

Briefing note

New Lichfield Leisure Centre update



Date: 3 November 2021

Presented to: New Leisure Centre Task Group

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Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Leisure & Local Plan

1. Section 122 LGA Appropriation

The 1972 LGA s.122 Notice consultation took place for just over six weeks, from 2 September until 15 October, during this time we placed two adverts in the local newspaper, engaged with Lichfield Live in terms of ensuring that a wider Lichfield population was aware that the advertisement had been placed, we wrote to all those signed up to the Lichfield e-news, some 19,000 people, we wrote to 186 residents neighbouring the park asking them for their views and we launched a microsite specific to the project so the anyone interested could see what we've done and why and so that people could follow progress.

In total we had 123 responses to the consultation, within the 6 week period resulting in 118 logged comments. From these 123 submissions, 1 submission was a forwarded blank email and 4 respondents made the same comment twice. From the 118 responses to the consultation, 84 respondents objected to using Stychbrook Park, 17 respondents supported its use and often wanted additional facilities. An additional 17 submissions made comments and asked questions about leisure centre proposals but they didn't object to Stychbrook Park being used. (See Appendix A - S122 Notice - collated responses relevant to objection or support).

The majority of the detailed comments are not directly relevant to the S122 Notice because this was specifically related to whether people objected to the loss of the open space for its appropriated use as a leisure centre. So for the purposes of the S122 Notice, it is clear that we had 84 objections to the loss of the open space and 17 who supported the use of the open space or supported a leisure centre being built here.

Since the consultation period concluded on 15 October, responses that included more detailed statements and requests for information have been categorised into key themes which include: transport links/parking, accessibility, wildlife/trees/woodland, pollution (noise, light), the loss of existing facilities, impact on climate change, increase in localised crime, facility design/mix comments, the impact of COVID 19, potentially using other sites, impact on local people and querying the consultation process. We intend to use these comments to help inform our responses to a planning application process and our engagement with local residents and park users and our communities further afield in our aspirations for creating a new leisure centre locally.

What was most encouraging was that a significant number of respondents fully supported our intention to build a replacement leisure facility for Lichfield.

2. Site Investigations

Site investigations have been ongoing at Stychbrook Park since early summer. The initial findings have been extremely positive:

1. Transport Assessment – has indicated no traffic signalling measures are required
2. Ecology – indicates no bat roosts
3. Environmental Engineering - clay 1m and sandstone at 3m presenting a fantastic sub strata for construction and a pool tank. No ground gasses have been identified. Topographical surveys indicated that cut & fill will be possible to retain as much as possible on site.
4. Unexploded Ordnance – local records indicate low risk
5. Archaeological – Heritage Desk Based Assessment indicates low risk, no adjacent digs

3. Funding

The centre configuration is estimated at £11.65m. This figures is comprised as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Construction | £8,850,491.00 |
| 3G Pitch | £800,000.00 |
| Fit out | £755,000.00 |
| Inflation | £447,400.00 |
| Client contingency | £542,644.55 |
| Client fees (PM, CoW, QS) | <u>£254,000.00</u> |
| Total | <u><u>£11,649,535.55</u></u> |

The costs are based on soft market engagement earlier this year, plus 12 months inflation at 4.3% (BCIS). Whilst this is an informed assessment of cost and a credible estimate, there remains a substantial degree of uncertainty regarding this sum, particularly in relation to current market volatility with some estimations suggesting 20% increases on materials and substantive delays in supply chains. Cost-certainty will only be achieved when the project is procured.

The funding profile for the project has been assembled as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| LDC Capital | £5,000,000.00 | Secured |
| Levelling Up Fund | £5,000,000.00 | Application submitted 17/06/21. Not awarded in the October budget – awaiting feedback from LUF Fund. |
| Community Infrastructure Levy | £1,000,000.00 | Expression of Interest submitted 01/10/21 |
| Football Foundation | £400,000.00 | Cannot apply >6mths prior to start on site |
| HS2 Community Investment Fund | £250,000.00 | Application submitted 22/07/21. Not awarded in October. |
| Total | <u>£11,650,000.00</u> | |

As has been regularly reported, more than half the funding for the new centre is contingent on funding applications. In light of the application to the Levelling Up Fund not having been awarded, the centre and timeframe, as envisaged, cannot be progressed.

Positive discussions have been had with the Football Foundation, however their funding can only be accessed 6 months ahead of the construction of the pitch element of the project.

4. Next Steps

Cabinet and Council, through approving the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, have taken the following decisions to date;

- To keep FGLC open without the all weather pitch and sports hall with a new 7 year lease with SCC with a view to replacing FGLC with a new facility as soon as possible,
- To make a contribution of £5m to provide for future leisure facilities in Lichfield,
- To approve the selection of Stychbrook Park as the preferred site for the new Lichfield Leisure Centre,
- To approve the proposed outline configuration of the new Lichfield Leisure Centre,
- To approve further development of the project, including site feasibility exploration, undertaking broad community engagement and consultation, obtaining planning permission and developing further external funding applications where opportunity permits.

Whilst it is disappointing that our bid to the Levelling Up Fund has been unsuccessful, as identified at (3), it is not the only source of funding.

Through the Section 122 consultation people have given us their views, so we need to take stock of these, as well as how the use of Friary Grange Leisure Centre has changed since 2019. We remain committed to delivering new leisure facilities people will use and where there is an identified need such as for swimming; football pitches for youth teams; and for other sports.

Our options for the delivery of new facilities would appear to be as follows;

- The replacement of FGLC with a new single facility be deferred until any alternate funding to replace the Levelling Up Fund contribution becomes available either from external sources, or, through LDC's own budgeting or capacity to borrow further funds, appreciating none of these can be guaranteed,
- Informed by the consultation and current usage of FGLC, we develop proposals to deliver new leisure facilities as separate components such as a new pool; new 3G pitches; etc., funded by the immediately available £5m of borrowing and any of the other current applications that are successful.

The delivery of new facilities must be ones that people will use and should be brought forward alongside how we deliver regeneration in Lichfield as a whole.

The task group's views would be welcomed as part of this meeting.

A report to Cabinet requesting the appropriation of the park is on the Forward Plan for December Cabinet. Dependent upon the views of Members, this may or may not now be progressed.

The submission of an outline planning application for the project had been anticipated in early 2022, based on the following timetable.

Key outputs

Stakeholder Engagement

Seek Outline Planning Permission

Appoint specialist advisors for the next stage, designers, QS, Legal etc

Development of Tender Documents

Development of Output Specification

Development of Heads of Terms for contracts & draft contracts

Development of Evaluation Framework

Seek approval to begin Tender stage

Timescale

Ongoing

Jan 2022 – Mar 2022

Jan 2022

Apr 2022 – Jun 2022

Apr 2022 – Jun 2022

Apr 2022 – Jun 2022

Apr 2022 – Jun 2022

July 2022

Again, dependent upon the views of Members, this may or may not need to be altered.

ENDS