from member of the public regarding the Leisure Review</td>
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<td>28/7/2009</td>
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<td>Petition arising from Leisure Review proposals</td>
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<td>17/9/2009</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Question on minutes re. petition</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/2/2010</td>
<td>Scrutiny Panel Environment, Culture and Tourism</td>
<td>Update on Leisure Review (recommendation made to fund using monies recovered from Icelandic Banks)</td>
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<td>18/2/2010</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Proposed amendment to budget re. funding</td>
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<td>8/3/2011</td>
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<td>Briefing paper providing an update on replacement</td>
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<td>Council</td>
<td>Question on minutes requesting update</td>
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<td>Scrutiny Panel Tourism, Leisure and Culture</td>
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<td>Clarification of capital programme funding within budget proposals</td>
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<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Report providing update in securing a new ice rink</td>
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<td>22/7/2014</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>Report on undertaking of procurement exercise</td>
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<td>Representation from Grimsby Ice Hockey Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>28/9/2016</td>
<td>Scrutiny Panel Tourism, Leisure and Culture</td>
<td>Verbal update from Portfolio Holder</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

12. **CONTACT OFFICER(S)**

Stephen Pintus, Director of Health and Wellbeing

*Councillor Jane Hyldon-King*

*Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing*
APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Proposal from Grimsby Ice Hockey Club

30th August 2016
Lincs Inspire are happy to continue running the Ice Rink facility with ongoing support from the clubs that use it, should the Council renew the current lease on the refrigeration plant.

Consideration should also be given by NELC to further investment after the period of time the rink will remain open is decided. Ideally, if the lease were renewed for 3-4 years then further investment would be viable as we would be able see a return over this period. Investment would include purchasing a new tractor, along with making the repairs listed and some visual improvements to draw in new casual users. The temporary pad currently has another 18 years of its lifespan left.

Lincs Inspire could then ‘re-launch’ the ice rink. The Ice Hockey Club have been contacted on numerous occasions by Viking FM, Compass FM, Lincs FM, Humberside Radio, Cleethorpes Chronicle, Market Rasen Mail, Louth Leader and the Grimsby Telegraph. This free press, along with facebook, Lincs Inspires own website and those belonging to the Hockey Club and Rec Teams could be used promote the re-launch the rink itself and Lincs Inspires swim and skate membership/other memberships. Promotional support from Hockey Club sponsors Wilkin & Chapman, Duckworth Landrover, A P Robinson & Online Design is also at hand.

This campaign could only have a positive effect on footfall as we approach winter and some outdoor sports/ pursuits are no longer as appealing. The winter months are the busiest throughout the year at the rink, so there would be no better time to promote the facility. A large proportion of the income at the rink depends on public attendance and casual skating, which is a variable, as opposed to club income, therefore promotional efforts should be concentrated on this area.

An independent survey of 250 local people was carried out and advertising was identified as a key area we should concentrate on when trying to increase footfall.

Lincs Inspire can target market playgroups, nurseries and schools by leaflet to increase attendance by children. Of 250 respondents, only 25 had seen advertising for the rink, mostly on facebook. Other points respondents felt strongly about included providing a catering facility allowing them to spend more time at the rink and creating a more sociable community area. Free Wi-fi within the rink, better seating and several different suggestions for new group lessons and disco nights were also mentioned.

INCOME GENERATION:
Estimated increased income needs to be well in excess of £50k pa and assumes all existing income remains constant. This does not account for any investment required, for example:
INVESTMENT REQUIRED:

□ NELC - The Ice Tractor requires full replacement at a minimum £16,854 (secondhand, 200hrs use, quote provided). After speaking to Marshalls, the existing tractor will realise £1k – £1500 at a machinery auction. The newly purchased tractor will still hold a residual value of £10k after a year and therefore be an asset. This brings the overall ‘real’ cost of the tractor down to £4,854. The loss in income to Lincs Inspire from rink closures because the old machine has been so unreliable and the cost of non-routine repairs because of its age amounted to £3- £5k last year, almost resulting in a break-even situation. It would be wise to make sure the new tractor has rollers fitted, as the old one once did, this protects the barriers from damage whilst the ice is being cut. Pre-shift checks will ensure the new tractor is kept in optimum condition.

□ NELC - Areas of the floor under the rubber matting surrounding the ice rink are rotten and potentially a serious trip hazard in places (areas mainly used by the Hockey Club rather than the public). In the long term this requires removal and replacement, in the short term repairs can be made to areas of the floor, or the small sections of the floor could be cordonned off.

□ NELC - Perspex protection screens secured to wooden barriers are coming loose in places as a result of rotten barriers – this is potentially very dangerous. This requires barrier replacement in the longer term, followed by new Perspex screens and mountings. In the short term it requires repairs to be made to both the barriers and mountings, possible in the form of additional external brackets.

□ NELC - The home entrance gate requires repair before the season begins this week. Hinges can be swapped to the other side of the gate to make it useable again. There are 5 professional welders currently playing in the Recreational teams who may be able to assist with this repair as it required to be carried out at short notice.

□ NELC - Condensation is a continuing problem within the rink and ideally the air handling system requires upgrading or replacing in the long term. In the short term it will not affect the running of the rink if this problem is not fixed, it does not cause a danger to the public and the system has not operated properly for a very long period of time. There would possibly be an improvement if two sets of plastic curtains were placed over the entrance used by the tractor, both inside and outside to form an air lock, stopping warm air rushing into the building.

□ NELC - Changing rooms/toilets serving the rink side are in poor condition and in need of upgrades. However, other changing rooms situated close to the rink are readily available to use during matches in the short term. It would be helpful if rubber matting were provided for teams to walk from these changing rooms to the rink on, protecting their skates.

□ Lincs Inspire - Further replacement of hire skates will be required at some point as only essential numbers have been replaced, the balance of hire skate replacement would be £10-£15k. The skates would generally only be replaced once demand for them is met (after increased footfall and therefore revenue).
* Ideally, the required level of income needed increases significantly and beyond £100k should all of the long term infrastructure/ replacement options be taken into account.

**INSTANT impact on revenue would be made by the following suggestions:**

**All of the following figures are cautious estimates.**

**Suggestion 1** - Increase all club/team hire costs, currently paying c£40k per annum across hockey and figure skating.

- A 10% increase would generate £4k
- A 20% increase would generate £8k

It is feasible to increase all hire charges, however all clubs (hockey and figure) would need to agree to this or cancel their bookings. In the event of cancellation, ice time could be reinstated for public use to generate increased casual ice time.

*Potential gain £4-8k*

**Suggestion 2** – There is a possibility of extending access for ice hockey training or private hire to 11pm x 2 nights per week, with clubs paying for an extra hour per night. This time could also be marketed to other clubs including Hull for training matches.

Additional staff costs will arise if current, paid, Lincs Inspire staff are used. Based on minimum staffing and **£100 hire charge per hour** the net gain assuming demand is met would be in the region of £65 per hour (also assuming no need for unsociable hours payments).

*Potential gain (2 nights x 50 weeks) £6.5k*

**Suggestion 3** – After being approached by the Grimsby Lightnings Recreational team this week, Lincs Inspire have already made adjustments to current ice time hire arrangements allowing an in-house adult league to be formed, during hours already staffed, made up of Grimsby Lightnings, Grimsby Stormers and Grimsby Ice Bears. This means an extra income of £100 per week for 50 weeks of the year.

*Potential gain (1hr @ £100 x 50 weeks) £5k*

**Suggestion 4** - During Ice Hockey Club/ Rec team training time c. 12 hours per week – remove all staff supervising the rink counter. Rink to be self-regulated by Clubs. To enable us to do this, a suggestion would be to employ hockey coaches on a 0hr Lincs Inspire Voluntary contract. One coach, present at three club sessions a week is already employed by Lincs Inspire. Figure skating coaches, employed by Lincs Inspire, along with cleaners are currently the only people present on an early morning session, therefore this proposal would mirror that of an existing practise. During match times this will not be possible as the general public are also in attendance as spectators.

*Total operational staffing on a shift at the leisure centre as a whole is 1x Operations
Officer (supervisor), 1x 40hr Leisure Assistant and 1x 34hr Leisure Assistant (to cover ice rink, patrolling the building, sports hall set ups and take downs, oversee roller skating sessions and general cleaning throughout the building).

*Potential gain/ saving £3-4k*

**Suggestion 5** – For ice hockey matches charge spectators an admission fee – e.g. £1/2 each with an average 40 attendees estimated by the Ice Hockey Club.

