



Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group

report on

New Leisure Facilities

Date: May 2014

PROJECT GROUP MEMBERS:

Councillors:

Lead	Councillor Flood
Group Members	Councillor Bradford Councillor Callan Councillor Clarke Councillor Elliott Councillor Miles Councillor D Stone

1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW AIMS

1.1 This review aims to focus on the decision made to replace the existing leisure facilities at Queens Park with a new building on the Queens Park Annexe site.

1.2 The main objectives of this review are:

- a) to review the Feasibility Study which was produced to support the development or renewal of the Queens Park Sports Centre
- b) to look at the possible risks/implications of the covenant associated with the land at Queens Park
- c) to review the procurement processes which were used when appointing the consultants to manage the project and the communication and consultation undertaken with the public in respect of the options available regarding the redevelopment of the leisure centre.
- d) to review the cost of funding the new leisure centre
- e) to review the procurement process used for appointing the building contractor by Deloittes and to reconfirm this process with the successful bidder.

- f) to review the partnership contract with Chesterfield College and identify Employment opportunities for young people and also opportunities in respect of Health and Wellbeing
- g) to establish the design of the new building, including specification and facilities to be provided.
- h) to review the planning and development process for the building, including employment, resources and how it affects the local community.
- i) to review the pre-marketing of the new facilities
- j) to review how the new facilities are being monitored and evaluated during the first 6 months of it opening.

2. REASONS FOR THE REVIEW AND LINK TO PRIORITIES

- 2.1 Cabinet made a decision to build a new sports and leisure centre on the Queens Park annexe site.
- 2.2 The Project Group were set up to provide ongoing monitoring of this project, from work undertaken to date through to delivery and evaluation of the project.
- 2.3 The review aligned with Corporate Plan Aim 5

“Healthier and Active Community – Participation in Sport and Recreation, especially in hard to reach Groups and the quality of our Leisure Centres will have improved”

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Project Group recommends:

- a) That soundings are taken from Community Groups, Sports Groups and members of the Community prior to decisions being made by Cabinet, to ensure diversity in facilities;
- b) That future consultation is undertaken with all staff in respect of design, facilities to ensure meaningful outcomes;
- c) That the decision making process needs reviewing.

4. REVIEW APPROACH

- 4.1** The Project Group have met regularly to review the process at all stages. The terms of reference were agreed at the first meeting held on 12th July, 2013, along with membership of the Group, all of whom were self nominated.

The methodology used to gather information was through interviews, meetings, reviewing relevant document via the internet and those held in the Town Hall, reviewing other sports centres websites and undertaking site visits to the Council's existing leisure centres, and Ripley, Leicester and The Arc to compare facilities.

See Scoping Document (Appendix 1)

4.2 Design of the Building

The replacement Queens Park Sport Centre is to be a modern state of the art leisure centre providing a wide range of sport and physical activities. It will be fully accessible, light and spacious, built to be energy efficient and to make good use of space.

The building will have a modern, contemporary design and will be built using robust materials. The height of the building will be kept low to avoid spoiling the view around the new centre, to keep energy costs low and to stay below the height of the surrounding trees to avoid having to remove any.

The facilities to be included are:

- 25m 6 lane swimming pool
- Learner pool
- 2 squash courts
- Fitness suite with specialist gym equipment
- 6 court sports hall
- Dry changing area
- Wet changing village
- Flexible multi-functional Training Zones
- Café

The centre has been designed to be fully accessible to individual users and groups providing the most up to date standards. Key features to promote accessibility and usage by a variety of users include:

- Accessible car parking spaces and dedicated family friendly spaces
- Range of accessible changing facilities, including equipment such as a hoist and moveable bed
- Easy access steps and a platform hoist to be provided in the main pool
- Steps and a moveable floor to learner pool
- Deck level swimming pool surrounds
- Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accredited equipment in the gym
- Spaces for buggies

There have been risks identified relating to the building of a new sports centre on the Annexe Site one of which is the existence of restrictive covenants, and specialist legal advice has been sought in relation to this.

Insurance has been suggested as a very real option to use to mitigate against the risk, and owing to the change of use aspect of the development a bespoke quote would need to be obtained. A level of indemnity would also need to be set based on the proposed value of the development or developments. Once the insurance policy is in place there needs to be no allowance made internally for future enforcement other than deciding the allocation of the premium or which party will pay it. Therefore it represents the most effective and cost efficient method of proceeding and would be satisfactory if any funding is to be secured against the development. (A copy of the insurance document and covenant are attached at Appendix 2)

Another problem which was encountered related to the Queens Park Annexe being undermined by badgers. As a result of this the building has had to be relocated to the south and the Council will seek a licence from Nature England to enable the construction to take place and minimise any negative impacts on the badgers.

