

River Park Leisure Centre

Issues and Options

What's in the presentation

- the existing River Park Leisure Centre
- the pros and cons of options
- Continuum report
- the proposition put forward
- financial realities
- location options
- how we proceed







RPLC current state of play

- circa 600,000 uses (not users) in 12/13
- 6 lane 25m pool
- 12m x 10m learner pool
- 8 badminton court sports hall
- 4 squash courts
- 120 station gym
- good day to day maintenance
- large, long term maintenance requirements – roof, changing rooms,
- up to £4million to overhaul (excluding closure impact)

Pros and cons of options

- 1. *Make do and mend (fix what breaks)*
 - affordable in the short term
 - some expenditure quite significant (e.g. swimming pool roof)
 - risk of unpredicted closure periods
 - running costs may increase disproportionately
 - continuing customer dissatisfaction
 - failure to meet needs of growing population
 - eventually new centre will still be required

Pros and cons of options

- 2. *Planned major refurbishment*
 - affordable (but still relatively expensive)
 - comprehensive
 - reduced risk of unpredicted closure
 - some visible customer benefits
 - 10 good years?
 - substantial planned non-availability
 - still fundamentally the same facilities afterwards
 - eventually new facilities will be required

Pros and cons of options

• 3. *Replacement Facility*

- strategic financial commitment
- major project - delivery risk
- debate over facilities and site
- meet the need for 40 years+
- flagship to promote participation/events/Winchester
- energy efficient, lower running costs
- low interest rates, reasonable construction costs

The 'sporting' argument for a new facility

- promoting sport and physical activity is a good thing for health, community well-being and local prestige
- major public facility essential to meet demand
- facilities (especially wet-side) at RPLC are not large enough or appropriately configured – old and tired
- replacing RPLC will re-energise sports participation – a facility to be proud of

The business case for a leisure centre

- why a 'business case'?
 - because our decisions have to be financially prudent
- if we didn't have a leisure centre, what leisure centre would we build?
 - if it isn't very different from RPLC that could strengthen the case for refurbishment
 - if a new facility could operate on significantly better terms then that could strengthen the case for replacement
 - other organisations are providing facilities as well – our facilities are part of the story, not all of it

Continuum report

- commissioned to answer the question ‘what would a new facility be like and what would it cost?’ – not ‘should we do it’?
- key partners and stakeholders consulted
- Winchester has good existing facility provision
- high level of latent demand
- population is growing
- affluent population – high participation rates, community interest in sport at all levels, strong clubs
- Winchester not identified as a regional hub

Refurbish or new facility?

- a political decision regarding the use of resources
- business case for replacement now:
 - to meet the needs of a growing, 'high participation' population
 - to take advantage of low interest rates and construction contracts
 - to avoid heavy expenditure on existing facility
 - to avoid closures and service failures
 - significant choices to be made on facilities, fit and finish to manage cost within affordable range

The proposition: A new facility to meet business case and sporting aspirations

- 10 lane 25m pool
- 20m training/teaching pool
- hydrotherapy and sports rehabilitation (possible partnership funding)
- health and fitness gym – 150 stations
- 8 – 12 court sports hall
- squash courts
- dance studios
- tennis courts, outdoor artificial pitches
- all relevant ancillary facilities
 - specialist facility for gymnastics/martial arts?

Why not a 50m pool?

- 'public' 50m pools operate in 50m mode only a few hours a week
- primary argument for 50m is to provide 2 x 25m pools using moveable booms/floors
- community facility would also have to include training pool
- 2x25m pools plus other water space not considered justified – capital and running costs
- 25m 10 lane plus training water best mix?



How affordable is a new facility?

- capital used has annual financing cost
 -
 - income from facility management fee
 -
 - income from any other sources
 - =
 - annual cost to the Council
-
- is the Council willing and able to fund this above other things?

New Leisure Centre - Rugby

- opened 31st August 2013
- 25m x 8 lane main pool
- 17m x 8m studio pool
- 6 court sports hall
- 100 station gym
- modest ancillary facilities – no squash courts
- no external facilities replaced
- external management contract tendered for opening
- capital cost circa £12.5 million
- budget book cost to Council £590,000 per annum

Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre St Albans

- 25m x 10 lane pool (moveable floor in part)
- 17m x 10m confidence/teaching pool (moveable floor)
- 200 station gym, youth gym, spinning studio
- 4 court sports hall (!)
- commercial standard spa
- creche and soft play
- climbing wall
- very high specification
- £25million capital cost



Options for location

- Bushfield Camp – allocated for employment use. Not easily accessible to users. High cost, no infrastructure.
- Bar End – major access and land ownership problems, high visibility. Close to motorway junction. Existing network of sports facilities.
- North Walls – town centre location. Care needed over parking. Loss of playing fields. Good infrastructure and accessibility.





Timetable constraints

- new facility =
 - site investigations and studies
 - agreement on content and funding
 - planning (.....this is Winchester)
 - scheme design
 - construction (18 months at least)
 - demolition and reconfiguration
- expect 5 years
- what do we spend on the existing building?

How are we proceeding

- test North Walls as location for Cabinet's preferred option
- seek views on proposed facility mix
- assess site specific constraints
- refine and improve cost data and affordability information
- report back to Cabinet/Council for decision making coordinated with 14/15 budget

River Park Leisure Centre – Meeting 26 September 2013 Winchester Guildhall

Points/ Issues raised

1. A larger facility located at Bar End would be more beneficial to the wider District population.
2. Loss of green space: how much and how is this valued?
3. Need to extend car parking at North Walls, by how much?
4. Need to have a more open and understandable consultation process/ timetable.
5. Impact of cars at North Walls: how many extra /additional car trips will be generated?
6. Case for 50-metre pool restated. Current lack of provision and waiting lists for all types of swimming and training/ learning. Financial case is strong for a 50m pool.
7. Bar End is more accessible to the wider District population.
8. Accessibility by public transport, cycling and walking at North Walls is better than Bar End but do not provide extra car parking to encourage people to walk/ cycle.
9. A Combined heat and power system should be included.
10. Preference for refurbishment at RPLC as well as a new facility at Bar End.
11. North Walls cannot cope with extra generated traffic from an enlarged RPLC whereas Bar End can.
12. A new facility at Bar End could utilise park and ride car parks.

13. Does Local Plan identify enough open space in Winchester and does RPLC proposition impact on the requirements?
14. All current green space at North Walls is needed for rugby training.
15. Impact on views across open space at North Walls.
16. Use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire alternative site.
17. RPLC proposition will impact on views from the South Downs National Park and damage gateway to the Park.
18. Impact on flood-plain at North Walls. Bar End is downstream so less of a risk.
19. Build new facility on existing building footprint at North Walls.
20. Need to involve all parties to bring together a funding package to deliver a larger facility at Bar End.
21. Need to talk to land-owners at Bar End to see if land can be made available.
22. Indoor bowling club concerned about impacts of the project and effect on their business.
23. Consider having some facilities at Bar End and others at RPLC.
24. Need to consider health and wellbeing impacts of loss of green space at North Walls.

25. Need for a combined cultural centre.
26. Can having more floors at a replacement RPLC reduce the footprint and hence loss of green space?
27. Access to RPLC via Gordon Road: can it cope, what improvements would be needed?
28. Have other potential access points to a replacement RPLC been considered/ identified?
29. Bar End has less population in the immediate vicinity and hence a new facility would impact on less people.
30. Consider archaeological heritage and impacts.
31. With growing population and changing demographics we need to ensure that future demands are catered for.