*Potential gain (based on 2 home matches per month) £960/£1,920*

**Suggestion 6** - Replace tractor and save money on tractor repairs/lost time.

This option would save money and improve customer service. A replacement tractor (probably second-hand) is advised by the Ice Hockey Club as costing in the region of £16,854 and would result in an overall break even situation during the first year. If NELC were minded to fund this there would be a return on investment over the life of the new machine, as future years then see an additional £3-5k return.

*Potential gain before purchase costs estimated to be: c£3-5k pa after year 1*

**Suggestion 7** – The ongoing success of the Hockey Club means that they will field three teams this year, as opposed to only one last year. This will result in 21 home games this year rather than only 7, increasing ice hire time by around 14 – 18 hours per annum.

*Potential Gain before costs £2k*

**Total potential savings/increased income (maximum): c.£24k**

The above figure assumes all clubs support increased fees and increased levels of fee paying use across a 12 month period, and that NELC replaces the current ice tractor immediately. A net position after costs is probably nearer a £15-20k gain which would not immediately resolve NELC’s funding position.

**ONGOING positive impact on revenue would be made by the following suggestions:**

**Suggestion 1** - Turn staff room adjacent to ice rink into a kitchen for parties and rink side catering/ café/ community kitchen.

This was a suggestion supported by nearly all respondents to the survey conducted. Footfall could increase as a result of this as and therefore increase revenue. The café itself may not be a big money earner but should act as a draw to members of the public and increase the profile of the rink as there is currently no other café on site.

Area currently used for storage of ice session equipment would require an alternative space, equipment not used on a regular basis could be stored in the decommissioned grinding room, equipment used more often could be stored in the adjacent indoor room. The old staff room will need a low level of investment for...
refurbishment and to become suitable for external use/catering use. In addition a Hygiene Certificate will be required and currently condensation issues rink side would not make this an ideal location. Lincs Inspire’s current vending contract would be affected if catering was available at all ice hockey sessions. However, catering for special events/charity funding raising could be considered as an exception. Frequency of such events would need to be offset against a return on investment. Therefore, we are unlikely to see an immediate gain and level of investment as yet is not known.

Potential gain only after cost of investment covered Nil saving year one.

**Suggestion 2** - Offer a skate only membership instead of swim and skate package. Adults currently access unlimited swim and or skate for £20 per month. Based on the pay as you go option, swimming would be £3.90, or skating £5 (excluding skate hire) per visit. Therefore just five ice visits per month makes this a good option even if you rarely go swimming.

A junior membership is currently £15 per month and provides access to all swimming, ice skating, junior gym – this is popular because children often take part in various activities not just one. However, a special mini active membership was also launched this summer for 3 to 7 years, for just £10 per month, again providing unlimited access to ice skating and swimming (with parent).

Current income from swim and skate memberships is split between all Lincs Inspire pools and the rink. More research would be needed to ascertain whether such a membership would benefit the rink or not.

As with reduced prices, the introduction of an even cheaper membership may result in current members cancelling one of the above in favour of a cheaper option, this could have a negative impact on income.

**Potential gain unknown and may result in a loss of income, more research is required.**

**Suggestion 3** – Lincs Inspire target markets the ice rink and public skating sessions to Latvian/ Russian local residents, based on ice hockey being a popular sport in Latvia.

On-line research confirms that Latvians do follow football, ice hockey and basketball. Therefore could be a potential interest, however extent of the Latvian community in North East Lincolnshire is unknown. It would be possible to translate marketing information into different languages, however we would need to be mindful not to discriminate any non UK groups within this area. Multiple language translation is an option to investigate.

**Potential gain after marketing/translation costs unknown** –

**Suggestion 4** - Offer any vacant weekend party slots to clubs for hire - a cheap last minute session.
The weekend party slot referred to is already on the timetable as available to hire for parties, clubs and groups. In the event of no bookings the public skate time is extended. It may be more useful if the 2 hour slot reverts to public skating within the timetable. However hockey clubs have had the option to book this time in addition to their current hours.

*Potential gain unknown as no evidence to suggest a demand, more research required.*

**Suggestion 5 – Target Marketing/ Disco sessions**
Lincs Inspire to target market playgroups, nurseries and schools. A large percentage of current users on public sessions are children. The quieter daytime sessions in particular could be marketed to playgroups as these children are not attending school during the daytime and clearly also have parents that are at home with them on certain days.

