

PARK SPORTS CENTRE PROPOSALS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information and views on the various suggested facilities for the new Park Sports Centre. These views have been formed following joint discussion between Officers and Holmes Place Leisure Management.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Following the closure of the Park Sports Centre on 31 March 2002 and the recent Leisure Management Contract tendering process, a report was presented to this committee on 14 November outlining indicative proposals by Holmes Place for a new centre on the site.
- 2.2 As a result of this report, it was decided that all Members be invited to submit any additional suggestions for facilities by 14 January 2003. Discussion would then take place on these options at this committee.

3 SUGGESTED FACILITIES

- 3.1 The following facilities have all been suggested by Members for consideration and feedback is given on each of these in no particular order
- 3.2 **Ice Rink (Large Enough for Figure Skating and Regulation Ice Hockey)**

The provision of an ice rink would involve a significant capital investment and also take up a considerable proportion of the area available for the new centre. As an indication the Oxford ice rink that was built in 1984 and cost approximately £2.5 million to build and the rink built in Coventry two to three years ago cost approximately £7-8 million (although slightly larger than Oxford).

To cater for figure skating and ice hockey, the minimum sized rink would be 56 metres by 26 metres. There would also need to be seating (minimum 1500), skate hire facilities, toilets, vending and a plant room similar in size / complexity to that of a swimming pool.

Whilst a facility of this nature can attract large numbers of people, the core business is very much concentrated between September and April/May, with participation trends being very low during the summer months.

Although obviously not fully costed out at this stage, it is Holmes Place's view that it is likely to place significant extra costs on the unitary charge made to the Council and only provide a limited range of facilities.

3.3 Creche

Within Holmes Place's indicative proposal previously submitted in their original tender and tabled at a previous meeting of this committee, the provision of a creche is included in order to complement the other facilities / activities.

3.4 Meeting Room

The availability of a meeting room was again included within Holmes Place's original proposal. The creche area would be able to act as a dual purpose space as its opening hours would be limited to cater for specific sessions such as aerobic classes, rather than being open all day. Dependent upon the nature of the meeting, it is envisaged that this space would cater for groups of up to 30/40 people.

3.5 Small Fitness Suite

Members will have seen on Holmes Place's original proposal that a fitness suite was included in the plans. In terms of size this was only intended to include about 40 work stations and so would be considerably smaller than many larger facilities, and in particular the new Clements Hall facility that will have 120 work stations.

3.6 Café

It is Holmes Place's view, they would recommend a good quality range of vending machines within a comfortable seating area rather than the provision of a café. Based on their original proposal, they do not feel that a café would be cost effective in relation to the nature of the facilities within the building and would certainly increase the unitary charge to the Council. A cafeteria would only become more cost effective where there were activities that have a high through-put such as a swimming pool.

3.7 Basketball

Within the sports hall included in the original proposal, there would be the provision of full size basketball court. When it comes to putting together the specific design of the centre, it would also be straight forward to provide additional “practice” goals along the side walls of the sports hall.

3.8 Tennis

Indoor tennis courts would take up a large space within the site, with the playing area being 35 metres in length and ranging from 32 metres in width for 2 courts up to 62 metres for 4 courts. To put into context this would compare to approximate dimensions of 33 metres by 18 metres for a multi-use 4 court sports hall. Dependent on the exact specification, the cost of building a 4 court tennis hall would be around £766,000.

Usage patterns are weighted heavily to autumn and winter as the peak times, with summer usage dropping considerably due to people playing outside. Holmes Place would recommend the provision of outdoor tennis courts which could be dual marked for netball and therefore encourage greater all year round usage, as netball tends to have higher participation during autumn / winter.

This would also complement Holmes Place’s proposed amendment to their original proposal, which would be to expand the netball provision at the expense of providing an artificial pitch. This is due to the fact that Sweyne Park School is currently in the process of applying for lottery funding to create a full size artificial pitch and if the project were successful, this would also be available for community use outside of school hours.

