# **Public Document Pack**



Democratic Services White Cliffs Business Park Dover Kent CT16 3PJ

Telephone: (01304) 821199 Fax: (01304) 872453

DX: 6312

Minicom: (01304) 820115 Website: www.dover.gov.uk e-mail: democraticservices

@dover.gov.uk

11 May 2016

#### **Dear Councillor**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** will be held in the HMS Brave Room at these Offices on Thursday 19 May 2016 at 5.00 pm when the following business will be transacted.

Members of the public who require further information are asked to contact Kate Batty-Smith on 01304 872303 or by e-mail at <a href="mailto:kate.batty-smith@dover.gov.uk">kate.batty-smith@dover.gov.uk</a>.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

### Dover Leisure Centre Advisory Group Membership:

T J Bartlett (Chairman)

P M Beresford

N J Collor

M D Conolly

P Walker

Mr P Ward

### **AGENDA**

## 1 **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## 2 **APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To note appointments of Substitute Members.

## 3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** (Page 4)

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be

transacted on the agenda.

## 4 **MINUTES** (Pages 5-8)

To confirm the attached notes of the meeting of the Group held on 31 March 2016.

## 5 INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY

To receive a briefing on responses received during consultation on the draft Indoor Sports Facility Strategy.

(All representations are available to view via the Council's consultation portal at <a href="http://dover-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal">http://dover-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal</a>.)

## 6 **LEISURE CENTRE VISITS** (Pages 9-15)

To consider feedback from the visit to leisure centres at Watford, St Albans, Flitwick and Ramsgate which took place on 20 April.

## 7 **FACILITY MIX - CORE AND COMMERCIAL FACILITIES** (Page 16)

To consider possible core facilities and feedback obtained from members of the Group regarding additional commercial facilities.

## 8 **NEXT STEPS** (Page 17)

To receive a briefing on the following:

- Project Programme, up to the point of completing the feasibility appraisal (report attached)
- Consultation with key stakeholders
- Public consultation
- Report to Cabinet

## 9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To consider future meeting dates.

## **Access to Meetings and Information**

- Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council, its Committees and Sub-Committees. You may remain present throughout them except during the consideration of exempt or confidential information.
- All meetings are held at the Council Offices, Whitfield unless otherwise indicated on the front page of the agenda. There is disabled access via the Council Chamber entrance and a disabled toilet is available in the foyer. In addition, there is a PA system and hearing loop within the Council Chamber.
- Agenda papers are published five clear working days before the meeting.
   Alternatively, a limited supply of agendas will be available at the meeting, free of charge, and all agendas, reports and minutes can be viewed and downloaded from

- our website www.dover.gov.uk. Minutes will be published on our website as soon as practicably possible after each meeting. All agenda papers and minutes are available for public inspection for a period of six years from the date of the meeting.
- If you require any further information about the contents of this agenda or your right to gain access to information held by the Council please contact Kate Batty-Smith, Democratic Support Officer, telephone: 01304 872303 or email: kate.batty-smith@dover.gov.uk for details.

Large print copies of this agenda can be supplied on request.

### **Declarations of Interest**

## Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a Member has a new or registered DPI in a matter under consideration they must disclose that they have an interest and, unless the Monitoring Officer has agreed in advance that the DPI is a 'Sensitive Interest', explain the nature of that interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a DPI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation permitting them to do so. If during the consideration of any item a Member becomes aware that they have a DPI in the matter they should declare the interest immediately and, subject to any dispensations, withdraw from the meeting.

## Other Significant Interest (OSI)

Where a Member is declaring an OSI they must also disclose the interest and explain the nature of the interest at the meeting. The Member must withdraw from the meeting at the commencement of the consideration of any matter in which they have declared a OSI and must not participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter unless they have been granted a dispensation to do so or the meeting is one at which members of the public are permitted to speak for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter. In the latter case, the Member may only participate on the same basis as a member of the public and cannot participate in any discussion of, or vote taken on, the matter and must withdraw from the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules.