Lincs Inspire to target market a weekly Disco session with Glow Sticks/ disco lights and chart music, preferably on a Friday night as per the amount of positive responses from the survey. Schools and other sports groups would be our target audience. The hockey clubs and rec teams will strongly support this event through internal promotion.

A re-launch could include the weekly disco within its campaign.

*Potential gain unknown although the survey states there is a demand, more research required.*

**Suggestion 6 – Winter Wonderland**
As winter approaches, thought could be given to arranging a day long Christmas winter wonderland event at the rink, with special activities through out the day, maybe extending into the sports hall. The rink would be the perfect venue for an event like this as it is not weather dependant. The event could become an annual attraction for all age groups and skaters of all abilities.

*Potential gain unknown –*

**Suggestion 7 – Retail equipment**
Previously members of the club have retailed Hockey Equipment and turned over £16 – 18k per annum, with a good profit being made. This was on an order-only basis and very little equipment was actually stocked to minimise any outlay. Other basic itemst for public skaters such as magic gloves, and thick socks could be sold at the rink counter. There is an opportunity for Lincs Inspire to re-instate this business model.

*Potential gain unknown -- further research required.*

**Suggestion 8 – Skate hire desk promotion**
As people enter and leave the rink, the skate timetable and upcoming events can be promoted by handing members of the public leaflets. This is a low cost effective way of promoting.
Potential gain unknown –

**Suggestion 9 – School Liaison Schemes**
Previously schools have used the rink for group bookings. There may be an opportunity to offer schools a package deal which includes swimming lessons, skating and maybe use of the sports hall and an area to eat packed lunches.

A full morning of different sporting activities may be more appealing and of better overall value to schools and encourage more casual skating attendance.

*Potential gain unknown -- further research required.*
Appendix 2 – Lincs Inspire Scrutiny response to Grimsby Ice Hockey proposal

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL - TOURISM, LEISURE AND CULTURE

SCRUTINY PANEL

GRIMSBY LEISURE CENTRE – ICE RINK INFORMATION

JULY 2016

BACKGROUND:

Grimsby leisure centre has been operational since 1975, the building is largely original, having only one major change during its life. The second sports hall was removed to enable the development of Grimsby Auditorium, opening in 1995. Since this date only operational/internal modifications have been made.

In 2008/09 North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) commissioned a strategic review of all its sports and leisure assets. The report followed the Sport England guidance at that time and provided a programme of replacement/refurbishment and removal, based on a needs assessment and future demographic profiling.

One of the recommendations within the review concluded that an ice rink was a great asset to have, however best served via a private sector/commercial development instead of public sector subsidy. In 2008/09 the operator of the ice rink was reporting an annual usage figure of 66,668 visits to the ice rink.

Various models and commercial options have been reviewed over recent years and to date no option has come forward to replace the ice-rink at no cost or subsidy to NELC.

Further to this, in 2013 NELC responded to the changes in refrigeration materials, from December 2014 the use of R22 gas became illegal. This substance was the main refrigerant of the Grimsby leisure centre ice rink. Cabinet decision undertook to not replacement the ice rink, however did commit to hiring/leasing a temporary ice pad and refrigeration unit for a two year period. The aim being to give the commercial market a further opportunity to consider this area for investment.

Performance since installation of the temporary ice pad is as follows:

July 2014 - July 2015  21,270 visits
July 2015 - July 2016 (to date)  30,963 visits

Lincs Inspire reports losses (income less expenditure which includes staffing, estimated utilities and internal house-keeping) - £9k in 2014/15 and £10k in 2015/16. This excludes NELC’s hire costs for the ice-pad and refrigeration equipment, NELC’s property maintenance costs (landlord expenditure) and ice
tractor repair costs. In addition during 2016/17 Lincs Inspire has replaced a proportion of hire skates and funded a third party skate sharpening service.

RESPONSE TO ICE HOCKEY CLUB REPORT:

The following information is provided in response to the headline points raised by Grimsby Ice Hockey Club (6th June 2016) with regard to the operation of the ice rink.

Question: Increase in operating losses from £21k to £65k

Response:
The figures quoted by NELC in 2014 reflect a net loss after subsidy. Lincs Inspire discussed operating losses for the last financial year with the chair of the ice hockey club. This information was based on a total loss including estimated maintenance and upkeep of the building, the hire/lease of the ice pad and refrigeration plant and also subsidy costs. The financial loss to NELC exceeds the loss to Lincs Inspire.

