

Portfolio Holder Briefing

Active and Healthy People– Work during Covid-19

Leisure Contract

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 enacted on 26 March 2020, forced the closure of all sport and leisure facilities as a result of the pandemic. In light of the extraordinary pressures on the sector the new operator procurement process that started in September 2019, was suspended on 1st April 2020.
- Emerging industry guidance is highlighting that the sector will need to create a new “normal” whilst also building back consumer confidence and re-purposing facilities to deal with the new restrictions in a phased approach. There may well be further casualties with some operators going out of business and some facilities being too expensive or old to adapt to the new requirements.
- Post-Pandemic Recovery of Leisure Services Report is being considered by the Executive on 7th July and Council on 21st July. This report is about the recovery of the Council’s leisure services as a result of the unimaginable and unparalleled impact of COVID-19 with many sectors and industries facing a future that is markedly different to life prior to the pandemic.
- In order to secure a long term future for the Council’s leisure services there is a need to act swiftly to make the most of the opportunity presented by the imminent ending of the current leisure contract. This report sets out a proposal for permanently in-sourcing the leisure service to create a new pathway to rebuild the Council’s leisure offer to ensure a viable and sustainable long term future.
- The report also sets out a staged re-opening of leisure services from September 2020 if Government lift restrictions and when it is safe and cost-effective to do so.

St Sidwell’s Point Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre Build

Please note: This is a ‘point in time’ briefing note on matters as understood / expected as at 19th June 2020.

Progress

- By the end of February 2020 there were over 120 operatives working on site on a daily basis. There were three cranes in operation on site (one tower and two mobile cranes), and a mobile concrete boom distributing the concrete across the frame. Site operations were circa 7am until 8pm five days a week, and Saturday morning working was also in place. The concrete frame contractor alone had over 70 operatives on site.
- Once the restrictions were announced in relation to Covid19, the site operations were greatly reduced. From late March to mid-April 2020, there were circa 20 operatives on site on a daily basis, and only one crane was in use.
- With constant review of site logistics, operations and welfare facilities, the number of operatives on site increased to 60+ in May and now circa 80+ in mid-June. The original programme for the project (pre-Covid 19) would have had over 200 operatives on site per day at this time (June 2020).
- Due to the current Covid19 restrictions in place and the measures adopted to address the restrictions, one of the main factors previously limiting resource on site was the capacity of the welfare facilities. Kier have now installed a marquee on the lower apron of the bus station which has increased the capacity for operatives to safely have food breaks, rest, etc. In addition, the team changed the existing toilet configurations and brought in more toilet blocks. These alterations have increased the site capacity to circa 120 operatives – although only circa 80 are currently on site.
- The critical activity at this time is the concrete frame. Resource availability for the specialist concrete frame contractor is constricted and not achieving the levels required on site. The concrete frame contractor relies heavily on resource from mainland Europe. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the vast majority of the labour force returned to their home towns and have not returned to the UK. It is believed that a number of factors are currently affecting the return of the workforce to the UK (it has been advised that these include various items such as : current income support / subsidy, UK border control quarantine rules for those entering the country, uncertainty over the safety of air circulation in airplanes, etc). Kier are currently pushing for priority of the concrete frame contractor resource for this

project over other commitments in the UK.

- The team continue to progress the concrete frame with the lower resource levels and – with the current resource levels - the critical path activity of the glulam beam installation is due to commence w/c 20th July. The glulam beams specialist installer is using skilled resource from the Republic of Ireland. Currently there are no quarantine restrictions between the UK and Ireland, however if the government rules changed in this regard before 20th July, that could severely impact on the availability of specialist resource to install the beams – which in turn would impact on the programme.
- As a result of the concrete frame resource focusing on being ready for the glulam beams, the 'dry side' of the building (non-swimming pool element) is now also on the critical path as these works have not been able to progress as planned.

