

# **Midlothian councillors asked to back closure of sports centres at weekends**

**Two Midlothian sports centres could close at weekends while swimming pool hours are cut as the council looks to bridge a £10m funding gap in its budget.**

The shut down of Newtongrange Leisure Centre and the sports centre in Gorebridge at weekends is one of a number of proposals going before councillors for approval next week.

They will also be asked to reduce hours at the county's swimming pools with an earlier 6pm closure on Fridays and 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Gorebridge Leisure Centre is at the centre of further proposals to create a community hub in it which would see the local library service and meeting rooms established in it with only the sports facilities closing at weekends.

A report to council outlining the plans to shut the sports facilities says: "

Staffing will be utilised in other facilities to fill current vacancies and turnover will achieve saving value through a dynamic staffing model in a mini-service review to flex the staff resource, where and when required.

"Vacant posts will be filled elsewhere and effectively remove their

original specific centre located post. There will be a saving from utility costs but this will require further analysis to establish value.”

It acknowledges some customers will no longer be able to access their closest sports centre but says other facilities are available in the county.

Additional savings proposals put forward by the council include reducing the discount offered to after school clubs to use council buildings from 85% to just 50% and cutting cleaning hours for buildings to axe weekend cleans and school cleans over summer.

Councillors will also be asked to consider a range of income generating schemes including providing its own out of school children’s services within its buildings as an alternative to parents 52 weeks of the year.

They will also look at reviews of commissioned children’s and young people services with services such as contracted family learning and therapeutic services to be reduced.

And there are plans to review the council’s education service with plans to reduce staff across the different departments.

The report says: “Reducing the size of teams providing the various statutory functions across the Directorate will inevitably impact the service provided to its service users and, particularly, support to schools.”

Councillor meet on Tuesday to discuss the savings proposals which have been put together by a cross party business transformation steering group and recommended for approval.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter