

Bakers Lane Leisure Centre, Epping Feasibility Study

QUALIS COMMERCIAL

08 December 2020



THE SPORTS CONSULTANCY



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Press &
Starkey

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Appendix 1: Press & Starkey Capital Cost Report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Sports Consultancy, in partnership with Pozzoni and Press & Starkey were originally appointed by Epping Forest District Council ('the Council') in October 2018, to undertake an initial feasibility study and business case exploring the future options for Epping Sports Centre. The output of that feasibility study was a report dated March 2019 which recommended an appropriate facility mix on a site at St John's Lane, Epping.
- 1.2 The Council have since set up Qualis Commercial Limited to build out developments on council-owned land in the district. One of these developments will be the replacement facility for Epping Sports Centre on Hemnall Street.
- 1.3 As was the priority in 2018/19, the new leisure centre should be financially sustainable, while meeting the physical activity and leisure needs of the local population. Through Qualis Commercial, the Council is seeking to provide a financially viable and future proofed facility mix that will encourage a wide customer base to participate in a range of leisure activities for the life of the centre.
- 1.4 The site at St John's Lane is now being considered for alternative uses and the Bakers Lane surface car park has been identified as a new potential site for the new leisure centre. This feasibility report therefore focuses on an appraisal of the viability of a new leisure centre on the Bakers Lane site.
- 1.5 Where appropriate, we have updated the research, analysis and stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the previous study.
- 1.6 The feasibility report presents and appraises suitable options for the new leisure centre with the primary focus on:
 - a) Cost and revenue implications
 - b) Capital costs based on designs provided by Pozzoni (who are reporting to Qualis Commercial through their design partner, Corstophine & Wright).

2. CURRENT FACILITY

- 2.1 Epping Sports Centre was built in 1970 and is consequently reaching the end of its designed life. Places Leisure have invested in the facility since being awarded the leisure management contact in 2017, although the benefits in terms of driving greater usage and higher net revenue generation have failed to achieve expectations. The site remains compromised by inadequate car parking, structural failings, limited studio space and no swimming pool or café.
- 2.2 As set out in our March 2019 report, condition surveys indicated significant potential costs in maintaining the current facility. Moreover, under the terms of the management contract with Places Leisure, responsibility for the considerable cost of major repairs and asset maintenance will transfer to the Council next year (i.e. at the end of Year 5 of the contract). The current site was identified in the Council's Local Plan for the development of 43 residential dwellings.
- 2.3 The Council has previously considered two alternative sites for the new leisure centre (North Weald Airfield (CM16 6HR) and St Johns Road Epping (CM16 5JU). Qualis is now focused on the current site on Bakers Lane, as shown opposite. This is currently a pay and display surface car park with 141 spaces, owned and operated by the Council.

Figure 1 Bakers Lane Site Red Line



3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic Context

3.1 Section 3 of the March 2019 report set out a summary of a detailed review of the Council’s strategy and policy documents (including the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, Local Plan Submission Version December 2017, Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028, and the Built Leisure Facilities Strategy 2018). These findings continue to remain relevant; rather than replicate them here, we would recommend referring back to the previous report for the strategic context.

Needs Analysis and Research

3.2 It is, however, worth reiterating the following research relating specifically to swimming pools, sports halls and fitness gyms, which sets the context for the recommended facility mix.

Swimming pools

3.3 There are currently 17 swimming pools spread across 11 sites across the District. Places Leisure operate the swimming pools at Loughton Leisure Centre, Ongar Leisure Centre and Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool, with the remaining sites owned and managed by a combination of private operators and education providers.

3.4 The needs assessment has identified that as a whole District, the quantity of water space is adequate to meet the current demand of residents.

3.5 However, whilst there is enough water space in the District to meet demand, not all the water space is in the right place and therefore not all the demand from Epping Forest District residents can be satisfied.

3.6 Moreover, the estimated increase in population between 2017 and 2033 is projected to generate a 9.5% increase in demand for swimming pools in the weekly peak periods of weekday evenings and weekend days.

3.7 Ongar Leisure Centre was built in 1977 and is reaching the end of its design life. Swimming pool provision here requires replacement or modernisation. However, in the meantime, the Council is currently replacing the wetside plant and equipment. This should be complete imminently and is likely to extend the life of the facility, albeit to a limited extent.

