

MAYOR AND CABINET			
Report Title	Leisure provision: Loampit Vale & Ladywell		
Key Decision	Yes		Item No. 4
Ward	Lewisham Central		
Contributors	Executive Directors for Regeneration, Resources & Community Services, Head of Law		
Class	Part 1	Date: 16 May 2007	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report deals with the current position in relation to the replacement of leisure facilities in Lewisham Town Centre. It notes that the Mayor agreed to procure the provision of leisure facilities on the Loampit Vale site at the meeting of Mayor and Cabinet on 14th March 2007.
- 1.2 Since that decision was made, by virtue of a decision of the School Organisation Committee (SOC) on 24th April 2007, the Council has been released from the statutory duty to build a new school on the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre.
- 1.3 In view of the SOC decision, the site of the Ladywell Leisure Centre is no longer required for a new school. Alternative future uses of the Ladywell Leisure Centre are therefore feasible. This report deals with the question of whether the decision to provide leisure facilities at Loampit Vale should be re-affirmed or whether that decision should be re-considered and leisure facilities in Lewisham Town Centre should instead be provided at the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre site. This report concludes that the preferable option is in line with the existing decision for the leisure facilities to be located at Loampit Vale, but in view of the changed circumstances, also recommends that before taking a final decision on that issue, the Mayor agrees to consult with residents and users on that preferred option, and consider a further report when that consultation is complete in June 2007, before making a final decision.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to consider, in the light of the decision of the Lewisham SOC on 24 April 2007, whether the Mayor's earlier decision to commission the re-provision of leisure facilities on the Loampit Vale site should be re-affirmed or altered.

3 Policy Context

The provision of, and investment in, leisure facilities is consistent with the Council's policy framework. It contributes to the Community Strategy priorities around health - to sustain and improve the health and well-being of local people and to the Council policy priorities around young people's achievement and involvement - raising educational attainment and improving facilities for young people through partnership working and active, healthy citizens, leisure, sporting, learning and creative activities for everyone. Finally, the report is consistent with the Council's Leisure Strategy.

4. Recommendations

That the Mayor:

- 4.1 notes the decision of the School Organisation Committee on 24 April 2007 to agree to revoke the earlier decision to select the Ladywell Leisure Centre site as the preferred location for the new school and that this means that alternative options for the future use of the Ladywell Leisure Centre site are now feasible;
- 4.2 considers the options in this report carefully, and that following that consideration, he considers the recommendation that he affirms that his preferred option for the location of new leisure facilities in Lewisham is the Loampit Vale site;
- 4.3 before taking a final decision on that issue, he agrees to consult users and residents about his preferred option, and asks officers to bring a report back to Mayor and Cabinet on 20 June 2007 on the outcome of the consultation for consideration.

5 Background

- 5.1 On 20 October 1998 the Council's Leisure & Environment Committee endorsed a draft Local Leisure Plan and Active Recreation Strategy and invited consultation on the plan. This included agreement to consult on the development of a new main wet and dry leisure centre in Ladywell/Lewisham from 2004 to replace the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre.
- 5.2 On 28 January 1999 the Council's Leisure & Environment Committee agreed a Leisure & Sport Strategy that had been subject to consultation as set out above. This focussed on the development of four key centres that included Ladywell. The strategy referred to "exploring and obtaining the necessary approvals for...a new main wet and dry (double sports hall) leisure centre in central Ladywell/Lewisham (replacing the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre in three to five years...).
- 5.3 In 1999 the Council successfully bid under Round 6 of the SRB programme for funds for the regeneration of Lewisham Town Centre

under the title Urban Renaissance. The Sundermead regeneration scheme was linked with the SRB programme and the masterplan proposal for Lewisham Town Centre regeneration. The masterplan proposals for Lewisham Town Centre addressed the provision of a new leisure centre, identifying a new leisure centre containing a range of wet and dry facilities.

