

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL****25 February 2021****Report by Director of Environment****EASTWOOD LEISURE CENTRE AND EASTWOOD PARK MASTERPLAN****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Council as agreed in December 2020 with regard to the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre options, costs and potential phasing of costs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. It is recommended that the Council:-
- (a) considers the options with regard to the Eastwood Leisure Centre/Theatre in order that this can be considered as part of the ongoing current financial planning/capital planning process for 2021/22 and future years; and
  - (b) notes that a further meeting of the member officer working group will be arranged in the near future to discuss progress

**BACKGROUND**

3. In December 2020 the Council considered a report on Eastwood Leisure Centre and Eastwood Park Masterplan.

4. The report advised that considerable progress on the project had been made despite the difficult circumstances created by the Covid pandemic and that the input from the member officer working group had proved invaluable and allowed the Director of Environment with advice from the group to work with the consultants to accelerate the project in terms of concept, vision and design.

5. A copy of the most recent consultant's report (RIBA stage I briefing and feasibility) endorsed by the member officer working group was attached and it was pointed out that work is ongoing regarding further detailed design development.

6. The consultant's briefing and feasibility study demonstrated that with regard to the leisure centre and theatre this is potentially an aspirational high quality, visually attractive, transformational and state-of-the-art facility that is much more than simply a leisure centre development. The focus is on customer appeal, future flexibility and income generating opportunities. Key examples included pool facilities which offer far more flexibility (compared with many other leisure centres) for lessons alongside public swimming and training, extended hours of access to the gym and fitness suites, a gymnastics facility, the potential to incorporate a library, agile workspace office accommodation, a studio theatre and rehearsal space to complement the main theatre auditorium and an outdoor cinema/theatre area as well as being able to host a wide range of events.

7. The report to the Council also advised that exploratory options with regard to the rest of Eastwood Park including Eastwood House were at an early stage. They were simply being flagged up as possibilities and would be the subject of a future report to the Council. The priority was to concentrate on the leisure centre/theatre development.

8. With regard to costs the Council in 2016 made provision of £26 million. Most recently this was phased over 2021/22 (£12.85 million) and 2022/23 (£12.85 million). However, it was made clear at the time the original provision was made and has been reinforced several times since then that this was an indicative allocation of £26m for provision of leisure facilities in the Eastwood area which would be refined further when a report on options is considered by the Council.

9. The Council in December 2020;

- (a) noted the attached briefing and feasibility study as an ambitious vision for Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre and Eastwood Park more generally;
- (b) approved the proposal that the priority in the short to medium term is to progress the Eastwood Leisure Centre and Theatre as opposed to the wider masterplanning issues;
- (c) noted that a further report specifically with regard to the Leisure Centre and Theatre options, costs and potential phasing of costs will be submitted to the Council for consideration in February 2021;
- (d) noted that the existing provision of £12.85 million for 2021/22 is sufficient for that year; and
- (e) noted that a further report with regard to the wider masterplanning issues in Eastwood Park will be submitted to the Council at some time in the future.

## **REPORT**

### **Vision/opportunity**

10. The opportunity is unique at Eastwood Park given the blend of civic, education, leisure, culture, heritage, landscape and community within it. It is recognised as having a central role in the identity of the surrounding area and East Renfrewshire generally. The Leisure Centre/Theatre has the potential to deliver extremely wide benefits reinforcing the success of the surrounding areas as attractive places to live with excellent facilities including schools, local shops, restaurants, places of worship, sports clubs and good public transport.

11. In developing proposals the consultants have been asked to optimise the benefits that can be achieved from the project.

### **Revised Cost**

12. The Council's project managers have assessed the current proposals based upon the report and feasibility study reported to the Council in December 2020.

13. The basic construction costs for the leisure centre and theatre including the demolition of the existing buildings, contingencies and inflation is estimated to be £47,500,000.

14. The overall development cost including all professional and planning fees, surveys, allowances for fixtures and fittings appropriate to a sports/leisure centre of this scale, contract inflation (assuming building of the structure starts in the first quarter of 2022), appropriate contingencies, demolition and site clearance, the construction of the theatre and any other associated external works is estimated to be £55 million. This is a maximum cost predicted at this early stage.