Forecast Completion and Risks to Completion

- The team are working weekends and extended days with the resource available.
- Kier have identified that they expect future problems are likely to manifest with the supply chain and ongoing / future availability of resource and materials. At this stage they don't know exactly where these problems will arise, or indeed if they will arise, they just believe there is a high likelihood of future challenges in this regard.
- There is no doubt that the disruption caused by the Covid19 crisis has materially affected the ability of the team to complete the project as previously scheduled for 8th March 2021. Works are continuing but not in the sequencing or timing previously planned.
- The full impacts of Covid19 on the completion of the project will not be known with 100% confidence until many, many months after we have returned 'to normal'. There are a myriad of elements in the completion of the project which may be affected by restrictions now, or may not even become apparent until sometime in the future. (Such as the collapse of a supplier of parts which make the machines which make the windows we need, or a spike in demand for resources in the future as projects have 'backed up', or indeed paperwork matters such as the S278, TROs and HATOC which have been affected by the pandemic).
- Even when a revised / rescheduled programme is issued, we expect it will contain a caveat along the lines of 'subject to change if further impacts of Covid19 become apparent'. Any future forecasting of completion will need to be carefully considered, and it is very possible completion cannot be guaranteed until the actual day of handover.

Cost Matters

- The Forecast Project Cost for the Leisure Centre is currently within the approved budget.
- The measures put in place by Kier on this project to manage the impacts of COVID 19 have been costly (direct costs for storage of materials off site, the increased welfare facilities, sub-contractor agreements & arrangements, etc.). Additionally, the programme / project duration will be impacted as a result of the pandemic – which has cost implications relating to staff, hire of office accommodation, plant, equipment, etc., on site.
- The widespread view of construction industry legal professionals at the moment is that in most standard forms of contract COVID 19 will entitle the contractor to an extension of time, but will not entitle the contractor for direct loss and expense associated with COVID 19 (such as the preliminaries costs for the extended period on site, storage costs, alternative arrangements such as additional toilet blocks, etc.).

Assistance to help the project during the crisis: Ongoing

- We continue to help the contractor with the following :
- To help the contractor with receiving deliveries of reinforcement steelwork materials, ECC freed up the lower apron of the bus station and handed this over to Kier. This was successfully used to enable the bulk reinforcement to be delivered and then distributed around the site. This lower apron space has subsequently been used for the additional welfare facilities mentioned earlier in this Briefing.
- The Government issued a Procurement Policy guidance note PPN02/20 to look at how the public sector can support construction firms and help their cash flow during the crisis. ECC have agreed to have fortnightly valuations of the works on site (instead of monthly valuations) and have also agreed to pay

the invoices within 7 days of receiving the invoices – all to help the contractor cash flow.

- Additionally, ECC have agreed to pay for goods purchased by Kier but held off-site, such as the Glulam beams, etc. The appropriate vesting certificates and insurances will need to be in place and evidence of such provided.
- The Contractor held Contingency (within the Contract Sum) has also agreed to be released – as the contingency is due and is there to cover unforeseen events, such as this.
- Other proposals were submitted by Kier for consideration under PPN02/20, however those that exposed ECC to an unacceptable level of risk, or could have increased the total cost of the project above the amount approved by Council were not implemented.

Riverside Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre Refurbishment

Please note: This is a 'point in time' briefing note on matters as understood / expected as at 19th June 2020.

