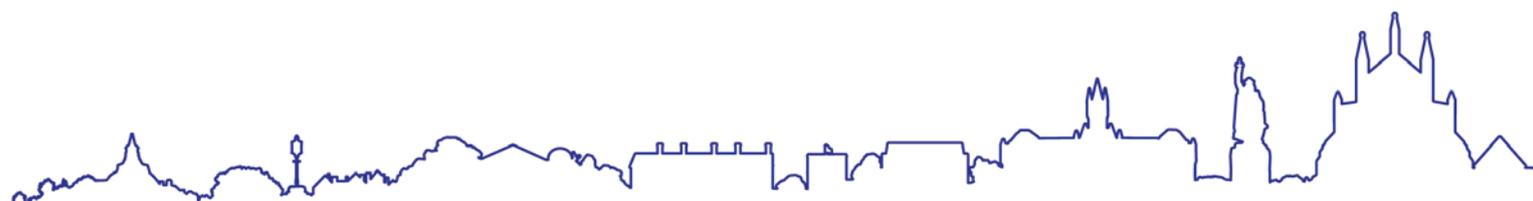

Winchester Sport & Leisure Park

Public Consultation Feedback (Phases 1 and 2)

September 2017

Background

1. In order to deliver an appropriate, viable and inclusive Sport & Leisure Centre within the Winchester Sport & Leisure Park at Bar End, the City Council has commissioned a design and technical team to analyse the relationship between the proposed uses and neighbouring residential areas. Understanding this relationship is key to promoting an aspirational sporting, leisure and development vision for the wider area and which can shape emerging proposals and initiatives and interventions in the years to come.
2. The creation of a set of a land use or development principles, known as an **Urban Design Framework (UDF)** will help place the first project, the Winchester Sport & Leisure Centre, into context. The Sport & Leisure Centre is to be built on land owned and controlled by the Council. The design, funding and delivery of longer-term interventions across the wider Sport & Leisure Park will involve land owned and controlled by Hampshire County Council and the University of Winchester.
3. In commissioning an Urban Design Framework, the Council has engaged with local residents, sports groups and clubs, and land owners (the University being a funding partner for the Sport & Leisure Centre). The engagement process, set out below, has helped appreciate the land use issues relevant to local people and has contributed towards a set of principles which the City Council can now seek to deliver in partnership with others.
4. The Council own the Depot site adjacent and to the north of the proposed Sport & Leisure Park site. The Depot site is within the boundary of the Urban Design Framework, but there is no set timescale for redevelopment or re-use of the site. As landowner, the Council must safeguard its long-term position over the future of the Depot site and the Urban Design Framework adopts a flexible approach to future uses to meet this objective. Full engagement will be undertaken in relation to future development of the site before any decisions are taken.
5. Notwithstanding this, it is envisaged that the redevelopment of the site will involve low-traffic generation activities (controlled by planning and/or management regimes) and will be informed by a series of scale and massing studies undertaken to help shape the Urban Design Framework. The relationship between redevelopment proposals on the Depot Site and the residential properties on Milland Road will have regard to both appropriate planning principles and, where appropriate, the mitigation measures raised by local residents during the engagement process.
6. Existing lease agreements, outside the control of the City Council, may result in development proposals and other interventions being delivered over a longer time frame than many may wish to see. However, with the principles and ambition established at this stage, the Council has an end state vision for the Sport & Leisure Park and the desire to see positive change being delivered that will leave a lasting legacy for the City and the wider area.



