



Scrutiny

Environment & Services
Scrutiny

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Item

8

Public

Shrewsbury Swimming Pool - update

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1. Summary

This report provides an update on work carried out on the development of future swimming provision within Shrewsbury since the report provided to Scrutiny on 22nd June 2015 and the end of the public consultation on 30th October 2015.

A number of site options have been consulted on – refurbishment of existing Quarry Pool; renovation of existing Quarry Pool; new build on site of the existing Quarry Pool; new build at Clayton Way; new build on land at Ellesmere Road; new build on land at the Shrewsbury Sports Village; and new build on land at Shrewsbury College.

There was a very high level of media, public and stakeholder interest in the survey. Over 1,900 people took part in the online survey and detailed comments were also received from, for example, Shrewsbury Town Council, the Quarry Swimming & Fitness Forum, the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District, the Shropshire Disability Network and others.

Detailed analysis of the 1900 responses from the consultation will take place over the coming weeks, but it is already possible to identify a number of common areas raised by stakeholders (such as Shrewsbury Town Council, the Quarry Swimming & Fitness Forum, the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District) within their responses including comments on capacity, demand and usage; the revenue modelling; the proposed facilities mix and timetabling; accessibility, parking, transport and environmental impact; a town centre or edge of town location and cost benefit analysis and economic impact; what will happen to the Quarry Pool site if it is vacated; and alternative town centre sites and delivery models.

Before a recommendation is made to Cabinet on a preferred approach for future swimming provision within Shrewsbury it is considered that some further bespoke work may be necessary to inform the detailed appraisal of the different options.

2. Recommendations

Members of Environment Services Scrutiny are asked to scrutinise the work done to date.

REPORT

1. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

Future swimming provision for Shrewsbury continues to create huge public interest, particularly with respect to its potential future location and the relative merits of a town centre versus an edge of town location.

A range of specialist work has been completed to help inform the development of a detailed options analysis and subsequent public consultation.

A five month public consultation has been undertaken and a range of stakeholders have been involved and contributed ideas.

Whichever option is ultimately chosen this is a significant project with the opportunity to make a very important contribution to individual and community well-being. The project also has the risk of potential overspend and project creep.

The project continues to be developed by a Project Board chaired by the Director of Commissioning and including relevant internal officers and external representation from Energize – the County Sports Partnership, Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association. The Board has developed and keeps under review a detailed project plan, risk management framework and Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA).

2. Financial implications

Significant capital funding will be required for the construction of a new swimming pool facility. A number of options are available to the authority including:

- Council Capital Programme Funding
- Prudential Borrowing
- Sport England – Lottery Funding

Independent leisure specialists, Strategic Leisure (commissioned to undertake the options analysis), have estimated that:

- The capital cost of improved pool provision will range between £2,317,656 for the refurbishment of the existing Quarry Pool to £12,808,323 for the full renovation of the existing Quarry Pool; and

between £9,007,843 and £10,989,859 for a new build depending on the location chosen.

- A new pool will make year on year revenue savings. The exact amount will depend on the option chosen but is estimated to range between minimal savings for the refurbishment and renovation of the existing Quarry Pool to an annual saving of £446,106 for a new build at the Shrewsbury Sports Village (estimates are based solely on the day to day operation of provision). Any consequential reduction in Shropshire Council's subsidy is yet to be determined and would be subject to detailed commercial negotiations.

In order to support the development of a preferred approach it will be necessary to incur revenue expenditure on specialist advice, etc. and this will continue to be funded by revenue funding set aside for this purpose.

3. Background

While the existing Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre offers a diverse range of facilities – 4 pools providing 898 sq m of water, 37 station fitness suite, health suite, café, training room, etc. - it is generally accepted that the condition of the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre and the user experience it offers has declined in recent years.

There are also huge on-going strains on the public purse and the running costs of the current facility will become a growing challenge.

A detailed vision for swimming provision in Shrewsbury was confirmed within the 30th July 2014 cabinet report and accompanied the public consultation. In summary the vision says that the Shrewsbury swimming facility should:

- increase participation in swimming and physical activity, and in so doing improve the wider health and wellbeing of the community
- provide a long-term swimming facility that's affordable to run both now and in the future
- be complementary to other leisure and recreational provision in the town

To take this vision forward, and based on a range of evidence, recommendations for the minimum facilities to be provided by a new swimming facility were developed:

- a 25m x 20m eight lane main pool, 500 sq m
- a 20m x 10m four-lane learner pool with full moveable floor, 200 sq m
- facilities to introduce people to water (to aid water confidence), 60 – 100 sq m
- fitness facilities, at least 50 stations
- spectator seating for 250 people

This would provide a total of 700 sq m of water compared with the current 898 sq m within the Quarry.

