

Introduction

This briefing note addresses the issues raised regarding the recent announcement of the transfer of diving facilities from Park Road to Tottenham Green Leisure Centre. The note sets out the general background to the planned investments by Fusion, the time line and decision making process regarding the diving facilities at Park Road Leisure Centre and a question and answer section covering the other points raised by ward Councillors and residents.

Investment Programme

The Council and Fusion are committed to investing £14.7m in the leisure centres in **Haringey**. **This major investment is part of the Council's commitment to residents to provide high quality leisure facilities that are accessible to all.** Fusion committed to raise participation at the leisure centres by 60% over the life of the contract with an average increase in participation of 500,000 visits a year. As part of the overall commitment the council has protected the concessionary pricing which allows all residents to access the leisure centres based on their ability to pay.

Fusion has already completed their investment plans at Broadwater Farm and local people now have access to a new fitness centre.

Still to come are **Fusion's** improvements at Tottenham Green and Park Road which will be completed by November this year.

The works at Tottenham Green include:-

- Full refurbishment of reception
- New cafe & Soft Play Centre
- New wet changing area and spa
- 4 new fitness studios including a dedicated spin studio
- New fitness suite
- Sports Hall refurbishment
- New Dry changing area
- Squash courts redecoration
- New multipurpose room
- Range of environmental improvements to reduce energy consumption and Co2 emissions

The works at Park Road Include:-

- Full refurbishment of reception
- New cafe & Soft Play Centre
- New wet changing area and spa

- 3 new fitness studios including a dedicated spin studio
- Expansion of fitness suite
- Refurbishment of the lido area, including new changing provision and water features
- Moveable floor in diving pool and complete refurbishment of all pools.
- Range of environmental improvements to reduce energy consumption and Co2 emissions

Background/ Decision making process

In 2009, the council conducted research that identified the borough has a deficit of swimming pool space in the borough. One way of addressing some of the deficit is to add a moveable floor to the diving pool at Park Road to provide more shallow water space to cope with some of the demand.

In February 2011, the council agreed to go out to tender for a new organisation to manage the leisure centres over the next 20 years. The council prepared a specification for the management of the leisure centres for organisations to base their bids on.

Over the course of the next 18 months the council worked with the bidders to identify a package of investment and improvements in the centres which would increase participation by local residents and improve health outcomes across the borough.

In terms of the process the Council received completed Pre Qualification Questionnaires (PQQ Stage) from 7 companies. Following Pre Qualification **selection, 4 bidders were 'invited to submit detailed solutions' (ISDS Stage)**. However, two withdrew at this point and the remaining two companies went forward into a competitive dialogue process to develop their initial bids to final tender submissions. Final tenders were submitted in July 2012 after which the Council scrutinised and completed a comprehensive evaluation of both bids. This included a review of the estimates of the capital works which at this stage were at an early initial design phase (RIBA B).

The Council considered the results of the tendering exercise at a Cabinet meeting on the 18th September 2012 where it awarded the contract to Fusion, which included the investment package of £14.7m and, as previously noted, made commitments to raise participation at the leisure centres by 60% over the life of the contract with an average increase in participation of 500,000 visits a year (Appendix A – Cabinet Report). Overall the package offered by Fusion delivered the following outcomes sought by the council:-

- Deliver the anticipated £500K revenue saving;
- **Cost significantly less than the projected 'status quo' in-house operation over the next 20 years;**

- Secure significant immediate capital investment in both new facilities and tackling lifecycle asset maintenance;
- Significantly increase user visits and facility utilisation;
- Reduce the subsidy per user visit and net cost to the council;
- Improve the quality of service delivery and customer satisfaction; and
- Maintain and improve access for disadvantaged residents through **‘protected’ pricing and programming arrangements.**

Fusion’s package of investment included the provision of a movable floor in the diving pool at Park Road, which would increase the current usage of the diving pool. At present the diving activities account for 180 visits per week with another 240 visits per week relating to other activities within the pool, which includes school swimming, aqua aerobics, swimming lessons and scuba diving. After the moveable floor is installed the average weekly usage is expected to increase fivefold from under 500 visits to be closer to 2,500 visits per week resulting in an additional 100,000 more visits per year. Fusions proposals would provide flexibility in the swimming programme at Park Road providing additional 60 hours of pool usage time and a safe environment for toddlers and disabled swimmers. People with disabilities are a priority group for the council and as part of the overall increase in participation, Fusion have a target of increasing participation of people with disabilities by 5% per annum. Between September 2012 and December 2012 Fusion mobilised for the start of the new management contract and in December 2012 the joint project board co-sponsored by the council and Fusion commenced its programme of monthly meetings to manage the high level decision making on the project.