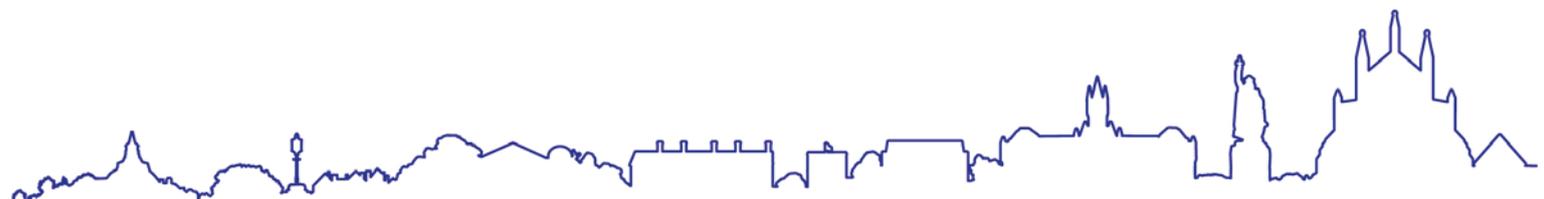
Engagement Overview

1. Following appointment of the Design Team in May 2017, a Consultation and Engagement Strategy was prepared and presented to the Leisure Cabinet in May 2017. Engagement has been organised in two concurrent work streams: **user group engagement** (initiated and led by LA Architects and which focusses upon the demand and requirements for sporting facilities linked to the Sport & Leisure Centre) and **public engagement** (managed by Stride Treglown and which covers the Urban Design Framework for the wider Winchester Sport & Leisure Park within which the Sport & Leisure Centre will sit). This paper focusses on the public engagement activities to date.
2. The first phase of public engagement was to be focussed on listening to local residents in order to better understand the issues facing them on a day to day basis and to test the degree to which the site and area analysis as presented by the Design Team was accurate. Phase 1 was therefore aimed at ensuring that the Urban Design Framework was informed by a robust evidence base.
3. Subsequent phases of engagement were to feedback the results of Phase 1 and to present the emerging Urban Design Framework. The intention in Phase 2 was to engage with a larger, widely distributed population: essentially targeting those with a long term interest in using the facilities to be provided at the Sport and Leisure Park.
4. Phase 3 of the engagement strategy (December 2017) is designed to present the Draft Urban Design Framework as informed by earlier engagement activities and to present the concept designs (scale, massing, general appearance) of the Sport & Leisure Centre and immediate surroundings. Clarity at this stage is required as to what is to be included, and excluded from an initial detailed planning application.
5. Phase 4 (to be confirmed, and as required) offers the opportunity to present detailed plans and computer generated images of the proposed Sport & Leisure Centre proposals. This is likely to be an exhibition of proposals as, by that time, much of the details will have been fixed and opportunities to revise the proposals will be limited.
6. The planning application will be accompanied by a Statement of Community Involvement. This will highlight the methods of pre-application submission engagement employed, summaries of the responses received and a description of how the proposals have been shaped by these comments.
7. Formal public consultation as part of the planning application determination process will be arranged by the Council's Planning Department once the application has been submitted.

Phase 1 (June – July)

8. Approximately 1,500 leaflets were distributed locally to notify residents of a series of 5 “drop-in” engagement sessions held between Friday 23rd June and Thursday 29th June across two venues in the City: Winchester Guildhall and the Winchester Sports Stadium at Bar End. WCC email networks were also used to sporting groups and organisations. Each session was attended by a number of core project personal (including Council Officers, architects, drainage engineers and transport consultants). A series of activity sheets were provided to garner views on local issues, prompting thoughts as to what would make the Park inclusive to all, and the degree to which the facilities would support a Community Hub.