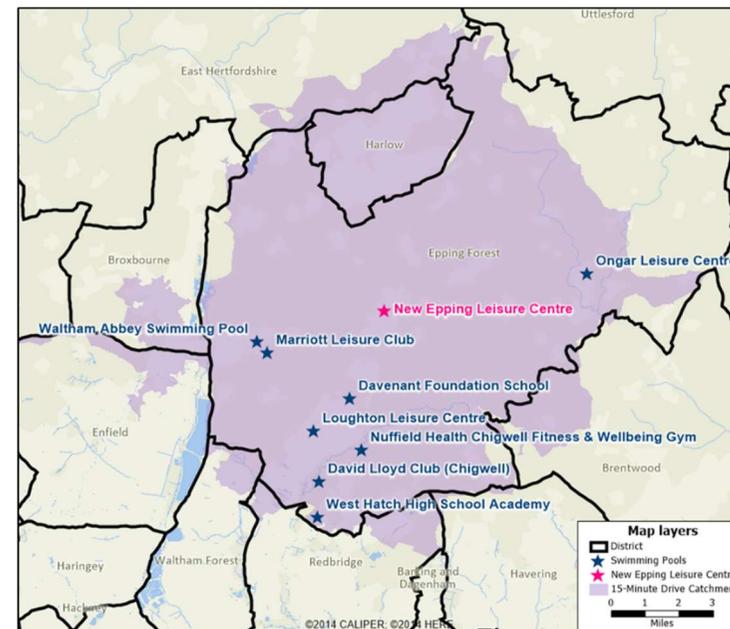
3.8 A significant amount of demand is exported outside of Epping Forest District, which equates to 10 lanes of a 25m pool, meaning that only 56% of the demand for swimming is met by facilities based in Epping Forest District.

3.9 The supply for swimming provision is projected to become a deficit by 2033. There is a need to at least maintain the existing quantity of water space to meet the projected demand for swimming up to 2033 and beyond.

3.10 Another focus should also be on improving the quality and accessibility of the existing facility stock.

3.11 Figure 2 illustrates the existing swimming pools in the District within a 15-minute drive time. As can be seen, large areas of the District are currently able to access a swimming pool within a 15-minute drive time catchment, however, of the facilities mapped only; Loughton Leisure Centre, Ongar Leisure Centre and Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre offer pay and play swimming. Davenant Foundation School and West Hatch High School Academy are available for hire by sports clubs and community associations.

Figure 2 Swimming Pools in Epping District (within 15-minutes of Bakers Lane)



3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 3.12 During our consultation, Swim England stated that a main pool and learner pool with a movable floor would benefit the catchment of Epping (this would also help maximise usage and programming of the pool which would help support its financial sustainability). The rationalisation of current facilities should also then be explored, perhaps lending itself to community pools that become sustainable in a different way. Ongar could provide an opportunity for a community pool in few years' time.
- 3.13 Epping District Swimming Club expressed a preference for a pool to be included in the facility mix for the new leisure centre. The club were disappointed that no spectator seating was included at the Waltham Abbey Centre and would like to see this remedied in Epping. Timing blocks and an integrated timing system would be very beneficial for the club and if these were provided, they would consider moving their home base to Epping (a contribution for these however, would have to be made by the club if they wished to see these special features added).
- 3.14 The provision of a swim school (i.e. swimming lessons) would help underpin the sustainability of the leisure centre as it represents a significant revenue generator. The core swim school market is made up of 3-12 year-old children, of which there are 1,673 within a 10-minute drivetime catchment of the Bakers Lane site. Allowing for competing supply from other swimming pools beyond the catchment, we estimate a new pool in Epping would attract a swim school of around 1,030 pupils.