- 5.4 In 2000 the Council commissioned a cost study by consultants AFH Shaw Sprunt on the options for the Ladywell site. This is described in more detail in paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6 below.
- 5.5 Consideration was also being given to establishing a new school within Lewisham. On 30 June 2004 the Mayor reviewed the site options for the new school, selected the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre as the preferred site and agreed the development of a programme to open the new school on the Ladywell Leisure Centre site for 2009 (subject to a decision being made to proceed with the proposals following the consultation processes outlined in the report). The proposals for the use of the Ladywell Leisure Centre site for the new school were considered in the context of the 1999 Leisure Strategy which, as set out at para 5.1 above, contemplated the replacement of the existing leisure centre building.
- 5.6 In 2004 the Council commissioned a Leisure Investment Strategy Review. The review noted the Council's draft proposals including the replacement of Ladywell Leisure Centre when it closed in 2010 with facilities at "Lewisham Centre" and specifically Loampit Vale in the context of the then proposed new school to be established on the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre. The review noted the shortcomings of the current Ladywell pool. On 6 April 2005 Mayor & Cabinet noted the Physical Activity, Sport & Leisure Strategy and the findings of the Leisure Investment Review (2004).
- 5.7 Following completion of the proper statutory processes, on 16 March 2006, the Lewisham SOC approved the proposal to open a new school on the Ladywell Leisure Centre site.
- 5.8 On 19 July 2006, the Mayor gave in principle approval to the redevelopment of the Loampit Vale site and instructed officers to undertake a programme of consultation. This decision was made in the context of the previous decision to open a new school on the Ladywell Leisure Centre site and the report noted that that the Loampit Vale pool would replace the Ladywell Leisure Centre which was expected to close in October 2007.
- 5.9 On 8 November 2006 the Mayor agreed in principle that he would wish to establish a new school on the site of the existing Lewisham Bridge Primary School rather than the existing preferred site of the Ladywell Leisure Centre, subject to consultation on that issue and securing all necessary statutory approvals if the final decision was to establish the

school at the Lewisham Bridge site. Any final decision would also be dependent on the SOC deciding that the requirement to implement the proposal to establish a new school on the Ladywell Leisure Site should cease to apply.

- 5.10 On 10 January 2007 the Mayor noted the outcome of the consultation process on the Loampit Vale site and agreed a Part 2 report which selected a shortlist of developers to be invited to submit proposals for the re-development of Loampit Vale.
- 5.11 On 14 March 2007 the Mayor considered the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed re-development of the Loampit Vale site. He decided that the proposed re-development should proceed, including the establishment of a leisure centre, and agreed to declare the Council's landholdings on the site surplus to requirements and to proceed with the proposed re-development. The Mayor also resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order for the acquisition of all remaining interests in the Loampit Vale site which were not in the Council's ownership.
- 5.12 At a meeting held on 20 March 2007, the Blackheath, Lee Green and Lewisham Central Area Forum forwarded a resolution to the Mayor regarding the consultation on Loampit Vale. On 18 April 2007, Mayor & Cabinet were scheduled to consider this referral from the Area Forum and were advised by the Head of Law regarding potential legal action on the matter. A report elsewhere on the Agenda addresses the Area Forum reference.
- 5.13 On 24 April 2007, the Lewisham SOC agreed to revoke the earlier decision to select the Ladywell Leisure Centre site as the preferred location for the new school.

6 Issues Associated with Site Options

6.1 There are three possible options:

- refurbishment of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre;
- demolition of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre and rebuilding a new facility on that site;
- redevelopment of the Loampit Vale site, to provide a new leisure centre that will replace the current provision on the Ladywell Leisure Centre site.

refurbishment of Ladywell

6.2 The current facility at Ladywell is 30 years old and needs significant investment to refurbish or adapt it to 21st Century needs. The main pool is a non-standard length and is therefore unsuitable for competition;

there is no separation between the two pools so differential water temperatures cannot be easily achieved; the teaching pool cannot be screened off to make it suitable for those groups who wish to swim in anonymity; there are many areas of unused or poorly sited floor space; and the building does not meet current Disability Discrimination Act requirements.

- 6.3 In 2000 a cost study was undertaken by consultants AFH Shaw Sprunt on the options for the Ladywell site and their November 2000 report identified three options. Refurbishment, which would not address all the deficiencies of the existing building, a mixed refurbishment / adaptation which would seek to address some of the issues of under utilised floorspace, and redevelopment. Their costings (based on 2002-03 prices) were as follows:

	Refurbishment £k	Refurb/Adapt £k	New build £k
Total cost	9,530	10,935	10,485
30 year maintenance	3,059	2,504	1,671
Total life cost	12,589	13,439	12,156
Time (months)	21	24	30
Area of site released	nil	0.18ha	0.20ha

- 6.4 The assumptions behind these figures have not changed since November 2000, although inflation would need to be applied to all of them. A significant amount of asbestos-related work was undertaken in 2002 (following closure of the building) but this will not have made a significant impact on the outstanding condition work required. Each option would require closure of the building whilst the works were being undertaken. In theory, refurbishment might be undertaken to a shorter programme than redevelopment as indicated. However, refurbishment projects are inherently more risky and delays often occur due to uncovering the unknown.
- 6.5 New build remains the lowest cost, lowest risk option, provides modern facilities to meet the Council's brief including high levels of sustainability and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. For these reasons the option of refurbishment is not considered any further in this report.