9. A total of 240 people attended the sessions. Many of the attendees were city residents, however the Sports Stadium venue supported interaction with Stadium Users resident across the sub-region. Positive feedback was received as to the suite of materials and activities to engage interest, and the availability of project personnel to discuss issues “face to face”. This encouraged constructive, qualitative, discussions and built a rapport with local people, some of whom were concerned about the impact of the development on their lives.
10. Over 530 questionnaires (on-line and hard copies) were completed over a 2 week period. The key headlines from Phase 1 of the engagement process are set out below:
 - a. 90.5% “strongly agreed” (74%) or “agreed” (16%) with the proposal to create a multi-use Sport and Leisure Centre within the Sport and Leisure Park at Bar End. 3% disagreed.
 - b. 73 % “strongly agreed” (26%) or “agreed” (47%) that the exhibition boards presented an accurate picture of the local areas with appropriate site opportunities and constraints listed. 3% disagreed. Given the geographical spread of respondents, not all were familiar with the area and responded “not sure”.
 - c. 97% “strongly agreed” (71%) or “agreed” (26%) with the statement that the Winchester Sport and Leisure Park offers the potential to become an important community hub for local residents and sporting organisations. Only 1% disagreed.
11. While the concept of the Sport & Leisure Park and Sport & Leisure Centre were well received, it is important to note that a number of local people raised constructive, genuine and strong concerns as to potential impact of the proposals. Concerns raised included, but were not limited to:
 - a. The risk that development could exacerbate local flooding issues (an issue of particular concern to Chilcomb Lane residents).
 - b. The impact of increased car parking demand (particularly along Milland Road and within the Highcliffe area north of the site).
 - c. The perceived impact of increased floodlighting (by those who share a boundary with the Park).
 - d. The retention of King George V Playing fields, as well as the Garrison Ground, as grassed playing pitches was supported in almost equal measure by many local residents (despite that the latter is intended to accommodate the Sport & Leisure Centre).
 - e. The continued uncertainty as to the future of the Council Depot Site adjacent to the Park raised particular concerns by a minority of respondents: the integration and relationship between the two sites being highlighted as a concern over a number of years. The suggestion of alternative uses for the site (car park, ice rink, local convenience store, student accommodation) were raised during the engagement period.



Phase 2 (July – August 2017)

12. A more comprehensive notification strategy was adopted to generate interest for the Phase 2 sessions. Around 4,500 leaflets were distributed, over 4,000 emails were issued (many through the Membership of the River Park Leisure Centre) and press coverage utilised.
13. A total of 253 people recorded their attendance across the three manned exhibition events at the Guildhall and Sports Stadium between Friday 21st July and Tuesday 25th July. This is slightly up on Round 1 (240). Project team representatives were present at each session to discuss issues as required. A notable number of young people were in attendance at the Saturday 22nd July event held at the Sports Stadium. A static (unmanned) exhibition was in-situ at the River Park Leisure Centre over a 4 week period: this tended to generate responses from an older population.
14. Phase 2 generated 389 completed questionnaires: down on Round 1, but possibly due to the absence of early concept images relating to the Sport & Leisure Centre building. This had been promised, but was unable to be delivered in the timescale given concurrent ongoing discussions as to the viability of the initial facilities mix.
15. Detailed feedback from the Phase 1 engagement was presented on the exhibition boards and hard copies given to event attendees to read at their leisure. 82% of respondents felt that the feedback summary helpful. Phase 2 generated similar local development impact concerns resulting from the development as was cited in Phase 1.
16. The questionnaire sought feedback as the degree to which respondents use other sporting facilities. Just under half of the respondents (of which there were 357) visit other sport and leisure centres. Their reasons for using other centres included the range of facilities (64%), the quality of facilities (41%) and ease of access (34%). The three principle activities which respondents undertake at these destinations are swimming (58%), Gym (26%) and sports hall uses (24%).
17. Without exception, there was an overwhelming positive reaction from respondents to each of the 22 proposed Urban Design Framework suggestions or strategies.
18. The three UDF components which generated the **highest approval rating** (by adding the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” percentages) were:
 - a. Investigating pedestrian and cycle connections to the existing St Catherine’s Park and Ride site (87%)
 - b. Encouragement for the existing Park and Ride Bus Service to serve the Sport & Leisure Park (87%)
 - c. Amendments to the local road network resulting in safe pedestrian and cycle connections between the site and the National Cycle Route 23 to the west (85%).
19. The strategy which generated the highest “Strongly Agree” response was the encouragement to utilise the existing Park and Ride and Bus Service 4 to serve the Sport & Leisure Park (50%). This is a WCC / Public Transport operator management issue, though would need to be accommodated by means new bus stopping points either within or adjacent to the site. This could require collaborative working with the County Council as Highways Authority.

