

**THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**9 October 2017**

Attendance:

Councillors:

Learney (Chairman) (P)

Evans (P)  
Gemmell (P)  
Pearson (P)  
Stallard

Thacker  
Thompson(P)  
Tod (P)  
Weston

Deputy Members:

Councillor Jeffs (Standing Deputy for Councillor Stallard) and Councillor Gottlieb (Standing Deputy for Councillor Weston).

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Ashton (Portfolio Holder for Finance), Griffiths (Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing), Horrill (Leader with Portfolio for Housing Services), Warwick (Portfolio Holder for Environment) and Laming.

Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:

Councillor Bell and Godfrey (Portfolio Holder for Professional Services) and Humby (Portfolio Holder for Business Partnerships).

Others in attendance:

Mr John Hunt – MACE  
Mr Simon Molden – The Sports Consultancy (TSC)  
Mr Chris Marriot – TSC  
Mr Tom Pinnington – TSC  
Mr Mike Lawless – LA Architects  
Mr Justin Ridgemount – Winchester University

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1. **MINUTES**

Councillor Gottlieb requested that the following point of clarification be recorded with regards to minute 5, Q1 2017/18 Financial and Performance Monitoring Report (Report OS171refers).

At point (g) on page 5, the Leader stated that the development of Station Approach would be subject to gateway decisions.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of meeting held 31 August 2017 be approved and adopted.

3. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND NOVEMBER 2017 FORWARD PLAN**

It was agreed that the Members' Allowances Scheme due to be considered by the meeting on 20 November be instead taken to the next available committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the November 2017 Forward Plan be noted; and

2. That subject to the above change, the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2017/18 be noted.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Emma Back and Councillor Laming addressed the Committee with regard to agenda item 5 below (Report OS177 refers) after the presentation to the Committee. A summary of their comments are summarised under the relevant agenda item below.

5. **WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK PROJECT – CONSIDERATION OF STAGE 2 PROPOSALS (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES)**  
(Report OS177 refers)

The Chief Executive responded to a query with regard to the exempt appendices to the Report. It was clarified both Appendices 2 and 3 were not in the public domain due them containing commercially sensitive information. Information within the appendices if considered in public could influence the procurement outcome for the new facility.

The Committee noted that the Facility Needs Assessment report (Appendix 2) was currently a working document and it was confirmed that the finalised document would be placed in the public domain as soon as it had been adopted.

Councillor Griffiths gave a presentation to the Committee on the provision of the new sports and leisure park at Bar End. In summary, Councillor Griffiths highlighted the overall vision and objectives of the project as well as the work undertaken on the facility mix, concept design and outline business case with regard to viability. The Council was working in partnership with the University of

Winchester and the Pinder Trust and had secured assurances of capital financial contributions from both of £6million and £1million respectively. The Council was also exploring partnership working with Hampshire County Council and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Councillor Griffiths also set out the facilities for the new Leisure Centre and highlighted changes to the facility mix, namely the sport hall being reduced to eight courts; the addition of studios and flexible space; a larger fitness suite, additional treatment room and a clip and climb facility.

Mr Lawless (LA Architects) gave a presentation on the aspirational design for the new facility. He showed the conceptual design and photographs of completed successful leisure centre projects. The building would be accessible to all. The swimming pool and sports hall were key parts of this project; both being well designed flexible spaces. In conclusion, the leisure centre was to be both an environmentally and socially sustainable building.

Councillor Ashton also gave a presentation and explained that an Urban Design Framework was under development for the area including the location of the new sport and leisure centre. No plans had yet been determined for the old depot adjacent to the site. Councillor Ashton detailed the extensive public consultation and engagement undertaken to date which had proven to be a valuable source of input to the new facility project. Concerns raised of flooding, car parking and floodlighting had been considered as part of the proposals as well that the existing King George V playing fields be kept as 'open' as possible. A movement and access strategy was being developed.

Councillor Ashton also reported on the financial aspects of the project. The project costs had been revised in September 2017 to £37.5 million, an increase in £3.5 million from July 2016 due to increased technical information and design and engineering factors. In 2016, the Council had also originally proposed a £6 million capital contribution and a £600,000 revenue subsidy per annum from the general fund. It was now proposed that the facility should be self funding including capital costs and interest on borrowing over the centre's 40 year life. There would be no net impact on the local tax payer. Councillor Ashton said that these changes were reflective of the changes to the Council's financial position going forward.

Mr Simon Molden, Mr Chris Marriot and Mr Tom Pinnington from The Sports Consultancy (TSC) introduced the district wide needs analysis undertaken, which was still in its draft form. It was explained that a quantitative data was sourced to give a 20 year view of current and future sporting demand requirements. A district wide needs assessment was also a requirement of any Sports England funding bid. Consultation had included sports clubs, educational establishments and other owners of sporting facilities, including parish councils and neighbouring local authorities.