4.3 Consultation

The first consultation took place between 24 May and 6 June 2013 using various methods. These included:

- On-line (use of website)
- Sports Clubs
- Community Groups

- Members at Queens Park Leisure Centre
- Pomegranate Theatre and Winding Wheel
- Electronic and Paper Surveys.

860 responses were received and an analysis of the information was undertaken with the following being the top 5 choices for inclusion in the new facility:

1. 25 metre swimming pool
2. Learner pool
3. Multi purpose sports hall
4. Fitness Suite
5. Children's water fun

Phase 2 of the consultation took place between a number of stakeholders at a meeting on 6th August, 2013 (copy of the notes attached at Appendix 3).

Members of the Group visited the Queens Park Sports Centre during this period to sample the consultation machine used and spoke to members of the public and the staff undertaking the consultation.

Feedback had been positive in the main with two thirds of consultees being happy with the proposals.

The two main changes had centred around car parking arrangements. This included increasing the accessible parking from 6 to 16 spaces and increasing family parking spaces from 8 to 20.

Access to the car park would need to be controlled as the Council were planning on offering free parking for users of the Leisure Centre and therefore use by non-centre users would need to be monitored.

A choice was given in respect of the café facilities, which would be either 'traditional' or a mixed service. The mixed service was deemed to be the preference, serving light snacks. However this would require the reconfiguration of the servery. A franchise was the preferred option for the café, subject to Member approval.

4.4 Visits to Sites

Members undertook visits to the Health Living Centre, Ripley Leisure Centre, Leicester Leisure Centre and Arc Leisure Matlock to compare their facilities including the following:

- Outside
- Entrance/Café
- Sports Hall
- Gym
- Pool
- Disabled Facilities
- Changing Facilities
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The results in respect of this are attached at Appendix 6

4.5 Appointment of Main Contractor

The Head of Environment was invited to the first meeting of the Group and at this meeting explained how the decision had been taken to appoint the contractor. The Council used the RM457 framework for Public Sector Organisations Procurement to tender for the project management of the whole process. 6 companies submitted a tender

The contract was awarded to Deloitte, one of the 2 shortlisted on price/quality.

The Group interviewed the Procurement Officer who took them through the process which had been undertaken in appointing Deloitte. The key things which were asked for as part of the tendering exercise were:

- Experience in specialised building
- Project Management
- Methodology
- Timescales for delivery
- Budget
- Quality management

4.6 Process for Appointing Building Contractor

The Procurement Officer was also required to explain the agreed procurement route for appointing the building contractor. This was done as a two part tender, and initially 15 applications were received. Deloitte and Council officers undertook an evaluation of these and came up with a shortlist of 5. Invitations to tender were sent out to the successful candidates with a deadline of 29th November to return their bids.

Only 4 of the 5 tenders were received back and the assessment was based on quality/price, 60/40. The tender also required that a local labour clause be included, which would include the use of apprenticeships.

The Contractor, Morgan Sindall has been appointed as per Cabinet Minute No. 205

The planning process concluded at a Planning Committee meeting on Monday 19th May 2014, which members of the scrutiny Project Group scrutinised. They confirmed that the planning process was thorough, impartial and members did not display any partiality.

- It was confirmed that the issues requiring conditions were other planning highway applications, protection of the badgers, an improved cycling route and improved exit from the site to enable better vision. Additional CCTV was also needed to protect the public safety and a review of screening in winter at the top of the site.
- They noted the objections, most of which were not accurate or not planning matters.
- They took note of the one objector who spoke and the response from members.
- They commented afterwards that the objections in the main were about misinformation and vested interests, reinforcing the need to deal with these matters earlier so as not to confuse the real issues for the Public and the Council.

4.7 Partnership Working with Chesterfield College

Members were briefed on the background to the College seeking dual use of the sports hall with the Council. The College will be investing £2.5m in the new facility and an ongoing amount to cover maintenance and for assistance to reduce subsidy.

The College will require use of 3 training rooms, including the sports hall for 7 hours per day for 32 weeks of the year. There will be some use of the courts and fitness suite and also use of the swimming pool, although that would now form part of the formal agreement. Further

consideration of partnership working with the College will be undertaken to see if all parties see this project as adding value to the lives of young people in Chesterfield, both through improving healthy life styles and education and employment opportunities. We are interested in seeing if this is envisaged to also assisting integration into the Community and augmenting Public Services whilst delivering Value for Money.

4.8 Funding the cost of the New Leisure Centre

The Council's Cabinet allocated £9.25m for the capital cost of the leisure centre project, which included contingency and a sum for the demolition of the existing centre.