15. This cost can be refined through further detailed design, market testing and value engineering in due course.

### Delivering Best Value

16. Whilst unique and ambitious this project requires to demonstrate value for money.

17. To help achieve this the Council's project managers have benchmarked against other relevant projects particularly in Scotland. A key benchmark has been the recently approved high quality new Allander Leisure Centre in East Dunbartonshire as that Council area has similar attributes, characteristics and demographics.

18. By comparison, the total all inclusive costs for the Allander project were estimated at £40.9 million in September 2019 and further revised to £42.5 million in October 2020. They may increase further.

19. It should be noted that comparisons are extremely difficult given the variances in scope and content of other projects and the date of construction estimates. However, the following gives a broad comparison of the two projects and an explanation of the resultant latest estimated cost of the Eastwood Park project.

20. The proposals for Eastwood Park seek to deliver a project of similar quality to the Allander project but with a wider range of functions to reflect the scale of the opportunity and the transformational potential (and environmental sensitivity) of this particular location.

21. Examples of key differences in relation to the Eastwood Park proposal are as follows.

- **A library** benefiting from views over the Park, Eastwood House, and over the pool, access to attractive south facing outside parkland space, access to a café and contributing to the overall dynamic blend of health and wellbeing, culture, education, heritage, family support, community and civic identity.
- **A theatre** of a quality which acknowledges the importance of arts and culture in East Renfrewshire enabling a far wider range of performances than at present including contemporary theatre, music, comedy, cinema, lectures and conferences taking into consideration accessibility for the audience, performers and technicians. There will also be an additional studio theatre and rehearsal space to expand the arts and culture offer (such as dance) in line with other regional theatres
- **A quality of materials and architecture appropriate to the Park and setting next to a listed building** including the extensive use of glass to offer views in and out of the building, generous entrances and overhanging roofs to provide shelter around the edges of the building for outdoor seating, queueing and some shelter on the connecting route to Eastwood House.
- **A 50m pool** with moveable floor rather than a 25m pool. This offers significantly more flexibility for lessons, training and public swimming. It includes an innovative vision for the spectator zone which can be used flexibly as an 'urban beach' and enabling a range of relaxation and health and wellbeing opportunities such as poolside yoga

- **Covid safe** with generously sized changing cubicles, circulation in wet areas and a wider poolside reflecting lessons learned in meeting social distancing preferences emerging from Covid but beneficial generally in making the building highly accessible.
- **A gymnastics zone** to reflect local demand and recognise that saunas, jacuzzis and steam rooms are likely to be less desirable post Covid. This also offers flexibility for other uses such as children's parties and sports clinics.
- **A café, kitchen and theatre bar** with flexibility to support a variety of events internally and externally.
- **A generous landscaped arrival plaza** benefitting the leisure centre and theatre but also the other uses in the Park including St Ninian's High School whilst also being suitable for events such as outdoor theatre, outdoor cinema and outdoor food festivals.
- The Allander specification includes 3 indoor football pitches and a learning disability centre which are not included in the Eastwood Park design.

22. In summary the high level of sensitive and iconic external design, the 50m pool instead of 25 m, the general quality of the pool environment, theatre, studio theatre, the focus on accessibility including more generous changing facilities, gymnastics space, events potential, library are key differentiators in the proposal for Eastwood Park and account for the cost difference between the 2 centres.

23. The cost data benchmarking exercise carried out by the Council's Project Managers has enabled them to confirm that the estimated cost level for Eastwood Leisure Centre is appropriate for a leisure centre of this ambition, size and scope, should be deliverable within the estimated budget and represents value for money in terms of the estimated build cost per square metre.

### Site Selection Benefits

24. Alongside the optimisation of the benefits of the facilities within the building a key factor also in relation to best value/value for money is the selection of this site at Eastwood Park. Key considerations/benefits are outlined below.

- Eastwood Park has an existing customer base and is a good location to deliver an enhanced and unique customer experience.
- The significant benefits of colocation with existing civic, community and education uses.
- The opportunity for a tandem build allowing existing facilities to remain operational during construction which is key to retaining customers.
- The proximity to Eastwood House creates a distinctive and attractive identity and is complementary to the long term viability of an important listed building.
- The established mature tree setting which creates an attractive setting and buffer to surrounding residential areas which is typically required to be provided on other sites.
- Existing infrastructure is in place in terms of access and parking which can be enhanced.
- It is a good catchment for walking and cycle assess.
- There are good public transport links and proximity to other amenities including restaurants, sports clubs and places of worship.
- It is a relatively level site.
- The site is large enough to avoid expensive solutions found in other recently delivered leisure centres in Scotland such as games halls on upper floors.
- The proposal is replacing an existing use so the principle of use is established from a planning perspective.