TSC set out that the analysis of sports hall provision indicated a significant over provision and that an eight court sports hall would meet future needs. This was a change from the previously proposed 12 court sports hall. The analysis was detailed that measures should be put in place to better utilise spare capacity at school sport halls across the district. It was appreciated that there was often a lack of control over some school sites. However, the Council should look to work with clubs and schools to address this. Sport England would not wish to develop new facilities without fully exploring maximising use of existing capacity to address need.

At the permission of the Chairman, Emma Back addressed the Committee and her presentation is summarised below.

- (i) The community sports sector in Winchester was very keen to see the new facility and Ms Back reported that the overall vision, consultation and financial sustainability as presented; were good.
- (ii) The proposals with regard to aquatics were very good and would meet demand that had been demonstrated. However, there was concern that there was a shift from sport/community use to 'fitness'. This was reflected by the loss of office space at the site for local groups and also the changes to the hall size. There was an apparent shift from large flexible spaces to less flexible spaces and in her view for adults only.
- (iii) The focus within the Needs Assessment should not focus on badminton courts as a denominator. There was a national centre of excellence for badminton at Westgate school.
- (iv) There was concern at the safety and quality of existing sport hall facilities in other community venues.
- (v) A smaller sports hall would generate less revenue as would the removal of spectator seating. Would there be a more affordable design proposed?
- (vi) There had been no proposals given with regard to the enhancement of the sports track, relocation of the boxing club and the potential of a new synthetic pitch.

The Chairman also invited the Committee to ask questions of Ms Back. Ms Back's responses are summarised below.

- (i) Due to growing populations and demand on schools, there would be associated demand on their facilities. There were currently limited high quality facilities other than at Westgate School. Other schools suitability was limited due to accessibility, whether due to them being private schools, single sex schools or from high demand from their existing students. For these reasons, several Winchester clubs already travel outside the district for suitable facilities.
- (ii) The large number of consultees engaged with by Sports England (222) was indicative of the high demand for suitable facilities in the Winchester district from adult participation. She stated that Sport England data did not recognise child participation.

- (iii) Over half of school sports halls were not suitable for, for example, netball competition. Consequently, Netball England had invested in the new centre under construction at Fleming Park, Eastleigh and at two local clubs. Some older facilities were not safe due to, for example, not having sprung floors or having adequate 'run off'.
- (iv) It was more cost effective to fund a new facility for the whole community as you cannot make a sports hall bigger in the future for various reasons.

Councillor Laming addressed the Committee and reiterated some of the points made by Ms Back. He also stated that it would have been preferable for members of the Cabinet (Leisure Centre) Committee to have firstly been given opportunity to consider both reports on the agenda. Councillor Laming also stated that the new centre must have facilities which were able to grow with the community.

During discussion of the Report, the Committee asked a number of detailed questions which were responded to accordingly, as summarised below:

- (i) The new centre presented an opportunity to develop a building that was energy efficient – both in its build and materials used. There would be less waste in construction methods, travel etc. The building itself would have passive heat gain addressed and reduced carbon emissions from its operating. PV cells would be used where possible. There would be an aspiration towards BREEAM excellence standards, or 'very good' which were likely to be achievable.
- (ii) Councillor Warwick advised that it was a 'given' that the new facility would achieve the objectives and undertakings of the Council with regard to reducing its carbon footprint. In addition, to the carbon footprint from the new centre, sustainable transport use was to be encouraged where possible when travelling to the site. As set out in Paragraph 6 on page 5 of the report.
- (iii) Councillor Ashton reiterated that the leisure centre project would not be subsidised by the Council and would be cost neutral over its expected 40 year life.
- (iv) It was expected that the emerging outline business case would be completed by November 2017 as various components were still being developed. This was scheduled to be considered by the Committee on 6 November. Paragraph 1.3 on page 3 set out the recommendation to proceed to RIBA stage 3 in advance of the business case.
- (v) The Assistant Director (Policy and Projects) advised that it was intended to develop an Outline Business Case stage as soon as the scheme was shown to be viable and then go out to tender. This would then allow the Council to develop a full business case. Additional information was now required at RIBA Stage 2 with regard to required solutions to address ground conditions at Bar End.
- (vi) The Assistant Director responded to a question with regard to the 'Legal Implications' paragraphs of the report – paragraphs 2 – 2.2 on pages 3

and 4. At paragraph 2.2, it stated that 'all factors' would be taken into account in decision making and he was satisfied that this continued to be the case.