In April 2013, the design of the schemes were detailed enough for the proposals to be effectively priced to enable indicative budgets to be produced (RIBA D). These worked up designs and budget estimates were verified by an independent team of experts (commissioned by the Council) to sign off the proposed works and costings as consistent with the agreed bid made in the final tender and approved by Cabinet. The movable floor and diving provision at Park Road remained part of the overall scheme. A Councillor briefing session was held in mid April 2013 to introduce members to the detail of the proposed schemes.

In May 2013, Fusion began a process of public engagement, with information made available on site and meetings held with stakeholders and individuals to seek input into the detailed schemes. This process continued and in July 2013 a further Councillor briefing was held to update members followed by a visit to one of Fusion’s completed projects in Enfield. Engagement and updating of stakeholders continued throughout this period. The detailed schemes continued to show that Fusion were planning to undertake all necessary works to the diving pool to install the moveable floor and retain diving. There were even considerations on whether

the pool could be deepened further and the ceiling height raised so that the 3m board could be a spring board rather than a 3m platform.

The tender process for the capital works commenced in mid August 2013 and lasted six weeks with tenders returned at the beginning of October 2013. As **Fusion's team** interrogated the tender returns and sought clarification it became apparent that all the contractors were estimating additional cost and time to make the alterations to the diving pool. Five tender submissions were received by Fusion and all submitted additional costs over and above the budget for the works. The increase in cost was between £0.9m and £1.7m. In addition the overall duration of the project would extend from nine months to fifteen months, adding significant additional cost. The additional work identified included completing the work in twenty sections rather than six sections as had previously been expected. Sheet piling of the whole area surrounding the dive pool works to protect the rest of the building from collapsing into the pool was required to minimise ground disturbance and protect the integrity of the pool structure.

As soon as this was known the Council alerted Haringey Aquatics to the issue and made them aware in mid October that Fusion would be undertaking an options appraisal. Whilst at this stage all options were considered, investing the additional £1Mn into Park Road for diving would result in reducing capital investment elsewhere, for example not building the three new fitness studios at Park Road. This could lead to facilities being completely withdrawn rather than, as in the selected solution, facilities having to be transferred to and enhanced at an alternative site.

Works were due to commence at Park Road in late November 2013 and therefore the award of contract was halted until an options appraisal could be conducted. The options appraisal was developed during November and December and this included some discussion with the Haringey Aquatics about the potential to relocate to Tottenham Green Leisure Centre. A third Councillor update was held in mid December to advise Members about the commencement and phasing of the works and how users were being informed about disruption and changes at both sites. At this meeting those Members attending were advised of the issue that had arisen relating to diving and that an options appraisal was taking place.

The options review looked at four principal options that were achievable without increased cost or increased time delay:-

1. Install the movable floor and cease diving in the borough.
2. Not to install the movable floor and retain diving.
3. Raise the top of the diving pool, install the movable floor and retain diving.
4. Install the movable floor and transfer diving to Tottenham Green Leisure Centre.

Option 1 was ruled out because option 4 was available.

Option 2 was ruled out because this would mean the business plan and participation targets could not be met.

Option 3 was ruled out on three key grounds:- Firstly the change in level required to raise the pool would negate the accessibility benefits of having a movable floor within a deck level pool. Secondly the raised pool would be problematic in providing the required service connections to the drainage and pool water treatment equipment. Thirdly in raising the overall height of the pool and the water level, the diving boards would need to be raised up to ensure the required distance above the water. In raising the boards up this in turn moves them closer to the ceiling. In the case of the 3m board, there would then be insufficient space between the board and the ceiling to meet the governing body safety regulations. Unfortunately the roof structure does not allow for the height of the ceiling to be increased.

Option 4 was identified as the preferred way forward as this retained a diving facility in the borough and would meet the business plan and participation targets.

Fusion did look at the option of providing seasonal diving in the Lido and have ruled this out as the pool is not sufficiently deep (2.4m rather than the required 3.4m) and the v shaped profile of the pool floor slopes does not meet the FINA governing body standards.