A detailed study was undertaken by independent leisure specialists, Strategic Leisure, to consider the following options for swimming provision:

- 1A. Refurbishment of existing Quarry Pool
- 1B. Renovation of existing Quarry Pool
- 2. New build on site of existing Quarry Pool
- 3A. New build at Clayton Way
- 3B. New build on land at Ellesmere Road
- 3C. New build on land at the Shrewsbury Sports Village
- 3D. New build on land at Shrewsbury College

In addition, the study considered the potential for the development of a 50m pool; its strategic need, capital cost, revenue and participation impact, in relation to the sites on which such a large scale facility could be accommodated.

4. Learning from other areas

A number of local authorities that had recently built public swimming pools were visited to learn from their experiences:

- AT7 & XCEL, Coventry (also included discussion over the ongoing plans around the 50m pool in the City.)
- West Bromwich Leisure Centre
- Westminster Lodge, St Albans
- Queen's Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre, Rugby

Learning points included:

- The benefit of providing a 20 x 10m learner pool that facilitates club training and warm up / down due to its dimensions being easily incorporated into training regimes, e.g. 400m warm up = 20 lengths.
- The importance of providing a quality gym with the capacity for large user numbers at the same facility to maximise usage
- The popularity and importance of water confidence areas for children, families and people with disabilities
- The importance of appropriate retail space (e.g. swimming and fitness equipment) within the facility to maximise income
- The importance of café / refreshment facilities to maximise the length of user stay and income
- The quality and finish of the facility is extremely important - the feel of a "private club" is needed to avoid the loss of users to other facilities

5. Summary of public and stakeholder engagement work

a. Polls carried out by the Shropshire Star

The Shropshire Star ran two online polls on the options in February 2015 and in June 2015:

February 2015		June 2015	
Wash & go	5%	Refurbishment of Quarry Pool	12.01%
Major overhaul	24%	Renovation of Quarry Pool	10%
Rebuild on existing site	34%	New build on Quarry Site	32.31%
Rebuild elsewhere	37%	New build on land at Clayton Way	2.08%
		New build on land at Ellesmere Road	2.99%
		New land on land at Shrewsbury Sports Village	36.1%
		New build on land at Shrewsbury College	4.51%

b. Public consultation

A four month public consultation was launched on the 28th May 2015. In response to feedback received during the consultation and the availability of 2014/15 revenue figures for the Quarry the consultation period was subsequently extended by a month until the 30th October.

The consultation was based on a concise web based summary supported by further detailed information available via links and access to a questionnaire.

Although the emphasis was placed on encouraging people to complete the survey on-line, alternative means were made available for people to have their say including:

- Hard copies of the consultation and survey available at Shrewsbury Library and the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre
- Staff at both venues were briefed on the consultation and were available to help people complete the questionnaire
- Access to computers to allow people to complete the survey at the Library and at the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre
- Direct contact points for people to discuss the consultation with Council officers: shrewsburyswimming@shropshire.gov.uk and 0345 678 9077
- Hard copies of the consultation and survey provided to groups upon request, e.g. the Shropshire Disability Network
- The offer of direct conversations with both individuals and groups

All of these alternatives were also explained during an interview with the West Shropshire Talking Newspaper.

The public consultation was extensively and frequently referenced and promoted within the media, by the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Forum, the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District, disability networks and others.

Over 1,900 people took part in the online survey - this represents one of the largest participation rates for a consultation of this type by Shropshire Council. The majority of respondents were in the 30-44 and 45-59 age groups and 56% were female. 40% of respondents were from the SY3 postcode area (this is mainly to the west and south west of the town including Copthorne, Bayston Hill, Bicton Heath, Longden Coleham,

Radbrook). SY1 (north Shrewsbury and Town Centre) and SY2 (Abbey Foregate, Monkmoor and Underdale) combined made up less respondents than SY3.

c. Stakeholder engagement

A range of meetings and conversations took place with key groups and organisations during the consultation period including:

- The Shropshire Disability Network - provides a collective voice for disabled people across Shropshire.
- The Pan Disability Forum – represents people with all types of disabilities including learning, physical, mental and sensory across Shropshire.
- The Shropshire Wheelchair Users Group - play a lead role in improving and refining service provision for wheelchair users as well as tackling wider issues of accessibility within the county.
- The Shrewsbury Access Group - considers all access issues for people with mobility problems, the elderly, disabled and parents with young children.
- The Northgate Swimming Club - operates at both Bridgnorth & Much Wenlock swimming pools and runs six clubs.
- The Shrewsbury Rotary Club - holds weekly luncheon meetings to help build lasting friendships and business relationships and fund raises for local and international charities.
- The Severn Loop Forum (formerly the Severn Loop Local Joint Committee) - hosted a series of presentations on the work looking at options for future swimming provision.
- The Shrewsbury Wide Local Joint Committee - hosted presentations on the work looking at options for future swimming provision.
- Shrewsbury Town Council
- The Quarry Swimming and Fitness Forum - represents the views of clubs and users.
- The Shrewsbury Business Improvement District - aims to improve the town centre in line with the priorities of the town's business community.

d. Main comments

A detailed analysis of the public consultation will be undertaken over the coming weeks. In the meantime it is possible to identify a number of key areas raised by the stakeholders referenced above within their responses including:

- Capacity, demand and usage – the capacity of the proposed two pools and whether this will meet future increases in demand, as well as the impact of moving swimming provision to an out of town location on how many people will go there and use the facilities on offer.
- Revenue modelling – further work on the detailed financial modelling including the refurbishment and renovation options
- Proposed facilities mix and timetabling – for example the potential impact of facilities such as a flume and/or diving boards on the number

of people who use or visit the pool. Suggestions were also made for a hydrotherapy pool and increased spectator seating.

- Accessibility, parking, transport and environmental impact – the impact of the location on accessibility and CO2 admissions and detailed consideration of parking availability and pricing in the different locations.
- Impact of different locations – consideration of the economic, social and community impact of different locations.
- Future use of the Quarry site – comments about possible alternative uses for the site.
- Alternative town centre sites – comments about the availability of other site options.
- Finance – consideration of alternative financing options.

6. Next steps

It is anticipated that a recommendation will be made to Cabinet in 2016 on a preferred approach for future swimming provision within Shrewsbury. Key points for consideration in the development of a preferred approach are likely to include:

- Population, changing patterns of usage and impact on participation
- Access including public transport
- Sustainability particularly linked to synergies with other community services, the local community and the opportunity for the development of a multi facility hub
- Impact on the local economy
- Availability, suitability and costs of site
- Site & planning constraints
- Capital costs of improved / new pool provision
- Decommissioning & demolition implications
- Continuity of swimming provision
- Revenue impact, social value implications and impact to the local economy
- Consideration of public consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Impact on minority and protected groups and the development of an ESIIA

Guidance will be taken on the analysis of the recent public consultation and stakeholder engagement and on how this can be best used to inform a preferred approach.

It is also recognised that before a preferred approach is identified some further bespoke work may be necessary particularly to respond to some of the areas raised and to inform the detailed appraisal of the different options.

Ultimately the confirmation of the preferred approach is likely to lead to a capital appraisal, the development of detailed feasibility work and funding applications.

It is likely that some further detailed stakeholder engagement will take place during the feasibility stage to inform detailed design work, etc.

Once a detailed costed scheme of works has been developed and a full funding package confirmed the project will move to the appointment of a building contractor.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2009 - 2019 and Playing Pitch Strategy 2010 – 2020, Cabinet, 29 June 2011

New pool for Shrewsbury, Cabinet, 30 July 2014

Shrewsbury Swimming and Fitness Options Report, Strategic Leisure, June 2015

Shrewsbury Swimming Pool update, Environment & Services Scrutiny, 22 June 2015

Frequently Answered Questions

ESIA

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Libraries and Culture

Local Members:

Cllr Andrew Bannerman, Cllr Peter Adams, Cllr Vernon Bushell, Cllr Ted Clarke, Cllr Anne Chebsey, Cllr Hannah Fraser, Cllr Miles Kenny, Cllr Jane Mackenzie, Cllr Peter Nutting, Cllr Alan Mosley, Cllr Pam Moseley, Cllr Mike Owen, Cllr Kevin Pardy, Cllr Mal Price, Cllr Keith Roberts, Cllr John Tandy, Cllr Dean Carroll & Cllr Amy Leibich

Appendices: