

**Cabinet Report****Witham Replacement Pool – Design Options**

**Portfolio Area:** Housing & Well-Being  
**Report Presented by:** Cllr Lady Patricia Newton

**Background Papers:** Business Case Version 1.01 – 18<sup>th</sup> April 2009  
Cabinet Report – July 2009  
Strategic Leisure Report – September 2009

**Corporate Implications:** Please refer to table at end of report  
**Options:** Detailed in this report

**Risks:**

- The existing Bramston Sports Centre swimming pool received circa £200k remedial repair work which necessitated a six week closure to the public and Maltings Academy in 2008. Consultant engineers have indicated to Council that the main structure of the pool hall should remain secure for approximately 5 years.
- Should authority to proceed with a new build project be further delayed, project timescales will slip significantly beyond those of the Academies by which time the existing Bramston Sports Centre facilities could be unfit for purpose.
- Consultancy, planning and build costs could escalate if these projects are not closely aligned.

**Executive Summary**

In December 2008 Cabinet agreed to hold discussions with the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and Essex County Council regarding the re-provision of leisure facilities on the Bramston site, and that an options paper would be presented to Cabinet regarding the continued provision of leisure facilities within Witham and the district.

A report was presented to Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and there was agreement that a Business Case and design options for a replacement pool in Witham should be prepared for Cabinet consideration. Members subsequently requested that a more detailed report should be prepared in order to assist them with their decision on design requirements.

The site position on existing hard tennis courts/basket ball courts has been investigated and following a positive report by consultant Arboriculturalists DF Clark Bionomique Ltd., has been approved by the AET. This report also highlights several positive environmental benefits achievable through sensitive redevelopment of the site and suggests a number of low cost solutions that would help us to achieve a high BREEAM rating.

Strategic Leisure has been engaged to act as consultant 'Subject Matter Experts' to enable Members to gain a clear understanding of potential Capital/Revenue implications for each element of the complex (squash, fitness suite etc). Additionally Members are keen to understand what the current footfall is at the existing Bramston facility and to ascertain what the intended timescales might be for the build.

**Decision**

1. That the Cabinet agrees an option as the basis for further consultation with all stakeholders;
2. That it is recommended to Council that, based upon the option identified from (1) above, the necessary capital funding be allocated to the capital programme.

## 1. Background:

Essential structural works on the existing Bramston Sports Centre swimming pool, which was opened to the public in 1974, were satisfactorily completed in December 2008 after a six week closure period. Consultant engineers have indicated to Council that the main structure of the pool hall should remain secure for approximately 5 years.

Architects Scott Brownrigg and subject experts Strategic Leisure have been engaged to provide a number of indicative cost and design options for Cabinet consideration and decision as early as possible, to enable the project to progress.

### The brief to which the budget cost relates to is as follows:

Three options have been considered. These options show the range of facilities that would be possible on the site. (NB. Swimming pools consist of two lengths; 25mtr and 50mtr and the water area for each facility is approximately 25% of the gross internal floor area (GIFA). ***In this instance we are only able to offer a design option for a pool at 25mtr pool***)

Options investigated are:

#### 1. Core Option

- 25m x 13m (6 lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities

#### 2. Standard Option

- 25m x 13m (6 lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13m x 13m) with access for people with disabilities
- 70-75 station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities
- Two good sized dance studios
- Two squash courts
- Café/shop area as part of a larger reception area

#### 3. Enhanced Option

- 25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities
- 85+ station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities
- Wet suite including sauna/steam room
- Two/three small treatment rooms for physiotherapy/beauty treatments etc
- Small/medium size climbing or bouldering wall (beginner/junior level)

#### Note:

1. The existing Bramston Sports facility has four squash courts available; however the popularity of squash has declined in recent years. It is therefore recommended that if squash courts are provided at the new facility, only two courts should be built and that these should be separated by a sliding partition enabling the total space to be used for classes (Dance, Aerobics, Pilates etc).

2. At a meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2009 involving Cllr Lady Newton and David Triggs (Chief Exec Officer Academies Enterprise Trust (AET)), David Triggs offered verbal agreement that the AET would prefer to manage the day-to-day operation of this new facility as part of the overall Maltings Academy site. The AET have since confirmed their interest in working in partnership with the Council to manage the commercial operation of the swimming pool (letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009).

All options will include the area for car parking required shown as part of the site layout.

#### Notes for comparison:

##### 1. Halstead Pool facilities:

25m pool includes 5 lanes & learner pool.

