

Update on Trowbridge leisure project Briefing Note No. 23 - 12

Service: Leisure and Communities

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Please find a written update on our work to provide a new leisure centre in Trowbridge.

We're pleased to say that this project has made some good progress over the last few months and we're now able to share more information on our plans.

Throughout this project we have carried out a thorough review of what the current physical activity opportunities are in Trowbridge, to help identify which additional services and facilities might help to increase participation locally.

This work has been incredibly beneficial and has provided us with a very detailed picture of the type of new centre we should be looking to provide. As part of this work, last summer we carried out public engagement to get people's views on what type of services they would like to see. We received almost 1,000 responses and then carried out some further engagement work with almost 550 school-aged children and college students.

All of this work and preparation has directly fed into the process of selecting a suitable site to locate these potential services.

At this stage, Wiltshire Council's East Wing site, located across the road from County Hall, has been identified as the preferred location. However, it's important to emphasise that no final decisions have been made and we have a lot of work to do before we can confirm that this will be the actual location. Although we are very confident in the work we have carried out so far, if upon further detailed investigation we don't deem East Wing as a suitable location, or other potential opportunities emerge, then we will reconsider the options available to us. A single member decision will be published on 23 May to confirm this latest development and is subject to a call-in period.

We looked at a number of sites to assess their suitability for a leisure centre, taking into account a variety of factors, including:

- Catchment area – which sites are accessible to the most people
- Accessibility – public and sustainable Travel
- Size of site
- Site ownership
- Building/demolition considerations
- Planning considerations
- Operating costs
- Build costs
- Timescales

East Wing came out favourably compared to the other options we have considered, and the main reasons for selecting this site are:

- The site is within easy walking, cycling and driving distance for large parts of the town and surrounding area.
- It has good access routes for public transport and active travel, such as walking and cycling.

- It has a prominent central location, adjacent to the main road and opposite County Hall and provides the opportunity for a high quality, public facing civic building.
- It can accommodate the building and car parking.
- It is owned by Wiltshire Council and so we can better control delivery timeframes.
- As a new build, there is a good opportunity for planning in adaptability and resilience to climate changes.
- It provides opportunities for multi-purpose trips such as people using the town centre and could encourage increased usage of active travel facilities.

In terms of the proposed facilities at the new centre, we have carried out extensive consultation and a review of a wide range of evidence and data. As a result, have identified proposed facilities for the new centre that we believe will benefit communities and the local area. They include:

- A six-lane, 25m swimming pool
- 7m x 13m learner pool
- Gym with 120 exercise stations
- Two studios
- Spin studio
- Community meeting room
- Café
- Adventure play – providing active play for young people
- Live well suite – providing a dedicated space for older people to exercise

However, these facilities are not confirmed and are subject to change.

The proposed facilities do not include a sports hall, squash courts or gymnasium. We intend to retain these facilities and dry changing rooms at Trowbridge Sports Centre.

We will now look to carry out a feasibility study at East Wing, which will involve a more detailed assessment of the site. This will involve activities such as carrying out surveys, site investigations, developing a project brief, developing a project programme and agreeing a procurement strategy.

We are also planning to carry out regular engagement work so that the public are kept fully up to date on the progress we are making. After all, this centre is for them so it's vital they are with us every step of the way. We will also continue to talk with all other stakeholders directly affected, which includes sports clubs, to ensure they have all the information they need.

It's important to note that there will be no imminent changes to leisure services in Trowbridge as a project of this scale will take a number of years to complete. Although we can't provide a specific date on when we hope this centre will be in place, we are anticipating that construction will commence in 2025.

To ensure the public and other stakeholders are fully up to speed, we will have a dedicated Trowbridge Leisure Centre webpage, which we will update throughout this project. We'll share the link with you when this page is live.

We are working hard to keep all stakeholders fully up to date on this work and share as much as we can, but as you will understand this is a complex project with many moving parts. Within the next few days, we will be updating local councillors, affected clubs, staff and the local media on this development.

Finally, we just wanted to share our excitement at the prospect of providing this new leisure centre. This investment bucks the trend of what is being seen nationally and we don't think many other councils are taking this kind of positive approach. Due to this significant investment for Wiltshire's county town, we are being as thorough as we can. However, we are very confident the end result will be a centre for all ages that the community will truly be proud of for many years to come.

If you have any initial questions that we haven't yet answered, then please don't hesitate to get in touch at trowbridgeleisureproject@wiltshire.gov.uk. In the meantime, we will endeavour to keep you fully updated as this project develops, including through the area board meetings.

Further information about proposed facilities:

Proposed facilities	Rationale
Main Pool – 6 lane x 25m Learner Pool – 7m x 13m	Current income per m2 very high, additional water space to ensure there are no capacity issues in the future. Activity for all ages to participate in. Swimming highlighted as the activity that most people wanted to do more of Swimming is the activity participated in most at the leisure centre
Gym – 120 stations	To ensure capacity for projected total membership demand Second most popular activity within the leisure centres Commercial element of the business and is important for future financial sustainability
1 x studio – 30 person capacity 1 x Studio – 25 person capacity Spin Studio	Sufficient capacity and space to deliver a robust group exercise timetable, whilst also giving flexibility for the spaces to be used for other activities, such as parties, meetings, wellbeing classes etc. Flexible studio space to enable multiple activities to be delivered including those for key groups and increasing accessibility
1 x Community/Multi-purpose rooms	Increase flexibility of space, support local businesses due to central location. Stakeholders highlighted the benefits of having flexible space available for different community groups, charities, health providers to utilise Having a bespoke community room will not impact on the studio programme, which, commercially is important for the financial sustainability of the centre.
Cafe	Linked to reception and to serve the pool and adventure play. Pre-prepared food and hot and cold drinks – similar to a high street café offer. Supports the attraction of a destination venue and commercial viability of the offer Creates social element to the leisure offer that can be utilised as part of the programmes and initiatives - supporting outcomes linked to social isolation
Adventure Play (Tag Active/Soft Play)	Physical activity opportunity for children that may not have an interest in traditional sports Creates a commercial element and delivers against the financial sustainability outcome Creates more of a destination venue supporting the local economy
Live Well Suite	Older people are currently under-represented in the leisure centres Provides a centre that supports health and wellbeing agenda that can be used by leisure centre members but also health services and partners Utilised for prevention and rehabilitation Supports the public health outcomes Provides a good introduction into leisure centres for those lacking in confidence (16% stated this as being a barrier to participation)