Ladywell or Loampit vale site?

- 6.6 The Council has developed a specification for a new leisure centre that could be built on either site. This section of the report looks at the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options. A number of factors to be considered are similar for both sites. For example, the sites are both in Council ownership, they are both located in the centre of Lewisham 1 kilometre apart, the specification for the centres would

be broadly similar and, therefore, so would the construction costs and construction periods. Parking arrangements for both sites are also broadly comparable with 53 spaces at Ladywell and 60 planned for Loampit Vale. The work required to confirm a specification for Ladywell, commence procurement of contractors for design and build and then enter at least a 2 year construction programme would mean a leisure centre on Ladywell could not be delivered until, at the earliest, mid 2010, broadly in line with the plans for Loampit Vale.

Ladywell – key factors

- 6.7 One of the advantages of building a new leisure centre on the Ladywell site would be that the location is already known to local people although, as the existing centre would need to be demolished while the new centre is being built, this could diminish over the period of closure of around 2 years.
- 6.8 Building a replacement on the current site could free up land on Loampit Vale for either disposal or development for another use. However, the current plan for Loampit Vale assumes a mixed use development, in line with existing planning policy, with the leisure centre providing a focus for related commercial space alongside residential development.
- 6.9 The main disadvantage of building a new leisure centre on the Ladywell site is the lack of continuous provision of leisure facilities. The redevelopment of Ladywell would mean the closure of the existing Leisure Centre and then a gap of at least 24 months whilst the site is redeveloped and before a replacement leisure centre is available for public use. Continuity of provision is important to users and the Council, a break in provision could lead to users seeking alternative sites never to return to the replacement facility.
- 6.10 Access to the site by bus is good. However, the site is significantly further from the main transport hub in the Town Centre (DLR, Rail and bus station) than the Loampit Vale site.

Loampit Vale – key factors

- 6.11 The proposals for Loampit Vale are to provide a new:
- 8 lane 25 metre competition pool
 - 20 metre teaching pool with moveable floor
 - Dance, exercise and aerobics studio
 - 100 station fitness suite
 - Health spa
 - Crèche
 - Cafe

- 6.12 The proposed Loampit Vale pool will meet Amateur Swimming Association and Sport England competition standards and would be available for County level competition with 250 spectator seats. The 33 metre 6 lane pool at Ladywell cannot be used for such competitions, having a non standard length. There will also be other advantages as a result of a larger and improved fitness suite.
- 6.13 The main advantage of developing a new facility at Loampit Vale, whilst Ladywell continues to operate, is the continuity of swimming provision. The leisure centre at the Loampit Vale redevelopment would be available for use before the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre was closed. This would avoid a gap of approximately 24 months in provision of swimming facilities. The lack of continuity of provision is a concern that has been raised in the past and continuity of operation of Ladywell through to the opening of Loampit Vale in 2010 would address this concern.
- 6.14 Although the transport links at Ladywell are good, those at Loampit Vale are much better providing a variety of choice. There are 9 bus routes (2 at night) to Ladywell compared to 25 (4 at night) to Lewisham town centre. 10 trains a hour stop at Ladywell at peak compared to 25 at Lewisham. In addition the DLR terminates at Lewisham with at peak 20 trains an hour. The site is also on the Waterlink Way providing good access for walkers and cyclists.
- 6.15 The proposal fits within the Council's planning policies. The Council is preparing a statutory town planning document called the Lewisham Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). This AAP is at the 'preferred options' stage and a report considering this matter was agreed by Mayor & Cabinet on 2 May 2007. The preferred options AAP contains a general leisure policy which states 'the Council is committed to providing one major leisure centre including a swimming pool in Lewisham town centre to replace the current Ladywell Leisure Centre'. The AAP further identifies a Loampit Vale Opportunity Area which sets out general urban design guidance and includes an illustrative development framework which shows a block on Loampit Vale as having the 'potential for a new mixed use block comprising commercial units, leisure facilities and residential units'. The AAP therefore provides a general planning policy framework to facilitate a new swimming pool at this location.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 It is proposed to undertake consultation with residents and users on whether the leisure centre should be located within the development at Loampit Vale as decided in March 2007 or whether that decision should be altered and the leisure facilities provided at the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre.