Current Progress & Successes

- Although works were significantly delayed during April and May, there have been successes in the past month or so.
- The new lift (which was replacing the original lift damaged in the fire) was successfully installed prior to the end of May. The lift had been ordered years ago as part of the fire rectification works but then placed into storage when the buildings structural repair works were identified. The end of May was a significant milestone / deadline as the regulations for controls and functions in lifts changed on 1st June – which would have resulted in the need to scrap the previous new lift in storage and buy another new lift with different controls (if the new lift was not operational by the end of May). Existing operational lifts do not need to be amended to reflect the changes required in new lifts.
- The works to the atriums (which were previously on hold) have been progressed and are almost completed.
- The high level internal painting and M&E installations have been completed in the pool hall and the majority of the internal birdcage scaffolding system has been removed.
- The ground floor changing village has been stripped of all floor tiles and structural repairs are being undertaken to the concrete soffit
- The design scheme for the wall cladding, showers, changing cubicles and lockers to the ground floor and first floor changing villages has been agreed.
- The design scheme for the new spectator seating and handrails in the pool hall have been agreed.
- A membrane water proofing system is being proposed to be applied onto the existing roof of the gym & central area of the building. This is an interim measure, intended to last for 3-5 years which is hoped will greatly reduce the water ingress into the gym over the next few winters. This solution will not deal with the structural defects in that section of roof. A full replacement of the roof will be required at some stage (which is understood as notionally being 3+ years in the future). Snow weather warnings or the like would result in sporadic closures of the gym over the coming years until such time as the roof is replaced.
- The critical element being delayed by Covid 19 was the geotechnical investigation of the ground around the pool (so the foundations for the new pool surround could be designed). These works were on hold until a safe method of working could be established in accordance with the Covid 19 restriction measures. Changes in the government guidance for construction sites in the period has enabled these critical investigations to be concluded. Weekend working was adopted with the specialist to undertake the investigations as soon as possible. The results of the investigations are currently at the laboratory but initial review suggests the ground conditions are in line with expectations.

Forecast Completion and Risks to Completion

- The full impacts of Covid19 on the completion of the project will not be known with 100% confidence until many months after we have returned 'to normal'. There are a myriad of elements in the completion of the project which may be affected by restrictions now, or may not even become apparent until sometime in the future. Current estimates are completion in June 2021.

Assistance to help the project during COVID 19 : Ongoing

- We continue to help the contractor with the following :
- The Government issued a Procurement Policy guidance note PPN02/20 to look at how the public sector can support construction firms and help their cash flow during the crisis. ECC have agreed to fortnightly valuations of the works on site (instead of monthly valuations) and have also agreed to pay the invoices within 7 days of receiving the invoices – all to help the contractor cash flow.
- Additionally, ECC have agreed to pay for goods purchased by Kier but held off-site. The appropriate vesting certificates and insurances will need to be in place and evidence of such provided.
- The Contractor held Contingency (within the Contract Sum) has also agreed to be released – as the contingency is due and is there to cover unforeseen events, such as this.
- Other proposals were submitted by Kier for consideration under PPN02/20, however those that exposed ECC to an unacceptable level of risk, or could have increased the total cost of the project, were not implemented.

Exeter Arena Development Plan

Background

- Exeter Arena and the ISCA Centre are located to the north east of Exeter city centre, just over a mile to the west of the M5. These facilities are managed by Legacy Leisure (Parkwood Leisure) under contract to the Council until September 2020.
- Exeter Arena, primarily an athletics venue, has grown to include a gym, football pitch, sauna suite, physiotherapy room, spin studio and social areas.
- Two development options have been produced by Max Associates
- The development of the site will be through a phased approach dependent of funding and opportunity.
- The wider impact of Covid-19 on the council is not fully understood but may impact on the project.

Progress

- A Project plan has been produced with indicative timescales
- Headline consultations have taken place with eight key organisations delivering a range of sports (Athletics, Rugby, Football, Triathlon, Tag Rugby). A summary is included.
- The general consensus was that all clubs are excited about the outline proposals and all wish to be involved in ongoing consultations.
- The general health of the clubs consulted was good, although some expressed concerns over returning to sport and the knock on financial health (lost members, increased facility costs, payments for events carried forward to 2021)
- Consultee details have been passed to Max Associates to progress more detailed discussions.
- Necessary site surveys are being scoped with Daryl Taylor (ECC Public Realm).
- Two clubs have been difficult to contact (SW Roadrunners and Exeter Harriers) but given they are key stakeholders, this will be actively pursued.
- British Cycling Places To Ride: Stage 1 project funding bid is being formulated for a c.£500k bid towards the new cycling hub. Once approved a request for Project Development Cost support (£30k to £50k – match funded) will be submitted.
- Further dialogue with Sport England facilities team took place and included progress on Exeter Arena proposals and feasibility.

