

# **Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

**Wards:** St. Helier, Cannon Hill

**Subject:** Morden Leisure Centre

**Lead officer:** Chris Lee, Director, Environment & Regeneration Department

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

**Contact Officer:** Christine Parsloe, Leisure & Culture Development Manager

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## **Recommendations:**

Cabinet agree to

- A. The Project Scope for the new Morden Leisure Centre.
  - B. Develop a new Morden Leisure Centre using the priorities for the facility mix as determined by the 2014 public consultation, in so far as the budgets set aside will allow.
  - C. Site MLC 3 as being the preferred location for the new facility with site MLC 1 being the reserve site should MLC 3 for any reason not be possible.
  - D. Re-profile the capital expenditure into future years in accordance with the detailed figures in paragraph 6.2.
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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks to gain approval to accept the recommendations of the 2014 Public Consultation and agree to the site within Morden Park for the new Morden Leisure Centre as well as agreeing to the Project Scope for the new Morden Leisure Centre. It also seeks to gain approval to re-profile the capital expenditure.

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1 In the winter of 2013, the Council announced its intention to press ahead with a new Morden Leisure Centre to replace the existing Morden Park Pools and set aside £11m within the council's capital programme.
- 2.2 Following desk top research and having sought advice from Sport England, the Sport England's Low Cost Leisure Centres design was chosen as the basis for a public consultation. PPS, an independent public consultation company, were appointed and they consulted on the use of this design as well as determining the public's preferences for additional facilities in priority order, so that a new facility can be procured within the budget available. The findings of this public consultation are detailed in paragraph 4 of this report.
- 2.3 For a number of years the council have been aware that a replacement for Morden Park Pools would be required as the existing building was beyond economic repair, hence the location for a new facility has been considered and the detail of the four shortlisted sites is contained within paragraph 3 of this report.

- 2.4 Internal cross-council project advisors have been brought together to support the delivery of this new facility as well as a project management team which includes the operators Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and this management team will be added to over the coming months as the councils external experts are appointed.
- 2.5 The council has already appointed its operator for the new facility, which is GLL. They were awarded the tender for the Leisure Management Contract for the boroughs three leisure centres in 2010 and that contract included the potential for the demise of Morden Park Pools and the move to a new Morden Leisure Centre.
- 2.6 Based on the findings from the public consultation and the work completed to date a Project Scope (Appendix 1- Project Scope) has been initiated to capture all of the detail for the development and delivery of this new facility. This document, which currently sets out the key objectives, initial scope and early findings from surveys currently being undertaken, will be added to over the coming months in readiness for procurement of the construction company. It will be used to inform our specialists and advisors and for them in turn to add to it to advise the contractors, thus ensuring we deliver within the scope of the project and within the funding available.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 Four sites within Morden Park were identified for consideration for the new Morden Leisure Centre (Appendix 2 – Sites Map):
- MLC1 – the site of the existing Morden Park Pools
  - MLC2 – Morden Park Car Park
  - MLC3 – on the London Road frontage, on the right hand side of the access road
  - MLC4 – on the London Road frontage, opposite the Morden South Station and near to the railway line
- 3.2 Each of these locations was then considered against the following criteria so as to help determine the most appropriate site:
- Location
  - Planning
  - Ecology.
  - Archaeology
  - Timeliness
  - Continuity of Service
  - Costs
  - Land ownership
  - Risks
  - Ancillary
  - Regeneration opportunities
  - Utilities

- Impact on other council services

- 3.3 Location MLC3 has the benefits of being the one with the least impact on the archaeological priority zone and is the only site not adjacent to a site of importance for nature conservation although it is accepted that a development here will have an impact on a number of mature trees and the resulting demolition of the existing Morden Park Pool may have ecological issues.
- 3.4 MLC3 is a clear site and by building on a new location it ensures that the existing pool can remain open during construction so that there is no loss of service to the users. The existing car park would remain and serve the new facility therefore only requiring car parking close to the facility for disabled users and service access.
- 3.5 This prominent MLC3 location, on the London Road, would assist in realising the council's Core Planning Strategy objectives of improving links between the town centre and the park.
- 3.6 It is prudent to ensure the council does allocate a reserve site for this development to ensure that should unforeseen issues arise during the project development and planning stages, that an alternative is available to the project team. The MLC1 existing pools site has been determined for this as it is already the site of an existing leisure facility, has the second best set of pros and cons within the Sites Review analysis detailed in Appendix 3, but it would mean that should the project team need to move to this reserve site then there would be a loss of the leisure facility and its benefits to the users for at least 18 months whilst demolition and construction occurs and an opening date which would be much later than that for site MLC3.

#### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1 Public consultation on the base Sport England Low Cost Leisure Centre facility model and prioritising the additional elements the public wished to see included took place in the spring of 2014, and the report was published in August 2014. The full report is available on [www.leisureformorden.com](http://www.leisureformorden.com)
- 4.2 The main findings were:
- 4.2.1 "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 (53 percent). ..."<sup>1</sup>
- 4.2.2 "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. ..."<sup>1</sup>
- 4.2.3 "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. ..."<sup>1</sup>
- 4.2.4 "...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."<sup>1</sup>

- 4.2.5 "...lack of a clear direction on what non water-based facilities are wanted... model developed by Sport England was satisfactory ... 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."<sup>1</sup>
- 4.3 The report also recommends:
- Liaison with the diving club to be undertaken during the process of planning the new facilities.
  - Further consultation ethnic minority people, who were not well represented in the previous consultation.
  - The council continues to communicate with the people who were involved in the consultation and left their contact details as the decision making process progresses.
- 4.4 The public will also be able to get updates on the progress of this project via the council's website, from local press and officers will attend Morden Community Forum as appropriate.
- 4.5 Officers have also met with Morden Park Playing Fields Trust (MPPFT) representatives to discuss their emerging proposals, whereby they wish to develop full-size floodlit artificial grass pitches and a pavilion in the playing fields area of the park in order to re-establish and re-open the sports pitches on the area previously operated, many years ago, by the London Playing Fields Association.
- 4.6 The council will continue to work with MPPFT and will develop a Memorandum of Understanding with them so that both projects can complement each other where possible and shared facilities can be explored.

## 5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1 Table 1 provides an indicative timeline for a new Morden Leisure Centre on site MLC3.

**Table 1 - Indicative Timetable – MLC3 Site**

By When	What
10 Nov 2014	Report to Cabinet
Dec 2014	Appoint Project Manager
Jan 2015	Procure Specialists
Spring 2015	Develop design and Procure Construction Company
Spring 2015	Application to Demolish existing Morden Park Pools
Autumn 2015	Agree design and submit planning application
Spring 2016	Begin Construction
Autumn 2017	Completion
Spring 2018	Demolish Morden Park Pools

- 5.2 Table 2 provides an indicative timeline for a new Morden Leisure Centre on site MLC1.

**Table 2 - Indicative Timetable – MLC1 Site**

<b>By When</b>	<b>What</b>
10 Nov 2014	Report to Cabinet
Dec 2014	Appoint Project Manager
Jan 2015	Procure Specialists
Spring 2015	Develop design and Procure Construction Company
Spring 2015	Application to Demolish existing Morden Park Pools
Autumn 2015	Agree design and submit planning application
Spring 2016	Demolish existing Morden Park Pool
Autumn 2016	Begin Construction
Summer 2018	Completion

## **6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The council has set aside £11m within their capital programme for the purposes of delivering a new Morden Leisure Centre. This figure is to include the construction of the new facility and the demolition of the existing Morden Park Pools, as well as all fees, surveys, associated costs, etc.
- 6.2 The current capital programme identifies spend of £1m in this financial year with £10m in 15/16. The council will need to adjust these figures to take account of the indicative programme, which anticipates the majority of the expenditure in the financial year 16/17. The profiled expenditure will be only known once the procurement has been completed, but at this point it is recommended that £100k remains in the 14/15 capital programme, with £900k in 15/16; £9m in 16/17 and £1m in 17/18.
- 6.3 All of the sites identified as potential locations for the new Morden Leisure Centre are on land owned by the council, but all lie within a conservation area each with their own different pros and cons as identified in Appendix 2 - Sites Review attached. A full planning application will need to be submitted.
- 6.4 The new Morden Leisure Centre is intended to increase usage with a resulting increase in traffic movement to and from the site. The operation of the access road / A24 Junction will need to be reviewed to accommodate the added traffic movements. This will be addressed by a Traffic Impact Assessment as part of the Planning Application.
- 6.5 To deliver this facility the council will need to draw on resources and expertise across the organisation and to that end an officer project advisory group has been

established. This group will meet bi-monthly and at other times as and when necessary to keep the project moving.

