

Minute Item 3

Agenda Item 3

Public questions received from Nigel Gibson

1. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, the answer to Question (c) 3 asserts that the proposed new pool at Blackbird Leys can be easily accessed by public transport, cycling and walking from many parts of the City. Can you please explain what you mean by “many parts of the City”, as
 - a. public transport is limited to a corridor between the City Centre and Blackbird Leys, along the Cowley Road
 - b. Cycling to a facility on the periphery of the City and outside the ring road means that few people will actually choose this method of transport
 - c. Walking the 2km the council has claimed is needed to encompass areas outside Blackbird Leys is impractical given the time it would take should anyone attempt it?

ANSWER: The proposed new pool is a City wide facility, with buses running frequently to and from the site approximately every 5 or 6 minutes. There are cycle routes to the proposed facility and no evidence to suggest that ‘few people will actually use this method’. As previously stated the transport assessment by Curtins Consulting makes reference to the Chartered Institution for Highways and Transportation (CIHT) document entitled ‘Providing Journeys on Foot’. This suggests that an 800m walk to a local service is ‘Acceptable’. However, this is not an absolute figure and the document goes on to say that the ‘Preferred Maximum’ distance is actually 1200m. A 1200m walk distance does extend outside of the Blackbird Leys Estate boundary towards Littlemore and Cowley. This is backed up by PPG13 highlighting walking journeys under 2 kilometres offering potential to replace car journeys.

2. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, part of the answers to Question (c) 6 asserts that the pool extension to Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre has a running cost of £150k per year. This figure has been cited many times as establishing a fixed operating cost for the proposed new pool, when in fact (according to the Chief Executive Officer of Fusion), it was provided as an indicative figure, not a contractual offer, and therefore could not be relied on as Fusion has not been asked to quote formally for this work. And also Fusion could only provide a cost for up to the end of the contract, and the annual cost thereafter cannot be ascertained at present. Can you please explain where your figure of £150k comes from, if it is a firm contracted annual amount, which organisation it is with and if so for how many years?

ANSWER: The annual figure of £150K originates from Fusion and their 'Best and Final Offer tender document' for the life of the contract. We are currently reviewing the costs for potential reductions, with additional items such as the inclusion of soft play and the renewable heat initiative.

In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, part of the answers to Question (c) 6 asserts that the current running costs at Temple Cowley Pools and Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool are £474k (presumably each year). Can you please confirm that this figure is for the financial year 2010/11, and provide a breakdown of this cost? Can you please tell me how much the Council pays Fusion to run each and all leisure facilities, and how this relates to the £474k cost?

ANSWER: The £474K figure was detailed in the September 2010 report on the council's website and relates to 2009/10. The Council will pay Fusion a contract management fee of approximately £3.1 million (not including RPIx) over the term of the contract. A detailed breakdown is not available as the information is commercially sensitive to Fusion under the Leisure management contract.

3. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, the answer to Question (c) 8 explains that although 800m is regarded as an 'acceptable' walking distance, 1200m is also acceptable (and so could include people from Littlemore and Cowley), and replays the Curtins report assertion that walking offers the 'greatest potential' to replace car journeys under 2 km – you then use this figure to justify how users of the proposed new pool at Blackbird Leys could walk from Littlemore and Cowley. Can you please tell me what proportion of the existing users of Leisure Centres anywhere in Oxford walk over 1500m to get to a Leisure Centre, and how many users you expect to walk over this distance to get to the proposed new pool in Blackbird Leys?

ANSWER: Figures on the proportion of the existing users of leisure Centres walking over 1500m in Oxford are not collected. As stated previously Sport England's Active Places Power tool indicates that there are approximately 10,000 individuals within a 10 minute walk of Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.

4. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, the answer to Question (c) 9 explains that you have 'sufficient information at this stage to estimate usage figures of the new centre'. Why are you not prepared to say which areas of Oxford (or beyond) these users will come from, or how many from each area?

ANSWER: As previously stated this will be a City wide facility, with users coming from across the City. Fusion who are Leisure industry experts have supplied the overall usage information based on their market data and estimating tools and more detailed analysis will link to the overall programme at the facility once approved.

5. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, as part of the answer to Question (c) 9 you say that "a detailed programme.... would take place nearer the time". Can you please explain what this means?

ANSWER: This is a detailed programme of activities at the site. This is typically shown on leaflets within the Leisure Centres or available on the website.

6. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, as part of the answer to Question (c) 9 you say that you will consult with key stakeholders. With which key stakeholders will you consult?

ANSWER: Fusion will consult with clubs, schools, community groups and general users and non-users of their facilities regarding the proposed program.

7. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting, your answer to Question (c) 10 seems to ignore the point of the question. Page 86 of the Mace report states quite clearly that a moveable floor will cost £295,000 in addition to the 3C option of £8.5m. Simple arithmetic shows that the cost of option 3C and the moveable floor will be at least £8.795m. Since you assert that the moveable floor is now included and is not an option, and you also assert repeatedly that the cost is still only £8.5m, can you please explain where the £295,000 has gone to?

ANSWER: As stated previously the cost of the moveable floor is within the £8.5 million budget. To aid clarity the £8.5 million is a total budget number including build costs, client and build contingency, and fees, which may be where some of the confusion arises.

8. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting you say in answer to Question (c) 11 that you are working with various bodies to ensure a 'well-co-ordinated leisure offer'. Can you please explain what you mean by the term 'well-co-ordinated'?

ANSWER: That within the City the various leisure providers are working together where possible to provide good community access.

9. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting you say in answer to Question (c) 12 that the council has 'ongoing' work with Sport England. Can you please say exactly what this 'ongoing' work is?

ANSWER: The Council works closely with Sport England on various projects including the proposed new pool and has supplied a variety of information including proposed usage and design information.

10. In the Public Questions Appendix in the Minutes of the last CEB Meeting you assert in answer to Question (c) 13 that the information on your website concerning the proposed new pool and closure of Temple Cowley Pools and Fitness Centre and the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool is not only not misleading but provides a 'true and fair position' of the facilities. Your statements on the website that these two leisure facilities are "near the end of their operational lives" are clearly at odds with the reports you have commissioned that say that Temple Cowley Leisure Centre is in "fair" condition and "midlife". Are you saying that these reports, the latest information you have published concerning the leisure centres condition, are incorrect?

ANSWER: Several years have passed since the condition survey for Temple Cowley Pools was undertaken in 2004. The purpose of the visual condition surveys for the Leisure centres at the time were to indicate the backlog repair estimates for the proposed leisure management contract and would have not have picked up any of the underlying issues with the site that an intrusive survey is likely to pick up and as such a direct comparison is inappropriate. As stated previously this is the advice of experts in the respective fields of asset management and leisure facilities.

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