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**TITLE: LEISURE CENTRE – FACILITY MIX REVIEW**

Committee: Leisure Facility Working Party

Date: 20th April 2009

Author: Chief Executive and Head of Community Services

[H380]

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1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To consider the facility mix for a new Leisure Centre.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 To note the discussion paper set out in Appendix 1 and to agree a final facility mix for consideration by Community Services Committee.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Leisure Facility Working Party on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009 requested that the facility mix for a new Leisure Centre be reviewed. This has been endorsed by the Community Services Committee, who are seeking a recommendation from the Working Party for consideration at their next Committee meeting in May.

4.0 **ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 Strategic Leisure had previously identified the mix of facilities for a new leisure centre in May 2007. The Discussion Paper set out in Appendix A is a re-examination of the facility mix and considers changes in local demographics, the existing supply of facilities and user demand. Consideration is also given to the ability of the building to accommodate multiple facilities, the cost of operating the facility and the potential revenue implications.

4.2 The Discussion Paper recommends no fundamental change to the facility mix in terms of total water-space, size of the sports hall and health and fitness provision. Members will note that the provisional cost of the facility remains unaltered. The paper however highlights issues for consideration regarding the level of auxiliary services such as catering, soft play and crèche, the type of water-space provided and the impact of the facility mix on the future sustainability of the facility.

4.3 The review of the facility mix is timely due to the imminent procurement of architects to design the facility and submission of a planning application later in the year.

4.4 Members are required to consider the key issues for the facility mix and agree conclusions for consideration by Community Services Committee.

4.0 APPENDICES

4.1 Appendix 1 – New Leisure Facilities – Facility Mix Considerations Discussion Paper

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**Background Documents**

**Location**

**Contact Officer**

Room FF107  
The Grange  
Ely

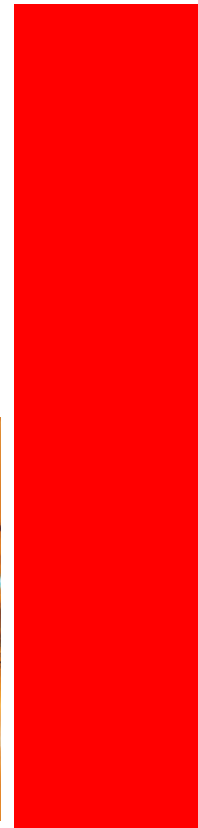
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# **New Leisure Facilities – Facility Mix Considerations**

## **A Discussion Paper**

March 2008



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following an earlier feasibility study Strategic Leisure was appointed by the Council to assist in the delivery of a new centre including the management of the process to find a management partner. The feasibility study suggested a 'facility mix based on an 'assessment of need'. The Working Party would like to 're-visit' the facility mix and to discuss a number of options regarding the scale and scope of facilities to be provided within the new centre
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to explain how the original mix of facilities was arrived at and to suggest areas for discussion.
- 1.3 During the course of the feasibility study and informal consultation with the Ely Outdoor Sports Association (EOSA) it was seen as advantageous to potentially create a 'Sports Village' concept integrating replacement indoor sport and leisure facilities with a re-provision of some or all of the current EOSA facilities. The rationale for this was to address current weaknesses of the EOSA facilities, release further land for commercial development and create a more unified facility with better configuration and land use.

### Strategic Need

- 1.4 The assessment of need set out in the feasibility report confirmed the future latent demand for quality leisure facilities in the City. The existing facilities are fragmented and 'tired'. They are not commensurate with modern more discerning user needs. Quite rightly Ely has aspirations to capitalize on its many strengths and new leisure facilities can be part of this development. The City is expected to grow significantly within the next twenty years and this will mean the provision of many new houses. Improved leisure facilities will undoubtedly help to generate and sustain this growth as well as provide much needed opportunities to residents.
- 1.5 The provision of enhanced leisure facilities is an integral part of the Vision for Ely; indeed, it is one of the strategic priorities.
- 1.6 There are advantages and disadvantages associated with the chosen location for the new leisure centre. On the positive side, it is a highly visible and accessible location for those with access to private transport. There is synergy with the existing uses on the site i.e. the football club and EOSA and this will help to create a critical mass of sport and leisure facilities thus creating a 'Sports Village' destination.
- 1.7 The fact that the site is in close proximity to the existing Park and Ride scheme is also seen as advantageous as is the immediate access to the A10, which will encourage use by people from outside of Ely City Centre. It will also ease congestion in the City itself. It is said that 50% of the existing working population of Ely leave the City for work and 80% of the future population will do likewise. These people will have easy access to the new facility on the way to or way back from work.

