

Committee: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 16 November 2022

Subject:	Hurst Swimming Pool
Lead Officer:	Head of Culture, Leisure and Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Leisure and Culture
Link to Council Priorities:	Sustainable Elmbridge, Love Elmbridge, Thriving Elmbridge
Exempt information:	None
Delegated status:	For resolution
Key decision:	Yes

Executive Summary:

The Council's emerging Vision for the Borough seeks to champion and promote sport, play, relevant health initiatives and healthy lifestyles in the Borough. To do this we are reviewing our approach to leisure and culture and looking to respond to measurable, data-driven, priority outcomes for our community.

These objectives and the drive to making the Council financially sustainable provide the backdrop for modernisation and service transformation. As a part of the Transformation Programme consideration is being given to the future of Hurst Pool.

There is an increasing demand for swimming in the Borough shown by the demand at the two pay and play facilities and 23 other public pools in the Borough. Hurst Pool also plays an active role in delivering our objectives under our Physical Activity Strategy (2021-2031). The Hurst Pool is ageing and will require significant investment in its infrastructure and plant if it is to continue to operate.

Condition surveys have been undertaken in 2017 and 2022 as part of the updated leisure contract procurement exercise. While the 2017 survey noted the building had been well maintained since opening to the public the later survey also identified that a much more significant refurbishment would be required within the next ten years to extend the useable life of the building up to 2032.

Therefore, it is the right time to be reviewing the Hurst Pool and assess the demand for and access to swimming across the whole Borough, before coming to a decision on the future investment into and use of the site.

At the same time, recognising that our leisure facilities are high users of energy and water, the review of Hurst Pool forms part of the Council's commitment and leadership of being a climate change and sustainability champion. Any facility improvement would provide the opportunity to deliver an environmentally sustainable swimming pool/leisure facility, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the facility with an aspiration to achieve carbon net zero.

This report sets out the background and current use of the Hurst Pool, the consideration of whether it should be retained at the current site and if it should, an outline project plan to undertake an options appraisal and feasibility study for a potential replacement/refurbished Hurst Pool.

Recommendation: that

- (a) Cabinet agree the outline project plan as set out in this report;**
- (b) Cabinet agree that the Hurst Pool site is considered the preferred site for the feasibility study;**
- (c) approval be given for £20,000 from the Contingency Budget for specialist leisure consultancy advice required to complete the first feasibility phase of the project; and**
- (d) a further report is brought back to Cabinet on completion of the first feasibility phase.**

Report

Background

1. Hurst Pool was built in 1996 to replace the old Upper Deck swimming pool in Molesey. The facility is ageing and will require significant investment in its infrastructure and plant if it is to continue to operate. The Council's Transformation Programme provides an opportunity to review Hurst Pool and assess the demand for and access to swimming across the whole Borough, before coming to a decision on the future investment into and use of the site.

Transformation Programme

2. The Elmbridge 2030 Vision report in November 2021 set out the direction for the future and our ambitions for our borough. Amongst a number of objectives there is an ambition to champion and promote sport, play, relevant health initiatives and healthy lifestyles in the Borough. To do this we are reviewing our approach to leisure and culture and looking to respond to measurable, data-driven, priority outcomes for our community.
3. Members considered a report in July this year which outlined the various projects which sit under the wider Transformation Programme with indicative timescales. This report progresses the intention to undertake an options appraisal and feasibility study for a potential replacement/refurbished Hurst Pool facility with the options appraisal concluded by Winter 2022 and detailed Business case and costs to be considered in Spring 2023.

The Leisure Facilities Strategy

4. The [Leisure Facilities Strategy](#) 2017-2035 identified that there will be an increased demand for swimming as a result of population growth through to 2035.
5. It reviewed the current provision of leisure facilities within the public, private and educational sectors and what future provision would be needed to meet the growth in population. The strategy concluded a number of priorities:

- Refurbishment/replacement facility of Hurst Pool; to include the development of a larger learner pool, and/or a larger main pool, as well as additional pay and play fitness facilities,
 - Reduce operating costs through the installation of new energy efficient technologies
 - Refurbishment/replacement of Hurst Pool could provide an opportunity to develop a wider community hub, comprising leisure, a library (existing facility 0.5 miles away), healthcare facilities etc, either on the same or an alternative site which is the current model that is promoted by Sport England.
6. Elmbridge has an overall total of 25 swimming pools across 21 sites (see Appendix 3) The four community accessible pools are located across the Borough as shown in appendix 3b (green dots are the pay and play community accessible pools (Xcel Leisure Complex and the Hurst Pool, 2 sites, 2 pools), and yellow dots are the four pools available for use by sports clubs/associations.
 7. Both of the existing pay and play community accessible swimming pools are located in the North of the Borough, within a mile of each other. Although the southern half of the Borough (pink and blue areas) is outside the 20 minute drivetime catchment of the two EBC swimming pool facilities (green and brown shaded areas), all Borough residents are within a 20 minute drivetime catchment of a pay and play accessible swimming pool, albeit these may be in an adjoining local authority.
 8. Existing pay and play community accessible swimming pools are well-located in the Borough. Despite both being in the North; both are on accessible sites with good parking provision, although public transport routes are poor. In addition to the pay and play community accessible pools, there are other facilities which are also used by residents, so overall in accordance with Sport England pool provision guidelines there is a good supply of provision in the Borough.
 9. Since the strategy was adopted, funding has been secured from CIL, the Your Fund Surrey and the Prosperity Fund to improve the Claygate Community Pool providing new changing areas and year-round facilities. Community use has been secured by a Community Use Agreement and this facility should now be incorporated into the above strategy analysis. Similarly, the Kingfisher Swimming Pool in Kingston is currently closed and undergoing a significant new build to replace swimming facilities.

Getting Elmbridge Moving Physical Activity Strategy 2021-2031

10. The Physical Activity Strategy sets out a vision for Elmbridge to be a Borough where everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of living an active life. By 2031 we want to be the most active borough in Surrey. We want all Elmbridge residents to have great opportunities to access a diverse range of physical activities to improve both their physical and mental wellbeing no matter what their personal circumstances.
11. Hurst Pool is an important leisure facility to help deliver on the objectives of the strategy and is especially important for providing swimming lessons for the local community but is also heavily used as a teaching pool for school lessons through the School programme.

Need for provision in the current catchment

12. In terms of the socio-economic population makeup the primary social grade for the Hurst Pool area is AB (36%) followed by C1 (30%), or Affluent achievers (41%) followed by Rising prosperity (23%) – see Appendix A. There are pockets of the community that have worse outcomes than most with 9% financially stretched and 8.6% urban adversity.
13. Specifically, the 2-mile area around Hurst Pool has the following key issues:
 - 32.6% residents never engage in moderate intensity sport/exercise
 - 16% report poor general health
 - 26.4 obese (BMI > 30)
 - 17.9 high blood pressure
 - 22% are families with dependent children
14. An improved facility would provide the opportunity for more targeted activities for the above groups.

The Existing Pool

15. Hurst pool provides a 25m x 13m main pool and a 13m teaching pool. The pool is well used especially for swimming lessons and school groups. The pool has a traditional changing village to support pool use which does not meet existing guidance on either safeguarding or DDA access, and a small reception viewing area with basic vending machines.
16. Both Xcel pools and Hurst Pool are operating at very high levels of use and will fail to address both unmet and future demand for public swimming.
17. The Hurst Pool was constructed in 1996 and a condition survey commissioned by the council in 2017 noted the building had been well maintained since opening to the public. The building at the time of the survey was overall in a fair condition excluding localised specified defects and general wear and tear in line with the age and frequent use of the facilities. The report noted that the mechanical installations at the time (2017) were approximately 20 years old and although they had been well maintained, were now showing signs of age. The general age and condition of the mechanical services suggested that a comprehensive refurbishment should be considered within the next five years, depending on how long the site is intended to remain in use. Records showed that regular testing was carried out in accordance with the standards and that defective items are replaced within an acceptable time period.
18. A budget estimate of £185,000 was recommended to be spent to bring and/or maintain the building in satisfactory condition over the next 5 years (2017-2022).
19. A further, interim, survey was commissioned in 2022 as part of the updated leisure contract procurement exercise identified that a much more significant refurbishment would be required within the next ten years to extend the useable life of the building up to 2032.

20. Usage Figures

	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22
Visits	142,677	156,786	138,065

21. Under the new Leisure Contract (starting 1 April 2023) the Council will receive an income from the contractor for operating Hurst Pool of £37,059.