Sports Halls

- 3.15 The volume of sports hall space expressed in courts is 3.3 courts per 10,000 residents, which is far lower than the England average of 4.3. There are also only five 4-court halls, with no halls larger than this. **When all supply and demand is taken into consideration, there is a deficit of sports hall provision. There is an estimated unmet demand of 2.5 courts.**
- 3.16 The increase in population between 2017 and 2033 is projected to generate a 9.5% increase in demand for sports halls in weekly peak periods.
- 3.17 Epping Sports Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre are the only two facilities in the District that offer pay and play sports provision. The feedback from the public consultation has borne out the considerable support for a new sports hall and **it is therefore strongly recommended that the sports hall at Epping Sports Centre be reprovided at the new centre.**
- 3.18 Only 50% of demand is met by Epping Forest District facilities. FPM analysis indicates that Epping District based facilities are only 58% full. Consultations indicate that there is spare capacity at both Epping Sports Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre. The quality of facility at both sites is very poor and a contributing factor to the level of spare capacity. A limited number of people wish to use the site.
- 3.19 Sports hall provision across the District requires significant modernisation, with existing facilities at Ongar Leisure Centre and Epping Sports Centre nearing end-of-life. It is recommended that high quality sports hall facilities are provided in the North of the District, in an area that is accessible by areas such as North Weald, Epping and Ongar, as well as the west of the District towards Harlow.
- 3.20 To meet the projected needs of the District's residents over the period of this strategy it is recommended that options are explored to increase the provision of pay and play facilities by 12 badminton courts. This should be pursued through a combination of the development of new facilities, alongside the increased supply of 3rd party facilities such as education facilities.
- 3.21 **As part of any new development it is key that gymnastics facilities are prioritised** to meet the growing needs of residents and reduce waiting lists of the two major clubs in the area.

Updated consultation with NGBs (regarding Sports Hall provision)

- 3.22 We have undertaken new consultation with various National Governing Bodies of sport (cricket, football, netball, badminton, and basketball) to help provide a sound evidence base to underpin the sports hall recommendations. These are set out in Table 1 on the following pages. This has identified demonstrable demand for the facility and sets out their likely needs in terms of the specification of the space (for example: lighting, flooring, storage, wall colour etc), which should be taken into consideration during the next stage of detailed design. The considerable demand from evidenced from this consultation underpins the assumptions in the operating business plan.

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION



Table 1 Summary of NGB consultation in relation to the proposed Sports Hall

NGB	1. Do you support the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within a new Epping Sports Centre development?	2. Are there any specific issues that should be considered in the design of the space?	3. User groups that should be engaged with in the future
ECB (Essex County Cricket)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. There are 16 clubs that are in need of an indoor facility. The ECB is available to advise in detail as the designs progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sports hall will need to be designed for technical training (hardball) and match play (composite ball). Match play with a composite ball can be accommodated in most halls. Minimum standards for flooring, lighting, nets and walls are laid out in ECB TS3 guidance. Storage for equipment for such as bowling machines should be included within the designs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abridge Cricket Club Buckhurst Hill Cricket Club Coopersale Cricket Club Epping Cricket Club Epping Foresters Cricket Club Fives Cricket Club High Beach Cricket Club Loughton Cricket Club Matching Green Cricket Club Nazeing Common Cricket Club North Weald Cricket Club Ongar Cricket Club Roding Valley Cricket Club South Loughton Cricket Club Theydon Bois Cricket Club Willingale Cricket Club
Essex FA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. There is a growing demand for Futsal given its player development benefits for both Futsal (as a game in its own right) as well as for development of grassroots football players. Essex FA Futsal youth provision has grown considerably in the last few seasons and more clubs/teams are utilising it as a winter training tool but also looking for space for emerging Futsal leagues to develop. Sports hall space is at a premium and as always a challenge to get hall time when competing with other indoor sports. Within Epping itself there are not many spaces suitable for Futsal that is readily available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the FA guidance on Futsal facilities for technical specification. Storage for suitable futsal goals and weights should be considered. Goals that can be fixed into the floor with a lock (Can be removed as and when needed) should be considered. Sufficient run-off from the touchline of the court to the perimeter wall is required. Spectator viewing from outside the sports hall is preferable. If not, sufficient run-off for spectators is required. Beaulieu School in Chelmsford is a good example facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buckhurst Hill FC Colebrook Royals FC Chigwell FC Epping Youth FC GFA Loughton Neighbouring Harlow also has quite a bit of Futsal provision. the following clubs / companies drive Futsal regularly within their grassroots programme and would be useful consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mazza Futsal Risden Wood Parringdon