### Voluntary Announcement of Other Interests (VAOI)

Where a Member does not have either a DPI or OSI but is of the opinion that for transparency reasons alone s/he should make an announcement in respect of a matter under consideration, they can make a VAOI. A Member declaring a VAOI may still remain at the meeting and vote on the matter under consideration.

#### Note to the Code:

Situations in which a Member may wish to make a VAOI include membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items; where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person; or where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position. It should be emphasised that an effect on the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc OR an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI.

Minutes of the meeting of the **DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday, 31 March 2016 at 5.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor T J Bartlett

Councillors: P M Beresford

N J Collor M D Conolly Mr P Ward

Also present: Councillor R J Frost

Councillor G Rapley Councillor M J Ovenden

Officers: Director of Environment and Corporate Assets

Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer Principal Community and Leisure Officer

**Democratic Support Officer** 

### 1 APOLOGIES

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

### 2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members.

#### 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest.

## 4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Group considered the draft Terms of Reference.

It was agreed that they should be accepted and kept under review as the project progressed.

### 5 OVERVIEW OF THE DOVER LEISURE CENTRE PROJECT

Members were reminded that, at its meeting held in March 2015, Cabinet had agreed that a review should be undertaken of the District's indoor sports and leisure facilities, prompted by Dover's ageing leisure centre. A consultant, The Sports Consultancy, had been appointed in July to undertake this review.

Working with Sport England from the outset, Officers had briefed the consultants to explore the inclusion of a range of facilities in a new leisure centre, including squash courts, sports halls, an indoor swimming-pool, dance/aerobics studios, health and fitness suites, etc. Sport England's approach had been followed wherever possible, and a technical and detailed analysis had been undertaken to identify the right mix of facilities for the District's current and projected populations. Information gathered during the review had also informed the Council's Indoor Sports Facility Strategy

(ISFS), consultation on which was due to finish on 6 May. A report would then be presented to Cabinet outlining the representations received.

The consultants had reached a number of conclusions in respect of the leisure centre. If the Council were to do nothing, it was estimated that maintaining the existing building would cost around £2 million over 3 years. This was unlikely to provide longevity for the building and significant problems would remain. Whilst refurbishment could potentially cost less than replacement, the consultants had advised against this as it could involve significant expenditure, yet result in a building whose lifespan had not been significantly extended. The recommended option was to build a new centre entirely, in which case one of the key considerations would be achieving the right mix of facilities in order to ensure that it met the current and future needs of the District.

The Principal Leisure Officer (PLO) summarised the review's findings and consultants' recommendations, as set out in the ISFS. There was a relatively low level of swimming-pool provision in the District. It was therefore recommended that a slightly larger pool should be provided to address this deficiency. There was currently an average level of indoor sports hall provision. However, this was likely to turn into a surplus in 10 years' time due to the number of schools which were opening their halls to external users in order to generate income. For example, the hall at Christchurch Academy had been specifically designed to facilitate public access. It was envisaged that a similar arrangement would be incorporated into the re-build of Castle Community College.

The review had identified a latent demand for health and fitness suites. It was, therefore, recommended that provision should be increased to benefit the public and increase revenues. Indoor bowls provision met the existing need and no additional facilities were recommended. The provision of dance/aerobics studios could assist in maintaining the centre's long-term viability. No increase in indoor tennis provision had been recommended. In respect of squash, there was evidence that, nationally, it had fallen in popularity in recent years and there was no requirement for additional facilities. Finally, the consultants had advised that gymnastics facilities should be provided in a specialist, dedicated unit rather than within the main leisure centre.

Turning specifically to the leisure centre project, Members were referred to the Feasibility and Options Appraisal report, presented to Cabinet in January 2016. Although the work plan had been superseded, for the time being it gave a useful indication of progress in relation to the new leisure centre. Briefly, Officers anticipated that a planning application would be submitted by September 2016. The Whitfield site was the consultants' preferred option, but further, detailed investigation was needed on matters such as archaeology, utilities supply, etc. Management arrangements would also be considered. The current operators operated as a charitable trust, but all options would be examined.

The development of facility options needed to be informed by stakeholder consultation with leisure centre operators, clubs, Sport England, etc and this was in progress. Expert advice was needed before public consultation and feedback could be undertaken. Once this had been completed, Members would be presented with deliverable options on which to make a decision. It was anticipated that the new leisure centre would be constructed by the end of 2018. Officers hoped to provide more detail at the next meeting.

In response to Councillor M D Conolly, the Principal Infrastructure and Delivery Officer (PIDO) advised that, although Whitfield was Cabinet's preferred site, Buckland was still in the running. The Director of Environment and Corporate Assets (DECA) added that, in any case, sequential testing would need to be carried out as part of the planning application process to demonstrate that the Whitfield site was the most suitable in Planning terms.

On the use of school halls, Councillor P M Beresford commented that, unless these were open in the evening, they were unlikely to meet everybody's needs. Councillor Conolly raised some concern that assumptions were being made that schools would provide certain facilities, and queried the impact should these assumptions prove to be wrong. The PIDO confirmed that it was for schools to decide whether their facilities would be open to the public. However, one of the funding criteria for school sports provision centred around public access. It was not assumed that every school would be open to the public; only where there was evidence would schools be included – and this would be monitored.

The PLO clarified that Officers had talked to school bursars to gain an understanding of their plans. Whilst nothing could be guaranteed, managing and monitoring this area was a high priority. The DECA added that school facilities were, in general, more likely to be able to serve organised clubs/groups rather than those who turned up on an ad hoc basis. Not only did Sport England expect the Council to provide evidence of needs and how these could be met, but there was also an expectation that school sites would be investigated, to avoid duplication of provision. It was recognised that there were uncertainties with this approach, but sites would be kept under review as the project progressed.

The DECA outlined the process for Members. Cabinet had been asked to consider the business case for refurbishment or replacement of the leisure centre in January 2016. Members had opted for the latter - to be built on a new site. Officers were in the early stages of progressing the project which involved costings, a planning application, work on the facilities mix, stakeholder and public consultation, etc. Once this was completed, the aim was to take a clear recommendation to Cabinet. Councillor Conolly commented that rebuilding on the current site had not been an option for Cabinet since it would have meant the facility being out of action for a considerable amount of time, not least because of the lengthy archaeological works that would have been required before any construction could commence.

The DECA reminded Members that, whilst the Cabinet report had focused on the sports facilities mix, there were potentially other key components to the centre, such as a café, toning suites, climbing wall, etc. Each component would have a capital cost, but could potentially generate additional revenues. These components would be investigated so that Cabinet could take a view on their inclusion. Also included in the costed options would be a 50-metre pool as it was recognised that this was a popular proposal.

In response to Mr Ward, Councillor Conolly advised that the Council was in an awkward situation in that it could not ask for funding from bodies such as the Football Association until it had identified what facilities were needed. The DECA advised that there were alternative sources of funding for 3G artificial football pitches which could potentially be delivered by schools/clubs. Whilst Mr Ward recognised that it would depend upon funding, he urged the Council to include an Olympic pool at Whitfield given that the site (unlike Buckland) was large enough to accommodate one. Councillor N J Collor commented that, given the amount of land available, the Whitfield site could be expanded to accommodate a pool in the

event that funding became available in the future. The PLO advised that Officers were due to meet Sport England in April to explore funding opportunities which were a key part of the project. It was clarified that Lottery funding was routed through Sport England, which would also talk to governing bodies such as the Football Association before allocating funds. It was accepted that funders generally consulted one another to avoid duplication.

It was agreed: (a) That the report be noted

(b) That an updated Feasibility and Options Appraisal Outline Programme be circulated.

### 6 NEXT STEPS

The PLO advised that Officers had attended Neighbourhood Forum meetings throughout the District in order to engage with the public on options for a new leisure centre. They had also been liaising with the Healthier South Kent Coast Group on the ISFS, and would be presenting to them in June/July on the leisure centre project. In respect of the Feasibility and Options Appraisal, it was intended to go out to public consultation in May/June by holding two detailed workshops, probably at Dover Leisure Centre. It was confirmed that the Group would be consulted before any proposals were taken to Cabinet, which was likely to happen in July.

The DECA confirmed that the consultation process would present all deliverable options to the public. This would ensure that all the options had been open to, and tested by, public scrutiny. That said, more trivial matters (such as small design details) would not be presented to the public. The PIDO added that the IFSF consultation process was another way of feeding into the proposals. IFSF respondents would receive a written response to their questions unlike those attending the workshops. Councillor Collor commented that it was important to ensure that respondents were local residents or users of the facilities. The DECA stressed that the Group would shape how consultation took place, and its timing would be important.

The PLO advised the Group that a trip would take place on 20 April to visit three new leisure centres recommended by the consultants. These were a combined leisure centre and spa at St Albans and two others, with a similar facilities mix to Dover's, at Watford and Flitwick.

In response to Councillor Conolly, the PIDO suggested that it would be appropriate to issue a press release when the results of public consultation were known. The PLO added that there would also be a 'Keep Me Posted' launch and postings on social media.

### 7 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on 19 May.

The meeting ended at 6.08 pm.

#### **Positive**

#### Space / Ambience

Generally light and airy

Ceiling height in the entrance hall, open space at reception

Nice open, but controlled, reception area with a welcoming feel and secure access to get into the building

Main entrance space with double height ceiling, visibility to activities and managers office Entrance was light and airy, but a little crowded.

Many facilities were accessible directly from the entrance area

Stairwells with glass and light from windows

There was a very good retail display and it was interesting to note that the same supplier was featured in all three centres

Wooden beams on the pool ceiling

Ambience of the main pool area

Ambience and feeling of light and space in the swimming pool area, use of beams and colour and interest

I liked the design of the changing rooms and the decor.

Not bad in a difficult position.

#### Management

**Enthusiastic staff** 

The staff were very helpful and also felt that they were very passionate and enthusiastic in their roles, it also had a good atmosphere significant community feel and willingness to change programmes and encourage community groups

Focus on sport provision, e.g. willingness to give up the café and meeting room in favour of spin etc Contract operators respond to customer consultation

### Sustainability

Lots of sustainable features

Use of solar / ground source to support running costs

Flexible use of the sports halls to generate additional revenue

I think the PVC flooring is a good choice of material for a sports hall and will not need much maintenance meaning lower maintenance costs

£10M budget – good use of a small site with reasonable level of service provision and reasonable level of contribution to the Council

#### Miscellaneous

Fitness studios are very pleasant

Studios a good size with plenty of light.

Changing rooms adequate and plenty of cubicles.

# **Negative**

#### **Climbing wall**

The climbing wall was not at all suitable for the site - space was wasted, this was poorly designed and could have been put to better use.

I'm not convinced about climbing walls in general and this one was particularly badly sited Climbing wall wedged in middle of centre seen through glass as you walking and on  $2^{nd}$  level.

Tucked away climbing facility

Climbing wall position below the main area is not viable

Climbing wall accessibility and lack of revenue generation

Climbing wall in the wrong place.

#### **Fitness suite**

The gym area was very crowded

The gym was cramped

The fitness suite felt slightly overcrowded within the available space

Fitness suite floor surface, wall colour and lighting made the space feel dark

Narrow feel to the gym facility which did not make use of the views out – equipment packed in and solid walls made it oppressive.

Fitness suite felt compressed with unpleasant carpet tiles

Gym felt very cramped.

#### Size

The lack of spectator facility at the pool was regrettable

The learner pool is too small

Teaching pool seemed cramped

The main pool is too small and affected by light coming through windows

Poor orientation of the main pool so that the permanently closed blinds let down an otherwise good space

Lower level changing facilities due to location, not utilised as they should be

Overall I felt that a quart had been squeezed into a pint pot

It was sadly too small and with very little car parking space.

