

Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda



Leisure Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Monday, 18th May, 2009

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry - The Office of the Chief Executive
Email: ahendry@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel. 01992 564246

Members:

Councillors Mrs R Gadsby (Chairman), D Wixley (Vice-Chairman), A Boyce, Miss R Cohen, D Dodeja, Ms J Hedges, S Murray, G Pritchard, B Rolfe, H Ulkun and J M Whitehouse

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 3 - 6)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) To note the attached Terms of Reference and associated Work Programme. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider and agree the notes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 23 September 2008.

6. FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SPORTS HALL AT WALTHAM ABBEY SWIMMING POOL (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the attached report.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To agree a date for the next meeting of the Panel.

LEISURE TASK AND FINISH PANEL – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title: Leisure

Status: Task and Finish

Terms of Reference:

To consider the following issues as identified by Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) Waltham Abbey Sports Centre/Swimming Pool:
 - To assess the feasibility of providing a new sports hall at the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool;
 - To conclude the assessment commenced in 2007/08 of evaluating the current and potential future management arrangements at Waltham Abbey Sports Centre.
- (2) The on-going monitoring of the Youth Initiatives Scheme.
- (3) To evaluate, with the Epping Forest College, options for the provision of sports facilities as part of the development proposals for the College.

Aims and Objectives

Waltham Abbey

- (1) To determine the feasibility of constructing a new sports hall as part of the present swimming pool complex thereby providing more modern and acceptable facilities for the local community and if feasible:
 - (a) to discuss the management of options and management fee with SLM; and
 - (b) to cease the existing dual use agreement at Waltham Abbey Sports Centre.
- (2) To scrutinise the background to any negotiations with the King Harold School in respect of the future management of the existing dual use facility so that a recommendation can be made to Cabinet in respect of either:
 - (a) the cessation of the existing dual use arrangements due to the moving of the facility to Waltham Abbey swimming pool; or
 - (b) additional investment into the existing sports centre with an on-going dual use agreement with the school for community use and a programme for the outsourcing of the facility management to a third party.

Youth Initiatives

- (1) To complete the monitoring of the 2007/08 youth initiatives and to report the outcome to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet by the autumn of 2008.
- (2) To monitor the progress of the 10 year (2007 to 2017) Play Strategy and the application of £244,000 capital funding over the next two years.

Epping Forest College

- (1) To work with the management of the Epping Forest College to explore, develop and bring forward proposals for the provision of community sports provision as part of the College expansion plans.
- (2) As part of the evaluation and consideration of any proposals to consult with the Youth Council and relevant Town and Parish Councils.

LEISURE TASK AND FINISH PANEL: WORK PROGRAMME

TIMESCALE	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
<p>Outline of requirements and recommendations re funding of Design Proposals. Report on temporary agreement progress with school.</p>	<p>1st Meeting – July 2008</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Feasibility, costs and planning issues of schemes at WASP reported back.</p>	<p>T&F October/November 2008</p>	
<p>Report back on discussions with SLM re Management fee etc.</p>		
<p>If new build recommended, report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p>	<p>O&S</p>	<p>Report to O&S in November 2008.</p>
<p>If site remaining at WASC then propose future objectives of facility.</p>		
<p>If WASP project agreed by O&S then report to Cabinet re new build request for funding of scheme 2009/10 and future budgetary changes re closure of WASC.</p>	<p>December 2008</p>	<p>Report to Cabinet in November 2008.</p>
<p>If site remaining at WASC then report recommended programme and timetable for outsourcing and Tender process.</p>		
<p>If WASP project agreed then get Cabinet confirmation of Capital Budget and SLM Management fee.</p>	<p>January/February 2008</p>	
<p>Chairman: Councillor Mrs R Gadsby</p>		

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF LEISURE TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2008
IN WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE, BROOMSTICKHALL ROAD, WALTHAM
ABBAY, EN9 1LF
AT 7.30 - 9.05 PM**

Members Present: Mrs R Gadsby (Chairman), D Wixley (Vice-Chairman), Miss R Cohen, D Dodeja, G Pritchard, H Ulkun and J M Whitehouse

Other members present: Mrs H Harding

Apologies for Absence: S Murray

Officers Present J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), A Clear (Performance and Quality Manager), B Ovens (General Manager Waltham Abbey Sports Centre) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

6. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

Noted that there were no substitute members for this meeting.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Panel noted that there were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Conduct.

8. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered its terms of reference.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked that the terms of reference be altered to include checking to see if any money was available for investment for the Epping Sports Centre. This would have to be added to the Panel's terms of reference.

The Director of the Environment and Street Scene, John Gilbert reported on the Limes Farm Play and Youth Facilities, that:

- Following comprehensive consultation with local residents and receipt of three tenders for installation of a new Children's playground at Limes Farm, SMP Play Equipment Company was selected to construct the new play facility.
- Construction work was due to commence in mid July with a completion date of 15th August, to enable use of the facility over the summer holiday period, but delays on behalf of SMP resulted in work commencing around 18th August.
- As of today, only very limited progress has been made on the site, with the installation of one piece of equipment and some safety surfacing. Vandalism of the site and construction vehicles had been an issue, with a dumper truck

and tractor being targeted over the last two weeks. Inclement weather has been cited as a cause of the delay. SMP have not confirmed when the installation is due to be completed.

Youth Facilities:

- Consultation with young people on Limes Farm identified a clear desire for a challenging 'Parkour' (free running) facility. A play company was commissioned to produce a bespoke piece of equipment for the site, but following extensive consideration by Officers including Health & Safety & Insurance, a report from the Health & Safety Executive and Legal Advice, a decision was taken not to proceed with the installation of a parkour facility.
- Officers are now re-consulting with young people as to a suitable alternative facility.

The work with Epping Forest College had not taken place as yet.

9. TOUR OF THE CENTRE

The Panel were taken on a tour of the Sports Centre by the Centre's General Manager, Bill Ovens. He offered an insight into the facilities available and answered questions from the members.

The Panel noted that:

- It was a dual use sports centre used in conjunction with King Harold School;
- It was open for public use from 6pm to 11pm weekdays, from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and from 4pm to 9.30pm on Sundays;
- It was also open on school holidays from 9am to 11pm;
- There were five income generating areas: the bar made about £25k per annum; the main sports hall generated about £43k per annum; the two squash courts about £7k per annum; the dance studio about £9.5k per annum and the gym about £4.5k per annum;
- The centre received about £25k per annum from King Harold School for management, upkeep and maintenance;
- The building is designed to "school standards" and this is not the same as modern public leisure facilities;
- If the Council wanted to update the building facilities it would have to pay for it itself, since there would be no financial support available from the school;
- The standards of the changing rooms were well below what was expected from a public leisure facility.
- The centre generated around £143,000 of income, including the £25,000 from the school. The centre was therefore heavily subsidised, as indeed were all the Council sports centres.

Councillor Ulkun asked what had been done to the centre recently. Mr Ovens said that they had a new sports hall roof installed about three years ago. Unfortunately they still had leaks. The heating system had also failed on about a half dozen occasions. It took time for the school to respond and organise any maintenance work. The School had recently installed a new lighting system in the main hall which cost about £25k. Unfortunately if a light fitting got broken it would cost about a thousand pounds to repair as they had to erect scaffolding to get to the fitting.

Councillor Mrs Gadsby asked if it was built for joint use. Alan Clear, the Performance and Quality Manager said that it was built for joint use but that was thirty years ago. It was built to far lower standards than was acceptable nowadays. One of the main problems was that it had inadequate toilet and changing facilities.

Councillor Miss Cohen asked when the school made decisions such as that about the lighting; did they consult the Centre's management. Mr Ovens said that they did not. They were reliant on the school.