### Vision for New Sport and Leisure Facilities

- 1.8 The provision of new sport and leisure facilities is therefore an important component of the Master Plan for Ely. Existing facilities are inadequate and occupy a site with the potential for other uses. Sport and leisure provision can contribute positively to the key themes of the Ely Master Plan. The vision is to create new facilities that cater for the whole community and that:
- Provide a blend of indoor and outdoor opportunities
  - Encourage formal and informal use
  - Make the most of the built and natural environment
  - Become the catalyst for complementary and sustainable development
  - Promote healthy lifestyles
  - Focus on young people

- Are quality in design and operation
- Provide work experience and opportunity
- Are accessible, affordable and equitable
- Act as a 'hub' for other sport and leisure provision in the District

## Assessment of Need

- 1.9 When assessing the leisure needs of an area it is important to look at current and future supply and demand by applying the national planning tools to the facilities to which they relate. The salient issues arising from the assessment of need carried out to inform the facility mix are as follows:

## Swimming Pools

- 1.10 Strategic Leisure used the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) to assess the future supply and demand for swimming pools in Ely. The analysis was done for the current population and for three other parameters. The first is the expected population in 2017 with existing levels of participation (21.3 % based on the Active People survey), the second is the expected population with a 5% increase in participation and the third is the expected level of population and a 10% increase in participation. It is important to note that it is the Government's target through the DCMS and Sport England to increase participation in physical activity (defined as 3 times a week for at least 30 minutes per session) by 1% per annum. Local authorities will be measured on their contribution to these targets through the medium of the annually updated 'Active People' survey.
- 1.11 In terms of current supply of **swimming pools** across the District there is total water space across all providers of **593 m<sup>2</sup>** including the current Paradise Pool. The Sports Facility Calculator which sets future targets for water space based on current population levels, participation rates etc identifies a current need for **828 m<sup>2</sup>** thus implying an under-provision of **235 m<sup>2</sup>**, equivalent to approximately a four lane 25m pool.
- 1.12 If a percentage accessibility factor is applied for the private sector facility (Atrium) that primarily caters for people from certain socio-economic groups and facilities that are less than 25m or are a leisure pool then the total current water space is **450 m<sup>2</sup>**, a deficit in supply of **378 m<sup>2</sup>** (equivalent to approximately one 8 lane 25m pool).
- 1.13 In terms of **future** demand for swimming pools, the deficit of accessible water space based on population trends will increase to **394 m<sup>2</sup>**. However if participation rates grow in accordance with national targets (1% per annum) then the demand for water space will increase accordingly.
- 1.14 A 10% increase in participation coupled to the population increase will lead to a deficit of **488 m<sup>2</sup>** for accessible 25m pools equivalent to approximately two 4 lane 25m pools. This perceived deficit has increased since the June 2007 assessment. Only some of this excess demand will be satisfied by provision in neighbouring boroughs e.g. the new pool at Newmarket.
- 1.15 It is important to note that these figures include the existing Paradise Pool. If this facility were to close without a replacement then the deficit in supply would increase even further.
- 1.16 **The assessment of need for water space supports the provision of water space equivalent to an eight-lane competition swimming pool and a separate teaching pool in any replacement facility. There is no recognized model for calculating the need for 'leisure water' and decisions relating to this element of the mix will be more to do with perceived need, stated demand, capital cost and revenue considerations.**