Entrance Hall too small

Lack of dedicated parking for the centre

### Miscellaneous

Expensive running and maintenance costs of lighting throughout Only one studio (although that was very good)

### **Positive**

### Overall impression / materials / ambience

Wow, what a centre, everything about it was fantastic.

Stunning building in a beautiful location opposite a park

Landscaping around the building

Public realm and quality of the environment created a positive impression immediately

Wow factor when you walk into the main reception; stunning lighting & glass showing gym suites Light and airy

Good ceiling height in the entrance

Light and airy entrance, with good cafe facilities with gave upmarket feel.

Quality of the space, generous height in the gym, views, corridors, circulation & main space

General use of materials to elevate the building to a superior finish – glass lockers and glazing worked particularly well and enhanced the building both internally and externally

Colour schemes and materials in particular the natural looking stone and tiling

Use of glass for light and transparency between activity areas to connect them

Views from the windows

I felt the centre had lots of room in all areas & plenty of light had been thought about in the design.

#### **Swimming pools**

I particularly liked the Swimming Pool area, so well thought out and it catered for all ages.

I like the idea of three pools - confidence, teaching and main swimming

Liked the learner pool and small leisure splash pool

The three separate pool areas definitely enhanced the centre.

Big pool

Glass finish in the lockers and cubicles in dry side changing

Finish of the changing areas, as well as looking nice appeared to be practical from a cleaning and maintenance perspective.

Wide range of facilities made it feel like a location worth a family travelling to from some distance – e.g. the splash area,

#### **Fitness suite**

The gym area was spacious and well planned
The finish in the changing areas was good
Stunning views from fitness studios, amazing gym and spa
Views from gym areas and use of views in the design
Good changing facilities with plenty of space.

#### Café

The cafeteria was excellent with a varied menu Excellent food facility

#### Miscellaneous

The Spa was to die for

Good management arrangements

£1.3M favourable revenue position and profit share arrangement

Although the price for members reflected in the facility, you got what you paid for.

I really hope we could have something for the young at Dover, like they had.

## Negative

#### Cost

I struggle to see it making financial sense

**Budget inappropriate for Dover District Council** 

£25M budget

The whole operation was outstanding, both in facilities offered and standard of finish, and we know that realistically we cannot aspire to this

Some of the circulation space is over generous and un-necessary particularly at significant cost

#### Spa

As for the Spar area, well we are never going to have that ??

Is a spa necessary for Dover?

Spa should have had separate entrance when it was building built

Spa was pretentious

The spa is not making money

## **Swimming pools**

Although they had made an error with spectator visibility on the inside lane this was a minor blemish.

Stained wooden beams

Stains on the ceilings

Leeks and staining to the beams in swimming pool lets down the overall space

### **Climbing wall**

Climbing wall for me a waste of money centres seems to use for a Wow factor! I personally think a big walled aquarium would wow more people

Revenue position of climbing wall

Not a fan of the climbing wall.

Climbing wall was better placed but still in wrong place

### Fitness suite / Youth Gym

Gym area was large but felt muddled.

Fitness suite felt slightly overcrowded

Junior gym a bad idea - youngsters do not want to be separated from full gym

Youth gym did not work

#### Miscellaneous

Only negative point was that I felt the manager lacked enthusiasm, having a centre like that is something you would be proud of.

Not keen on the types of seats in the cafe.

Too much wasted space in corridors.

### **Positive**

#### **Overall impression**

The third centre was the one that I felt would be the most suitable for Dover; I liked most things.

The art of the possible.

Welcoming reception with secure access to enter the centre

Light and airy

Well-designed corridors (spacious)

Good connections: gym views the sports hall, views of gym & swimming when you enter the building

#### **Artificial Grass Pitches**

Outdoor artificial grass football pitches for 5 a side very good idea made useable all year as Flood lit.