10. TO VIEW THE WALTHAM ABBEY SWIMMING POOL BUILDING

The Panel decided not to visit the Swimming Pool that night.

11. RELOCATION OF SPORTS HALL FACILITIES FROM WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE TO WALTHAM ABBEY SWIMMING POOL

The Panel considered the report on the relocation of the sports hall facilities from the Waltham Abbey Sports Centre to the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool.

They noted that the current facility was popular with local people and families; the report puts forward ideas for similar use but in a modern setting.

The Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool (WASP) has a 25 metre swimming pool, five lanes wide, with a small teaching pool. There is also a new dance studio and a modern gym / fitness studio and there is a reasonable size car park. The proposed new area will need new changing room facilities so that there will be separate changing facilities for pool users and for the other sports. There were no significant highway problems highlighted, although Essex County Council was still considering this. There would be a small increase in the parking spaces available.

The missing figure under item one in the options part of the report was considered to be about £100,000. This would be for Architect Fees, a Structural Engineer, M&E Services Engineer, a Quantity Engineer, a Project Manager and a CDM Co-ordinator. If the Panel did not decide to go with this option then they would need to decide what would happen to the sports centre post 2010 when the current contract ends.

The new building along with the existing one will have to be brought up to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards. It would need a lift installed and the rest of the building suitably modified.

Councillor Pritchard asked, if the new build went ahead, what would be the loss of facilities to the local area. He was told that there would be the loss of two squash courts, a dance studio which housed martial arts (but this could go into the new sports hall), and maybe the hardcore gym users. There was also the loss of the bar facility. There had been 3 bar functions so far this year and 7 last year. There have also been 5 children's parties this year and 9 last year.

Alan Clear commented that there was no Crèche at the Swimming Pool site and if this was provided then children parties could be held there when needed.

Councillor Pritchard said the general facilities of the area needed to be considered along with what would be lost and what was needed. Councillor Mrs Gadsby said it depended on what we wanted to offer the public; there were also the new Town Mead facilities.

Councillor Whitehouse said that they were there to consider community leisure. Is this being driven by need or finances (savings) or was it just an interesting idea. No doubt it would be offering a better service but would it generate extra income? The pool was important, squash and gym less so. There needed to be more clarity on how the funding was to work and what was SLM's view on this. John Gilbert said that the reason this was being considered was because the dual use agreement with King Harold School would come to an end in March 2010 and there was no guarantee that it would be renewed. If the Council stays here there will still be all the problems seen here tonight to contend with. This centre is not part of the SLM contract and could not be bolted on. A judgement on how to manage and bring this centre up to standards would have to be made if we decided to stay. This would be problematic as the building was not ours.

Councillor Ulkun said that King Harold School would be redeveloping their school, but will it be the school only. Mr Gilbert said it was his understanding that it would not include this building. Councillor Ulkun commented that the school may one day consider that they do not want to continue with the agreement.

Councillor Miss Cohen commented that if the Council moved out, the school may not be able to keep the building going. What will they do? Alan Clear said that they could provide a gym in their school rebuild and extend the school, taking up some of the present car park. Or the Head Teacher may want to demolish the centre and build a new school with a new gym.

Councillor Mrs Harding recommended that the Panel went for a feasibility study, as they needed facts; although £100,000 seemed a lot of money for this. John Gilbert said that this could be looked at again and try to get some reductions in the costs. It was more than just architectural drawings; it was also to see if it was feasible to see if the Council could get permission as WASP was built on green belt land.

Councillor Wixley asked if the new site was big enough and has the school said what it would do. He was told that it was and as said before, the school would develop their school site. Councillor Wixley continued that with the Olympics coming up a sports centre would be a high profile thing. Also the health of the people of Waltham Abbey had to be considered. This was not a particularly attractive part of the Green Belt so should not pose a problem in the development of the swimming pool. The footpath could be redirected. What would happen to the staff here? He was told that the pool would probably only need a couple of extra staff, but that would have to be considered at the appropriate time.

