

Merton Council

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

11 November 2014

Supplementary agenda

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| 7 | Morden Leisure Centre - Update (Appendix – Consultation Report) | 1 - 36 |
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Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 11th November 2014

Agenda item: 7

Wards: St. Helier; Cannon Hill

Subject: Morden Leisure Centre - Update

Lead officer: Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager

Lead member: Councillor Nick Draper, Cabinet Member for Community & Culture

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Urgent report

Reason for urgency: The Chairman has approved submission of this late report to enable full consideration to be given to Item 7 on the agenda: Morden Leisure Centre - Update.

Recommendations:

- A. That the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel notes the PPS Group consultation report on Morden Leisure Centre (attached as Appendix 1).

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To provide the PPS Group consultation report on Morden Leisure Centre to be considered alongside the report and appendices for the Morden Leisure Centre -Update (item 7 on the agenda for this meeting).

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None for the purpose of this report

3. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

4. TIMETABLE

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None for the purposes of this report

9. RISK AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None for the purposes of this report.

10. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THIS REPORT

10.1 Appendix 1 – PPS Group Consultation Report on Morden Leisure Centre.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None for the purposes of this report.

Consultation Report

Morden Leisure Centre
London Borough of Merton

July 2014

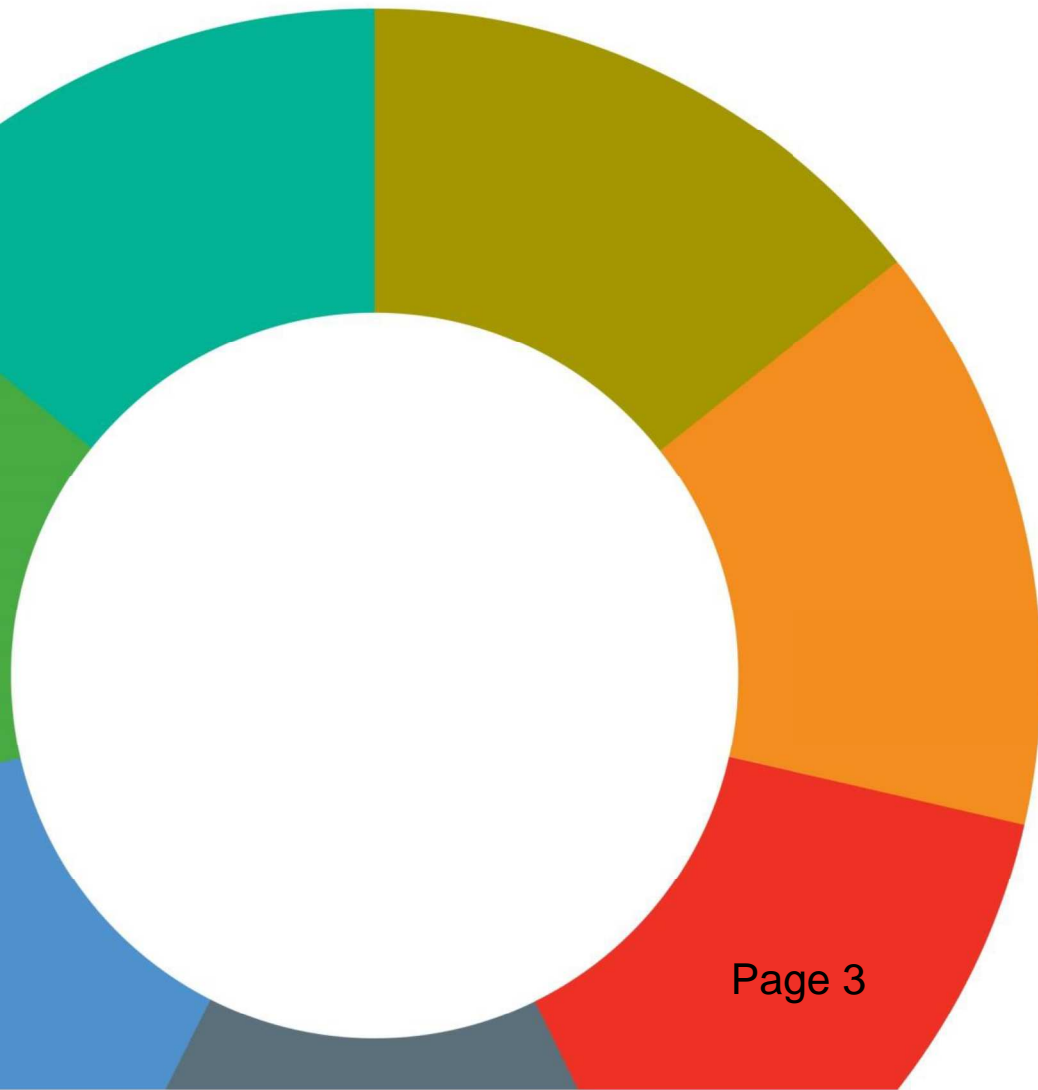


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Executive Summary

Merton Borough Council has earmarked £10m to build a new Morden Leisure Centre and hired PPS to test public reactions to what should be provided in the new centre. The Council proposes a model devised by Sport England and wished to test if this was appropriate and what additional facilities the community wanted at the new centre.

Consultation took place between 20th March and 7th April. It was publicised via the Council newspaper 'My Merton', in the local press, through letters to individual stakeholders, through presentations to Merton Council's Community Forums, through Twitter and through flyers distributed at the existing leisure centre.

A website was created with an online questionnaire. A series of public exhibitions were held to encourage participation and allow those uncomfortable with or unable to use the internet to get involved.

Respondents were asked whether they felt that the use of the Sport England model was appropriate and what further facilities they wished to see at the new centre. They were limited to the £10m budget.



Consultation in Action

A total of 418 valid submissions were received: 354 via the website, 42 at exhibitions and 22 by post.

A majority of respondents agreed that the Sport England Model was a good basis on which to work.

The most popular choice for additional facilities was a café (49 percent of respondents).

Movable floors to allow diving in the main and/or secondary swimming pools received the next most support (35 and 44 percent respectively).

Leisure swimmers made a strong case for the length of the new pool to be same length as the existing one - 33m, allowing leisure swimming alongside other activities. However this was countered by competitive swimmers who wanted 25m. 38 percent of respondents thought that a wider pool would be a good option.

Opinion on more non-water based sports was less clear and we are aware that this is partly because the results were skewed by the high rates of participation in the consultation from swimmers and divers. Anecdotal evidence from the exhibitions indicates strong support for the sports hall and its facilities and 31 percent of respondents opted for a climbing wall to be included.

Analysis of who got involved in the consultation shows that a good balance between men and women and age ranges was achieved. However, a disproportionately small number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people participated. Only 64 percent of respondents were from Merton; a relatively low number probably explained by the position of the existing leisure centre close to the Borough boundary with Sutton.

Consultation Scope and Approach

Background

Morden Park Pools is one of three leisure centres owned by the London Borough of Merton. Located in parkland behind South Thames College (Merton campus), it opened in 1967 and contains:

- 36 station Wellness Health and Fitness room (installed in 2004);
- 33m Swimming Pool (with diving in a 3.9m deep end);
- Teaching Pool;
- Sauna.

The present building has come to the end of its operational lifespan and this limited range of facilities means that the centre does not provide for a broad range of sports. Nonetheless, the Centre continues to be well used, particularly by leisure swimmers and divers.

Merton Council has been considering what to do with Morden Park Pools for some time and in early 2014, the Council announced that it had decided to build a replacement. A budget of £10 million was set aside for a new facility.

The Council's aspiration for a new Morden Leisure Centre is to provide a broader base of facilities in the Centre than are currently available in the old. The Council consulted Sport England, the foremost authority on helping communities keep active through sports, on the latest thinking on leisure centre provision and officers were impressed by a report, 'Affordable Sports Centres' that Sport England published in 2013.

Merton Council decided to use one of the templates in the Affordable Sports Centres' report as the basis for provision of facilities in the new centre at Morden Park. This provided for:

- A sports hall
 - Large enough for 4 badminton courts
 - Equipment storage
 - Dry changing
- A swimming pool
 - 6 lane main pool
 - Secondary pool
 - Wet changing
 - Buffer/school/group changing
- Health and Fitness facilities
 - 100 gym stations
 - 2 studios
 - Changing provision

Such a facility would meet the objective of broadening the range of sports that could be provided at Morden Park and it was estimated that this facility could be provided for £8.4 million. However, it was appreciated that this model might not meet the particular needs of the local area, that existing users of the current leisure

centre might have views on a replacement and that the wider community should be consulted. As this facility could be provided for £8.4 million, the money left over from the budget of £10 million could be used to incorporate the community's preferences.