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

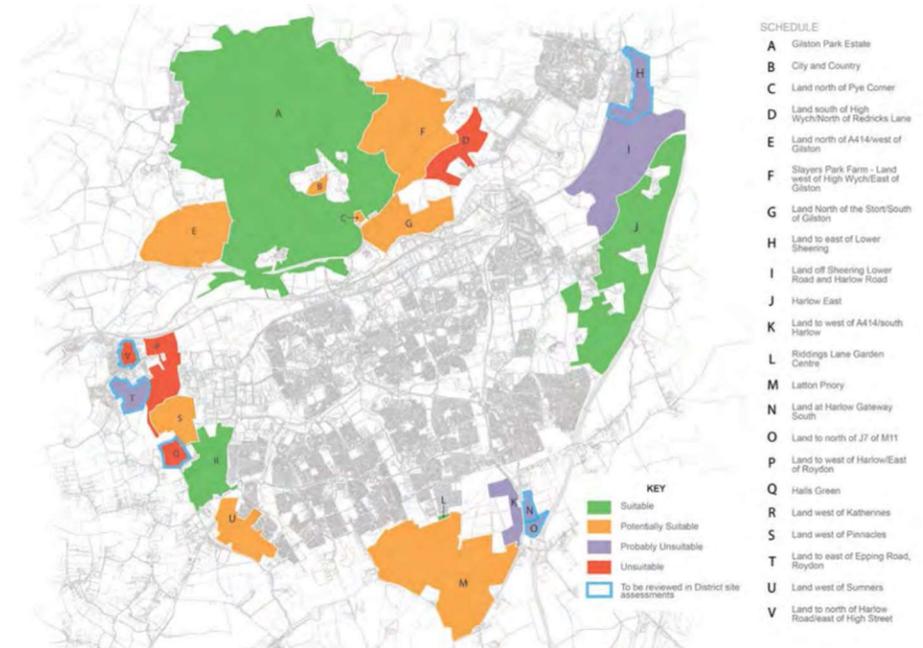


NGB	1. Do you support the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within a new Epping Sports Centre development?	2. Are there any specific issues that should be considered in the design of the space?	3. User groups that should be engaged with in the future
Netball England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. The inclusion of a Sport England compliant sports hall that includes netball court line markings is essential, particularly as it serves as the only public centre for the wider district area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend that Sport England's 'Developing the Right Sports Hall' document is used to inform the overall design of the space, and that the specifications for 'Community' level netball be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophie Johnson, Netball Development Community Coach who runs an England Netball Walking Netball group at the current centre.
Badminton England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. Badminton England were extremely concerned at the original omission of a sports hall in an area of good badminton participation; Epping Forest has the highest rate of twice a month participation for badminton of any local authority in the Country and very high levels of annual participation showing very strong demand. The County has strong ambitions to grow junior participation and increase opportunities for talent development. The badminton facilities strategy (2019) shows a significant shortfall of quality facilities to meet demand currently, exacerbated by the development plans highlighted above and population growth in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Badminton England's facility guidance (2011) with particular attention to the sections on lighting and walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epping Badminton Club – 35 members No Strings Badminton sessions - Monday 7:30-10 and Friday 9:30am – 12 (organised by centre) Junior Badminton – Monday 5-7pm (organised by centre)
Basketball England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 4+ or 5 court sports hall would be preferred for Basketball 		

Health and Fitness Gyms

- 3.23 A Leisure Database Report was commissioned in order to understand and assess the potential demand for fitness provision at the proposed new Epping Leisure Centre. The overall estimated demand for the new Epping Leisure Centre is 2,350. This is the total number of members that the Leisure Database Company feel could be achieved. This includes allowance for 20% of the total to travel from outside the estimated 10-minute drivetime catchment area. It is known that 18% currently do so and this may increase slightly with the addition of swimming facilities. Pre-COVID, there were 1,650 members at Epping Sports Centre, so this estimate represents a potential increase of 700 members.
- 3.24 Applying a comfortable ratio of 23 members per fitness station indicates an appropriate size of gym to be c100 stations (c450m²).
- 3.25 Allowance has also been made for the new homes that are due to be built in Epping and North Weald Bassett, where there are no current fitness facilities. We understand there could be approximately 1,305 new homes in Epping which could house almost 2,000 new adult residents. There could also be approx. 2,700 new homes in North Weald Bassett which we estimate could house just over 4,000 new adult residents.
- 3.26 We have also taken into consideration population growth to the south of Harlow, particularly as part of the Latton Priory development. There is substantial housing development planned for Harlow and the surrounding areas within the next 10-15 years. This is outlined in The Harlow Strategic Site Assessment Report (2016)¹. The potential development includes sites to the south of Harlow, within 10-minutes' drive of the Bakers Lane site. Site 'M' showing on the map indicates the proposed area the Latton Priory development. This is designated as a 'potentially suitable' site for development so is likely to be realised.

Figure 3 Harlow Housing Development Assessment Map



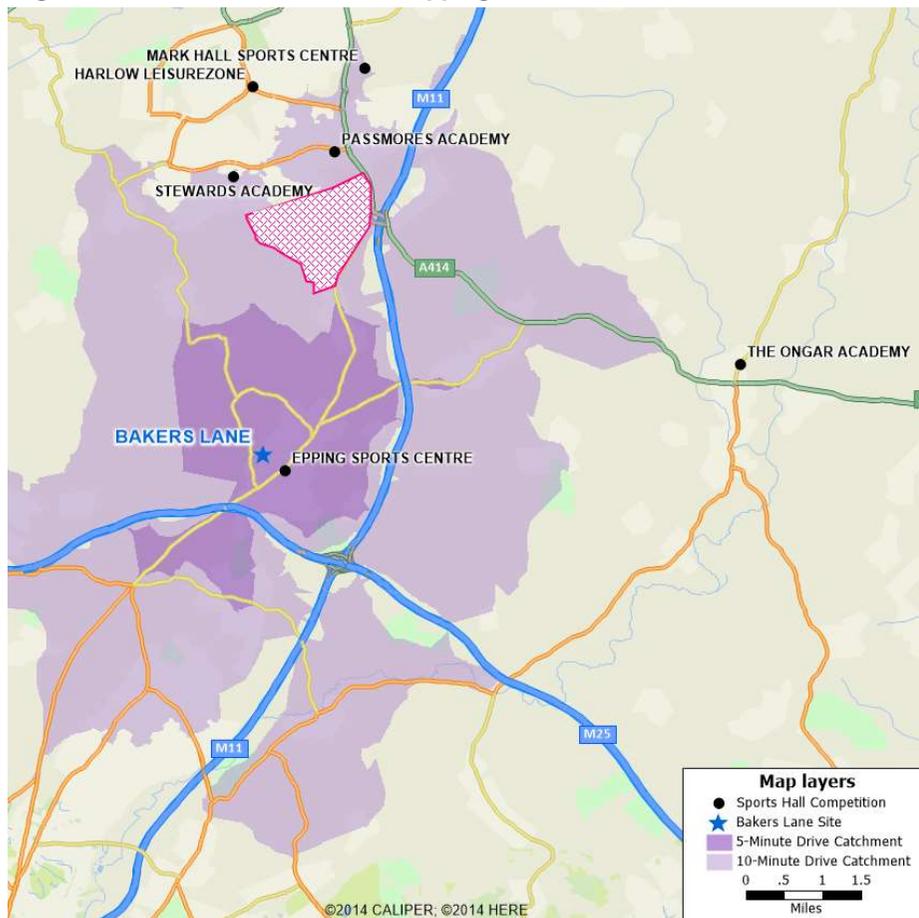
- 3.27 The Latton Priory development site is 260 hectares in size and has a potential capacity of 2,012 units. The Harlow Strategic Site Assessment Report assumes 1,050 units will be developed by 2033. This is guided by restrictions in the site and mitigation of the environmental impact. Assuming an average occupancy rate of 2.4 persons per household, this represents a population of 2,520. If the site were developed to full capacity then there could be a population of approximately 5,000 persons.
- 3.28 The development includes an aspiration to improve transport links to the M11 and north-south links within Harlow. This would improve links between Harlow and Epping and further increase the impact of this development on potential users of a new leisure centre in Epping.

¹ <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EB1500-Harlow-Strategic-Site-Assessment-AECOM-2016.pdf>

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

3.29 The map below shows the Latton Priory Development (as a pink hatched area) in relation to the Bakers Lane Catchment. It is firmly within the 10-minute drive catchment.

Figure 4 Bakers Lane Catchment Mapping



Squash Courts

3.30 Epping Squash Club (located at Epping Sports Centre) would ideally like to see the new centre have four squash courts to replace the two that were lost when Epping Sports Centre was redeveloped, with membership numbers dropping from approximately 75, to 30 as a result. The Essex Junior Grand Prix Tournament can also no longer be hosted at the club.

3.31 As an absolute minimum however, two squash courts are needed in the new centre with a viewing area for spectators. The club are also keen to see a café in the new centre.

Sport England

3.32 Whilst Sport England is not a statutory consultee for the project as the Bakers Lane site does not involve plans to build on sports pitches, they would however like to be informed of the outcome of the study and provide technical support as required when the project develops. Sport England raised concerns about the lack of sports hall and squash court provision in response to the proposed facility mix for a previous iteration of the Bakers Lane scheme as part of the public consultation exercise, which they set out in an email to Puttock Brown dated 8th September 2020.

Car Parking

3.33 Whilst the Bakers Lane site is not large enough to accommodate a car park, we understand a new multi storey facility will be provided on a nearby site within comfortable walking distance. We have assumed that free parking will be available for users of the leisure centre.

4. RECOMMENDED FACILITY MIX

4. PROPOSED FACILITY MIX

4.1 The proposed facility mix is based on the research, analysis and consultation set out in the previous section. The following table compares the proposed facility mix with the existing provision at Epping Sports Centre, and that recommended for the original St John's Road scheme.

Table 2 Recommended Facility Mix

Activity Area	Current Facility Mix	St John's Scheme	Bakers Lane Leisure Centre	Notes
Main pool	None	6 lane x 25m pool	6 lane x 25m pool	
Learner pool	None	15m x 10m with moveable floor	15m x 10m with moveable floor	
Sauna & steam room	None	Sauna/steam room/spa (poolside)	None	This is unlikely to generate much additional income and is not considered essential (bearing in mind the constraints of the site)
Spectator seating to pool hall	None	Yes	Yes	
Sports hall	4 courts	4 courts	4 courts	
Health and fitness	80 stations	120 stations	100 stations	The St John's scheme allowed for an additional comfort factor in the size of the gym to accommodate the 2,350 expected members. This has been reduced in the Bakers Lane scheme owing to the size constraints of the size
Multi activity studio	2 x small studios	2 x studios (30 persons per class)	2 x studios (30 persons per class)	
Spin studio	1 x studio	1 x studio (64sqm)	1 x studio (64sqm)	
Multi-purpose room (meeting/crèche/parties)	1 x room	1 x room (100sqm)	None	There is no need for a multi-purpose room. This was included in the St John's scheme as compensation for the loss of the town council community hall, which was due to be demolished to make way for the leisure centre.
Reception with retail area	Included	Included	Included	
Café	No	Yes	No	Coffees and snacks potentially available from the reception servery, with limited provision of café style seating.
Squash courts	x 2	x 2	x 2	
Dedicated parking spaces	41	130	None	Parking provided by new multi-storey car park on an adjacent site.

5. FACILITY DESIGNS

5. INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGNS

5.1 Based on the recommended facility mix, the following images show the development of Pozzoni's leisure centre designs from concept sketch to floor plans and elevations. The centre will be arranged over 3 floors (basement, ground and first floors).