## Sports Halls

- 1.17 A similar analysis was carried out for sports halls again using Sport England parameters. Supply and demand for sports halls is not calculated on the basis of m<sup>2</sup> of court space but rather on a one badminton court 'unit'.
- 1.18 In terms of **current** supply and demand for **sports halls** in Ely, there is total number of courts across all providers of **38** badminton courts. The Sports Facility Calculator which sets targets for the number of courts based on population levels, participation rates etc identifies a current need for **23** courts thus implying a surplus of **15** courts. However, this analysis fails to take into account the quality of facilities, their functionality and their public accessibility. If the assessment is tailored to take out facilities that are less than four courts (that being the size of facility capable of supporting certain indoor activities) the number of badminton courts within a four-court hall is reduced to **30** a surplus in supply of **7** courts. If a percentage accessibility factor is applied for private sector facilities (that primarily cater for people certain socio-economic groups) and education facilities (with limited daytime use) the accessible sports hall provision within a four-court hall environment reduces to **24.6**, a surplus of **1.6** courts. This includes the current Paradise Sports Centre's four-court hall and if this were to be closed without replacement, there would be a deficit in provision.
- 1.19 In terms of **future** demand for sports, halls the demand for indoor court space based on population trends will increase to **26**, which is not a significant increase.
- 1.20 However if participation rates grow in accordance with national targets (1% per annum) then the demand for indoor court space will increase accordingly. For example if there is a 10% increase in participation by 2016 then the court space required to satisfy demand will increase to approximately **29**.
- 1.21 **The supply and demand assessment for sports hall space in Ely supports the addition of a six-court sports hall in any replacement facility.**

## Health and Fitness

- 1.22 The parameters for measuring the number of health and fitness stations (individual pieces of equipment) necessary to meet demand are different again. The total number of stations required to supply current demand are calculated using the Fitness Industry Association current penetration rate of 12% together with estimates of the frequency of participation and the number of stations required to satisfy a given throughput at peak times. Using these parameters and applying them to Ely gives a current requirement for **208** stations.
- 1.23 There are currently a total of **196** across all sectors thus showing a theoretical deficit in supply of **12** stations. NB. The analysis ignores facilities where the aggregate number of stations is less than 10.
- 1.24 The health and fitness centre at the Atrium (40 stations) is operated by the private sector and by definition these exclude a proportion of the community on economic grounds. Strategic Leisure has made an assumption that this commercial facility is targeted primarily at those in socio-economic groups, A, B and C1. We have applied an accessibility factor against this measure and this reduces the number of fully accessible fitness stations to **156** stations, thus giving a deficit in supply of **52** stations (equivalent to an average sized fitness suite).
- 1.25 Based on trends in participation and population it is anticipated that by 2016 the demand will have increased to **332** stations, which gives a total under supply of **136** stations compared with current supply and a deficit of accessible supply of **176** stations.
- 1.26 **In terms of health and fitness, therefore there is a significant under supply of accessible stations. There are currently 47 health and fitness stations at the Paradise Sports Centre. We would recommend that this be increased to 80/100 in any replacement. This will satisfy future latent demand and improve the net revenue position.**

## Summary of Supply and Demand Assessment

- 1.27 The existing facilities will not be large enough or of sufficient quality to meet the future needs of Ely particularly as the City grows. Furthermore, they will not be commensurate with the expectations of a more discerning population. New facilities will be required to complement and be a catalyst for future population growth.

## Facility Mix and Capital Costs

- 1.28 The table below illustrates the optimum facility mix for a new public leisure centre based on the assessment of need. It includes the three main functional areas described above and a range of complementary ancillary facilities that would be expected with a facility of this nature e.g. spectator provision, changing rooms, offices, cafeteria etc.

## New Leisure Facility in Ely – Optimum facility mix

<b>Estimated Capital Costs</b>			
		<b>Optimum Option</b>	
<b>Indoor Area</b>	<b>Cost/m2 (Rate)</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>£</b>
Main Pool (8 lane version)	2,500	420	<b>1,050,000</b>
Teaching Pool	2,500	126	<b>315,000</b>
Swimming Spectator Area 200	1,500	200	<b>300,000</b>
Sports Hall (6 court)	1,500	720	<b>1,080,000</b>
Sports Hall Bleacher seating (PC Sum)	N/A	N/A	<b>150,000</b>
Fitness Suite 100 station	2,000	400	<b>800,000</b>
Health Suite	2,200	75	<b>165,000</b>
Function/Meeting Rooms	1,600	200	<b>320,000</b>
Crèche / Soft Play	1,600	150	<b>240,000</b>
Cafeteria/Vending	1,750	200	<b>350,000</b>
Staff, First Aid Room etc	1,250	100	<b>125,000</b>
Storage	1,000	200	<b>200,000</b>
Plant	1,300	300	<b>390,000</b>
Dry Change	1,400	250	<b>350,000</b>
Wet Change	1,750	300	<b>525,000</b>
Toilets	1,500	150	<b>225,000</b>
Office/Reception	1,600	200	<b>320,000</b>
Circulation/Poolside	1,300	550	<b>715,000</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>4,541</b>	<b>7,620,000</b>
Land Acquisition			-
External Works	<b>10.00%</b>		<b>762,000</b>
Contingency	<b>10.00%</b>		<b>762,000</b>
FF and E	<b>5.00%</b>		<b>381,000</b>
Inflation		<b>10.00%</b>	<b>762,000</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>10,287,000</b>
Professional Fees	<b>12.00%</b>		<b>1,234,440</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>11,521,440</b>