Alternative Locations

22. Whilst need for a pool at the current location can be justified on both the current demand and the socio-demographics of the area, Officers have taken the opportunity to look at possible alternatives.
23. As part of the preparation of the Local Plan the Council issued four separate 'call for sites'. As part of this process landowners have been asked to put forward any site that could be available for development including development for swimming pools. No sites have been promoted for such use. This is not surprising given the nature of development and land values in the borough. The majority of larger sites promoted by landowners are in the green belt and are therefore constrained. Sites promoted in the urban area are smaller in size and are being actively promoted for residential use by landowners.
24. The Council has also reviewed its own land holdings looking for an alternative suitable site. However, none have been identified.
25. Based on the findings above it is recommended that the existing Hurst Pool site is considered the preferred site for the feasibility study.

Scheme Objectives

26. Assuming Members agree to the recommendation the objectives of the Hurst Pool project should be to:
- Update the demand for swimming pool provision by 2035 (Sports Facility Strategy 2017-2035) to include any changes to local swimming provision
 - carry out an options appraisal to determine the preferred approach to either refurbish or rebuild the Hurst Pool and the preferred location on the site.
 - identify what enabling development could be achieved to offset\ pay for the new leisure facilities.
 - carry out a feasibility study to model the likely capital and revenue costs for a new facility and what additional income generating\ community facilities would complement the site (i.e., Café\ studios\ water play).
 - deliver a new community swimming pool and associated facilities for the community.
 - consider opportunity to develop a wider community hub, comprising leisure, a library (existing facility 0.5 miles away), healthcare facilities, community facilities, other commercial opportunities etc, either on the same or an alternative site which is the current model that is promoted by Sport England.

- seek to deliver an environmentally sustainable swimming pool/leisure facility, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the facility with an aspiration to achieve carbon net zero.
- seek to deliver a new leisure facility that creates a surplus income through an innovative range of public / commercial services on the site.
- Explore the opportunities for providing housing on the site.

Success Criteria

21, It is proposed that the following success criteria for the project be adopted:

- Running costs to be cost neutral\ profit making
- Payback on investment
- Reductions in carbon emissions \ net zero
- Increased throughput on current facility
- Delivered on time and on budget
- Minimal disruption to the operating of the existing Hurst Pool facility whilst the new centre is developed
- Strengthen partnership working with health professionals

Key Benefits

22. Benefits to Organisation

- seek to deliver a new leisure facility that creates a surplus income through an innovative range of public \ commercial services on the site.
- A new leisure facility would be a significant corporate project and positive story.
- Demonstrate the council's commitment and leadership to the wider community of being a climate change and sustainability champion
- Reduction in carbon emissions and improvement to air quality with an aspiration to achieve net zero
- Improve the health and well-being of residents and reduce health inequalities
- Strengthen partnership with health practitioners including GP surgeries, Occupational Therapists and falls prevention teams that will help facilitate future projects

23. Benefits to Area

- This would provide a modern new facility, fit for purpose and reduced maintenance costs
- The new facility would seek to generate income through the mix of facilities on site (i.e., Café\ studios\ water play)
- The new facility would be a good opportunity to improve levels of physical activity to targeted demographic groups within the local population and to meet the objectives of the Physical Activity Strategy.
- The new facility and increased swimming lanes would continue to meet the needs of a growing population

24. Benefits to Customers

- A new leisure facility would be a benefit to customers by providing a new modern facility with a range of services and activities.
- The new facility would provide a wider access to swimming lessons and reduce waiting lists.
- Bring together health and leisure facilities which will attract new users and support the Council's commitment to reducing health inequalities
- Improvements to access to open space

Scope of the Project

25. The scope of the project is laid out in appendix A and is made up of:
- The existing Hurst swimming pool and car park
 - Other ancillary facilities within the boundary of the plan including the recreation ground pavilion, car park and tennis courts may be considered as part of the development of the site, and a better use of space/assets. (see appendix A)

New Leisure Facilities Contract

26. The appointment of the contractor to manage the leisure facilities and contract will start in April 2023. The 'new' operator will need to be engaged in the project to ensure any new facility is designed in conjunction with the operator and benefits from their commercial insight.
27. The management of the Hurst Pool has been included in the current tender documentation. Once the new facility has been designed the contractor will be asked for an updated business plan\ management fee for the operation of the new facility. This will avoid the need for a lengthy procurement process.