The netball facility on the Park School site could have the potential to become a centre of excellence and host local and regional leagues / tournaments.

With respect to the provision of indoor tennis, Members may also wish to consider the level of competition in the area. There are currently indoor centres in Southend, Basildon (David Lloyd) and just past Brentwood alongside the A127, with a strong possibility in the near future of another David Lloyd club being built in Southend.

3.9 Indoor Bowls

An indoor bowls hall containing 4 rinks would measure approximately 41 metres by 23 metres, with a capital cost in the region of £500 - 600,000 dependent on the extent of the support facilities (toilets, changing rooms etc). It is Holmes Place's view that such a facility would also require some basic catering facilities due to club matches and the hosting of away teams.

Participation trends are that usage is very high mid September through to April but during the summer months it becomes very quiet whilst bowlers are playing on the outdoor greens. Holmes Place would need to spend more time formulating a business plan before saying what effect this facility would have on the unitary charge.

3.10 Outdoor Skateboarding Park

The exact costs of such a facility (between £20-£60K) would depend on the amount of equipment it was decided to provide, which in turn would obviously affect the amount of space required. Holmes Place recognise the demand for such a facility and it is their view that it should be floodlit to enable maximum availability. They also consider that providing it on a "free of charge" basis would be preferable and be the simplest way to operate such a facility. They would be responsible for the security and the maintenance aspect and their initial opinion is that it would have only a very minimal affect on the unitary charge to the Council.

4 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The provision of a new facility at this site and in particular a skateboarding park, could have a positive effect on the level of crime and disorder complaints received.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Holmes Place are prepared to provide up to £1.5 million towards the capital cost of the new centre and would provide the Council with a fully detailed business plan, to explain the level of annual unitary charge payable by the Council for the operation of the facility.
- 5.2 The extent of capital investment from Holmes Place will obviously affect the unitary charge levied to the Council. The Council is proposing to provide £1m grant towards the scheme and use the proposed new rules on borrowing to finance the scheme.

5.3 The unitary charge will be calculated on the assumption of operating the centre over the remaining 17 years of the current contract.

5.4 A provision of £150,000 has been included in the budget strategy for 2005/06. The actual sum will depend on the mix of facilities, and therefore the actual amenity charge from Holmes Place, and the Council's ability to use the new borrowing powers.

6 RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is proposed that Members consider the information detailed in this report on the particular facilities suggested for the new sports centre and give their view on which of these facilities they would wish further detailed research and costings to be developed.

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Background Papers:

None

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APPENDIX A

PROPOSED PARK SPORTS CENTRE OPTIONS

OPTION (1)

Facilities Provided: Four Court Sports Hall
Four Squash Courts
Aerobics Studio
Health & Fitness Gym
Healthy Living Centre
Creche
Outdoor Netball Courts
Synthetic Pitch
Vending Area
Reception and Changing Areas

Initial Estimated Capital Cost: £2 million

Increase in Annual Unitary Charge: £314,756.

Assumptions Made: Operational from 2005 for remaining
17 years of the current contract.

Holmes Place contributing £1.5
million to the capital cost.

OPTION (2)

Facilities Provided: Four Court Sports Hall
Four Squash Courts
Aerobics Studio
Health & Fitness Gym
Healthy Living Centre
Creche
Outdoor Netball Courts
Synthetic Pitch
Vending Area
Reception and Changing Areas
25 metre swimming pool (6 lanes)
Small teaching pool (similar in size to Clements
Hall teaching pool).

Initial Estimated Capital Cost:	£4 million pounds.
Increase in Annual Unitary Charge:	£568,425. In the first year, £525,000 each year thereafter.
Assumptions Made:	<p>Operational from 2005 for the remaining 17 years of the current contract.</p> <p>Holmes Place contributing £1.5 million to the capital cost.</p> <p>An allowance made for the potential loss of swimming income at Clements Hall.</p>



