

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL
CULTURE AND SPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

13 MARCH, 2007

JOINT REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF CULTURE AND MAJOR
PROJECTS
“VISION INTO REALITY” CONSULTATION – FEEDBACK

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the feedback received from the consultation events and other related initiatives held in respect of the Council's leisure vision for the future.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the feedback received from the “Vision into Reality” consultation exercises held in respect of the Council's leisure vision for the future.

3. Key Issue – “Vision into Reality” Consultation

- 3.1 A number of key new leisure facility related initiatives are currently being developed and implemented in line with the Council's policy of “build new, and not patch and mend”.
- 3.2 Ongoing consultation with as many stakeholders as possible across all such projects is central to the Council's rationale to ultimately provide facilities totally “fit for purpose”.
- 3.3 This leisure development programme is currently in train, with some schemes having progressed to planning approval stage and others in their infancy at Feasibility Study stage.
- 3.4 In light of the situation as outlined at 3.3 above, a number of public consultations mechanisms were implemented during December, 2006 to gather and assess opinion of this work. Feedback from these exercises has continued to be received during the first part of 2007. This has now been collated and is presented for consideration within this report.

4. Key Issue – Consultation Approach

- 4.1 Two public consultation events entitled “Vision into Reality” were held on 5 December, 2006 at the Chase Leisure Centre, Cannock, and on 7 December, 2006 at the Rose Theatre, Rugeley.
- 4.2 In addition to press articles and local advertisements promoting the events, approximately 200 invitations were also despatched to individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in these schemes and other related issues.
- 4.2 It is estimated that in total almost 300 people ultimately attended the two consultation venues.
- 4.3 Prior to these events taking place the Deputy Chief Executive met with relevant Trade Union representatives to outline the intended thrust of these sessions, and in particular to provide to them with copies of the Feasibility Study specifically relating to the proposed Chase Leisure Village development.
- 4.4 Furthermore, in the run up to the December 2006 presentations, staff briefing notes were also despatched to all employees of the Council, summarising the current position and inviting them to attend, see the project displays and comment as appropriate.

5 Key Issue – Proposed Chase Leisure Village Development - Feasibility Study

- 5.1 The Feasibility Study referred to in 4.3 for the proposed Chase Leisure Village development was received from the appointed architectural practice during September, 2006.
- 5.2 The Feasibility Study provided numerous outline design options for the current Chase Leisure Centre site that included new leisure facilities, (a swimming pool, sports hall, theatre, etc.) and also office proposals to replace those at the existing Civic Centre, Cannock.
- 5.3 Since the document was initially received, liaison has been ongoing with the Architects and their professional associates. This has resulted in clarification of certain issues, with refinements and revisions being made to the original draft.
- 5.4 The final full Feasibility Study was a “weighty document,” and thus Members considered an abridged version of the Feasibility Study at the Culture and Sport Select Committee held on the 29, November, 2006.
- 5.5 At that meeting it was reported that Cabinet had previously considered this Feasibility Study and of the options provided, their preferred option at this stage was Option 4B. However, Members of Culture and Sport Select Committee were of the opinion that at that time they could not express a preference from the options outlined within the Feasibility Study, and would defer decision on this for future consideration.
- 5.6 In full it was Resolved:
 - (A) That the current position relating to the proposed leisure village development be noted.
 - (B) That the outline design option preference be deferred to a future meeting of the Culture and Sport Select Committee.

6. Key Issue – Feedback from “Vision into Reality” Public Consultation Events – Proposed Chase Leisure Village Development

- 6.1 The feedback questionnaires issued to attendees of the public consultation events were designed to promote as many views as possible in “free format style”, and thus it is not possible to precisely analyse all these results. A summary of comments relating to the proposed Chase Leisure Village proposals is reproduced at Annexes 1 and 2. However, the thrust of the main comments highlighted issues relating to the following:
- 6.2 - “a need for increased car parking provision” – *it is the professional view of the appointed Architects that if any of the proposals outlined come to fruition, then by appropriate management of the site as one complex, the proposed number of car parking places, (350) will be adequate. For example, car parking for an evening Theatre performance would not “clash” with parking required by Council office staff at that time.*
- 6.3 - “dissatisfaction in proposals to transfer the Civic Offices to this location, in association with the height of any such potential development” – *any decision that may ultimately be taken to relocate the Civic Offices to this site will be made prior to any despatch of the Full Design Brief for the site, for progression to the next stage. The height of any proposal would be dependant upon such factors as the final office area requirement, the size of the “footprint” chosen to accommodate this and where within the “sloping” site such a construction might be located. Any such proposals would naturally be subject to the Council’s planning policies.*
- 6.4 - “the new swimming pool to be of 50 metres in length” – *this option was not put forward as part of the Feasibility Study Outline Design Brief. However, the Architects have provided information that the additional cost of upgrading a 6 lane, 25 metre swimming pool to an 8 lane 25 metre pool is estimated to be £1.26m. It is thus reasonable to assume that any proposal to further upgrade to a 50 metre pool would have significant budgetary implications, and may also impact on the total site outline design option proposals.*
- 6.5 It is worthy of note that those members of the public who expressed an opinion selected Option A, (Feasibility Study Option 2) as their preferred design choice.
- 6.6 As stated above, the preferred option of Cabinet was Feasibility Study Option 4B. This option when considered by the public was presented to them as Option C.
- 6.7 It is again emphasised that the Feasibility Study report was developed from an Outline Feasibility Study Brief, and is indicative at this stage of which facility options and layouts it may be possible to accommodate within the specified site “footprint”. In real terms, it is the starting point from which a Full Design team upon appointment would commence their detailed project commission. This appointment would be subject to future agreement by the Council to proceed in principle to the full design stage for this particular project.

7. Key Issue – Friends of Cannock Park Association

- 7.1 Members may be aware of the Council’s successful partnership working with the Friends of Cannock Park Association, (FOCPA) and ongoing dialogue regarding many matters associated

with the current and future development and operation of facilities within Cannock Park and the surrounding area.

- 7.2 Within the public consultation feedback reproduced at Annexes 1 and 2, there are personal views of some of the members of the FOCPA. However, a letter has also been received by the Council's Chief Executive from the FOCPA Chairperson reflecting the formal views of the Association, following the consideration of information presented at the Vision into Reality meetings.
- 7.3 With their express permission, this letter is reproduced as Annex 3 to this report. In the interim a formal response has been despatched to this communication.

8. Key Issue – Feedback from “Vision into Reality” Public Consultation Events – Other Proposed New Leisure Facility Schemes

- 8.1 In addition to those consultation feedback outcomes outlined above, questionnaires were also available at the consultation events to invite comments on other schemes included within the new leisure facility development programme, specifically inviting comments relating to the following schemes:

- New Swimming Pool, Rugeley, (to be constructed adjacent to Rugeley Leisure Centre);
- Replacement Athletics Track and associated facilities, (proposed to be built within the Blake Valley Technology College site, Hednesford);
- The Chase Heritage Trail, (a cycle / foot / bridleway to be constructed throughout the District of approximately 12 miles in length, accessing heritage points of interest together with development of extended facilities at the Museum of Cannock Chase, Hednesford).

- 8.2 Direct user / potential user answers and those additional comments, again in “free form style” were supplied by event attendees. Please see the further information in paragraph 8.3 below and the detail reproduced at Annexes 4 and 5.

- 8.3 Again it is possible to highlight some of the comment trends:

New Swimming Pool, Rugeley

In general terms this new swimming facility is welcomed as “long overdue”. There are references to disability issues and the associated design and operation of the new pool. - *This facility will be fully compliant with such disability access and design legislation requirements.*

Details relating to programming of sessions / opening times are sought - *These will be advised as the pool programme is developed*

Replacement Athletics Track and Associated Facilities

Members may be aware of the good working relationship between Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club, who are currently based at Cannock Sports Stadium, and the Council. Senior Officials of the Athletics Club attended the Vision into Reality event held at the Chase Leisure Centre, Cannock, and also expressed their views verbally to Council Members and Officers.

In summary, the Athletics Club are keen to have a “seamless” transfer to the new proposed facilities to offer continuity of training and competition to their members. They also hope to continue to enjoy the use of an 8 – lane athletics track as at present.

The Chase Heritage Trail

This project, although consulted upon during this exercise is not in the portfolio of this Select Committee. However, The Leader for Access to Skills and Economic Development did attend the consultation events and was personally briefed upon the public feedback at that time.

9. Key issue – Other Consultation Feedback Received to Date

- 9.1 Following the actual afternoon and evening consultation sessions held at both Cannock and Rugeley further questionnaires have been received by the Council. These have been incorporated into the relevant Annexes as outlined within the report.
- 9.2 In addition the local press have since received numerous contributions to their letter pages regarding the various project proposals and updates presented in December, 2006.
- 9.3 These cannot be reproduced here without the express permission of those individual authors, and some have in fact withheld their identity in publication of their letter(s).
- 9.4 In summary, these additional views support those findings outlined within the report and the feedback from the public consultation events.

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Section 1

Background

The Council has resolved that the provision of leisure facilities in the future should be based on high quality provision throughout the District providing new, and not 'patch and mend', with the aim of providing better value for money, increased customer satisfaction and increased participation levels.

Accommodation within the Civic Centre is presently under review, especially in terms of meeting room facilities, and there are also many issues associated with other operational areas.

Studio E Architects were appointed to produce a Feasibility Study based on an Outline Design Brief following a quotation exercise in which fourteen architectural practices / organisations participated. A Feasibility Study has been carried out which has provided various outline design options for the proposed Chase Leisure Village development, to include new sporting facilities, (swimming pool and leisure centre), a theatre to replace the Prince of Wales Centre, as well as office accommodation proposals to replace existing offices and meeting areas at the Civic Centre, Cannock.

Cabinet considered this Feasibility Study and associated report on 16 November, 2006, and resolved to commence the consultation process by referring the matter initially to this Select Committee, prior to seeking views of the public at special consultation events programmed to be held during December 2006.

This Committee then deferred its decision to a future meeting.

Section 2

Details of Matters to be Considered

The abridged Feasibility Study report, prepared by the appointed Architects, has been previously considered by Culture and Sport Select Committee on 29, November, 2006, as contained in the report. Members have the feedback from the public consultation events and other associated information. Members are asked to note the information contained in this report.

Section 3

Contribution to CHASE

New sporting and leisure facilities will further support the aim of the Council to develop a healthier and more active community by increasing participation by local residents. The proposed new facilities will enable greater use by local residents, schools and colleges. In particular, the proposed new theatre will allow for theatrical productions on a larger / more varied scale than previously undertaken.

Section 4

Section 17 Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of Section 17 at this stage.

Section 5

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Human Rights Act 1998 arising from this report.

Section 6

Data Protection Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act.

Section 7

Risk Management Implications

In the worst case scenario, Members must be aware that in respect of the proposed Chase Leisure Village Development, the Council could be liable initially for the fees for a Full Design Team and project management support, if appointed, for work done in respect of RIBA stages A-D work, (design up to the submission of any detailed planning application), should this permission then be refused.

Should this project proceed to the next stage, then a full risk assessment will be carried out as part of the Project Action Teams' initial work programme.

Other projects referred to throughout the report which are currently progressing, as permissions have already been granted by the Council, are all "underpinned" by full and ongoing reviews of specific project risk assessments. This is part of the formal project management methodology employed by the Council's Strategic Projects Team.

Section 8

Legal Implications

The Council must have regard to its policy and accordingly, consider this project in line with its decision to provide leisure facilities that are of high quality and not 'patch and mend'. To achieve high quality facilities will involve the delivery of and meeting of customer needs and aspirations and therefore consideration of the "Vision into Reality" consultation exercises, will help ensure that the Council achieves its policy aims.

Section 9

Financial Implications

Although the previously considered Abridged Feasibility Study report relating to the proposed Chase Leisure Village Development showed costed options, all of them are dependent for financing upon monies received from the sale of land at Cannock Sports Stadium. This will not be known for some months so at this stage the financial viability of any of the options cannot be stated with any certainty. Future reports will address both the capital resourcing and the revenue implications of progressing with both the leisure centre and the office complex.

Section 10

Human Resource Implications

Projects which are referred to within the report that are currently in actual construction / implementation stage are being supported by members of the Council's Strategic Projects Team.

The proposed projects relating to the Chase Leisure Village Development and the replacement of Athletics Track / associated facilities at Blake Valley Technology College will require additional similar project management support resources, should they come to fruition. It is not clear, at this stage, what quantity of additional staff will be required within the Strategic Projects Team to deliver this project. Until the numbers of staff are identified and the duties of the post(s) specified and subject to a job evaluation exercise it is not possible at this stage to determine the grading or costs of any additional posts. A further report will need to be brought on this issue once the resource implications have been evaluated.

A number of staff are employed at existing leisure facilities. Consequently, arrangements will need to be made to ensure that any employees potentially affected by the changes described in this report, and their Trade Union representatives, are kept apprised of the overall project and any alternative options, and should be fully involved in future consultation processes, as appropriate.

Until the mix of facilities for the Blake Valley Technology College development has been finally determined, and the dual use agreement finalised with the County, it will not be possible to determine the staffing requirements and fully address the potential human resource implications for Cannock Chase Council. It will, therefore, be necessary for a further report to be brought to Council once these issues have been determined in order that the human resource implications and ongoing associated revenue implications can be fully explored.

In addition, whilst the human resource issues in respect of the employees currently based at the Stadium have been addressed in previous reports to Council, it will be necessary to give careful consideration to any rights they might have, in terms of ownership, of any new posts being established at the new facility at Blake Valley Technology College which could be viewed as a direct replacement for the facilities at the Stadium. Should consideration be given to the facility being run by other than Cannock Chase District Council existing employee's could have rights under TUPE.

Section 11

Conclusion

That the consultation feedback and other related information contained within this report, together with the Abridged Feasibility Study report relating to the proposed Chase Leisure Village Development be noted by Members.

Section 12

Background Papers

Proposed Chase Leisure Village Outline Design Brief

Various Correspondence : Blake Valley Technology College
 Friends of Cannock Park Association
 Cannock and Stafford Athletics Club

Various Letters, previously published in Local Press

Individual Project Risk Assessment Registers

Annexes

1. Proposed Chase Leisure Village Development – Feedback Outcomes from Public Consultation Event in Cannock
2. Proposed Chase Leisure Village Development – Feedback Outcomes from Public Consultation Event in Rugeley
3. Letter from Friends of Cannock Park Association
4. Rugeley Swimming Pool – Feedback Outcomes from Public Consultation Event in Rugeley
5. Rugeley Swimming Pool – Feedback Outcomes from Public Consultation Event in Cannock