Project Team

28. An officer project team has been identified to deliver the Hurst Pool project. This team will be responsible for managing the project plan and reporting back to Cabinet.
29. Further external consultancy will be required to deliver the various stages of the project due to the scale and potential complexity of the project.
30. Officers have met with Sport England who indicated there is the potential to secure support funding towards the feasibility work. This will be pursued once approval has been confirmed to progress this works.

Outline Project Plan

Stage 1: feasibility

31. Options Appraisal

- Update the demand for swimming pool provision by 2035 (Sports Facility Strategy 2017-2035)
- Options appraisal report to identify if refurbishment or rebuild is the preferred route and in the case of rebuild, whether to build on existing footprint or elsewhere on the site

- Feasibility study to examine the possible mix of facilities and indicative running costs to maximise income

32. **Detailed business case**

- Feasibility study to examine the funding model options and the potential payback period
- As part of the feasibility stage the methods/sustainable build options need to be considered to drive down our direct emissions (scope 1 &2). Sustainability will also need to be considered as part of the procurement/tender process when the time comes
- Further consideration should also be given at this stage to options for sustainable transport to any new facilities. This should include consideration of linked cycle routes, bus routes and exploring any links to other local transport providers (i.e. Chatterbus etc..) Consideration to be given to an Active Environment/Active Travel link from a new centre into the community to reduce car use and increase walking/cycling.
- Report to member reference group and agreement at Cabinet\ Council

33. **Stage 2: Planning**

- Planning permission to be applied for

Stage 3: Build

- Delivery method to be considered at feasibility stage

Member Reference Group

34. The Leisure Facilities Member Reference Group has been established to consider the future of Hurst Pool under the following Terms of Reference:

- consider the options available for the future of Hurst Pool, that best meets the recommendations from the Leisure Facilities Strategy and achieves best value for the Council;
- support officers in progressing the preferred option going forward and any associated contractual requirements; and
- to monitor & review progress in re-tendering of the contract to ensure openness and transparency and in turn guarantee the best result for the Council

35. The group met on 3 October 2020 to consider the outline project plan for Hurst pool and raised the following comments:

- The project is a real opportunity to consider the energy uses of the facility and to ensure this is more energy efficient
- Given the current increases in energy costs and the pressures on swimming facilities that closures to other nearby facilities could increase demands on our swimming facilities.
- That plans needed to be mindful of the risks of increased construction traffic and disruption to neighbours in the various options
- This is an opportunity to be positive and to improve local community facilities including library and local health services

Financial implications:

Under the new Leisure Contract (starting 1 April 2023) the Council will receive an income from the contractor for operating Hurst Pool of £37,059.

Sport England Facility Cost Guidance (Q3 2022) indicates that a new 8-lane 25 m pool (25 x 17 m) plus secondary pool (17 x 7 m) would cost as a minimum £8 million to £10 million to build. Other facilities would be an additional cost to this figure once the facility mix was confirmed.

The mix of facilities would need to ensure that the net revenue cost of the facility would enable the facility to break even.

Environmental/Sustainability Implications:

A new Hurst Pool would provide the Council with an opportunity to design a net zero carbon emissions facility. The costs/benefits of this would need to be explored in the feasibility study.

Legal implications:

- The contracts awarded as part of this project will be undertaken in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- Any open space disposal as a consequence of this project will need to be advertised in accordance with all applicable legislation.
- Statutory Considerations
- Planning permission will be required for any new facility
- If a new Centre is built on open space land, then there may be open space disposals procedures that would need to be followed.

Equality Implications:

An equality impact assessment will be carried out in conjunction with the options under consideration

Risk Implications:

- Risk of not meeting the objective of delivering increased income depending on the mix of commercial facilities, and the implications\ cost benefit of various energy saving/carbon reduction measures and environmental impact of the new site
- Risk of not achieving planning permission for the new facility
- Cancellation of the project due to viability
- Failure to agree a reasonable operating cost with the new operator

Community Safety Implications:

Provision of an improved leisure facility will provide additional facilities for the local community.

Principal Consultees:

Leisure Facilities Member Reference Group
CMB
Head of Planning Services
Asset Management and Property Services
Head of Legal and Governance

Head of Finance
Group Services Accountant
Climate Change Programme Lead

Background papers:

None

Enclosures/Appendices:

Appendix A – Site location Map
Appendix B – Swimming provision in Elmbridge.
Appendix C - Acorn analysis

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