

Cabinet

20 June 2018



Title	Replacement of Spelthorne Leisure Centre – Consultation 1		
Purpose of the report	To make a decision		
Report Author	Lee O’Neil, Deputy Chief Executive		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Ian Harvey Councillor Maureen Attewell	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	Clean and Safe Environment		
Recommendations	<p>Cabinet is asked to:</p> <p>(a) Approve the proposals to consult with the borough’s residents, businesses and other stakeholders on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed site, and • The proposed facilities mix and additional options for consideration, for the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre <p>(b) Authorise the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, as Chair of the Council’s Leisure Centre Development Working Group, to consider the results of the consultation exercise and decide on the business case for any amendments to the proposals based on the consultation responses.</p>		
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure that the views of stakeholders are taken into consideration before any detailed design work is undertaken on a new leisure centre.		

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The current Spelthorne Leisure Centre in Staines-upon-Thames has served the borough well, but it is likely that by 2021 this facility will be nearing the end of its useful life. In 2017 the centre had over 579,000 visitors. It has over 3,100 fitness members and over 1,900 children are registered on the centre’s learn to swim scheme. The facility is also used by 10 schools for swimming lessons in addition to other school sports festivals such as indoor athletics, indoor football and swimming galas.
- 1.2 An initial evaluation established that refurbishing the current centre was not feasible because of:
 - (a) Poor design - The centre is of a poor design by today’s standards, in terms of layout and flexibility of space.
 - (b) Lack of space - The site does not offer sufficient space to provide the additional facilities we are likely to want to incorporate.

- (c) Limited parking - The site has limited parking, which would be difficult to expand.
 - (d) Age of the current structure - The site began as a swimming pool in the 1960s and was extended to form a leisure centre in the 1980s. It would therefore be very difficult to match the quality of any new build competition, bearing in mind the age of the current leisure centre buildings and facilities.
 - (e) Effect on users – Refurbishment of the current centre would require closure of all or parts of centre, which would have a major effect on users and be likely to result in a significant loss of customers.
 - (f) Repair costs – The increasing maintenance costs of the existing centre indicate that it would not be cost effective to try to refurbish the buildings/facilities.
- 1.3 A decision has therefore been taken to pursue the development of a new leisure centre that meets modern standards and today’s customer expectations.
- 1.4 A number of options have been considered for locating the new centre, including the site of the current facility. It was necessary to identify a location which is:
- (a) Owned by the Council
 - (b) Not in the Green Belt
 - (c) Large enough to accommodate all the facilities required in the new centre
 - (d) Easily accessible by a large number of the borough’s residents
 - (e) Developable within other planning and environmental constraints
- 1.5 Another important consideration was the need to ensure continuity for users of the centre. It was therefore considered important to be able to keep the current facility open if possible until a new centre is developed. Although the current leisure centre site meets a number of the required criteria, rebuilding on the current site would mean that the centre would have to be closed for 18-24 months, significantly affecting users. The site is also not considered large enough for the facilities required for a new centre.
- 1.6 A section of Staines Park has been identified as offering the best potential for the new leisure centre based on the above criteria. This is outlined in **Appendix 1**. This area is owned by Spelthorne but part of the site is currently leased by the Staines Bowling Club and the Spelthorne Museum. The Council also owns one unit of residential accommodation above the Bowling Club, and some outdoor courts on the site, which are used for tennis and basketball.
- 1.7 A range of studies are in the process of being completed to confirm the suitability of this site prior to submitting any planning application, including a number of environmental assessments.
- 1.8 Assuming that the Council can progress with its plans for a new leisure centre on this site it will be necessary to seek vacant possession. Officers are therefore actively pursuing discussions with the current occupiers regarding options for relocation.