Question: lack of participation monitoring

Response:
Lincs Inspire agrees that participation figures for the ice rink are not comprehensive. NELC and the operator have asked on many occasions for clubs to provide attendance details, this has not been forthcoming. At sessions where the ice is hired by a club those club members do not swipe in or record their attendance through the till. In addition spectators at hired ice hockey sessions are not charged admittance and also enter as part of the club. Therefore this data is not reflected in any performance reports.

However this is a valid point which we can look in to and establish a registration system to ensure all club members sign in. We can also consider introducing a fee for spectating during club sessions.

Question: Cost to address Ice Tractor issues

Response:
Lincs Inspire agrees with the problems relating to the current tractor which is very old and at the end of its life. The company responsible for repairs and servicing has noted that we are getting to a point where repair will become impractical (and very costly). This has frequently been raised with NELC, who have provided costs for new and hired tractors. Lincs Inspire also recently asked a contact to look out for a second-hand tractor perhaps from an ice rink that might be closing. Even second-hand the cost is significant and would not be value for money if the rink is not going to be retained. This decision links directly with NELC’s decision on the future of the ice rink.
Question: Ice Hockey Club proposes introducing car parking fees across the whole site

Response:
All surrounding land and car parking is the responsibility of NELC. Councillors previously considered charging for parking to assist with the cost of funding the new leisure facility. This proposal was considered a costly one to manage in terms of compliance/cash collection and was seen as detrimental to encouraging the community to be active.

Lincons Inspire does not issue car park passes currently for any leisure facilities. Users of Cleethorpes Leisure Centre receive free parking within a public pay and display car park operated by NELC. The system requires members to provide their registration number which is logged with NELC’s car park service. This ensures the equitable use of all leisure facilities. We are not aware that this causes any problems for Cleethorpes participants. Users with a different registration number (i.e. change of family car) could pay for a ticket and reclaim it within the centre, providing the purpose of their visit is to use the leisure centre.

Question: Vending Machine operations

Response:
The assumptions made by the Ice Hockey club are inaccurate. A contract with Pelican Rouge to supply and fully manage vending provision at all centres is in operation. This was introduced earlier this year, early teething problems have been addressed and a fully maintained system is in operation. This saves the company time and money as staff are not being used to service vending machines. In addition a profit share arrangement is in place however the details are covered by a confidentiality agreement.

Question: Re-introduce a café

Response:
NELC closed the previous café in 2000 (before that a licensed bar was also closed), both as a result of loss making situations. The previous contractor did look into the viability of re-introducing the facility and came to the same conclusion. Insufficient footfall and spend levels did not provide a prudent business case.

It is correct that Lincs Inspire does not allow clubs to bring their own food and drink provisions on to site without prior consent. We have confirmed to the Ice Hockey Club that if they wish to hold a one off fund raising/charity event then we would look to be supportive providing all food handling/health and safety requirements are met.

We can also confirm that Lincs Inspire has not been approached by a café operator wishing to lease this space. We have been approached with regard to franchise arrangements, however these are costly and the minimum sales levels required would be difficult to achieve.
Question: Re-introduce children’s soft play area either in café or bowls hall

Response:
NELC spent a significant sum of money refurbishing the bowls hall and to add any equipment on to the surface would risk damage. In addition the bowls hall is well used throughout the year and we would not want to displace users.

Lincs Inspire piloted a crèche/soft play area in partnership with NELC’s Community Learning Service, including discounted access to fitness classes. This was undertaken at both Cleethorpes and Grimsby leisure centres. The take up was very low and didn’t cover CLS staff costs (based on qualified childcare staff).

Question: Re-use common area and swimming pool area for other sports or café

Response:
NELC decommissioned the pool hall upon the opening the new swimming pool. The old pool has been left as a drained pool. The area would need considerable work to create a re usable space. Members will be aware that this building suffers from significant amounts of asbestos and much of the plant and equipment is original and at the end of its practical life. Therefore any construction work will be costly and require lengthy periods of closure. Integrity of the roof is also an issue of regular repair, again due to age and condition.

However, Lincs Inspire would welcome any landlord investment to enable this space to be reused.