The attitude of SLM was unknown but they would probably be receptive to the new facilities and would be looking to EFDC for the Capital spends.

There was a very tight timeline, especially as the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting had been cancelled.

Councillor Mrs Gadsby said she thought that the sports centre was very old and she was in favour of moving to the new pool site, although £100,000 was a lot. Waltham Abbey needed a good sports facility and pool combined.

Councillor Whitehouse said it was potentially exciting for Waltham Abbey, but the council needed more detailed figures and to begin negotiations with SLM.

Councillor Ulkun asked how many square metres the proposed new hall would be. He was told 594sq.mtrs. He said the estimated price of £2-3million was quite high for

this size of build and could probably be done cheaper. He was told that Sports England quoted about £2.4 million for a sports facility. It was the figure being used at present, but it may change. Also the figure included the changing rooms, increasing the car park and possibly redesigning the reception.

Councillor Mrs Harding wanted to give a vote of thanks to Bill Ovens and the rest of his staff for keeping the Sports Centre going, thinking out of the box and generating so many revenue ideas.

John Gilbert summed up by saying the Panel needed to decide if the facility was needed for Waltham Abbey; was there a need to explore an alternative provision, was there a need for a feasibility study and to explore if there was a cheaper way to carry this out. If agreed a more comprehensive report would go to the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 6th November.

RESOLVED:

1. That a lower costing for a feasibility study be sought if possible; and
2. That the Panel recommend to Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the new build is a feasible option and that a funding of £100,000 (or lower if 1 above could be identified in time for the O&S Meeting) of DDF be sought to enable architect's drawings and a costed project to be created and a planning application be submitted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee Secretary to identify a suitable date towards the end of November for the next meeting of this Panel.

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SCRUTINY



Report to Leisure Task & Finish Panel

Date of meeting: 18 May 2009

Portfolio: Leisure & Young People

Subject: Feasibility study on the construction of a new sports hall at the site of the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool

Officer contact for further information: J Gilbert / Laura MacNeill

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry

Recommendation(s):

- (1) To note the receipt and content of the feasibility study of the construction of a new sports hall at the site of the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool;**
- (2) To recommend to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that the proposals be further developed to enable:
 - (a) a planning pre-application submission to be made; and**
 - (b) subject to the satisfactory of the pre-application a full planning application to be made.****
- (3) That the proposal be progressed to the pre-planning application stage;**
- (4) That capital provision in the sum of £1.70 million be sought for the construction of the new sports hall; and**
- (5) That consideration be given to the time period between the cessation of the Joint Use Agreement with the Governors of King Harold School in January 2010 and the earliest likely date of opening of any new facility in the Spring of 2011.**

Background

1. At the last meeting of this Panel in November 2008, it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that a feasibility study be undertaken into the construction of a new sports hall on the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool site, to replace the facilities which might be lost due to the cessation of the joint use agreement between the Council and the governors of King Harold School, in respect of the Waltham Abbey Sports Centre.
2. This recommendation was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting in November 2008 along with a recommendation to Council for the provision of a capital sum of £6,000 to undertake the feasibility.
3. Stace were appointed to carry out the feasibility with the following brief:
 - (i) undertake the feasibility but without intrusive investigations;
 - (ii) assess what surveys etc might be required to take a proposal to the planning application stage;
 - (iii) provide a high level budget estimate;
 - (iv) produce indicative sketch plans; and
 - (v) provide an indication of the fees required to bring a proposal to a conclusion
4. The core requirements for a new facility were identified as:
 - (i) a sports hall 35m by 17m (4 badminton courts);

- (ii) changing rooms;
- (iii) a creche area;
- (iv) a storage area for the sports hall;
- (v) reconfiguration of the existing reception area; and
- (vi) additional car parking

The feasibility study

5. The final feasibility study was received from Stace in March 2009, copies of which have been provided to Members of the Panel. The study has demonstrated that, in general terms and subject to planning consent and additional site investigations, such a development could be accommodated on the existing site, forming an integral part of the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool complex. This is ably demonstrated by the sketch drawing in Appendix A of the study.