The Council appointed an independent consultation and engagement consultancy, PPS Group, to seek the views of the local community on what facilities were desired in the new centre so that an informed decision could be made.

This report explains the methodology that PPS employed and the results that came from the consultation.

The Brief

The brief given to PPS was to engage the public, including seldom heard groups in the community, using a range of consultation methods and tools. The Council would advise on which groups to contact but these would include, among others, faith groups, disability groups, friends of Morden Park, youth groups, younger people from South Thames College (Merton campus) as well as local residents and centre users.

PPS was asked to organise, lead and implement the entire consultation to ensure that Merton Council remained impartial in the process. A number of engagement tools were suggested:

- Public exhibitions;
- Schools/college workshop;
- Engagement at existing community events, for example residents' association meetings and community forums;
- Website/social media/online surveys and engagement.

PPS's Approach

PPS has developed a set of principles for community engagement – The PPS Seven Point Plan – that has been recognised by government as an example of best practice. It requires consultation programmes to:

1. **Notify** and identify the stakeholders and local communities that are to be consulted.
2. **Inform** those being consulted about the proposals, what they are being consulted on, the parameters of the consultation and any constraints (financial, technical, political, geographical).
3. **Consult** the relevant stakeholders and the general public to obtain their views using a mix of techniques.
4. **Measure**, then analyse and document their responses.
5. **Report** back to stakeholders and the local community about the views that were expressed.
6. **Respond** to the consultation by amending proposals or explaining if changes cannot be made.
7. **Publish** a detailed consultation report and outline the revised scheme with an explanation of how the consultation has influenced it.

This basic approach has proved extremely successful in practise over many years. It ensures that all relevant stakeholders are addressed in a manner that is relevant to their needs, that they have adequate information upon which to form an opinion, that PPS effectively captures the views of those being consulted and feeds

them back to the client, that feedback is given to participants in the consultation and that the findings of the consultation are published.

With the Morden Leisure Centre consultation it was considered important to explain the thinking that had already gone into the question of what facilities should be provided and to explain that the Council wished to use the template provided by Sport England. Consequently, the first task was to understand the community's views on that basic Sport England template.

The next task was to assess what options over and above that template were popular within the local community. It was felt desirable that the consultation should not merely elicit a long 'wish list' of sports facilities many of which might be impossible to provide because of budgetary constraints. As far as was possible, therefore, the consultation was designed to inform respondents about the costs of the options that they might choose. By doing this it was hoped that we would end up with a list of options that reflected the facilities that really mattered to local people. In practice, this meant that a list of suggested options was drawn up, costed and presented to respondents. The list of suggested options was taken from the informal discussions Merton Council officers had had with the various groups and individuals involved in the sports centre.

Provision was also made for respondents to suggest other options, though of course, as they did this, they were unaware how much these suggestions would cost.

It was agreed that the methods used for the consultation itself should follow broadly the suggestions made by Merton Council in its original brief. However, it was agreed that given the complexities of this consultation – the Council wanted not only feedback on what was acceptable but wanted the consultees to give that feedback fully aware of the cost constraints – the primary focus of the consultation should be an interactive website.

The website had one key advantage over more traditional methods of consultation - it could be designed so that information on the Sport England model and the cost constraints for several additional options could be conveyed in a manner that was accessible and would encourage people to stay within the £10 million budget when giving their feedback.

However, it was felt that other routes of consultation were also desirable, particularly because they would allow us to capture the views of those who did not have access to the web or were simply more comfortable with face-to-face engagement. To that end, it was agreed that a series of public exhibitions should be run in areas that would encourage participants from the key groups identified in the Council's brief.

It was agreed that manned exhibitions should be held in South Thames College (Merton campus), at the offices of Merton Council and at the existing Morden Park Pools and that presentations would be made to local community forums meetings to ensure that local people were aware of the website and the exhibitions. It was also agreed that where appropriate, one-to-one meetings would be held with affected groups.

Delivering the Programme

Notifying and Providing Information

On 28th February Merton Council issued a press release announcing that a consultation was planned regarding a new Morden Leisure Centre. The release, which included a quote from Merton Council Cabinet Member for Community and Culture Councillor Nick Draper, was circulated to the local press and appeared in the Wimbledon Guardian and SW19.com.

An article on the consultation, explaining the scheme, giving the dates of the public exhibitions and directing people to the website, was included in the spring edition of the Council's newspaper 'My Merton' which was circulated to every household in the borough in March 2014.

On 21st March, Merton Council then issued a second press release giving details of the consultation events and publicising the link to the website. This was covered in the Wimbledon Guardian.

A bulletin was sent to Merton Council staff informing them of the consultation and an e-mail sent to all Merton Councillors on 21st March.

Letters were also sent to all stakeholder groups identified by Merton Council as likely to have an interest in the consultation in March.

This included the existing Morden Park Pools. However, it appears that this information about the consultation was not displayed as had been expected and several respondents who visited the exhibition held there on Saturday 29th March said that the flyers had only appeared on the reception desk three days beforehand.

On Wednesday 19th and Thursday 20th March, Stephen Byfield of PPS Group addressed two local consultative forum meetings of Merton Council, both of which comprised representatives of local amenity and residents groups. These were important as they allowed PPS to engage with representatives of many of the hard to reach groups in those communities. This was particularly the case with the meeting on the 19th March; the Joint Consultative Committee which comprised representatives of ethnic minority organisations in the Borough. The presentations explained what the Council wanted to consult upon and how the community could engage.

An account was set up on Twitter, @Leisure4Morden, and tweets were sent out to alert people of the consultation. Tweets were also sent during the public consultation encouraging people to engage with the process.

The consultation website www.leisureformorden.com went live on 19th March. It included information on the public exhibitions as well as information on the proposals and an interactive questionnaire.

The Consultation

Most respondents to the consultation chose to learn about the scheme and make their views known via the interactive website which went live on 19th March and continued to accept responses for 20 days until 7th April. In total, we received 355 online submissions via the website.

In addition, three days of public exhibitions were held in venues designed to be easily accessible and which would encourage responses from some of the harder to reach groups. The exhibitions consisted of a number of panels explaining the rationale for the replacement of the existing Morden Park Pools, the decision to use the basic model suggested by Sport England, the content of that model, some suggested additional options and the estimated costings of those options.

The exhibitions were manned by PPS staff members who answered questions and encouraged those attending to give their views. The timing and location of the exhibitions was as follows:



The Exhibition at South Thames College

- South Thames College, Morden Park, London Rd, Morden, SM4 5QX,
 - 8.30-11am Thursday 27th March 2014
- Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX
 - 12-4pm Thursday 27th March 2014
- Morden Park Pools, London Rd, Morden, Surrey SM4 5HE
 - 9am-3pm Saturday 29th March 2014

South Thames College (Merton campus) was chosen as a means of securing the views of younger people who might well use the existing facilities (the college is adjacent to the existing Morden Park Pools). The Civic Centre was chosen as it has a high footfall of local residents visiting to access council services and we were able to meet many of them with an exhibition in the foyer. The exhibition at Morden Park Pools was designed to get the views from existing users. This exhibition was interrupted when a health and safety issue within the changing rooms caused the centre to be shut down for two hours. However, as it was a warm, dry day the consultation team were able to set the exhibition up outside the entrance of the centre where they engaged with a significant number before continuing the exhibition inside when the centre re-opened.

Approximately 93 attended the public exhibitions. 42 feedback forms were collected over the three venues and a further 22 feedback forms were submitted by post in the following days.

Following the presentation made to the Morden Area Forum on 19th March, PPS was asked to attend a meeting with representatives of the Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust to be briefed on the trusts aspirations for Morden Park Playing Fields and to hear their views on the proposals for the Morden Leisure Centre. A meeting was held on 2nd April.

Measuring Views

Views of respondents were recorded and measured in three ways:

1. Responses to a questionnaire. Two versions of this were produced – one for the website, which added up the value of options respondents chose, and informed them when they had exceeded the budget of £10 million - and a paper version for use at the public exhibitions. In each case the questions were the same and also included a space for general comments. A copy of the questionnaire is included at appendix 1.
2. Responses in meetings and in conversations with PPS team members. Only one formal meeting was held as part of this consultation but the views were noted and are recorded in this document. General conversations with PPS staff on the exhibition stands have been used only to provide additional context to some of the quantitative feedback coming from analysis of the questionnaires.
3. A number of letters and e-mails were received by Merton Council and PPS. They too have been analysed and the feedback recorded in this document.

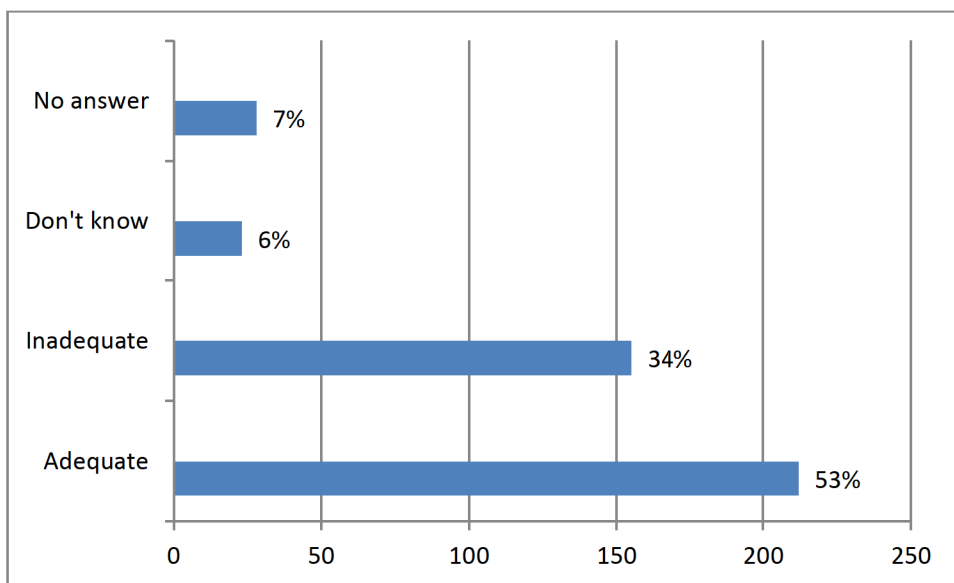
Feedback Received

Feedback from Questionnaires

The website proved to be very popular and 354 respondents completed the questionnaire online. In addition, 42 feedback forms were collected during the exhibitions and a further 22 paper feedback forms were received by post. PPS accepted a total of 418 valid submissions.

The first two questions of the feedback form addressed the Sport England model being used as a basic template for the new leisure centre. The first question asked respondents to state whether they believed the Sport England model to be an adequate or inadequate template for the new facility. A 'don't know' option was also available for completeness. The results are shown in the graph below:

Q1. Do you think the Sport England model is an adequate or an inadequate basic template for the new leisure centre at Morden Park?

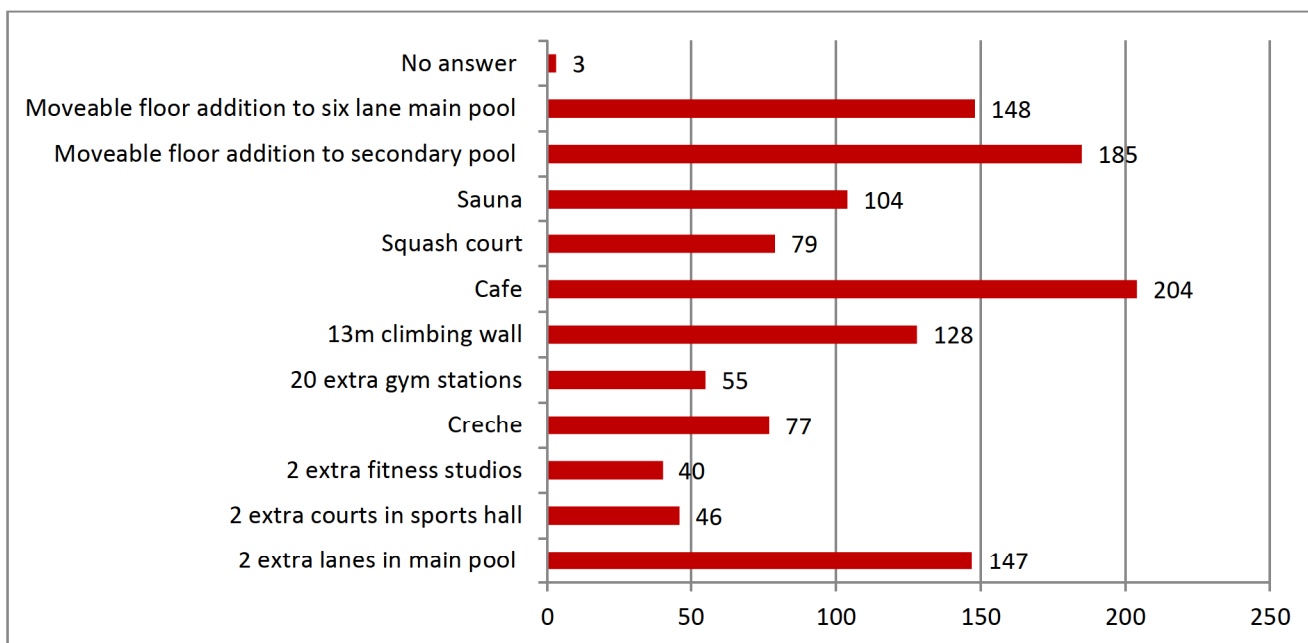


As the graph shows, slightly over half of the respondents believed the Sport England model to be adequate. A large proportion of people (155) thought the model was inadequate as a basic template. From the feedback received at the exhibitions and the analysis of the qualitative feedback we infer that many of those who responded with 'inadequate' did so on account of their perception that there was a lack of diving facilities in the Sport England model.

Question 2 asked respondents to select the additional facilities they would like to see in the new centre over and above the basic Sport England model. Respondents could choose as many options as they liked as long as the total cost did not exceed £1.6 million (the figure left over from the £10 million budget once the Sport England model had been paid for). The results are shown in the graph below:

Q2 Working within this £1.6 million budget, what extra leisure facilities would you like included, on top of those suggested by Sport England?





The most popular choice of additional facility was the café – 49 percent of respondents selected this option.

A movable floor addition to the secondary pool and a movable floor addition to the main pool were also very popular choices with 185 (44 percent) and 148 (35 percent) of respondents picking these options. This reflects a strong desire among the users of the pool and the local community to see provision for diving and aqua aerobics remain at the new leisure centre. This feedback was reflected in comments at the exhibitions and in the written comments on the questionnaires such as this one:

“Diving is really important to us. Also, for the community, it is an easy-access sport, no expensive equipment is required, no horribly expensive lessons are required, A reasonably priced and well supported diving school already in place in Merton. It crosses all socio-economic backgrounds... and Morden Park Pools would be a poorer place without a diving facility. It would be even better if the boards could be available outside lesson times for practice”.

Several people who are currently using Morden Park Pools for swimming expressed concern that the new facilities are proposed to be 25m in length rather than the 33m like the current pool (10 percent of respondents to Q3 made this point). This, they felt, would cause several problems. It would mean that swimmers would have to turn more frequently and that there would be less space to accommodate swimmers alongside divers and classes such as aqua-aerobics. This point was summed up in a couple of the written responses received on the questionnaires:

“We want a 33m pool like at the moment, not less. The pool timetable means it is shared by different groups at the same time and we need to make sure this can continue. Lane swimming is important. Certain additional facilities are not wanted at the loss of a good pool”.

This was not an entirely uniform view even among swimmers (representatives of local swimming clubs who attended the exhibitions said that they wanted the new pool to be 25m in length so it could be used for competitions). However the views of those keen to keep the 33m pool were strongly felt. Some respondents felt that widening the proposed pool to make it eight rather than six lanes might be an acceptable solution to

the difficulties that felt would be caused by reducing the existing length. 147 (38 percent) of respondents selected this option.

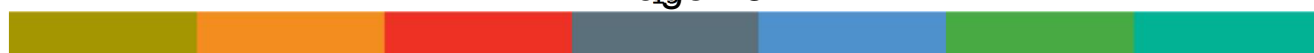
There was far less clarity of views from those who were interested in non-water based facilities. A 13m climbing wall was a popular option, selected by 31 percent of respondents, but additional gym stations (13 percent), a larger sports hall (11 percent), and additional fitness studios (10 percent) received relatively little support.

The third and final question was open and gave respondents the opportunity to give further feedback on the proposals. Analysis of the feedback received from the open question is as follows:

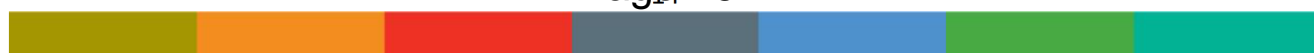
Comments	Times noted	%
1. Swimming pool/water sports facilities	130	43%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool should be kept at 33m Should be a 50m Olympic sized pool Proper deep-end depth needs to be provided Develop a water polo area/facilities Provide a viewing gallery A 25m, 8 lane pool with a moveable bottom (to a depth of two meters) would be the ideal venue for competitive swim training and hosting events 8 lanes would be perfect for swimming clubs! A large pool should be provided for serious swimming and diving and the 2nd pool targeted at 2-8 year olds and anyone wishing to relax (whirlpools, etc) Moveable floor would be good Electronic timing and a standard competition size pool should be provided. Aqua aerobics will help make most out of the pool Aqua aerobics are an important form of exercise for older and disabled people. A proper teaching pool should be in place and be big enough Other/miscellaneous 	42 12 11 10 8 10 6 5 4 3 2 2 2 13	
2. Diving	101	33%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diving facilities should remain Want to capitalise on the success of Olympics/Tom Daly Please include a diving pool with 1 + 3m spring boards and 5m platform Diving is really important to us Other/miscellaneous 	76 8 5 3 9	
3. Additional facilities	77	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steam room Climbing wall Jacuzzi / hot tub would be fantastic Scuba diving Sauna Hydrotherapy pool for those with disabilities is desperately needed in Merton Could sports hall be used for basketball? Squash court would be good Provision for table tennis Tennis courts 	11 8 7 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 3	



Comments	Times noted	%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spa facilities like in the Wimbledon leisure centre Short-mat bowls I think a sports hall with facilities for multiple sports is very important. Toilets Gymnastic equipment and trampolines An ice rink or rollerskate room Keep the pitch and putt course please Other/miscellaneous 	<p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>10</p>	
4. Changing facilities	44	15%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family changing facilities Better quality changing rooms Better shower facilities ensuring some privacy while showering. Room for large/clean lockers Could changing facilities be made more child friendly e.g. playpens, more changing mats/tables for babies, a smaller child's sink and toilet. Better separate changing facilities for men and women Other/miscellaneous 	<p>11</p> <p>7</p> <p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>22</p>	
5. Family/Leisure facilities	39	13%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slides Some 'fun' facilities Soft play area Short stay/mini crèche Wave machine Other/miscellaneous 	<p>15</p> <p>8</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>2</p>	
6. Café facilities	32	11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Café should be included Café to be included with an outside terrace/access from park such that park users could also use it 	<p>15</p>	
7. Gym facilities	26	9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 gym stations are too many Extra fitness studios for yoga/pilates/dance More training stations at the cost of the size of the swimming pool are unjustifiable I would very much like to see the gym facilities vastly improved Other/miscellaneous 	<p>6</p> <p>5</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>9</p>	
8. Design	23	8%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of daylight in the architecture to create a feeling of integration with the surrounding grounds. Views over the park should be retained The high ceiling should be retained Other/miscellaneous, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bear in mind cleanliness and durability when choosing finishing materials. An L-shaped pit is the best design as it can be permanently open allowing 	<p>5</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p>	



Comments	Times noted	%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unfettered swimming ○ Provide gated access to the pool from the changing areas to prevent accidents ○ It would be great to keep the windows and view ○ Main Hall - Badminton and short tennis need good lighting and colour on surrounding walls is important. ○ Incorporate reuse of water, solar panels, biomass heating into the design and the centre will pay for itself over the course of its lifetime. ○ Sustainability should be a key design factor. ○ Will the development have built-in design flexibility to allow for future expansion should funding become available? 		
9. Other leisure centres/pools	22	7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guildford Spectrum is outstanding. • It would make me very sad to see it end up like the Westcroft! • A good example of excellent design and a good combination of services is the Epsom Rainbow Leisure Centre. • Other/miscellaneous 	6 2 2 2	
10. Outdoor facilities	17	6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outdoor heated pool • Outdoor facilities e.g. artificial grass pitches which could be used by schools, football clubs etc. • Somewhere to tie dogs and a secure bicycle storage area • Improved outside play area and playgrounds. • Other/miscellaneous 	4 3 3 3	
11. Budget/cost	15	5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other/miscellaneous, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is enlargement of gym facilities value for money? ○ £300,000 for a café seems expensive ○ £300K for café (when considered against the cost for a Crèche) seems too low. ○ Are running costs of the Crèche and the cafe included in the total estimated? ○ Please budget for on-going maintenance. ○ I would prefer the money to be spent on reducing the national debt. ○ Think everyone in Merton should pay £1 a week for 2 years on the council tax so everyone would get what they want ○ I would suggest you keep the £1.6m for contingency – as costs will over-run. 	11	
12. Other themes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking e.g. free parking, better lighting from car park • Consultation e.g. consult professional swimmers • New facility should be moved to front of Morden Park on London Road • Classes/exercise sessions e.g. include fitness classes, classes only for women • Pricing • Positive comments e.g. Pleased that the site is going to be updated • Access e.g. the whole building should be disabled-friendly. • Timescales/building works • Comments on facilities e.g. facilities should be of an Olympic standard 	12 12 11 11 10 9 9 8 5	



Comments	Times noted	%
13. Miscellaneous comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure you carry on the 'Olympic legacy' • A family centred pool considers only one section of the clientele and does not cater for the clubs and serious swimmers who now use the pool regularly to exercise and keep fit • Such a good/one-off opportunity to revamp this pool. • Think family friendly where the entire family can have a great time and keep fit and you will not go wrong. 		

Feedback from Meetings

The meeting on 2nd April with the Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust helped present some context to the situation in which the consultation on the Morden Leisure Centre was undertaken.

The Playing Fields Trust has prepared plans for an application to revitalise the playing fields on Morden Park and build new changing facilities. However, at the request of Council officers, they have put their plans on hold while the future of Morden Leisure Centre is resolved. The Trust now wishes to press ahead with an application as further delays will mean that the technical reports prepared for the planning application will soon be out of date.

However, the group had only a limited amount to say on the proposals that were the subject of the consultation. The group had no objections in principal to what was proposed by the Council. The Trust does not wish to share facilities (changing rooms etc) with the Morden Leisure Centre, citing problems with ownership and management. Nonetheless, they are willing to discuss matters such as joint management and do see the facilities planned by Merton Council as being complementary with those they intend to provide on the Playing Fields. There was a feeling that some of the funds earmarked for the leisure centre could be usefully and perhaps better used by the Trust. The diversion of just £1 million of the £10 million budget allocated to the leisure centre would allow the Trust to move forward with its plans for the wider park, they said.

Feedback from Correspondence

A small number of letters on the subject of the future use of Morden Leisure Centre were received outside the formal consultation period. However, they all make germane comments which are worth considering.

Six letters were received from the pupils of Hatfeild Primary School addressed to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Alambritis. The letters came from pupils in each of the school's houses: Cannizaro, Cunningham, Liberty, Morris, Nelson and Wilberforce. These were sent following a meeting the Councillor held at Emmanuel Church on 1st February at which the plans for Morden Park Playing Fields were discussed. In summary, the children wished to see:

1. More facilities for play in the pool: toys such as rings, floats and inflatables; water slides and fountains. A wave machine was a popular request.
2. Bigger and better changing rooms that smelt nice, with non-slip surfaces, cool and inviting décor, better and more powerful showers, more lockers.



3. A bigger teaching pool.
4. There were some innovative new ideas – a sub-aqua viewing gallery, a library of children’s books so they had something to read while waiting for classes/parents etc. and underwater lights that changed the colour of the water.
5. There were lots of issues to do with management rather than provision of facilities – the children wanted access to the diving boards, lifeguards who would walk around and talk to the children rather than sit in their chairs, reception staff who were quick and friendly, toilets that were kept clean.

Siobhain McDonagh MP passed on correspondence she had received from a constituent, who raised four points. Two of these were relevant to the wider park but two were relevant to the future of the leisure centre. The constituent wanted provision for only a basic swimming pool at the new centre and wished car parking for the new leisure centre to be shared with the nearby mosque.

An e-mail was also received by Merton Council asking that the Council should resist calls to make the pool more family friendly and should continue to operate it primarily as a facility in which people can take exercise rather than play.

In addition to these, several emails and submissions via the ‘Contact us’ form on the website were received. There were a total of seven emails received from local residents and stakeholders. Of these, four emails explained in detail their thoughts on the redevelopment of Morden Park Pools and the consultation process. The issues covered in these emails included the view that the pool should be kept at 4ft deep throughout, to ensure the new leisure centre is user-friendly for elderly residents by having easy disabled access to the whole building, stair access to the shallow end and that the facilities are offered at a discounted rate to elderly users. Another resident wrote about changing facilities at leisure centres, highlighting the existing problems with single sex changing rooms being used by families and suggested the provision of the family changing rooms as a solution to this problem.

An email was also received criticising the scope of the consultation. It stated that the principle of replacement should also be covered in the consultation process because some users feel strongly that the existing facility has many benefits superior to those offered by more modern buildings of this kind, and should therefore be retained and upgraded. The remaining three emails were briefer, mainly asking to be kept updated on the plans.

The ‘Contact us’ tool was available on the website for anyone wishing to contribute to the consultation or to send any additional enquires they have. Seven submissions covering a range of issues were made via this tool. These included suggestions like having a good size exercise class hall/studio, a sauna and steam complex and a gym overlooking the pool area. Cllr Maurice Groves submitted a detailed letter via this form outlining why he thought the plans and consultation were incomplete. He mentioned that there are several omissions from the current plans including a pleasant landscaped area, no plans to shield the residents in the local roads from the noise and that there are no plans to offer adequate sports facilities.

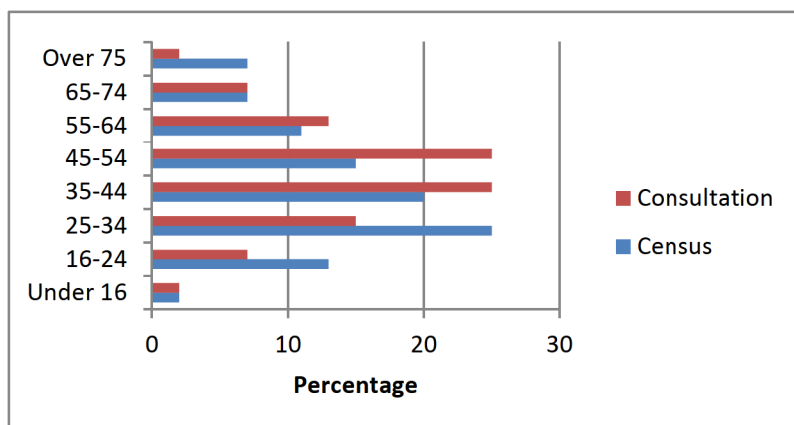
Who got Involved?

Demographics

Analysis has been undertaken of those who filled in the questionnaires to ascertain the extent to which this consultation reached a broad cross section of the community in Merton.

We achieved a relatively good balance of feedback from men and women. 54 percent of the comments were from men and 46 percent from women.

We also received comments from a broad cross section of the age ranges within the local community, with comments received from the under sevens right up to the over 75s. This graph sets the figures for those who visited the exhibition against the age range of the general population of Merton at the time of the 2011 census.



16-34 year olds were under-represented in the consultation, while 35-64 year olds were over represented. We received views from a representative sample of retired people, though from fewer elderly people than exist in the Merton population, (this could be down to people having less of an interest in sports provision as they get older). In general, we feel that we received the views of a broadly representative sample of the

Respondents by Age

population, especially as we received feedback from young people through means other than the questionnaire responses which are not recorded here.

The under representation of young people is perhaps also explained by the fact that 45 percent of those who responded to the consultation were the parents of children under 16. It is quite possible that adults filled in questionnaires on behalf of their children.

So while we can claim success in terms of age, the consultation was less successful in terms of securing a response from across the ethnic groups in the area. Fully 86 percent of the respondents who answered the question on ethnicity were white, with only seven percent representation from other ethnic groups (six percent of respondents chose not to answer this question). This contrasts with statistics from the 2011 census which showed the make-up of St Helier ward in Merton (the ward in which Morden Park lies) as being 66 percent white with 34 percent being from other ethnic groups. This is disappointing given that attempts were made to publicise the consultation among Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, in particular through the Council's ethnic minority consultative forum.

There could be a number of reasons why this happened – many of the responses were received online and it may be that the ethnic groups in the area are less likely to engage online. This would, though, be unusual. An Ofcom study in 2013 found that internet access and use among Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups



was higher than among the British population as a whole¹ and, in any event, other means of engaging (the public exhibitions) were available. Perhaps a more fruitful line of inquiry would be to consider how many of the current users of Morden Park Pools are from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups. Our non-objective



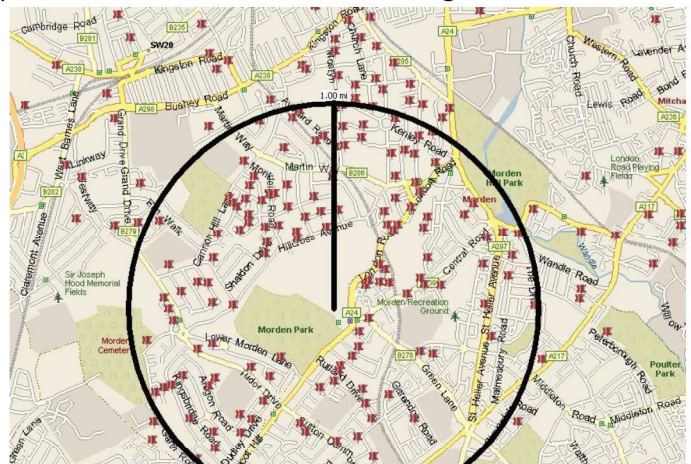
Where Respondents Came From

observation from talking to people at the Leisure Centre was that users seemed to be overwhelmingly white. It is also the case that Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority groups tend to be harder to reach.

We have analysed where the respondents to the consultation came from. 64 percent of respondents were from the borough of Merton, so slightly more than a third of our respondents were from outside the

Borough. At first glance this number seemed quite low, but Morden Park Pools lies close to the borough boundary with Sutton Council, so it is little surprise that a relatively high proportion of users came from there. As the first map shows we did have a sprinkling of respondents from further afield including locations such as West Byfleet, Walton on the Hill and Lewisham.

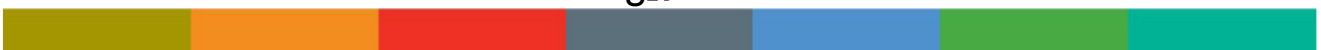
We also mapped where respondents came from in the area immediately around the site. We were initially surprised to find that only nine percent of respondents were from St Helier ward, the ward in which Morden Park Pools falls. However, as the second map shows, those attending the exhibition came from all points around the site, whereas the existing leisure centre is on the boundary of several wards. It is immediately adjacent to the Canon Hill ward and very close to the boundaries of Merton Park ward and Lower Morden ward. We were successful in getting to a significant number of local people, but they were spread across different Merton wards and into Sutton.



Spread of Respondents within One Mile of the Centre



¹ "Ethnic Minority Groups and Communication Services. An Ofcom Special Report". 20 August 2013



Conclusions and Recommendations

The Consultation Process

On the whole we believe that this was an effective and useful consultation. However, we must acknowledge that it was not without flaws.

1. The period in which consultation was open - at 20 days - was shorter than normal. However, PPS received and accepted responses that arrived outside the shut off period.
2. There was an issue with one of the channels for notifying the existing users of Morden Park Pools about the consultation, as the management company operating the facility only placed notices about the consultation on the reception area a couple of days before the public exhibition was due to take place. However, the consultation was promoted through lots of other channels as well and, given the significant number of responses received from the current users of the facilities, we judge that a significant number of them knew about the consultation and were able to participate.
3. The exhibition held at the existing leisure centre was interrupted by an issue within the pool that caused the centre to be shut down for two hours. However, it was a warm, dry day and the consultation team were able to set the exhibition up outside the main entrance where they engaged with a significant number of people arriving to go swimming.
4. Even though the consultation had a high response rate, these responses came disproportionately from the white residents of Merton. It may be worthwhile doing more work with representatives from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups to verify that the results achieved here are matched in these groups. If this is deemed necessary, we would suggest that qualitative research techniques such as focus groups might prove a more useful way to get views from these communities.

For the most part, though, the consultation appears to have been a success.

1. With over 400 valid questionnaires submitted, the consultation elicited a significant response.
2. Analysis of the demographic information supplied showed that the consultation was successful in reaching a broad cross-section of the local community, by age and sex if not by ethnicity. The vast majority of respondents were Merton Borough Council residents and we achieved a balance between feedback from existing users of the leisure centre and the wider public.
3. The design of the website proved to be particularly effective because a) it explained the issues in an accessible fashion and b) the interactive questionnaire worked particularly well.
4. The feedback received was clear and informative.

Finally, it is worth noting that the results of this consultation have been skewed by the organised response of two constituencies – those who currently dive at Morden Park Pools and those who currently swim there. The views of people who fall within these groups are, consequently, over-represented in the findings.

On one hand, these are local people who care about their facilities and chose to engage with the consultation when others did not. In our view their voices should be heard. But on the other, we must be aware that we received a disproportionate response in favour of water based activities. We believe that the relatively low

numbers of people asking to see more non-water based sports should not be interpreted as a sign that there is limited interest in a sports hall or gym. Indeed given that most users of the existing facility are swimmers and divers, the number of respondents who did call for more land based facilities seems to be high and indicates that there is a local desire for the facilities that a sports hall would bring. Again, focus groups could be used to further test this proposition.

Recommendations

PPS draws the following conclusions from the consultation.

1. The Council's basic approach of using the Sport England model as the basis for the new leisure centre was endorsed by the majority of respondents (61 percent of those who expressed a preference). We suspect this number would have been higher were it not for an organised campaign by some to vote the model down because the Sport England model did not include provision for diving. There is majority support for the Council's approach and we believe that the support for sports that come with the sports hall is under-represented in this consultation.
2. A clear preference was shown for what additional facilities the public would like to see at the new sports centre. Top of the list is a café. This is an inconvenient finding as cafes in sports centres rarely work financially without a significant subsidy. Indeed, Morden Park Pools, as originally conceived, had a café which was subsequently closed and converted into the current gym. Nonetheless, there is a clear preference for a café and so we recommend that the Council explores how one can be provided in a way that is cost effective, perhaps by letting space to an external operator or perhaps by discussing joint café arrangements with the Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust and/or others.
3. A significant response was received from users of the diving facilities at the existing leisure centre. They want the new Leisure Centre to continue to offer diving facilities either by incorporating a movable floor in the secondary pool and/or by incorporating a movable floor in the main pool. We recommend that facilities for diving are incorporated into the new plans and that liaison with the diving club is undertaken during the process of planning the new facilities.
4. There was a similarly strong response from swimmers using the existing pool. Many of the leisure swimmers using the facilities were upset at the prospect of the existing 33m pool being replaced with a smaller one. For some, this was because they preferred the longer pool, though their arguments were somewhat undermined by (the smaller number of) those who wanted to use the pool for competitive swimming and so needed it to be 25m. For others, it was a question of flexibility – a longer pool could accommodate swimmers at the same time as children or aqua aerobics classes used the shallow end.

There was a significant body of opinion from younger people expressed through the exhibition at South Thames College (Merton campus) and in the letters received from Hatfeild Primary School that the pool should include some facilities for having fun – slides, flumes and a wave machine were suggested. Anecdotal evidence suggests that such facilities tended to be dismissed by the older swimmers, but perhaps room could be found for some of the younger people's suggestions in a training pool at least. After all, a primary aim of Merton Council's leisure policy is to encourage children to take exercise and if the swimming pool is fun it should encourage more youngsters to participate.

So, the future configuration of the swimming pool is a tricky issue to resolve and whatever the Council does, some users will be upset. Our recommendation would be to a) keep the 25m pool but b) add in an additional two lanes so the footprint of water is nearer to what it is now and so the pool can continue to be operated in a flexible manner and c) to investigate some fun uses of the training pool (even if it is just the provision of large floating toys) for when it is not being used for diving.

5. The lack of a clear direction on what non water-based facilities are wanted probably stems in part from the fact that no firm advocates for a particular sport came forward in the way that swimmers and divers did. However, anecdotal evidence from the exhibitions suggests that most people felt the range of sports that could be undertaken within the model developed by Sport England was satisfactory. In our view, there is strong support for a sports hall, a gym and the facilities that come with them .

Our recommendation is to take the evidence from the consultation on face value and to approach additional facilities in the order in which they were wanted. So, if sufficient funds are available, to provide a climbing wall, then to provide a sauna, then look to a crèche and so on.

Next Steps

It is recommended that this report will be made available online and publicised. All those who were involved in the consultation, and left contact details, will be alerted to the findings of this report so that they are able to see the results of the consultation in which they were involved.

Merton Council will now consider the findings of the consultation and reach conclusions about the future provision of facilities in the new Morden Leisure Centre based in part upon its findings. We would recommend that the Council continues to communicate with the people who were involved in this consultation as the decision making process progresses.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Example Stakeholder Letter



19 March 2014

Dear Sir / Madam,

New Community Leisure Centre for Morden Park

As you may be aware, Merton Council has decided in principle to replace the ageing Morden Park Pools but key questions remain about what it should include.

Community engagement specialist, PPS Group, will run an independent consultation on behalf of Merton Council and report back on what the local community wants for its leisure centre. We will be hosting public exhibitions on the facilities to be included in a new leisure centre and we invite you to come along to:

- Morden Park Leisure Centre, London Rd, Morden, Surrey SM4 5HE
 - o 9am-3pm Saturday 29th March 2014


To help guide the overall decision making, the council has taken advice from Sport England on developing a high spec leisure centre that is best value for money. The budget available for a new leisure centre is £10million.

We will be encouraging people to complete our consultation form on our dedicated website, www.leisureformorden.com, and attend our public exhibitions during March. If you are unable to attend the above event, you are also welcome to attend the other exhibitions taking place in March at the following venues:

- South Thames College, Morden Park, London Rd, Morden, SM4 5QX,
 - o 8.30am-11am Thursday 27th March 2014
- Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX
 - o 12-4pm Thursday 27th March 2014

You can find out more by visiting our website at www.leisureformorden.com, or alternatively you can email us at info@leisureformorden.com or speak to us on our Freephone community line **0800 019 2054**.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Byfield
PPS Group

ISSUE 57
SPRING 2014

news and information from your council

my merton

Brand new pool for Morden

Expanding our best schools
Residents give council best ever scores
Become a mega recycler and win cash prizes

Council tax frozen again!

THE MJ 2013 BEST ACHIEVING COUNCIL 25th ANNIVERSARY WINNERS

Best Achieving Council



making a splash
Merton - a great place for families

Morden to benefit from new family leisure centre

Merton Council is investing in a brand new, £11m family leisure centre to replace the ageing Morden Park pool. And the design of the new centre is over to you.

Morden Park Pool was built in the 1960s. But, with the building looking old and tired, it's clocking up a growing repair bill. With construction techniques and materials changing, the council has found an affordable way to deliver the project, making a new facility better value for money than continuing to maintain the old one.

Leader of the council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, said "I have a business background so it's important to me that these plans are value for money and realistic. By being careful with money the council has been able to put funds aside to replace the pool with a new and affordable leisure centre for local families to enjoy for generations to come." Consultation has begun on what residents would like to see in their new centre. Don't miss the chance to have your say - to find out how, visit merton.gov.uk/future-mpp. Christine Parsloe, the council's leisure development manager explained: "We want to build a family-friendly facility, which includes a pool, but other than that we're really open to residents' ideas."



"People might want a sports hall, rooms for classes and group activities or a health and fitness centre. They might like spinning bikes, a sauna and steam room, or crèche facilities. Once we've taken into account design fees and demolition, there will be around £10m for construction. It sounds a lot but facilities like these are expensive so while we want to hear a range of views, they need to be realistic." Ideally we need a flexible space that can be adapted as trends change, according to Christine: "We want to know what residents would like, but more importantly what they would use, not just now but for years to come."