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- 1.29 At this level of expenditure an 'iconic' aesthetic building will not be delivered but rather a functional leisure centre. These costs are based on an eight-lane pool version. The table does not include the cost of land acquisition because this has already been bought and would therefore not require additional expenditure. Within these costs, no allowance has been included for any integrated development as part of a partnership with EOSA or any additional outdoor facilities such as five a side football facilities. For clarity, the costs shown are for a functional, standalone leisure centre adjacent to but not incorporating the existing EOSA facilities. Subject to the availability of funding, it would make sense to replace the existing EOSA facilities and re-configure the whole site to create a new Sports Village with both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- 1.30 The additional cost of replacing and enhancing the EOSA facilities is estimated at circa £1.5m based on £500k for a replacement full sized synthetic pitch (3G), £120k for two new grass pitches, £750k for new clubhouse facilities (integral to the leisure centre) and a contingency of £100k for improving additional facilities e.g. tennis courts etc. It is possible that some of the cost of this could be funded by external grant aid e.g. Football Foundation but clearly their remit is football, not rugby, hockey and tennis which are the main sports provided by EOSA. The total cost of the optimum option including new EOSA facilities is therefore likely to be around £13m.
- 1.31 Strategic Leisure has identified demand from a five a side football developer/operator for a commercial soccer centre with six small-sided floodlit pitches. Subject to their use, some additional funding could be obtained for these. The operator would pay the capital cost of this development, net of any grant aid and would either pay a small rental in relation to the land or allow free community use during the daytime. It is envisaged therefore that a football centre could be provided at no capital cost and with the potential for a small revenue contribution or free community use.
- 1.32 The figures provided above also exclude any significant infrastructure improvements such as road alterations, abnormal ground conditions, cycle ways, footbridge/underpass, VAT (if applicable) etc. The costs are indicative at this stage and will need to be firmed up.
- 1.33 Clearly funding this level of capital will be critical. Any capital that the Council can contribute to this development will need to be supplemented by a mix of other funding sources including capital receipts from the existing Paradise site and other land holdings, commercial enabling development, section 106 agreements, grants and private sector contributions through Public Private Partnership arrangements (see below).
- 1.34 Other local authorities have been able to use revenue savings arising from a rationalisation of leisure facilities to underpin Prudential Borrowing. This is considered unlikely in this case due to the relatively low level of revenue support provided to the existing facilities (circa £130k per annum). Future revenue costs will therefore be important in any discussion regarding the future facility mix.

### Key Issues to Discuss

- 1.35 The purpose of this report is to highlight how the original 'optimum' facility mix was arrived at. There are a number of considerations to discuss.
- 1.36 In relation to swimming facilities, the standard 'unit' is 25m. For the main pool there is no point in providing for anything less. The points for discussion are therefore
- How many lanes should the main pool tank have, 4, 5, 6 or 8?
  - Should the main pool have spectator provision?
  - Should there be a separate 'learner pool' and if so, how big?
  - Should there be an element of leisure water? If so, how big should this be? What is the target market/age group? Can this be incorporated into the teaching pool water?
- 1.37 In relation to the **sports hall** the 'unit' is a badminton court but the minimum size for a sports hall is in reality 4 badminton courts to allow for other sports to be played in the space. The question therefore becomes should the hall be 4 or 6 courts?



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- 1.38 The questions posed above are seen as the main points for discussion however there are others such as:
- How many fitness stations should be provided?
  - What ancillary facilities should be provided e.g.
    - Cafeteria
    - Crèche/soft play
    - Health suite
    - Facilities for EOSA
- 1.39 These issues should be discussed in the context of:
- The impact on the capital cost and ability to attract external funding
  - The impact on the future revenue position and sustainability
  - Design and planning considerations
  - The target market and demand
- 1.40 Strategic Leisure will facilitate a discussion with the Working Party on the facility mix questions.