Question: Re-introduce a shop for sports goods

Response:
Various sports shops have rented space in the building, all of which ceased when leases ended (and before Lincs Inspire’s time). Stock displays from retailers have also been previously available, however there is currently no demand that we are aware of. However if the Ice Hockey Club could provide details of interested third parties then we would be happy to discuss hire/lease arrangements.

Question: Memberships are confusing; an additional ice membership is needed

Response:
Our most popular membership is the family scheme which includes two adults and two children for £50 per month giving unlimited use to all facilities. We do offer a range of memberships/school holiday passes which are based on encouraging participation across a range of activities. However an ice skating only membership could be introduced however we believe a better understanding on the future of the ice rink would determine the viability of this option.

Our £15 a month Junior membership, valid for those aged 8 to 15, gives young people access to public ice skating sessions at Grimsby Leisure Centre, the junior gym at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre and public swimming sessions. Therefore it is inaccurate that the £20 swim and skate membership is the only membership covering those aged 8 to 10 years old.
Question: Party hire pricing advertised at higher price than paid at the till
Response:
Thank you for pointing this out, it is an error which will be rectified immediately.

Response: Question cost of bringing in external skate grinding
Response:
The statement made by the Ice Hockey Club is inaccurate. The skate grinding room was condemned by NELC’s maintenance partner back in December due to poor air condition/circulation. Therefore the grinding facilities cannot be used. Work to address the room is currently outstanding and has been chased on a number of occasions. In the interim Lincs Inspire needed to have hire skates sharpened and therefore brought in a third party as a temporary measure.

Question: Reinstate the outdoor courts
Response:
NELC used the outdoor courts for construction compound purposes. The courts were at the end of their life and originally the objective was to use the courts as a compound for 18 months and to then refurbish them as part of the overall new leisure centre facility. Unfortunately and as reported in the media NELC had additional works to address resulting in an overspend. This did not enable the courts to be refurbished as the cost was estimated to be well in excess of £50k.

Lincs Inspire agrees that courts would generate income and be welcomed by other users, however this would require significant landlord investment.

Question: Reinstate the ceiling mounted foam cannons
Response:
NELC we believe took the cannons out of use in 2000 due to the problems with the ‘bubble’ chemicals creating pitting on the ice. We do not regularly use a portable device for similar reasons and especially as this is a hired facility.

Question: Reinstate party booking slot for general skating when not booked
Response:
We only have one party slot on a Saturday 4.30 to 6.30pm and this is already advertised for party bookings or club/group use. This is a very quiet time in the centre and often if there is interest the earlier public session is extended so the ice is not empty, however depending on usage this is also a good time to resurface the ice. There is very little down-time on the ice, currently we provide, per week:

- 43 hours public skate
- 23 hours figure skating
• 12 hours ice hockey clubs
• 12 hours for course/coached sessions
• 2 hours for party or group bookings

Question: Improve signage and advertising

Response:

All external signage is provided by NELC and an extensive installation programme has been implemented for the whole site, including ice rink signage from the front main car parks.

With regard to advertising, the ice rink is incorporated in much of our promotional literature. For example:

• Junior Summer Pass poster (this includes ice-skating as an integral part of the offer). This is also included in a summer holiday leaflet which will be going directly to a number of local schools.
• Mini Active Membership poster (a new membership which aims to get young people using the ice rink)
• Junior Gym poster (for those aged 8 to 15)
• Polar Cubs and Bears posters from Christmas and Easter.
• The Ice Meltdown Disco was featured on the reverse of Lincs Inspire Parties flyer
• The disability sports taster day includes reference to the ice rink
• Previous Viking FM radio campaign
Notice boards are also made available for club use and we encourage clubs to advertise their events, activities and success.

The ice rink is promoted on social media, predominantly on the Grimsby Leisure Centre Facebook page which has over 1900 likes. The Grimsby Leisure Centre Facebook page has also actively promoted the Grimsby Stormers' hockey matches in the past, please see below:
In addition articles have been sent to the media, however we cannot control what is and isn’t published, below are a number of examples:

**Penguins help with ice skating**

*Photo shoot*

**Where:** Grimsby Leisure Centre  
**When:** Friday May 15, 2015 from 10:45am to 11:15am  
**What:** Photograph the skate aids in use during a Polar Cubs session finishing at 11am.

TODDLERS and children can have great fun on the ice at Grimsby Leisure Centre and their confidence will now soar with the introduction of a colony of penguin skate aids to help with balance.