##### 2. Braintree Pool:

25m pool includes 8 lanes & learner/fun pool. 294 spectator seating.

##### 3. Witham Pool:

25m pool includes 6 lanes, learner pool & diving pool, small spectator area.

## Strategic Rationale - Standard Option

Facility	Strategic Rationale	Income Estimates
25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swimming is one of the most popular forms of physical activity in the District, particularly amongst women and older age groups.</li> <li>Current Government agenda/drive to increase activity – Free Swimming initiative.</li> <li>Commitment from Council to re-provide at least some swimming provision.</li> <li>Consultation with DCL confirms popularity of swimming</li> <li>Competitive swimming within the district largely met at 8-lane Braintree pool – therefore only modest spectator accommodation required.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>(Core Option)</b> £448,000 (combined pools)</p>
Additional learner pool tank (approximately 13 x13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports swimming activity with for people with disabilities</li> <li>Provides better facilities for swimming teaching - major income stream.</li> </ul>	
70-75 station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most important income generation tool.</li> <li>Upgrade in terms of overall stations and space from current provision.</li> <li>Would have greater appeal to wide cross section of community.</li> </ul>	£420,000 (Based on £6-£8k per station – 70 stations)
Two good sized dance studios (150m2 each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Necessary as part of a good quality health and fitness offering.</li> <li>Taps into current trends for group exercise – especially step; yoga; Pilates; body pump; aerobics; spinning etc.</li> </ul>	£20,000
Two squash courts (potentially glass backed with movable wall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some support for squash provision within brief.</li> <li>Throughput and financial figures suggest consistent demand for squash (c. £25,000 income currently).</li> <li>Space could 'double' as studio space, but some issues over usage clashes.</li> <li>Consultation suggests there should be some provision, otherwise only squash in district is in Halstead.</li> </ul>	£15,000 (Based on current income and allowing for loss of space)
Café / shop area as part of a larger reception area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current facility at Bramston is in wrong location and wrong specification/market.</li> <li>Need for reception to be more welcoming and user friendly.</li> <li>Trends away from solely providing vending machines.</li> <li>Would need to be of good quality.</li> </ul>	£20,000
<b>Total £923,000</b>		

### Strategic Rationale – Enhanced Options

Facility	Strategic Rationale	Income Estimates
Wet suite including sauna/steam room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential part of creating a 'private club' standard facility.</li> <li>• Facility currently provided at Bramston (but issues over its location in relation to changing/pool).</li> <li>• Part of helping to increase membership income.</li> </ul>	£2000
Two/three small treatment rooms for physiotherapy /beauty treatments etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reprovision of current facilities at Bramston.</li> <li>• Consultation suggests there is some demand for these services.</li> <li>• Relatively space-economical – can be delivered without much additional GIFA.</li> <li>• Additional service.</li> </ul>	£5000
Small/medium size climbing or bouldering wall beginner/junior level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some limited regional competition in terms of climbing facilities – could be targeted at beginners/intermediate.</li> <li>• Chance to provide a unique facility.</li> <li>• Could be operated by an independent operator (paying a hiring fee) at fairly limited risk to overall management.</li> <li>• Creative and interesting option</li> </ul>	£3000 (Could explore potential for sub-contracting to climbing wall operator)
<b>Total of additional income for Enhanced Options £10,000</b>		

The tables above show that in the case of the Standard facility option, potential income of £923,000 could be realised. This is based upon the uptake and maximisation of a successful health and fitness offer, and the success of the new swimming pool.

By means of comparison, the Braintree Swimming Pool took £491,000 in swimming income, while Halstead brought in £267,078. In terms of health and fitness, Bramston's income was £311,597 and Halstead's £300,657 (although both facilities are smaller than the proposed fitness suite identified above).

## Corporate Implications

### Financial:

The following cost options are based on a requirement to provide facilities adhering to BREEAM "Very Good" (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) standards.