However, as previously reported there is a compromise in that this site cannot provide outdoor football pitches.

### **Design and impact**

25. The design of the project has been very carefully managed with the design team given the sensitivity of Eastwood Park.

26. The design team have worked up a concept which is based around the large glass houses often found in the grounds of historic estates (this is ongoing). Although the building is large the design is being developed to be sensitive through the extensive use of glass which will reflect the green setting during the day and create a lightness in the evening. This will be further enhanced by linking the structure and roof in relation to the surrounding woodland. In essence with the structure will reflect the tree trunks and the roof like the tree canopies with extensive use of wood. The approach also seeks to make the building feel light and airy internally with users able to appreciate views of the park and material inside the building reflecting those outside.

27. The design team have also considered carefully the relationship of the proposed building with Eastwood House. The design concept is a simple linear elevation which has a relationship similar to the colonnades and glass houses often found in estates with defining walled gardens. This will complement the vertical emphasis of the house. The height of the building is lower than Eastwood House and also below the surrounding mature trees. The team have also looked at the elevation proportions of Eastwood House and this has informed the development of the bays of the proposed building. The roof form is also derived from the dynamic roof of Eastwood House. These concepts will be developed and explained in more details in the next stage of design development.

28. In summary the building although large seeks to be a quiet understated architectural structure that blends in completely with the park.

### **Option appraisal**

29. In essence, the options available to the Council at this stage are;

- to progress the current proposals at an estimated capital cost of £55 million
- to choose a reduced level of capital expenditure and have the scheme redesigned within that level of expenditure.

### **Programme and Progress**

30. Considerable progress has been made since the report to the Council on 16 December 2020. Key areas include;

- review and refinement of project brief
- full project design team in place – includes specialists for aspects including the pool environment, theatre acoustics, ecology, transport, sustainability and energy.
- agreement reached on project governance arrangements and reporting schedules with the project managers
- scoping of required survey works to support a detailed planning application completed
- submission of a Proposal for Application Notice
- contact made and positive discussions ongoing with Scottish Water regarding a potential heat from sewage project

31. The timescales proposed include the submission of a detailed planning application in the middle to end of May 2021 with the aim of commencing works on site in 2021 with a construction period of around 24 months for the building.

#### **Next Stages : Surveys and Investigations**

32. There are many preliminary investigations required before construction of the facility starts. These include;

- Transport Assessment/Transport Statement and strategy
- Contamination Survey/Site Investigation Report
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Topographical/ Archaeological survey
- GPR / Existing Utilities survey
- Drainage CCTV
- Water Impact Assessment
- Tree Survey
- Ecological Appraisal
- Habitat Survey
- Energy efficiency study

33. These need to be instructed as soon as possible to maintain momentum and an on-site building construction start date of early 2022. Arrangements are already in place to allow these to commence quickly.

#### **Wider Masterplanning Issues**

34. Previous reports also outlined the potential costs associated with the wider masterplanning of Eastwood Park.

35. Initial consideration of these matters has produced a list of potential options for Eastwood Park. These are attached as appendix 1. However, they are simply initial suggestions/ideas which have come through discussions with the member officer working group. Potentially, the costs associated with **all** of these additional and optional proposals could be around £18,500,000. Contingencies have been included but no inflation has been included at this point in time given the uncertainty regarding timescales associated with some or all of these proposals.

36. These options will be the subject of a future report to the Council.

37. The priority at this stage is to progress the Leisure Centre and Theatre.

#### **FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY**

38. As stated there is existing provision of £12.85 million within the General Fund Capital Programme for 2021/22.

39. However, given the revised total potential cost of £55 million, the firm possibility of a building construction start date of early 2022 and other recent relevant information the revised phasing of the programme is estimated to be approximately;

2021-2022: £4m (mainly fees, surveys, application fees, site investigation and enabling works)  
2022-2023: £24m  
2023-2024: £24m  
2024-2025: £3m

## **CONSULTATION**

40. If approved by Council a public consultation event will be held mid to end March 2021 regarding the £55m scheme. This will be virtual in view of Covid restrictions. Similar virtual events have been very successful over the last few years. This will be widely advertised.

