

FINAL REPORT OF THE SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

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What is the Commission being asked to do?

The Commission is invited to note the outcomes of the work of the Sports & Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group and agree that its work has concluded.

Executive Summary

The Sport & Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group has met on two occasions in the last year to scrutinise issues and risks associated with the construction of the new sport and leisure centre. It has received information from WDC and Buckinghamshire County Council officers and representatives from Jacobs and Mace. As progress towards construction was already advanced at the time the group was re-convened its remit did not include re-investigating areas which had been covered previously. Instead its role was to focus on any risks and issues which might hinder the progress or success of the project going forward.

To achieve its aims the group chose to review the risk register in detail, put questions to officers, and receive a presentation on the traffic modelling which had been undertaken for the scheme to support the planning application.

After receiving information the Group was satisfied that the risks associated with the construction of the sport and leisure centre were being appropriately managed and that the process to model the traffic implications had been robust. It is therefore proposed that the Improvement and Review Commission agrees that the group's work is now complete.

Background and Issues

At its meeting on 4 September 2013 the Improvement & Review Commission reviewed the risk register for the Sports and Leisure Centre. The Commission was invited to consider whether a further meeting of the Sport & Leisure Centre Task and Finish Group, which had initially been established in early 2012 to look at the feasibility of the business case for the replacement sports centre, was required.

The following extract from the minutes of the IRC meeting refers:

TASK AND FINISH GROUP - SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE, HANDY CROSS

The Meeting had before it a short report outlining the background to the Sports and Leisure Centre redevelopment, specifically in respect of previous scrutiny of the project. The Commission was being asked to consider whether further meetings of the Task and Finish Group were now needed and if so which issues should that Group consider.

To aid the Commission a copy of the project risk register for the Sports and Leisure Centre was appended to the papers. This risk register; being a tool to ensure identified risks are prevented from adversely impacting on the successful implementation of the scheme. The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, plus the relevant officers were in attendance to answer any Member questions and outlined the progress in respect of the project to date. Members remarked on the importance of the Sports Centre redevelopment to the District, but if reconvening the Task and Finish Group they should guard against going over old ground. It was confirmed that in respect of the proposed food hall the client's requirements had been fed into the construction tender with a budget.

Members expressed their concerns regarding traffic generated by the new centre when completed; traffic entry and exit had to be catered for. An offer of a presentation by County Council Highways officers of their traffic modelling scheme was suggested.

It was proposed that the task and Finish Group be reconvened on the basis of scrutiny of the following issues / risks:

- Traffic;*
- Impact on town centre of the new shops on the Sports Centre Site;*
- Operation / operators involvement in the new Coachway terminus;*
- Sports Centre operational contractual arrangements / running costs;*
- Food hall tenants contractual arrangements;*
- Delays to project to allow for value engineering exercise;*
- Phasing of synthetic turf pitch and running track impacts on users and 3rd party users;*
- Possible increase in build costs;*
- Possible late design information;*
- Possible main contractor / sub-contractor / supply chain going into liquidation.*

The Meeting then voted and

RESOLVED: *That the Commission's Sports and Leisure Centre Task and Finish Group be reconvened to consider the above issues / risks in respect of the project.*

The Group, with a different membership from its 2012 guise, met on 14 October 2013. The following members were present:

Councillor Z Ahmed
Councillor D H G Barnes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mrs L M Clarke
Councillor R Farmer (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs W Mallen
Councillor R Wilson

The Council's Major Project and Property Executive, Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services, Community Commissioning Manager, Head of Finance & Commercial Services and Head of Planning & Sustainability attended this meeting, along with representatives of Mace, the developers appointed by the Council in respect of the project.

The Task and Finish Group discussed the identified issues and risks at length. Members then considered the project risk register in more detail and noted that there had been changes to the status of some risks. However these constituted 'improvements' to risks (i.e. moving toward amber or green) rather than additional risks being added or existing risks moving toward red.

Members remained concerned about some aspects of the traffic model and the potential for increased congestion around the site area, whilst noting that this had been addressed as part of the planning application process and any changes to this model would require a revised planning application. The Task and Finish Group was clear that it did not wish to delay the project, but wished to understand the traffic situation more clearly. Buckinghamshire County Council traffic officers were therefore invited to provide additional information on the traffic model and implementation to a future meeting of the Group.

Notification was subsequently received that Buckinghamshire County Council Cabinet Member Decision PT11.13 (the outstanding routing of the Daws Lea link aspect of the Southern Quadrant Transport Plan) had been called in. Given that changes to the decision would affect the information presented, County Highways Officers requested that the presentation on traffic modelling be delayed until the conclusion of the call-in was known.

The Group met again on Wednesday 8 October 2014. The following members were present:

Councillor D H G Barnes (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor R Farmer (Chairman)
Councillor A E Hill
Councillor J L Richards
Councillor J A Savage
Councillor A Slater

The Council's Major Project and Property Executive and Development Management Team Leader, together with John Rippon (Strategic Planning & Policy Business Manager, BCC), Del Tester (Senior Highways District Manager, BCC) and Tom Withey (Jacobs) attended the meeting. A presentation was provided which covered the detail of how traffic models are produced and tested for accuracy, assumptions, tolerance margins for error, sources of data, and the planning requirements which the model must address. Members were also informed about how micro-simulation traffic modelling fits within the wider macro level planning and core strategies.

In respect of the sport and leisure centre traffic arrangements, members had confidence that the modelling process which had been undertaken to support the planning application had been robust and based on sound principles. In response to concerns about those scenarios which had not been modelled (for example vehicles breaking down and disrupting traffic flow) assurance was provided by the Major Projects and Property Executive that, wherever possible, contingency was being made to address those issues which could be anticipated. For example, discussions were being held with county regarding a bus point for school buses, and provision would be made within the scheme for school drop-offs.

It was acknowledged that the scheme will not resolve all of the existing issues at the Handy Cross junction. However, the group was satisfied that the modelling process which had been carried out had taken account of the additional traffic which may be caused by the new sport and leisure centre.

Conclusions/ Recommendations

The Commission is invited to note the outcomes of the work of the Sports & Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group and agree that its work has concluded.

Corporate and Financial Implications

There are no direct financial or corporate implications arising from this report.

Next Steps

To be decided by the Improvement & Review Commission.

Background Papers

Progress Report on the Sports & Leisure Centre Task & Finish Group - Improvement and Review Commission 13 November 2013

Minutes of the Improvement & Review Commission - 13 November 2013