The initial consultation will last until the beginning of April when all views will be considered, then designs will be worked up and there will be further consultation on the designs prior to planning approval being sought later in 2014. Construction will take about a year with the new facility open for business shortly after.

find out more
www.leisureformorden.com
info@leisureformorden.com
Community telephone line: 0800 019 2054

A new and affordable leisure centre for local families to enjoy

The M.J Best Achieving Council • The M.J Best Achieving Council • The M.J Best Achieving Council • The M.J Best Achieving Council

FEEDBACK FORM
 Leisure for Morden
 Public Consultation March 2014

Thank you for taking the time to attend our public consultation on the emerging plans to replace the ageing facilities at Morden Park Pools with a new family leisure centre. We would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes to fill out this form to share your views on the proposals.

1. Do you think the Sport England model is an adequate or an inadequate basic template for the new leisure centre at Morden Park?

Adequate

Inadequate

Don't know

2. The council is working to a budget of £10 million and can provide additional facilities over and above the basic Sport England model providing they do not exceed the budget. The Sport England model is estimated to cost the council £8.4 million, so there is a budget of £1.6 million left over for additional facilities.

Working within this £1.6 million budget, what extra leisure facilities would you like included, on top of those suggested by Sport England?

Once you have selected your preferences please fill in the total cost of your preferences, making sure you do not exceed £1.6 million.

Additional facility	Cost (approximately)	Please tick your preferences (ensuring you do not exceed the budget)
2 extra lanes in main pool	£600k	
2 extra courts in sports hall	£400k	
2 extra fitness studios	£800k	
Crèche	£400k	
20 extra gym stations	£200k	
13m climbing wall	£100k	
Café	£300k	
Squash court	£200k	
Sauna	£300k	
Moveable floor addition to secondary pool (this would allow aqua aerobics and diving)	£500k	
Moveable floor addition to six lane main pool (this would allow diving)	£500k	
Total Cost:		

Page 1 of 2





3. Please let us know if you have any comments below:

4. If you would like to be kept updated, please provide your contact details below:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Please tick the boxes below as appropriate:

- Age:** 0-19 20-39 40-59 60-79 over 79
- Occupation:** student part-time full-time retired unemployed

All comment forms should be returned by 4th April 2014 to: Leisure for Morden consultation, c/o PPS Group, Langham House, 302-308 Regent Street, London W1B 3AT. FREEPOST RSHJ-LKUR-TALS

Email: info@leisureformorden.com Phone: 0800 019 2054 Website: www.leisureformorden.com

Your enquiries and comments will be analysed by PPS (Local & Regional) Ltd on behalf of London Borough of Merton. Copies may be made available, in due course, to London Borough of Merton. We will, however, request that your personal details are not placed in the public record. Your personal details will be held securely by PPS and London Borough of Merton, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2000, and will be used solely in connection with the Leisure for Morden consultation and any subsequent planning application and, except as noted above, will not be passed to any third parties.



Appendix 4 – Copy of the exhibition boards

Leisure for Morden

A New Leisure Centre for Morden



Welcome to this public exhibition about plans to replace the ageing facilities at Morden Park Pools with a new family leisure centre.

Merton Council wants to know what you want to see in the new centre and has appointed PPS Group, specialists in community engagement, to run a consultation with residents, analyse the results and report back their findings.

Please take a moment to read the information on display and leave your feedback with us. Alternatively you can participate in the consultation by going to www.leisureformorden.com and filling out the online questionnaire.










0800 019 2054
info@leisureformorden.com
www.leisureformorden.com

Leisure for Morden



Existing Facilities at Morden Park Pools





Morden Park Pools was built nearly fifty years ago. It needs replacing and does not include basic facilities, such as a sports hall.

Morden Park Pools currently has:

- 30 gym stations
- 6 lane swimming pool
- Changing facilities
- Diving facilities
- Sauna suite
- Teaching pool

0800 019 2054
info@leisureformorden.com
www.leisureformorden.com

Leisure for Morden

New Leisure Centre for Morden Park



The decision to replace the Centre has been made and Merton Council has committed a budget of £10 million for a replacement.

Merton Council has taken advice from Sport England, the foremost authority on helping communities keep active through sports, and intends to base the new leisure centre on their recommendations.

The Sport England model allows the following facilities and is estimated to cost the Council £8.4 million:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Sports hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large enough for 4 badminton courts ▪ Equipment storage ▪ Dry changing rooms/areas <p>Swimming pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6 lane main pool ▪ Secondary pool | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wet changing rooms/areas ▪ School/group changing rooms/areas <p>Health and Fitness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100 gym stations ▪ 2 studios ▪ Changing rooms/areas |
|---|--|

However, there is some flexibility. The council is working to a budget of £10 million and can provide additional facilities over and above the basic Sport England model providing they do not exceed the budget.

This is where we want your views.



0800 019 2054
info@leisureformorden.com
www.leisureformorden.com

Leisure for Morden

Let us know what you think



We are asking you to select what additional facilities you would like to see at the new leisure centre, on top of the facilities provided for within the £8.4 million Sport England model.

It is important to calculate the costs of these additional facilities when selecting your preferences because the total cost must not exceed the budget of £10 million.

For example - if you choose:

- 2 extra lanes in the main pool £800k and
- 1 movable floor addition to the secondary pool £500k and
- 2 extra fitness studios £800k

This would add up to £10.3million (£8.4m + £1.9 million) and would be over the £10million budget, so you will have to choose again to stay under budget.

To let us know your preferences and use our handy calculator, please visit www.leisureformorden.com to fill in the online questionnaire or fill out a feedback form before you leave.



0800 019 2054
info@leisureformorden.com
www.leisureformorden.com

Leisure for Morden

Your Choices

Additional facility	Cost (approximately)
2 extra lanes in main pool	£600k
2 extra courts in sports hall	£400k
2 extra fitness studios	£800k
Crèche	£400k
20 extra gym stations	£200k
13m climbing wall	£100k
Café	£300k
Squash court	£200k
Sauna	£300k
Moveable floor addition to secondary pool (this would allow aqua aerobics and diving)	£500k
Moveable floor addition to six lane main pool (this would allow diving)	£500k

Next Steps


This consultation will run until April 2014 and following this we will collate the results of the feedback received.

If you would like to be kept updated and informed of the results of this consultation please leave your contact details on the questionnaire provided or email info@leisureformorden.com

Thank you for attending today.

Leisure for Morden

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A new Leisure Centre for Morden

Plans are in place to create a new family leisure centre to replace the ageing facilities at Morden Park.

Merton Council wants to know what you want to see in the new centre and has appointed PPS Group, specialists in community consultation, to run a consultation with residents, analyse the results and report back their findings.

PPS will be consulting until the 4th April 2014.

We will update this website regularly and let you know when we will be hosting public consultation events. But in the meantime, feel free to fill in the questionnaire about the proposals on this site.

Recent News

Public Exhibitions

This online consultation will run until 4 April 2014 and is being supplemented by public exhibitions held locally to gather feedback. ...read more

Consultation planned for Morden Park Leisure Centre

Merton Council announced today that there will be a consultation asking residents in Merton ...read more

PPS merton

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Leisure for Morden

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Morden Park Pools was built nearly fifty years ago. It needs replacing and does not include basic facilities, such as a sports hall.

The decision to replace the Morden Park Pools has been made and Merton Council has committed a budget of £10 million for a replacement building.

We are now consulting on what facilities you would like to see in a new family-friendly leisure centre.

Morden Park Pools currently has:

- 30 gym stations
- 6 lane swimming pool
- Changing facilities
- Diving facilities
- Sauna suite
- Teaching pool

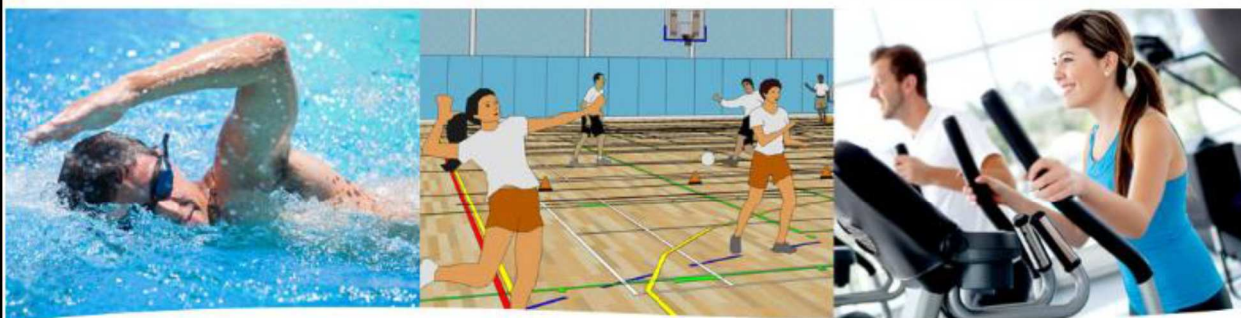


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At this stage we want to know what facilities you would like to see in the new centre.