20. The three UDF components which generated the **highest disapproval rating** (by adding the “Strongly disagree” and “disagree” percentages) were:
- The Garrison Ground being the most suitable location for the proposed Sport & Leisure Centre (23%).
(By way of comparison, this generated an approval rating of 61%).
 - The WSLP forming an appropriate gateway to the South Downs Way (15%).
(By way of comparison, this also generated an approval rating of 61%).
 - An outdoor gym / activity area being an asset (11%).
(By way of comparison, this generated an approval rating of 70%).

Note: two other components also generated a similar reaction: the main entrance into the site being from Bar End (9%), and the northern access from Milland Road being restricted to emergency and maintenance vehicles only (9%).

21. The majority of UDF components generated a disapproval rating of between just 3% and 8%.

Open ended responses

22. The use of open ended questions under each of the main topics in the questionnaire have generated the following number of comments. In order, highest first:

1. The Sports & Leisure Park (195)

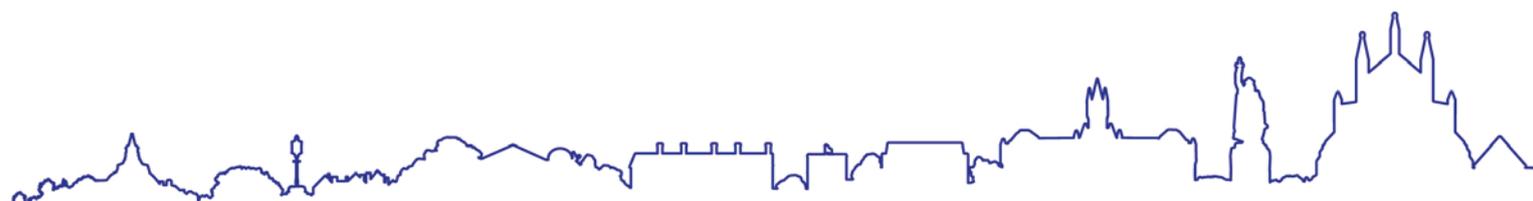
Issues raised included: the importance of balancing the needs of the community with the perception that the Park could become a Sporting Centre of excellence (for elite athletes/swimmers); support for the retention of the King George V Playing fields as grassed pitches and a pavilion to serve their use; the importance of making a natural, direct, footpath connection between the two halves of the Park (over land currently controlled by HCC) and support for an external natural trim trail around the periphery of the site (linked to a strengthening of the landscape boundary).

2. Access and Movement strategy (122)

Issues raised included: Parking demand and adequate provision within the Park, relationship to (and capacity of) the nearby Park and Ride Sites, support for pedestrian and cycling facilities and safer connecting routes into the Park, residents parking permit scheme revisions in the adjacent areas. Concerns were raised by some over the relative accessibility of the Park at Bar End over the existing River Park Leisure Centre.

3. The relationship between the Sport & Leisure Park and the South Downs National Park (80)

Issues raised included: Opinion was divided as to the relevance of connecting the Park with the South Downs Way. Many considered that those accessing the South Downs National Park (SNDP) would not wish to participate in Leisure Centre activities as part of a dual trip: others suggesting that if the connection was encouraged, South Downs Way walkers would use the on-site Leisure Centre parking spaces to the detriment of users. This appeared to be a marginal issue for many.



4. The relationship between the Sport and Leisure Park and adjacent uses (78)

Issues raised included: A concern was raised by some that the absence of a formal proposal for the Depot Site results in an inability to fully understand the “end state” impact of the urban design framework. The absence of technical assessments to demonstrate how the development will impact upon residents was cited as a concern by those who are live immediately adjacent or close to the site. As with Phase 1, a well organised but small interest group supported the idea of an Ice Rink on the adjacent Depot Site.

5. Environmental and Landscape (76)

Issues raised included: The natural qualities of the area remain important to many respondents, with numerous references supporting the retention of, or creation of new, “unkempt areas” as a way of increasing biodiversity gains. Many respondents supported the initiative to provide for peripheral routes for running / training / walking, though support was not as strong for the creation of an “outdoor gym”.