In order for the option of moving to Tottenham Green to be viable, Haringey Aquatics had raised concerns about the ability of the moveable floor at Tottenham Green to achieve the required 3.5m depth and the facilities ability to meet the governing body safety dimensions. It was now the Christmas period and Fusion arranged specialist sub-aqua diving teams to visit the pool as well as specialist contractors to assess the pool and its suitability.

The required information was presented to the project board on the 9th January 2014 and a decision to move ahead with relocating diving to Tottenham Green was made. The principal reason for the decision was taken on the basis that it represented the best option to meet the business plan and participation targets, whilst still providing diving in Haringey and without a detrimental effect on other parts of the overall refurbishment project at Park Road or Tottenham Green. The Cabinet Member was advised of this decision and the council and Fusion met with Haringey Aquatics on the 17th January to advise them accordingly. Haringey Aquatics then went on to advise their members of the decision and Fusion began amending their information for customers and layout plans.

As a consequence of Haringey Aquatics beginning to advise their members and parents of the decision to relocate diving to Tottenham Green local ward Councillors and residents have raised a number of questions relating to the decision. A summary of the questions with detailed answers is provided below:

Questions and Answers

1. What discussions have Fusion had with Haringey Aquatics?

The council has been in contact with Haringey Aquatics since this issue was identified when the tenders were returned. Fusion has followed this up giving more details of the options being developed and exploring with Haringey Aquatics the potential of moving to Tottenham Green.

The current membership is mainly drawn from the Muswell Hill and Crouch End area. However, they do have divers that come from Tottenham, Hackney and Southgate. Haringey Aquatics are concerned about the prospect of losing the ongoing use of the diving pool at Park Road and moving to a new facility at Tottenham Green. Their view is that such dedicated facilities are in short supply across the capital. Haringey Aquatics believes that the retention of the existing diving facility should be the priority and have consistently stated as such in their dialogue with the council over many months. Haringey Aquatics feel that the replacement diving facility to be made available at Tottenham will need to provide the same quality and quantity of opportunity as the current facility at Park Road. To achieve this Fusion has agreed to:-

- **Arrange the boards to meet Haringey Aquatic's specifications.**
- Come forward with options for spectator seating in the training pool.
- To provide additional pool time within the current cost base of the club to compensate for limitations anticipated by the club of coaching in a three sided pool.

Moving to Tottenham Green does have some longer term added value for Haringey Aquatics as they would be able to access facilities together with a range of land based training opportunities that would not be available at Park Road. The land based training would give Haringey Aquatics additional options to improve the performance of their divers. In addition, because of the pool space availability at Tottenham Green, there would be more opportunity for additional diving time, which would not be available at Park Road.

2. What support has been offered to Haringey Aquatics to assist with the move to Tottenham Green?

- Additional pool time and first preference when the new pool programme is set.
- Reduced hire costs during the transfer and establishment of the new club base.
- Sports hall – equipped with harnesses and trampolines.
- Dry side training space and land based board.

- Sports development and marketing support to attract new divers to Haringey Aquatics and to improve attainment of quality recognition for Haringey Aquatics.
- Exclusive control of all learn to dive activities.

3. Is there scope for an alternative business plan for the diving pool?

Fusion developed their business plan for the centre over an 18 month period prior to the submission of their final tender submission and its acceptance by the council. During this process numerous options were considered and Fusion's final proposal represented the culmination of these considerations and reflected the optimum proposals for the site.

Diving represents around 180 visits per week of the current usage of the diving pool. The intention is to grow the use of the pool by another 2000 visits per week. All other activities that take place in the diving pool will be able to continue in the pool as they do now. Diving on its own cannot generate the increase in participation.

4. What about the other users of the diving pool how will they be affected?

Within the diving pool other activities also take place on a weekly basis and these include school swimming, aqua aerobics, swimming lessons and scuba diving. All of these activities can continue to take place in the diving pool if the diving boards are removed and the movable floor installed.

5. What are the timescales for the changes?

A decision was taken on the 9th January by the project board to move forward with the relocation of diving to Tottenham Green. Discussions followed with Haringey Aquatics and the Cabinet Member on the implementation of this option.

Fusion's works are currently commencing on site and the main pool and diving pool at Park Road will close on the 23rd April, assuming the project is on programme. The new facilities at Tottenham Green will open on or around the 4th July. This will halve the time Haringey Aquatics has to make alternative arrangements to dive at Waltham Forest.

Appendices

Appendix A - Haringey Council Cabinet report plus extract from part B of the report.