Merton Council has taken advice from Sport England, the foremost authority on helping communities keep active through sports, and intends to base the new leisure centre on their recommendations.

However, there is some flexibility. The council is working to a budget of £10 million and can provide additional facilities over and above the basic Sport England model providing they do not exceed the budget.

To give us your views on what facilities you want to see at Morden Park, simply fill in the [questionnaire here](#).

For more information on Sport England visit their website here www.sportengland.org

Or for more information on the Affordable Sports Centres document click here: [Read the Sports England Affordable Sports Centres publication here](#)



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- 2 extra courts in sports hall
- 2 extra fitness studios
- Crèche
- 20 extra gym stations
- 13m climbing wall
- Café
- Squash court
- Sauna



You are over budget!
Please remove some of your choices to keep within the budget

 £10,700,000

Leisure for Morden

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Thank you for your interest.
The consultation period has now ended.
PPS Group will now analyse they responses and feed them back to Merton Borough Council for consideration.



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If you have any comments or questions, please email info@leisureformorden.com, phone 0800 019 2054 or leave your comments below and a member of PPS will respond to your query.

Name *

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>First</small>	<small>Last</small>

Phone

Email *

Enquiry *



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Committee Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

11th November 2014

Agenda item:

Wards:

Subject: Business Plan Update 2015-2019 – Equalities Assessment
(Appendix 2)

Lead officer: Caroline Holland

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison

Contact officer: Paul Dale

Forward Plan reference number:

Urgent report:

Reason for urgency: The chairman has approved the submission of this supplementary item to Appendix 2 as a matter of urgency as it provides the latest available information on an issue included in the Business Plan Update report which requires consideration as it relates to the Budget process and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-2019. It is important that this consideration is not delayed in order that the Council can work towards a balanced budget at its meeting on 4 March 2015 and set a Council Tax as appropriate for 2015/16.

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Equality Analysis

Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet [LINK TO BE ADDED]
Text in blue is intended to provide guidance – you can delete this from your final version.

<p>What are the proposals being assessed?</p>	<p>£200K income generation through local authorities being allowed to set their own planning application fees.</p> <p>The government has effectively backtracked from their original position and the delivery of the income is now highly unlikely.</p> <p>As an alternative, these savings are proposed as part of the shared service proposal with Wandsworth already tabled which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Shared enforcement and admin teams and investigation of other shared service options 2) Increased income generation from planning performance agreements and revised pre application charging 3) Joint re-procurement of M3 Northgate systems 4) Improved efficiency and resilience with larger teams. 5) Efficiencies delivered through Mobile and flexible working arrangement rollout and other TOM improvements 6) Potential outsourcing of admin scanning functions
<p>Which Department/ Division has the responsibility for this?</p>	<p>E @ R , Sustainable Communities</p>

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Stage 1: Overview	
<p>Name and job title of lead officer</p>	<p>Neil Milligan, Building and Development Control Manager</p>
<p>1. What are the aims, objectives and desired outcomes of your proposal? (Also explain proposals e.g. reduction/removal of service, deletion of posts, changing criteria etc)</p>	<p>Designed to deliver savings and improvements to the service. Shared services are designed to reduce the overall management structure. Efficiencies delivered in other areas will also result in deletion of posts.</p>
<p>2. How does this contribute to the council's corporate priorities?</p>	<p>Changes in working practices will result in more self-service and home/flexible working to support corporate objectives for flexible working and customer contact change</p>

3. Who will be affected by this proposal? For example who are the external/internal customers, communities, partners, stakeholders, the workforce etc.	The potential reduction in posts may result in reduced capacity at a senior level to support the planning application process and the ability to meet targets. TOM objectives are planned to try and improve processes and mitigate any impact.
4. Is the responsibility shared with another department, authority or organisation? If so, who are the partners and who has overall responsibility?	Wandsworth Council will share the responsibility. There are no other direct service providers although residents and their association are closely involved in the process. The service is provided for residents, businesses and developers and involves close contact with statutory consultees.

Stage 2: Collecting evidence/ data

5. What evidence have you considered as part of this assessment?

Provide details of the information you have reviewed to determine the impact your proposal would have on the protected characteristics (equality groups).

There is no information presently collected on such groups using the service. Potential impacts on groups could be monitored through an action plan although this would have its own resource implications

Stage 3: Assessing impact and analysis

6. From the evidence you have considered, what areas of concern have you identified regarding the potential negative and positive impact on one or more protected characteristics (equality groups)?

Protected characteristic (equality group)	Tick which applies		Tick which applies		Reason Briefly explain what positive or negative impact has been identified
	Positive impact		Potential negative impact		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Age		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Disability		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Gender Reassignment		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Marriage and Civil Partnership		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Pregnancy and Maternity		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Race		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Religion/ belief		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Sex (Gender)		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Sexual orientation		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision
Socio-economic status		x	x		It is not know yet if there will be any reduction in overall service provision

7. If you have identified a negative impact, how do you plan to mitigate it?

If any negative impacts are identified through any monitoring then an action plan will look to address this as far as is practicable

Stage 4: Conclusion of the Equality Analysis

8. Which of the following statements best describe the outcome of the EA (Tick one box only)

Please refer to the guidance for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is available on the intranet for further information about these outcomes and what they mean for your proposal

- Outcome 1** – The EA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact and all opportunities to promote equality are being addressed. **No changes are required.**
- Outcome 2** – The EA has identified adjustments to remove negative impact or to better promote equality. **Actions you propose to take to do this should be included in the Action Plan.**
- Outcome 3** – The EA has identified some potential for negative impact or some missed opportunities to promote equality and it may not be possible to mitigate this fully. **If you propose to continue with proposals you must include the justification for this in Section 10 below, and include actions you propose to take to remove negative impact or to better promote equality in the Action Plan. You must ensure that your proposed action is in line with the PSED to have ‘due regard’ and you are advised to seek Legal Advice.**
- Outcome 4** – The EA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. **Stop and rethink your proposals.**

Stage 5: Improvement Action Pan

9. Equality Analysis Improvement Action Plan template – Making adjustments for negative impact

This action plan should be completed after the analysis and should outline action(s) to be taken to mitigate the potential negative impact identified (expanding on information provided in Section 7 above).

Negative impact/ gap in information identified in the Equality Analysis	Action required to mitigate	How will you know this is achieved? e.g. performance measure/ target)	By when	Existing or additional resources?	Lead Officer	Action added to divisional/ team plan?
If any identified through service level changes	Action plan to mitigate	Measuring customer feedback	2017	Additional for monitoring customer feedback	Neil Milligan	no

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Note that the full impact of the decision may only be known after the proposals have been implemented; therefore it is important the effective monitoring is in place to assess the impact.

Stage 6: Reporting outcomes

10. Summary of the equality analysis

This section can also be used in your decision making reports (CMT/Cabinet/etc) but you must also attach the assessment to the report, or provide a hyperlink

This Equality Analysis has resulted in an Outcome [add](#)

There is some potential negative impact on all of the groups identified since the proposals may involve a reduction in the size of the section although that is still unknown at this stage. Therefore, the range and breadth of service may affect all members of the public. The proposal does not change the overall service provided in any way therefore if there are any impacts they will be difficult to easily identify. Rather the changes will involve a diminution in levels of service overall. Potentially we would look to place a considerable emphasis on providing a service which focuses ever more around the provision of web based information as opposed to direct contact with customers. Should these proposals be accepted then we would design the service so that it only responds to high risk issues.



Stage 7: Sign off by Director/ Head of Service			
Assessment completed by	Neil Milligan. Building and Development Control Manager	Signature:	Date:
Improvement action plan signed off by Director/ Head of Service	Add name/ job title	Signature:	Date:

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