Five a side provision was good

Outdoor 3G 5-a-side pitches

Good outdoor facilities

Outdoor football pitches

I particularly liked the external six a side pitches which took pressure off the indoor sports halls and if we could do this I think four of the latter would be enough

Very much liked the 3 G Football pitches but have mixed feelings regarding the changing rooms.

Outside 3G pitches

### **Swimming pools**

Nice ceiling in the swimming pool changing room

Spacious wet side changing facilities

Quality of pool space, beams, glazing, adjustable floor

Glass finish to the wet-side changing cubicles was good

Good design in the Swimming Pool changing rooms

#### Fitness suite

Layout of the gym was excellent and I liked the idea of putting the 'heavy grunting' area round the corner from the main stations. Good feeling of space and I would worry about any tightening of this Spacious gym

Fitness suite felt the best lay out of all sites visited

The gym felt spacious, the floor materials were good

Gym was intelligently laid out with defined areas of use and felt spacious.

### Sports hall

The sports hall colour scheme and floor were good

Excellent changing rooms along with a good size sports hall.

Very good sports hall, best floor.

## Dance studios / flexible space

Three dance studios – good provision

Good rooms for other activities.

#### Miscellaneous

Sensible £13M budget, associated with improved revenue for council with profit share Plenty of car parking spaces.

## **Negative**

#### Overall appearance / ambience

Does not look like a leisure centre from outside

There was too much space in this centre which was wasted.

Location was less accessible – the bumpy road and caravans detract from the approach Poor use of colour

#### **Swimming pools**

After seeing the seating area in the other sites for swimming I felt this was disappointing.

Pity about the spectator area in the pool and they had wasted the third pool by running out of the funds needed to create the confidence pool and had ended up with a paddling pool.

Glare was an issue in the pool

Swimming area had good large 8 lane pool but other two pools felt squashed.

#### Cafe

Unusual café arrangement, which functioned OK but didn't look good

Catering area looked fine although I felt the seating area was a bit small - could have more seats.

Not sure franchising the catering is the best option.

Poor cafe area

### **Climbing Wall**

Yet another climbing wall made for impact for me a waste of money
Climbing wall feature was made of cheap materials and was already marked
Climbing wall too basic and unconvincing in appearance
Cheap looking climbing wall

Climbing wall made entrance feel small

### Dance studios / flexible space

Spin room tiny as was changed from meeting room too crammed again.

Not sure about divider system for the studios, it could be difficult to use

Moveable wall in studio not providing to give a revenue benefit for additional capital cost

Moveable wall between studios, with its poor sound insulation

Studio separator – time to remove this

Poor insulation between studios – could hear noise from above

Transmission of sound from studio to studio – feeling of reduced quality

#### **Changing rooms for the APGs**

Unnecessary football changing rooms as a requirement from Sports England for funding Outdoor changing rooms were a waste of space
Waste of space on additional changing areas

### Management

Management agreement similar to the Dover District, except that they pay the LA a fee.

Management agreement with repairs at a certain level of spend being the Council's responsibility rather than a specific equipment / structure ownership

#### Miscellaneous

Sound barriers in the sports hall would require maintenance Very crammed gym; too little space, too much equipment.

# Agenda Item No 7

# **Project Advisory Group Members Expressed Preferences for Additional Facilities**

	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	Average
Facility	1	2	3	4	5	6	Score
2 x five a side football pitches (outdoor 3G)	7	9	9	8	9	9	8.5
Small sauna and steam (poolside)	6	8	7	4	6	7	6.3
Confidence water	8	6	3	5	8	8	6.3
Toning tables	5	4	6	7	7	6	5.8
Café and soft play (not staffed)	4	7	8	3	4	4	5.0
50m pool with 500 spectator seats	9	1	5	6	3	2	4.3
Full size 3G pitch	3	2	4	9	2	5	4.2
Additional 4 court sports hall	2	5	2	2	5	3	3.2
Clip and climb	1	3	1	1	1	1	1.3

Anonymised results, presented as scores (9=most preferred 1= least preferred)