- 1.9 A detailed feasibility exercise has been undertaken to consider the core facility mix which should be provided at the new leisure centre. This has taken into consideration a range of factors including Spelthorne's leisure needs analysis, the borough's current and future demographics, current industry data and the Council's key drivers, including the need to maximise the financial viability of the new centre where possible. Further work has been undertaken with local sports clubs to understand their preferences for facilities within the centre. The proposed facilities mix arising from these exercises is outlined in **Appendix 2**, and includes a list of possible additional options for consideration.
- 1.10 In undertaking such a development it is important to seek the views of users of the current centre, residents of the borough, local businesses and other stakeholders. It is therefore proposed to undertake formal consultation at two stages in the development process:
- (a) Consultation 1 – seeking views on the proposed location for the new centre and the proposed facility mix. Target date: June 2018.
 - (b) Consultation 2 – seeking views on the detailed design, layout and finalised facility mix (having taken into consideration the feedback from Consultation 1). Target date: September 2018.
- 1.11 This report seeks approval to initiate Consultation 1, seeking views on the proposed location for the new leisure centre (outlined in **Appendix 1**) and a proposed facility mix, with additional options for consideration (outlined in **Appendix 2**).
- 1.12 If approved by Cabinet, Consultation 1 will run for a period of three weeks and will involve:
- (a) An online questionnaire – it is planned for this to be accessible via a dedicated micro-website, which can also be accessed via a link from the Council's main website.
 - (b) A public exhibition/drop in event – which will be held in the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre from 29 -30 June 2018.
 - (c) Targeted communication – letters inviting comments on our proposals will be sent to all properties adjoining Staines Park; to residents' associations within the borough; local schools; the Spelthorne Sports Council; and to local businesses via the Spelthorne Business Forum and the Surrey Chamber of Commerce. Borough and County Councillors for Spelthorne will also be contacted directly to seek their views.
- 1.13 In order to ensure that the consultation process is seen as transparent and unbiased, it is proposed to employ the services of a company which specialises in this area of work to conduct the relevant surveys and public exhibition/drop-in event. They would also be tasked with analysing and reporting on the results of these exercises.
- 1.14 The results of the consultation process will be reported to the Council's Leisure Centre Development Working Group, which has been set up to monitor progress with the development of the new leisure centre and report to Cabinet as necessary. This Group is comprised of the Leader of the Council (as portfolio holder for Strategic Assets), the Portfolio Holder for Community

Wellbeing (responsible for leisure), the Deputy Chief Executive, the Property Development Advisor and the Sport and Facilities Manager.

2. Options analysis and proposal

2.1 Option 1 – (Recommended option)

- (a) To approve the proposals to consult with the borough's residents, businesses and other stakeholders on the proposed location for the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre (as outlined in **Appendix 1**) and the proposed facilities mix and additional options for consideration (outlined in **Appendix 2**).
- (b) To authorise the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, as Chair of the Council's Leisure Centre Development Working Group to consider the results of the consultation exercise and decide on the business case for any amendments to the proposals based on the consultation responses. The Working Group will ensure that Cabinet is kept informed of progress with this project as the development moves forward.

2.2 Option 2 – Do nothing. This is not recommended as the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre will be coming to the end of its useful life in 2021. It is therefore necessary to move forward with proposals to replace this facility within the next few years.

2.3 Option 3 – To propose an alternative approach. Any alternative options put forward would have to be based on a thorough analysis of needs and a suitable business case.

3. Financial implications

3.1 As part of the 2018/19 Capital Programme the Council approved a capital growth bid to cover the initial costs for the Leisure Centre Redevelopment project. Part of that budget will be used to cover the costs of the proposed work outlined above.

3.2 The costs of building the new leisure centre will be significant and will be depend to a large extent on the facilities mix which is included in the final design. It is therefore important that any amendments to the facilities within the new centre are financially viable wherever possible.

3.3 The budget for the construction costs of the centre will be put to the Council once the design has been finalised following both rounds of consultation.

4. Other considerations

4.1 The Council's Sunbury Leisure Centre is not affected by the above proposals.

4.2 The contract for the current operator of the Spelthorne and Sunbury Leisure Centres is due to expire in 2021. The Council has the option to extend this contract for up to five years. A procurement exercise will have to be undertaken in due course to appoint an operator to run the Council's leisure centres, when this contract comes to an end.

4.3 As part of Spelthorne's ongoing discussions with Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) over the proposed expansion of Heathrow, the Council is exploring options for a new leisure offering in the north of the borough (which HAL have been asked to fund) which would complement the proposals for the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre.

4.4 The Council is mindful of its Public Sector Equality Duty; responses to this initial consultation will inform the Council's preparation of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA will be included in the Consultation 2 element at a later stage.

4.5 Risks:

- (a) There is a risk of negative feedback as a result of the consultation exercise. The purpose of this exercise is to seek the views of relevant stakeholders and to consider whether changes should be made, e.g. in relation to the facilities mix. As the Council's plans for the new centre are still in the feasibility stage, with no detailed design, there is an opportunity to consider amending the proposals, based on any objections received.
- (b) The Council is continuing to undertake a range of environmental studies to assess the suitability of the proposed site for the new centre. Although it is not anticipated that there will be any problems arising from this work, it is possible that an issue arises which makes it more difficult to develop the centre on the proposed site. In such a case the Council would need to consider whether any mitigation measures would affect the viability of the project.

5. Timetable for implementation

5.1 Outlined timetable for Consultation 1:

- (a) Letters to targeted groups inviting them to participate in consultation process, 21/22 June 2018
- (b) Public exhibition/drop-in event: 29-30 June 2018
- (c) Micro website with online questionnaire available from 29 June until 20 July 2018.

Background papers: There are none

Appendix 1 - Proposed Site for New Spelthorne Leisure Centre

Appendix 2 - Draft Facilities Mix