Figure 5 Sketch Plans - Basement

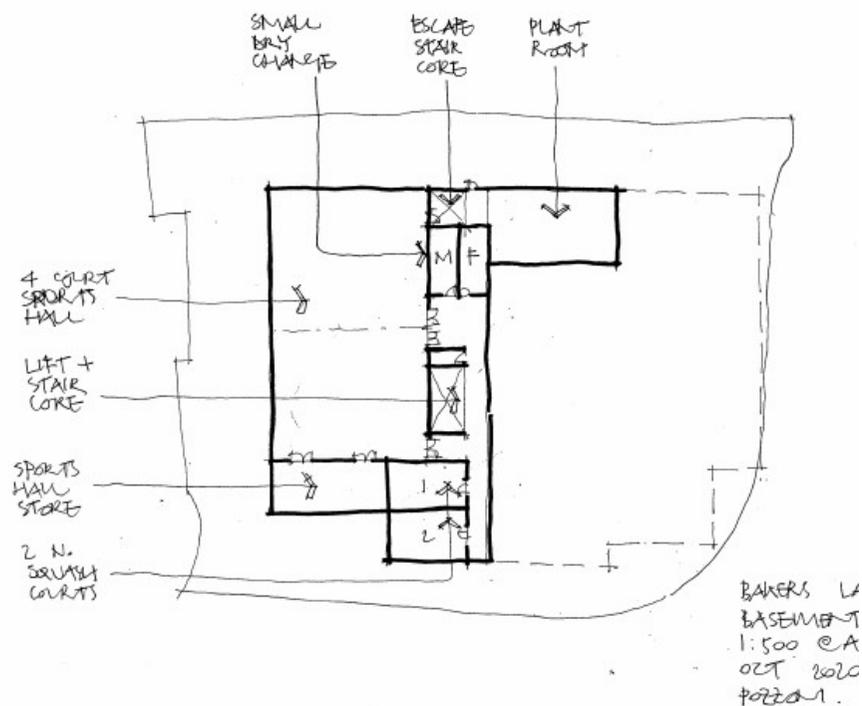


Figure 6 Sketch Plans – Ground Floor

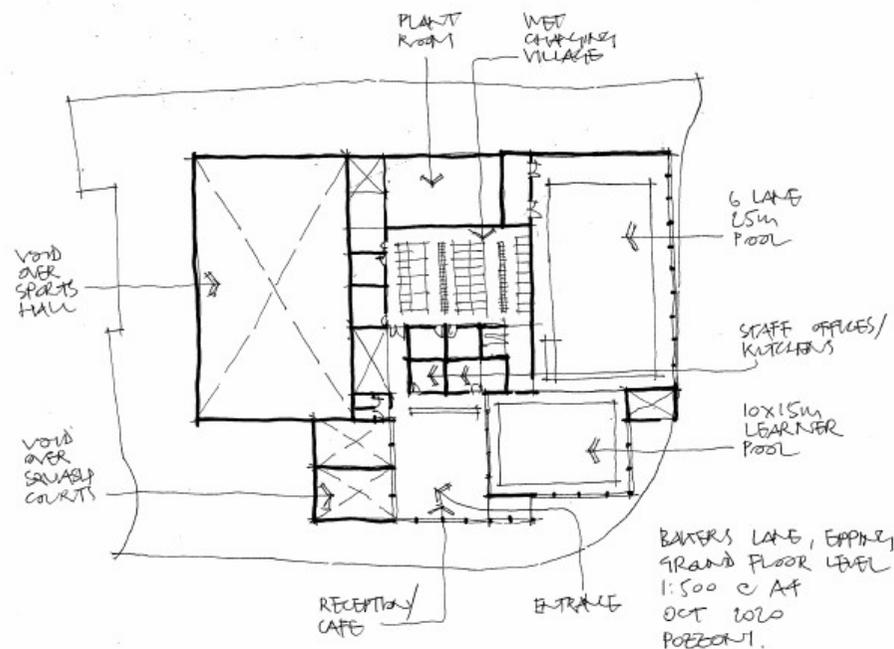


Figure 7 Sketch Plans – First Floor

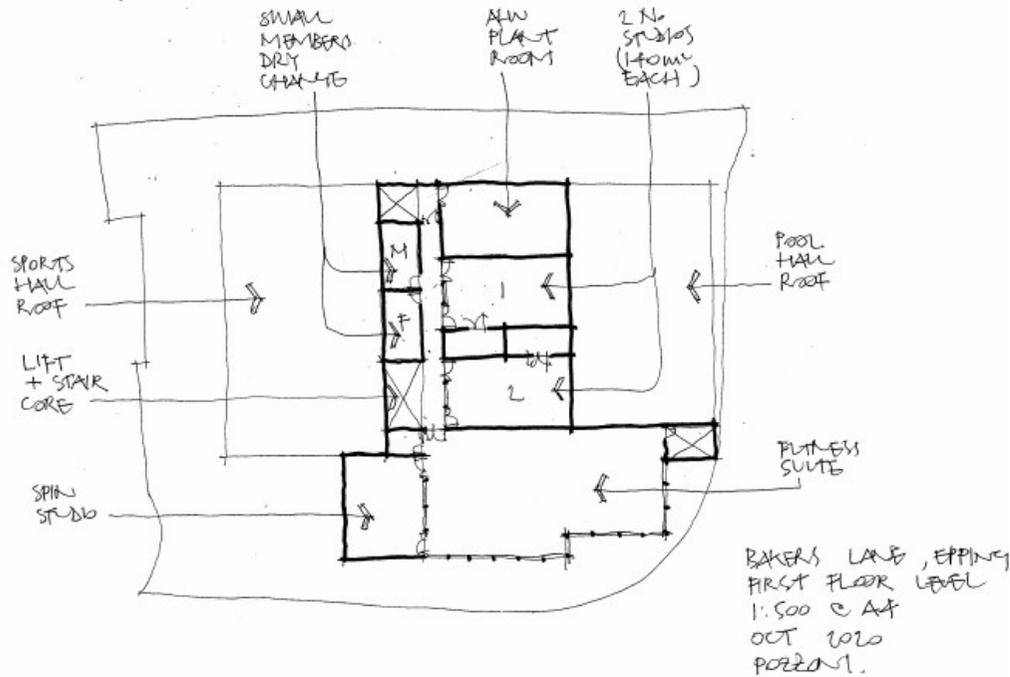