Note: For a detailed explanation of "BREEAM" specifications and processes go to: [www.bre.co.uk](http://www.bre.co.uk)

### Option 1

#### Core Option

- 25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities

<b>Build Cost -</b>	<b>£2,565,000.00</b>
18% Preliminaries	£461,700.00
9% Fees	£230,850.00
5% Overheads & Profit	£128,250.00
7.5% Contingency	£192,375.00

**Total Cost** **£3,578,175.00**

Approx Running Cost	£700,000.00
Approx income	£448,000.00
<b>Variance</b>	<b>-(£252,000.00)</b>

### Option 2

#### Standard Option

- 25m x 13m deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities
- 70-75 station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities
- Two good sized dance studios
- Two squash courts
- Café/shop area as part of a larger reception area

<b>Build Cost -</b>	<b>£3,400,000.00 (est.)</b>
18% Preliminaries	£612,000.00
9% Fees	£306,000.00
5% Overheads & Profit	£170,000.00
7.5% Contingency	£255,000.00

**Total Cost** **£4,743,000.00**

Approx Running Cost	£780,000.00
Approx Income	£923,000.00
<b>Variance</b>	<b>£143,000.00</b>

### Option 3

#### Enhanced Option

- 25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50+ spectator seats
- Additional learner pool (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities
- 85+ station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities
- Wet suite including sauna/steam room
- Two/three small treatment rooms for physiotherapy/beauty treatments etc
- Small/medium size climbing or bouldering wall (beginner/junior level)

**Build Cost - £4,112,600.00 (est.)**

18% Preliminaries £740,268.00

9% Fees £370,134.00

5% Overheads & Profit £205,630.00

7.5% Contingency £308,445.00

**Total Cost £5,737,077.00**

Approx Running Cost £950,000.00

Approx Income £933,000.00

**Variance **-(£17,000.00)****

#### Indicative Project Timetable:

Cabinet agreement for design option-	October 2009
Consultation with Stakeholders-	October 2009 to January 2010
Council allocate capital funding-	February 2010
Submit Planning Application-	April 2010
Official Journal of the European Union (Tendering Process)-	June 2010 (8 Weeks)
Appointment of construction partner-	July 2010
Project completion-	October 2011

#### Conclusions and recommendations

It is highly likely that either the Core or Extended options presented above could be delivered for less than is currently spent on the Bramston Sports Centre, as the new facility would be significantly smaller and more efficient, in terms of staffing and energy consumption.

In general terms, it is evident that a new facility at Witham is both sustainable and achievable. The Halstead Centre, which achieved a slight financial surplus, is an illustration that the right centre, with the right mix of facilities can work.

To return to the Council's original options:

- Standard Option – 25 x 13m 6-lane swimming pool, learner pool and spectator area
- Enhanced Option – Swimming provision as above, but with fitness suite & squash courts.

It is evident that the 'Enhanced' Option put forward by the Council is broadly comparable with the 'Core' mix proposed by consultants Strategic Leisure. The provision of a good quality health and fitness suite is essential to generate the necessary income.

<b>Legal:</b>	Contractual issues with existing leisure operator to be determined.
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<b>Equalities &amp; Diversity:</b>	No issues identified at this stage.
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<b>Customer Impact:</b>	This project presents an opportunity to significantly improve leisure provision in Witham.
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<b>Environment &amp; Climate Change:</b>	It is intended that this facility will comply with BREEAM Very Good ratings.
<b>Consultation/Community Engagement:</b>  A formal consultation process will be undertaken and will include Witham Town Council, Witham Local Committee, Bramston Sports Centre, DC Leisure Management Ltd., Mid Essex NHS Trust, the Academies Enterprise Trust, the Academies' student population, local sports clubs and associations and the general public. It is anticipated that plans will be placed on public display in Witham Library and Witham Town Council offices in Newland Street, Witham.	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Public/Private Report:</b>	Public
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## Witham Replacement Pool - Options Financial Analysis

Ref:	Option	Total Cost to Build	Est. Income	Running Cost	Variance
	Bramston Sports Centre - Current Position	N/A	£811,078.00	£1,390,000.00	<b>-£578,922.00</b>
<b>Option 1</b>	25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats	£3,578,175.00	£448,000.00	£700,000.00	<b>-£252,000.00</b>
	Additional pool tank (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities				
<b>Option 2</b>	25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats	£4,743,000.00	£923,000.00	£780,000.00	<b>£143,000.00</b>
	Additional pool tank (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities				
	70-75 station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities				
	Two good sized dance studios				
	Two squash courts				
	Café/shop area as part of a larger reception area				
<b>Option 3</b>	25m x 13m (6-lane) deck-level swimming pool with 50 spectator seats	£5,737,077.00	£933,000.00	£950,000.00	<b>-£17,000.00</b>
	Additional pool tank (approximately 13 x 13) with access for people with disabilities				
	85+ station fitness suite with dedicated changing facilities				
	Wet suite including sauna/steam room				
	Two/three small treatment rooms for physiotherapy/beauty treatments etc				
	Small/medium size climbing or bouldering wall (beginner/junior level)				