- (vii) Those sporting groups consulted with had indicated their predicted level of usage of the new centre and facilities, but there had been no commitment beyond this or for any capital contributions etc.
- (viii) Consultation and public engagement events had taken place and had been open to all residents from across the district. There had been a majority support for a new facility at Bar End.
- (ix) Parking and transport assessment exercises would generally inform the planning process, but this information would be reported to Members when this was available.
- (x) With regards to the need for an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the detailed design and assessment work, the Assistant Director recognised that the facility was designed to be very accessible to all users. A facility group had been established to lead in this work. Councillor Griffiths also stated that the centre would have uses and activities suitable for all ages. It would also be a flexible building so that changes could be easily made in response to changes in demand for a particular activity, including the swimming pool.
- (xi) Mr Ridgmont (University of Winchester) indicated that whilst the University had aspirations to expand to 10,000 students by 2025, there was no detail of student 'type'. Whilst the sports sciences continued to be popular, it was expected that students would use the new centre mainly for leisure.
- (xii) TSC advised that their study had indicated that there were 14 sites across the district with 4 or more courts suitable for badminton. 10 of these were on education sites. Peak demand times were factored into the analysis.
- (xiii) At the request of a member, Councillor Horrill reiterated that the sport and leisure centre was for the whole district and there was a desire to replace the River Park facility with something that was excellent. Cabinet would like to understand all the facts and therefore the Facility Needs Assessment would need to be fully considered as this was an important cornerstone for the project. The Assessment would be verified and checked and reviewed before any final decision was made on the facility mix. The sport and leisure centre would need to reflect changing needs and desires for the next 40 years.
- (xiv) Councillor Griffiths advised that as well as the gym mix, potential revenue from car parking could be considered as part of any revenue deficit from the facility mix.
- (xv) TSC advised that the final version of the Needs Assessment would set out current usage of existing facilities, noting accessibility issues of some educational centres.
- (xvi) In theory, a smaller sports hall could be expanded in size in the future (if needs and financing changed) but this was likely to be prohibitively expensive.
- (xvii) Councillor Ashton advised that the financial position of the whole project had changed due to some increased revenue contributors and also from a

better understanding of revenue modelling that could be anticipated following the various consultations undertaken to date.

During debate, the Committee referred to Councillor Horrill's assurances that there would be opportunity for Members to fully consider the Sport Facility Needs Assessment report when this had been finalised before any decisions were made by Cabinet on the Sport and Leisure Park project. This would allow for the challenging of the various 'need' and capacity' questions. It was also suggested that Cabinet should explore any spare capacity of sport halls across the district that were accessible to residents etc.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Portfolio Holder have regard to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when preparing the report to Cabinet on the matter as set out below:

That the Committee note the progress made to date with the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Project and provides the following comments to Cabinet:

- (i) That concern is raised that the objectives of the project should be clearly aligned to the Council's policy regarding reducing its carbon footprint;
- (ii) That the assurances of Cabinet are sought that the facility mix for a new Sport and Leisure Centre provides for all age groups;
- (iii) That the Committee is concerned at the changes to the facility mix for the Centre, notably the proposed reduction of the sport hall capacity from 12 courts to 8; and
- (iv) That there is opportunity to scrutinise the Full Business Case and needs assessment reports before final decisions are made by Cabinet

**6. WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK PROJECT – PROCUREMENT  
(Report OS179 refers)**

Councillor Griffiths introduced the Report which set out the procurement process of the main construction contractor for the sport and leisure park and also for a specialist leisure operator to manage the new centre.

During discussion, it was noted that the recommended development framework agreement (option c) as a procurement strategy would help ensure a contractor with the required skills and experience was engaged for the project.

With regard to the facility management, it was explained that contracting with an existing specialist operator (option 2) was generally a less expensive option as the management support aspects and costs were generally shared with other facilities managed by that operator. The other benefits were set out in the report on page 9. The majority of local authority leisure centres were managed by specialist operators.

It was suggested that indicative costs for each of the models presented on pages 8 and 9 could be discussed informally be Members.

The Assistant Director clarified that the procurement of a new operator was required to be undertaken so that the full costs are able to be built into the business case. Careful consideration will be given to the specification for the new contract and a strategy for the procurement agreed.

During debate, it was agreed that the framework agreement for the construction was appropriate but the process and timeframes for the procurement of the management contract should be as transparent as possible, with a contractor engaged at an earlier stage in the process.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the progress made to date with the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Project and provides the following comments to Cabinet:

- (i) That the Committee is content that the procurement of construction contractor proceed as set out in the report; and
- (ii) That due to the sensitivities of the leisure management contractor procurement, further information be provided before final decisions are made by Cabinet

**7. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.



<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
##	Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Project – Consideration of Stage 2 Proposals (Exempt Appendices)	) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Para 3 Schedule 12A refers)

8. **WINCHESTER SPORT AND LEISURE PARK PROJECT – CONSIDERATION OF STAGE 2 PROPOSALS (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**  
(Report OS177 refers)

The Committee considered the financial aspects of the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park Project (detail in exempt minute).

RESOLVED:

That the exempt appendices be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm, adjourned at 9.30pm and reconvened at 9.35pm and concluded at 10pm.