

Minutes of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**28th March, 2019 at 5.30 pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Ahmed (Chair);
Councillors Crompton and Hevican (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Allcock, Chidley, M Hussain,
M Y Hussain and White.

Apology: Councillor Phillips.

In attendance: Chris Jones (Commonwealth Games 2022
Aquatics Centre - Project Director).

4/19 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 21st February, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

5/19 Review of the Legacy Plans for the Sandwell Aquatics Centre and Commonwealth Games 2022

The Commonwealth Games 2022 Aquatics Centre - Project Director attended the meeting and presented a report on the legacy plans for the Sandwell Aquatics Centre and the wider Commonwealth Games 2022.

It was reported that, to date, the priority of the project had been around the design of the Aquatics Centre; this was solely to ensure that the facility was delivered on time for the Commonwealth Games 2022. However, it was recognised that the lasting benefits that could be achieved from the delivery of the Centre and the Games was far broader than just the construction of the facility.

An overview of the design of the Centre and the various facilities that were available was presented to the Scrutiny Board.

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As the design and build element of the project was on programme, and the Project Team was at full capacity, it was timely to start considering the launch of a Legacy Workstream for the project.

The Commonwealth Games 2022 Member Steering Group had agreed to focus the Legacy Workstream initially on five themes:-

- Sports Development and Clubs;
- Public Health and Physical Activity;
- Skills and Education;
- Regeneration, Job, Tourism and Place Building; and
- Culture and Communities.

These themes supported the delivery of Vision 2030 and linked with the Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham Legacy Pillars. Focus groups would be held with members, officers, key partners and stakeholders including schools. The outcomes identified from the focus groups would be aligned against the themes and contribute to the creation of a Legacy Plan.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board, the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- the proposals for the Centre had been approved at Planning Committee and would be considered by Council at its meeting in April;
- in addition to the Centre, the site would include a football pitch, children's play area, a water pool for improving biodiversity at the site and space for walking;
- once the facility was delivered, there would be more trees on the site than were currently on the playing fields;
- the Centre would be located centrally within the site to minimise any impact on the local community;
- the main feature of the Centre was its competition-size pool which would include features such as movable floors and booms to create a flexible swimming resource for Sandwell;

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- the Centre would also include a diving pool and a dry diving facility which would provide Sandwell and the wider West Midlands with a venue to train in that sport;
- there would also be a smaller community pool at the Centre; this could be made completely private, for example, to facilitate single-sex swim sessions;
- in accordance with Sport England guidelines, the Centre featured a unisex changing village. The Board was assured that privacy had been built into the design for this and there were also single sex changing areas to ensure that all users would feel comfortable;
- photovoltaic panels installed at the Centre would contribute to the energy requirements. Gas boilers would be used for the pools. Biomass boilers had been considered for the pools, but it was determined that they were unable to achieve the necessary levels of efficiency to be viable;
- the Centre, including the competition pool, was designed to be accessible. It was thought that the competition pool would be the only such pool in the world to be fully accessible;
- there would be an adequate number of toilets located throughout the site;
- following the Commonwealth Games, management of the Centre would be handled by Sandwell Leisure Trust, with the building remaining the property of the Council;
- the Council was working with partners, including Transport West Midlands, to develop a Transport Plan for the Commonwealth Games. The Games had been designated a 'Public Transport Games' and parking at venues would not be permitted;
- it was intended to carry out wide-ranging consultation on the legacy workstream, including with all of Sandwell's schools;
- alternative uses for the existing leisure facilities that the Centre would replace would be developed.

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The Scrutiny Board thanked the Project Director for attending the meeting and providing detailed information and points for discussion.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the approach for developing the Legacy Workstream for the Aquatics Centre and Commonwealth Games be endorsed;
- (2) that the Aquatics Centre and Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan be brought back for consideration by the relevant Scrutiny Board prior to approval by Cabinet.

(Meeting ended at 6.16 pm)

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