- 6.6 A project team including Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and lead officers for the council will lead & drive the project forward.
- 6.7 Procurement of the construction of the new facility will be via OJEU.
- 6.8 The new Morden Leisure Centre will be operated by GLL, as this is part of their existing contract with the council, which was previously procured through an OJEU process that concluded in December 2010, with the award of a 15 year Leisure Management Agreement (LMA).

## **7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The provision of leisure facilities is a discretionary matter for the authority.
- 7.2 The current Leisure Management Agreement (LMA) with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) provides for the termination of those clauses in the existing LMA covering Morden Park Pool and to amend the LMA with GLL to include the new facilities. Schedule 3 of the LMA provides a list of agreed principles which both parties are subject to in determining what terms will apply in relation to the terms that will apply to the new Morden Leisure Centre.
- 7.3 Furthermore, a new lease will need to be entered into with GLL with regards to the new leisure centre.
- 7.4 If MLC1 is chosen, if there is encroachment onto land owned by the college then the Council will have to decide how they will acquire this land whether it be by purchasing the land (including consideration of a Compulsory Purchase Order) or a long lease.
- 7.5 Title searches at the Land Registry are currently being conducted of the proposed sites to identify restrictions, rights of way or any other factors that may have a bearing on the proposed sites.

## **8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 It is important to ensure that the range of swimming pools operating in the borough and the surrounding boroughs have equalities, accessibility and pricing policies to meet the complete range of Merton resident's needs.
- 8.2 The design of the new Morden Leisure Centre will be in accordance with Sport England's Best Practice Guidance and will be disabled accessible, whilst the contractual obligations for the operation is already in place and there is no intention to alter the operational arrangements rather just to improve the range of sports facilities and offer available.

## **9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Sport & Recreation Alliance in its 'Game for Life' report, September 2012, evidences how participation in sport & recreation is good for you, be that by improving health, educational attainment and/or community cohesion.
- 9.2 Research shows that participation in "...sport and recreation programmes can prevent boredom, teach important life skills, divert young people from crime and foster social inclusion."<sup>2</sup>

9.3 The importance of sport and recreation within a local community with regards to the crime and disorder implications is evidenced by:

- Physical activity can create a diversion from undertaking criminal behaviour, with "...7 out of 10 teenagers believing that anti-social behaviour occurs because young people are bored and 6 out of 10 say that there isn't enough for young people to do in their area." <sup>3</sup>
- "A lack of self-regulation has been linked to substance abuse and criminal behaviour amongst other negative behaviours (Baumeister et al., 1994 cited in Oaten and Cheng, 2006) and potentially it can play a role in someone's adherence to an exercise programme or participation in sport."<sup>2</sup>
- "Diverting 1 in 10 away from crime would save over £113m per annum."<sup>2</sup>
- "Around 80% of people believe that participating in sport teaches respect for others and increases people's involvement in community activities. 76% of people believe that participating in sporting activities reduces anti-social behaviour / crime among young people."<sup>4</sup>
- "There is a significant link between participation in cultural activity and people being satisfied with an area in which they live. In inner cities those who participated in culture were 10% more likely to be satisfied with where they live, compared to those who did not participate."<sup>5</sup>

9.4 A new Morden Leisure Centre will not on its own be the panacea to resolving local crime and disorder issues, however the sports and recreation facilities along with the operation of them will create a whole host of opportunities for local people that will reduce their likelihood to become bored, offer programmes and activities that encourage social and community cohesion and offer experiences that will in turn benefit the individuals, self-esteem, sense of well-being and increase their capacity for educational attainment.

## **10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

### **10.1 Risk Management**

10.1.1 There is a high business risk that the existing Morden Park Pools (MPP) could fail, resulting in closure of service provision. In managing the business risks, officers and the leisure contractors are continuing to progress planned works thus ensuring that the services can be retained and the facilities operated during the development and construction of the new Morden Leisure Centre.

### **10.2 Health and Safety**

10.2.1 Should MPP fail and become a health & safety risk it will be closed with immediate effect.

## **11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Appendix 1 – Project Scope
- Appendix 2 – Sites Map
- Appendix 3 – Sites Review

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report**

- Morden Leisure Centre – Public Consultation Report, July 2104

**13. REFERENCES**

1. Morden Leisure Centre Consultation, PPS, July 2014
2. Game for Life, Sport & Recreation Alliance, Sept 2012
3. Nestle Family Monitor, 2002, & 4Children, 2007, cited in Audit Commission, 2009
4. MORI Research, 2004
5. Taking Part Survey, Internal Data Analysis, DCMS, 2002

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