Playing Pitch Strategy

Background

- We are conducting a full review of the 2018 Draft Playing Pitch Strategy and producing a new strategy based on a complete understanding of current supply and demand of sports pitches
- The brief follows Sport England methodology and will produce a clear, strategic framework for the management, maintenance and development of outdoor playing pitches and ancillary facilities over the next ten years (2020 to 2030)

- The scope includes priority sports: Football, Rugby, Cricket and Hockey whilst also taking the opportunity to review Tennis and Bowls provision in the city. Other outdoor sports will be assessed on a demand basis, for example Exeter Spitfires Baseball Club have indicated a willingness to work with the Council to develop a new home
- COVID-19 has had a significant effect on local community sport with all outdoor team sports only now considering phased return to play plans. Many National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have been focussing on response and recovery plans for their sports and supporting clubs to access resources to ensure survival.

Progress

- BELAP consultants were engaged in February 2020 to review existing strategies and conduct winter sport site visits to assess quality and supply of pitches in the city. This work has been concluded and evidence base of winter sports pitches collated.
- Officers have been engaging with NGBs to understand their current sporting landscape, plans to return to action and the appetite for re-engaging with the PPS process. The response has been overwhelmingly positive with NGBs agreeing the work presents a wider opportunity to support clubs at this critical time
- All priority NGBs have been contacted with a view to establish a steering group in July to review the PPS brief in the context of COVID-19 and plan for communications to their stakeholders and clubs

Sport England Local Delivery Pilot

Background

- Exeter City Council on behalf of the partners signed a Lottery Funding Agreement with Sport England in June 2019 to implement the proposals set out in the submission agreed by the Board in January 2019.
- The focus up to January 2020 has been on developing firm foundations upon which to build sustainable delivery platforms for the community-based People and Place programmes whilst simultaneously developing strategy and policy alignment across the whole system. Whilst this approach is winning hearts and minds and positively disrupting the system it is proving to be challenging. The process evaluation has been very helpful in ensuring that we regularly take stock and learn as we go.
- Contracts were awarded to a range of delivery partners including Devon County Council, Devon Community Foundation, Active Devon, SERIO, Grow Consultancy, CAG Consultants, Exeter City Living, and KYMA/ETL. Devon Community Foundation have awarded contracts to new Wellbeing Exeter delivery partners including Exeter YMCA and Exeter Community Trust.
- In January 2020 the board met and were presented with an overview of the process learning and agreed to a series of workshops in February and March 2020 to address a number of issues which had been identified in the initial development phase of the programme. The focus of the workshops was to establish shared values, language and agreed ways of working going forward. Three of the four workshops took place before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Progress

- On 11 March 2020 on the day of the third workshop the WHO announced Coronavirus as a global pandemic. The Active and Healthy People Team hosting the Sport England Local Delivery pilot provided a platform to enable Exeter City Council to respond rapidly with the establishment of the Exeter Community Wellbeing (ECW) response. A number of staff were deployed to work on the development of this emergency response which launched in March 2020.
- ECW is linked to the key theme of Active Communities and the Wellbeing Exeter which is a key delivery platform for the LDP. It is highlighting the efforts of communities to mobilise their own resources to provide volunteering services to residents across the city. Cranbrook partners have mobilised the East Devon District Council Coronavirus Community Support Hub Hotline whilst Cranbrook Town Council and Cranbrook Community Association are supporting vulnerable residents in the town with food and medicine supplies working with community volunteers.
- The success of ECW demonstrates the strength of local partnership working and system wide efforts and ABCD principles. Stories of individuals, groups, organisations and communities are being captured and shared. There are also many examples of people engaging in physical activity, albeit within social

distancing measures. Sport England survey data suggests 33% are more active than before and 39% are less active than before the pandemic. There is also evidence of neighbourhoods organically demonstrating the kinds of behaviours the pilot has strived to foster, such as ‘play streets’ with the reduction in traffic allowing children to use the roads for space to be physically active and traditional games such as hop-scotch re-emerging.