As well as the penguins, slightly larger polar bear skate aids can also be hired by beginners. There are also ideal for use by people in wheelchairs and have been purchased with the help of Sport England’s Inspiring Lives project.

Customers are welcome to hire the friendly-faced skate aids during any public session to help them learn to skate independently. They cost £5 per hour or £3.50 for half an hour and there’s a £5 returnable deposit fee.

To encourage children to take-up skating from an early age, the leisure centre holds weekly sessions for children where they can learn to skate with the assistance of coaches and others their age.

From 10am to 11am on Fridays, toddlers aged under five meet for a weekly **Polar Cubs**
session. Soft play mats, toys and sledges means there’s plenty to enjoy. Skates aren’t necessary either, children can get used to walking on the ice wearing their shoes. Pushchairs and prams are also allowed on the ice. As their confidence grows there’s the opportunity to earn stickers by trying out for some grades. Skates are available to hire from as small as an infant size 4. Sessions cost £5 for one adult and child, with an extra child’s ticket costing £2.50 each. The centre’s crèche is open for babies enabling parents to take toddlers to this ice session.

On Friday afternoons the format for the Polar Bears session has changed. From 5pm to 5:30pm children can now take to the ice without skates. Soft toys, sledges and mats, together with assistance from staff, offers a gentle introduction to ice skating for pre-school children. From 5:30pm to 6pm the toys, prams and pushchairs are cleared giving older children and adults more room on the ice. From 6pm to 6:30pm disco lights and music brings a party atmosphere to the rink. A qualified coach is included in the price of this session who assists children with all the skills they need to achieve certificates. Pre-school children pay £5, which includes one adult. All others pay £4 per person.

For more information about any of these sessions, ice skating parties or the Learn to Skate programme available for beginners from the age of three, contact (01472) 323100 or visit www.lincsinspire.com

Ends

Getting Little Ones Active (May 2016)

KEEPING fit and healthy can be great fun – even when you’re little. For example, what child wouldn’t want to take to the ice with a colony of penguins? Well now they can, by getting along to Grimsby Leisure Centre, where penguins and polar bear-shaped skate aids can be used to help little ones get their balance.

Polar Cubs sessions on Fridays from 10am to 11am are open to toddlers aged five and under, where they can use soft play mats, toys and sledges – only using skates if they wish. Pushchairs and prams are also allowed on to the ice and, as your little one grows in confidence, there is the chance to work towards grades.

Sessions are £5 for one adult and one child, with additional children charged £2.50 each. Older children can get along to Polar Bears sessions on Fridays from 5pm to 6.30pm. A qualified coach is included in the price of the session, which is £5 for a pre-school child and adult, or £4 per person for older children. To find out more call Grimsby Leisure Centre on (01472) 323100 or visit www.lincsinspire.com

Ends

20th May 2016- GRIMSBY TELEGRAPH

Health organisations in North East Lincolnshire have come together to put on the Starting Well Family Fun Day. It takes place on Tuesday, May 31 in Grant Thorold Park. In the run-up to the day we are featuring advice from local health groups on how children can start life well, and live well. More information on the day itself will appear in next Friday’s paper.

As well as being good fun, starting exercise at an early age is great for your health.
Signing up for a junior leisure membership with Lincs Inspire allows youngsters to go swimming, ice skating and go to gym sessions – all for a £15 monthly fee.

Valid for those aged eight to fifteen, the package gives young people access to the junior gym at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre, swimming during public sessions at all Lincs Inspire sites and access to public ice skating sessions at Grimsby Leisure Centre.

For those aged 11 to 15, Lincs Inspire’s adult fitness suites can also be used at specific times.

The Junior Gym at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre offers a wide variety of equipment from resistance machines to boxing equipment, dance mats, treadmills, interactive games and even an X-box Kinect.

Gavin Johnstone, junior gym co-ordinator at Cleethorpes Leisure Centre, said: “The junior gym is a fantastic way of engaging in physical activity and getting fit.

“The unique, interactive equipment offers a brilliant opportunity to achieve your child's exercise targets. Under the supervision of dedicated staff, children have the chance to gain independence and make new friends in a fun environment that enables them to learn about fitness, fitness equipment and its safe use and have fun getting fit!”

Ends.

Lincs Inspire Limited

July 2016