

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLANS FOR A NEW LEISURE CENTRE IN SWANLEY

Housing and Health Advisory Committee - 27 February 2019

Report of Chief Officer Communities and Business

Status For consideration

Key Decision No

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Safe and Caring Communities, Green and Healthy Environment and a Dynamic and Sustainable Economy**

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Hayley Brooks, Ext. 7272

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**Recommendation to Health and Housing Advisory Committee:** Members are asked to consider the community engagement plans.

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**Reason for recommendation:** To ensure that Members' have an opportunity to consider the community engagement plans for a new Leisure Centre in Swanley and other sites as detailed in this report.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 During 2016 we held a series of consultations with residents about the future of leisure in Swanley as part of the Master Vision consultation. 96% of those who responded to our survey said that they wanted to keep a leisure centre in the town. This followed a request from Members to undertake feasibility work on a new leisure centre on a number of sites in the town and a planning requirement to conduct a sequential test. The Whiteoak site was identified as the best available site in planning terms. The existing White Oak Leisure Centre is expensive to run and is no longer economically viable to repair.
- 2 Some initial design work has been undertaken, including a mix of facilities that would mean that Swanley could enjoy modern facilities and equipment. It is planned to hold a series of drop-in events to inform local people about plans for a new Leisure Centre built in the grounds of the current White Oak Leisure Centre, which would remain open during the construction stages.
- 3 After this community engagement, it is planned to undertake full feasibility which would enable the centre to progress up to and including a planning application.

- 4 Local people will also be able to see how ideas have developed for a new Swanley gateway on the Bevan Place and Meeting Point site. This follows the Master Vision consultation with local people during 2016 when over 70% of residents who responded to our survey, said that they wanted to create a more welcoming entrance to the town, new commercial property to support economic growth, and the opportunity to create employment opportunities and help meet the District's housing needs by building new homes for local people.
- 5 The consultation will involve drop in sessions at the following times and locations, where people will have an opportunity to view plans and ask members of staff questions:
  - Wednesday 6 March - Swanley Market, 10am - 3pm
  - Thursday 7 March - White Oak Leisure Centre, 10am - 8pm
  - Friday 8 March - White Oak Leisure Centre, 10am - 8pm
  - Saturday 9 March - Swanley Link, 10am - 3pm
- 6 In addition, members of staff will attend the Orchards Academy on 4 March to talk to a group of Prefects about the plans. The school has agreed for Prefects to disseminate information to other pupils in the school.
- 7 A newsletter has been produced (attached as Appendix A) promoting the engagement events to nearly 15,000 residents in Swanley, Hextable and surrounding parishes. They will be delivered by Royal Mail from the 18 February 2019. Banners will be put out on display in key locations in the town centre including the Swanley Link, Asda and the Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre. In addition, the Communications Team will promote the events on the Council's social media resources.
- 8 Displays of plans will be available for residents to view at the engagement events. Staff from the Communities and Business Team will be on hand to answer questions from residents at the events.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

The community engagement work will be delivered within existing resources.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are no legal implications associated with this report. Failure to engage members of the public about the Council's plans for a new Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre and other sites mentioned in this report, could adversely affect the Council's reputation.

## Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### **Conclusions:**

Members are asked to consider the community engagement arrangements for the new Swanley White Oak Leisure Centre and other sites as detailed in this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - A New Leisure Centre for Swanley-  
February Newsletter

### **Background Documents**

None.

**Lesley Bowles**

**Chief Officer Communities and Business**