- This illustrates although devastating and tragic, the Covid-19 pandemic has also enabled some people to become more active, though we are acutely aware that for some existing inequalities have amplified and even created new vulnerabilities for whom activity is simply not possible or not part of daily life. Evidence is emerging of the increase in mental health and wellbeing support needs which are likely to have long term impact. These insights create new potential for innovation and opportunities for the LDP, the new behaviours demonstrated during this unusual time can be captured and built upon – to maintain this momentum and strengthen the efforts of the programme in the future. In particular, the vital role of local community groups and volunteers in supporting neighbours and strangers alike with empathy and practical support, affirms the need for place-based approaches to empowering communities for positive behaviour change.
- In effect, the existing work of the LDP has enabled a rapid community response to the pandemic. This in turn is generating evidence which will be valuable for the future planning and delivery of the LDP as the ‘new normal’ emerges. Therefore, an interim plan has been developed for April to September 2020 to transition from the pre-Covid-19 situation to a place to enable us to continue to deliver on the LDP priorities, albeit in a different format, during this uncertain time.

Next Steps

- The review of governance has been completed and a new more streamlined governance system has been agreed with strategic oversight now being provided by the Liveable Exeter Place board. This will be implemented from July.
- A further submission has been made to Sport England for core and evaluation funding up until 2025
- Detailed delivery plans for around 20 projects are being finalised with delivery notching up a level from July
- The Communications strategy and new branding “Let’s Move” is progressing to launch in September with a website and series of campaign actions being planned to support the next stage as we move into delivery.

Sport England Local Delivery Pilot: Wonford Development Plan

Background

- Following the initial consultation phase in 2019, the project is now in the Feasibility Stage. This stage commenced in February 2020 and is due to be completed this calendar year.
- Good progress was initially made in February and early March 2020, including meetings with the Wonford COGs and Sounding Board, to understand the ambitions, requirements, concerns, challenges and opportunities of the potential new facility in the neighbourhood / community.
- At the heart of the Feasibility Stage is a community-led design ethos. With the activities and needs of the community being paramount to specifying and designing the new facility. The outbreak of COVID 19 and subsequent lockdown measures materially affected the ability of the team to meaningfully engage with the community to fully understand their needs & requirements. This resulted in the project being largely ‘on hold’ throughout April & May.

Progress

- In the past 3 weeks changes to the COVID 19 restrictions have enabled the project to recommence in earnest.
- A detailed community engagement plan has been developed which takes into account the current & anticipated COVID 19 measures.
- Discussions have progressed with the Wonford Green GPs surgery to confirm the spatial requirements and operational flows for their practice in the new facility, including future proofing for growth rates, etc.

Next Steps

- It is the intention to launch community engagement activities w/c 22nd June. This will involve digital (website, Facebook, Instagram), mail drop of flyers to households, and promotion of the engagement through the local primary & secondary schools.
- A 'public event' for face to face interactive consultation (community design workshop) is currently planned for mid-late August 2020, with a further community session planned for late September 2020 to provide feedback on the initial discussions.
- Further discussions will take place with the Wonford Green GPs to conclude the financial estates matters (land valuation, rental values, etc.).
- Designs will be produced to reflect the needs / activities required of the new facility.
- It is currently the intention to conclude the Feasibility Stage this calendar year, with indicative designs / sketches, financial modelling and a feasibility report.