6. The study does indicate a wide range of additional surveys and additional design which will need to be undertaken. These are broken down into two areas:

- (a) those required to take the project to the stage of seeking planning consent (RIBA stage D); and
- (b) those required to see the proposal through to completion (RIBA stages E to K)

Both of these stages are estimated at around £130,000.

7. The Panel should note at this stage that whilst this is a clearly a capital scheme, should the project not be completed, all the capital monies spent on the scheme revert to revenue, which could have a serious impact upon the Council's continuing services budget at what is already a difficult time. However, if Members wish the feasibility to be taken further, additional capital monies will have to be allocated to enable that to happen. It is therefore suggested that the proposal only be developed as far as the planning pre-application stage, at which point it should become clear whether there is any realistic prospect of the proposal receiving a full planning consent. This intermediate stage reduces the exposure of the Council to the resourcing difficulties of capital expenditure reverting to revenue if the proposal cannot not be taken forwards.

8. The feasibility study indicates a construction cost of around £1.14 million with associated fees of £260,000, making an total of £1.4 million. There are however a number of significant key omissions from the costings at this stage, including fixtures and fittings, a new electricity sub station, contaminated land issues, diversions of existing services and unforeseen underground works. Based on other capital projects it is recommended that a contingency sum of between 5% and 10% is provided for, especially where ground conditions might be uncertain. A realistic total project cost for the project would therefore be £1.70 million and it is suggested that Cabinet be requested to allocate this capital sum into the Council's capital programme.

9. The feasibility study also puts forward an indicative time line for the proposal should it be agreed. If a project start were to be made in July 2009, completion could be anticipated in around March 2011 (i.e. a project period of 21 months). However, given current time constraints and the time needed for the proposal to be considered and approved through the Council's democratic processes, it is unlikely that a decision could be made to proceed by July of this year. The Joint use Agreement with the King Harold School is due to end in mid January 2010. If the School Governors elect to close the Sports Centre, this will leave a period of at least 15 months where there will be no replacement sporting or community provisions available. As part of the management of the cessation of the Joint Use Agreement, officers will discuss with the school how they may wish to deal with this time period and offer support to them where it is practical to do so. However, it is not suggested that the Joint Use Agreement be extended, since the Council's CSB budget already takes into account the savings which will arise from the closure of the Centre, and the underpinning rationale for the ending of the agreement, this being the condition of the buildings etc. remain, with continued deterioration.

Resources

10. The core resource components have been described in the section above, but for clarity this section will set out the resourcing implications in more detail in tabular form.

Item	Est. capital cost £
Develop proposal to planning stage (RIBA stage D)	130,000
Develop and oversee proposal to completion	130,000
Main construction costs	1,133,000
Other costs – sports equipment sub station	46,250 100,000
EFDC officer costs (estimated)	TBC
Total construction related costs	TBC
Contingency @ 10%	TBC
Total project cost	1,700,000

11. It can be seen from the above table that the total capital cost is estimated at £1.70 million. The use of this capital carries with it a revenue consequence added to which are the direct revenue costs of operating the new facility. This results in an overall annual revenue as set out below:

Item	Est. revenue cost £
Use of £1.70 million of capital at 2%	34,000
Additional SLM management fee	15,350
20% NNDR	TBC
Total additional revenue	£40,000

12. The report to Cabinet in December 2008 identified revenue savings of £202,500 per annum, from 201/11 onwards, arising from the decision to cease the joint use agreement with King Harold School. The revenue expenditure identified above will therefore reduce those CSB savings to £162,500 per annum.

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