Figure 8 Basement Floor Plan



Figure 9 Ground Floor Plan

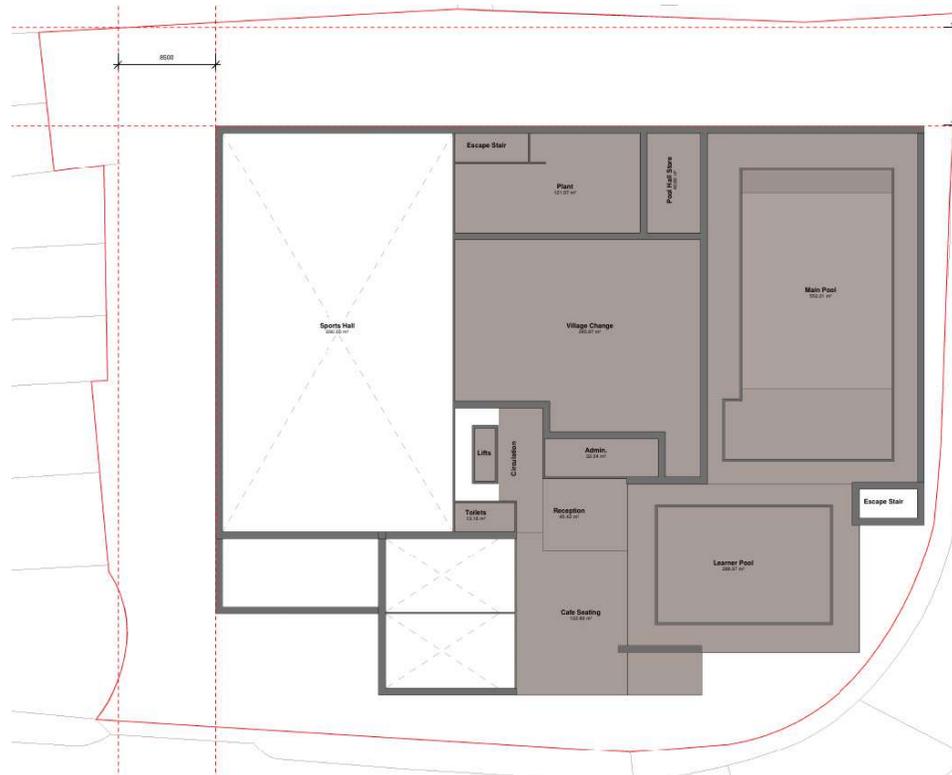


Figure 10 First Floor Plan



5. FACILITY DESIGNS



Figure 11 Bakers Lane Context Views



Figure 12 Bakers Lane Sections