4.9 Staff Questionnaire

Donna Reddish attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Group in October 2013 to discuss the preparation of a survey questionnaire for employees affected by the restructure of leisure services and the Leisure Centre new build. She agreed to meet with the trade unions to devise some suitable questions for inclusion on the survey.

Representatives from Unison were invited to a further meeting on 5th February 2014 with a copy of the proposed questionnaire and the Group discussed the pros and cons of it. (A copy of the points/suggestions made at that meeting are attached at Appendix 7)

It was proposed that with the agreement of Members and Officers, the questionnaire would be made available to staff in early March with a deadline for completion of 3 weeks. Unfortunately this coincided with the staff survey circulated by the Chief Executive and it was felt that this would have a negative impact on the number of questionnaires being returned. This piece of work is still to be done and a review of the questionnaire will be needed to decide if it is still appropriate and timely and what might need to be amended.

5. EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

- 5.1 Evidence gathered to support the review work includes:
 - New Sport and Leisure Facilities Scoping Document (Appendix 1)
 - Consideration of the Covenant relating to Queens Park Annexe (Appendix 2)

Review how the public were consulted – (copy of notes from consultation event held on 6th August 2013 at Appendix 3)

Scrutiny of the Feasibility Study (Appendix 4)

Consideration of the Cabinet Report and its recommendations (Appendix 5)

Comparison of similar projects including visits to other leisure sites and research of other councils via their websites (Appendix 6)

Review of how staff were consulted and compiling staff questionnaire to establish their views (Appendix 7)

Interviews with consultants (Deloittes)

Interviews with officers including Head of Environment and the Sports and Leisure Manager, Head of Finance and Leader of the Council

Interview with Procurement Officer relating to the appointment of Consultants.

6. REVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 It was clear to the group that, had the various organisations been asked for their views at an early stage it would have better informed the process and would have assisted the Cabinet in its decision making.

6.2 The group were impressed with the methodology used to communicate and update staff, as were the Trade Unions. However it was felt after gathering various information from several sources about staff opinions, that staff did feel anecdotally, that their views and expertise were not being considered initially and felt somewhat disengaged, which is why Members felt it was important to carry out the questionnaire to verify or dispel these comments. It was unfortunate that the restructuring of staff took place at a critical time in the process, leading to the new centre being blamed by some people for the outcomes. Whilst the new centre staffing will require a further review, we felt that some staff did not see this as a positive move to integrate them into the new centre in a staged approach.

6.3 During the time the Working Group has been considering the project we have been made aware by various sources of some dissatisfaction with our consultation process. However, we feel that the consultation which has taken place has been thorough and efforts to seek views were rigorous by the Officers.

The protocol for decision making at the Council allows Cabinet to decide on the change/project and then the Consultation takes place.

We feel that if there was a new process in place, which includes taking soundings from the public, service users, staff, members and all relevant interested parties, that it would save a huge amount of Officer and Executive Member time and cost and reduce the opportunity for rumour, misinformation. It would also put the effects of change aside and reduce staff dissatisfaction. Therefore we feel that a review of our policy/ protocol at the council needs to be undertaken.

We have seen some evidence of this idea by Cllr John Burrows over the Council Tax and also the Great Place Great Service savings.

Recommendation

That the Council's decision making processes be reviewed to include a predetermination stage, to inform any final proposals.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

That soundings are taken from Community Groups, Sports Groups and members of the Community prior to decisions being made by Cabinet, to ensure diversity in facilities;

That future consultation is undertaken with all staff in respect of design, facilities to ensure meaningful outcomes;

That the Council's decision making processes need reviewing

8. REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Scrutiny Review Group wishes to thank all the officers and Executive Members for their co-operation and openness during this review.
- 8.2 Having reviewed all processes and contracts we are confident that there has been robust adherence to the Council's objectives in providing a new sports and leisure facility to date, and that it meets our objectives set out in paragraphs 1.2 a-h of this report.
- 8.3 The group wishes to place on record their thanks to Jackie Brobyn for her assistance with this review.
- 8.4 The next process to consider is the partnership with the college in more detail, to meet the contractor to discuss their views on our procurement process and talk about the project moving forward.
- 8.5 There is a need to revisit the content and the timing of a staff questionnaire.
- 8.6 The Scrutiny Review Group will continue to monitor the planning conditions as agreed at Planning Committee on 19th May 2014
- 8.7 Set a timetable to review the outcome of the Sport England bid and any impact
- 8.8 The Scrutiny Review Group will revise the timetable for this review, in light of the delays experienced so far and will consider providing another interim report in February 2015 prior to the Local Elections.

Contacts:

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