- 7.2 The consultation will include, scripted telephone interviews of 600 local residents who reside within a 2km radius of either site, meetings with key user groups of the centre and, one day of face-to-face in depth interviews with current users of the centre to be conducted across different times of the day in order to meet the differing needs of users. Information will also be provided on the Council's website that will enable e-mail comments to be provided to the Council. The consultation will take place during May/June 2007, will be summarised in a final report and, be reported to Mayor & Cabinet on 20 June 2007.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The costs of the proposed consultation process, estimated to be £20k, can be met from the budget set aside for the project. Further financial implications will be included in the subsequent report to Mayor & Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 At the time the original consultation on the Loampit Site was commenced, the Ladywell Leisure Centre site was needed for the new school and the consultation which was undertaken therefore did not address the possibility of refurbishing/rebuilding the pool on the existing site. However, in light of the decision of Mayor & Cabinet on 8 November 2006 and the decision of the SOC on 24 April 2007, the Ladywell Leisure Centre site is now available and this means that options for the alternative future use of the Ladywell Leisure Centre site can now be considered.
- 9.2 Following the decision of the SOC and the availability of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre site for other uses, it is now considered appropriate for the Mayor to consider whether the decision to locate the leisure centre at Loampit should be affirmed or whether the leisure centre should be located on the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre. As part of that decision making process, it has been decided to carry out additional non-statutory consultation on whether the leisure centre should be located within the development at Loampit Vale as decided in March 2007 or whether that decision should be altered and the leisure facilities provided at the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre.
- 9.3 The outcome of that consultation will be considered prior to a final decision being made on whether or not to proceed with the proposed redevelopment of the Loampit Vale Site or rebuild the Ladywell Leisure Centre on its current site.

10 Crime & disorder implications

Any new project will provide an opportunity to ensure that the design takes into account crime and minimises the potential for crime and aims to ensure that designs will meet Secure By Design standards.

11 Equalities Implications

11.1 The key equalities implications concern access. Significant work would be required to the Ladywell Leisure Centre to adapt it to the needs of disabled people while a new build would provide a facility that would address all users' needs. Access by public transport is an important equalities consideration for the siting of leisure provision, given that approximately 43% of households in Lewisham do not have access to a car or van. Both sites are well served by public transport, particularly buses. However the Loampit Vale site is closer to Lewisham's main public transport hub. This hub is accessed by a wider range of bus routes and train services, together with the DLR.

11.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment of provision which would be available at Loampit Vale site has been undertaken and work is ongoing, for example, with disabled people's involvement, to ensure full access for all sections of the community. This approach would also be applied at Ladywell, if a decision was taken to provide leisure facilities at that site rather than at Loampit Vale.

12 Environmental Implications

Developer proposals will aim to meet the Council's environmental and sustainability objectives particularly on energy use and traffic reduction.

13 Conclusion

13.1 The Council has plans, as part of the redevelopment of Lewisham Town Centre, for a new mixed use development including a new leisure centre on the Loampit Vale site. Following the decision of the SOC on 24 April 2007 that the Council is no longer required to establish a school on the site of the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre alternative use of that site can now be considered.

13.2 It is recommended that the preferred option, in principle, would be to affirm the decision for new, mixed use development on the Loampit Vale site including a new leisure centre. A new leisure centre on the Loampit Vale site would provide an appropriate accessible location with 21st Century facilities. The refurbishment option at Ladywell Leisure Centre is not recommended. It would be a high risk endeavour that could not address all the accessibility problems and high long term maintenance costs of the existing building. The alternative of a rebuild on the Ladywell Leisure Centre site would create a centre in a less accessible location than Loampit Vale and would lead to a break in leisure provision of around 24 months. Before any final decision is taken on whether to affirm the decision to locate the new leisure centre

at Loampit, it is recommended that the Council consults on whether the leisure centre should be located within the development at Loampit Vale, as decided in March 2007, or whether that decision should be altered and the leisure facilities provided at the existing Ladywell Leisure Centre and officers report on the outcome of that consultation on 20 June 2007 for consideration prior to taking a final decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Short title of document	Date	Contact
Leisure & Environment Committee	20 October 1998	Annette
	28 January 1999	Stead
Reports to Mayor and Cabinet	30 June 2004	Kevin
	6 April 2005	Flaherty
	19 July 2006	
	10 Jan 2007	
	14 March 2007	

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