41. A project specific website is being developed which will be used for the public consultation event. This will remain live so the viewing of proposals and submission of comments will be an ongoing process and not be limited to the public consultation event.

42. User groups will also be consulted along with relevant governing bodies such as Sports Scotland

43. A full communications strategy is being developed.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

44. There has been considerable partnership working mainly with the Trust in developing these proposals.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS**

45. There are no staffing, IT, legal or equality implications directly associated with this report at this point in time. The financial implications are dealt with elsewhere in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

46. It is recommended that the Council;

- (a) considers the options with regard to the Eastwood Leisure Centre/Theatre in order that this can be considered as part of the ongoing current financial planning/capital planning process for 2021/22 and future years; and
- (b) notes that a further meeting of the member officer working group will be arranged in the near future to discuss progress

Further information can be obtained from Andrew Cahill Director of Environment 014 15773036

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Wider Park Masterplan - Additional Enhancement Options for Cost

**1.0 St Ninians – Civic Frontage**

1a. New Entrance space formed to the School – area 500m<sup>2</sup>  
 Medium Specification, double height open plan entrance space with glass frontage. Possible student study, touchdown and social space.  
 1b. New public realm space formed between St Ninians School and the proposed Leisure Centre and Theatre - 3400m<sup>2</sup>.  
 Medium specification – concrete paving and granite sets, kerbing, lighting with landscape planting incorporated.

**2.0 Eastwood House**

2a. Refurbish Eastwood House – 1,535m<sup>2</sup>  
 Reconfigure and repurpose internal layouts. Medium specification for refurbishment. Reuse existing kitchen facilities / heating and electrical services.  
 Ground floor support space to function suite / wedding venue - 644m<sup>2</sup>. Upper ground floor to become Bride and Groom Suite – 102m<sup>2</sup>. First & Second floor to provide Members Offices / Meeting Rooms / Committee Rooms – 789m<sup>2</sup>.  
 2b. Extend Eastwood House to create new Orangery – area 571m<sup>2</sup>.  
 High specification function space and elevation. Double height room 6m tall with feature roof and curved glazed ends. To include bar, storage, pre drinks arrival space  
 2c. Landscape improvement around Eastwood House – area – 1,784m<sup>2</sup>  
 Upgrade of the gardens to the north and south of the house, allow soft and hard landscaping. 1/3 hard to form feature element.

**3.0 New Southern Gateway**

3a. New Pedestrian Gateway Access to South West Corner of the Park – area 500m<sup>2</sup>  
 Form new 6m wide opening in the existing stone wall with a new stone return pier extending 2m into the park to form a new 4m wide gate. New paving enhancement, concrete setst.  
 3b. Lower stone wall along the length of Roukenglen Road by circa 1m – length of existing wall circa 250m (0.25km).

**4.0 Cycle Hub and Café**

Convert / refurbish existing Age Concern Facility form a new Cycle Hub, Workshop and Café – 350m<sup>2</sup>

**5.0 Woodland Adventure**

5a. Significant enhancement and upgrade of the Woodland Paths – 2,096m (2.1km) of resin bound path 3m wide with precast kerbs and lighting.  
 5b. Create 6no educational spaces circa – 30m<sup>2</sup> each  
 Spaces to include various ground treatments – bark, resin bound gravel with clearings for gathering / training / woodland gym  
 5c. Upgrade pedestrian access, surfacing, lighting, points of interest and signage

**6.0 Water Landscape**

6a. Create 3no educational spaces along the edge of the watercourse - area 20m<sup>2</sup> each.  
 Spaces to include timber decking / resin bound gravel with enhanced landscape features for training / artwork / learning.  
 6b. Route to extend to the east to form continuous disabled access along the watercourse. – 150m anti slip timber decking.  
 6c. New public seating in the grassed area alongside the burn, with potential children’s outdoor play area. circa 5no picnic benches.

**7.0 Additional Parking**

7a. West Car Parking – area 7,200m<sup>2</sup> spaces 306  
 7b. East Car Park – area 5,700m<sup>2</sup> spaces 183. Proposed deck over part of the parking - 3,370m<sup>2</sup>

**8.0 Civic Colonnade**

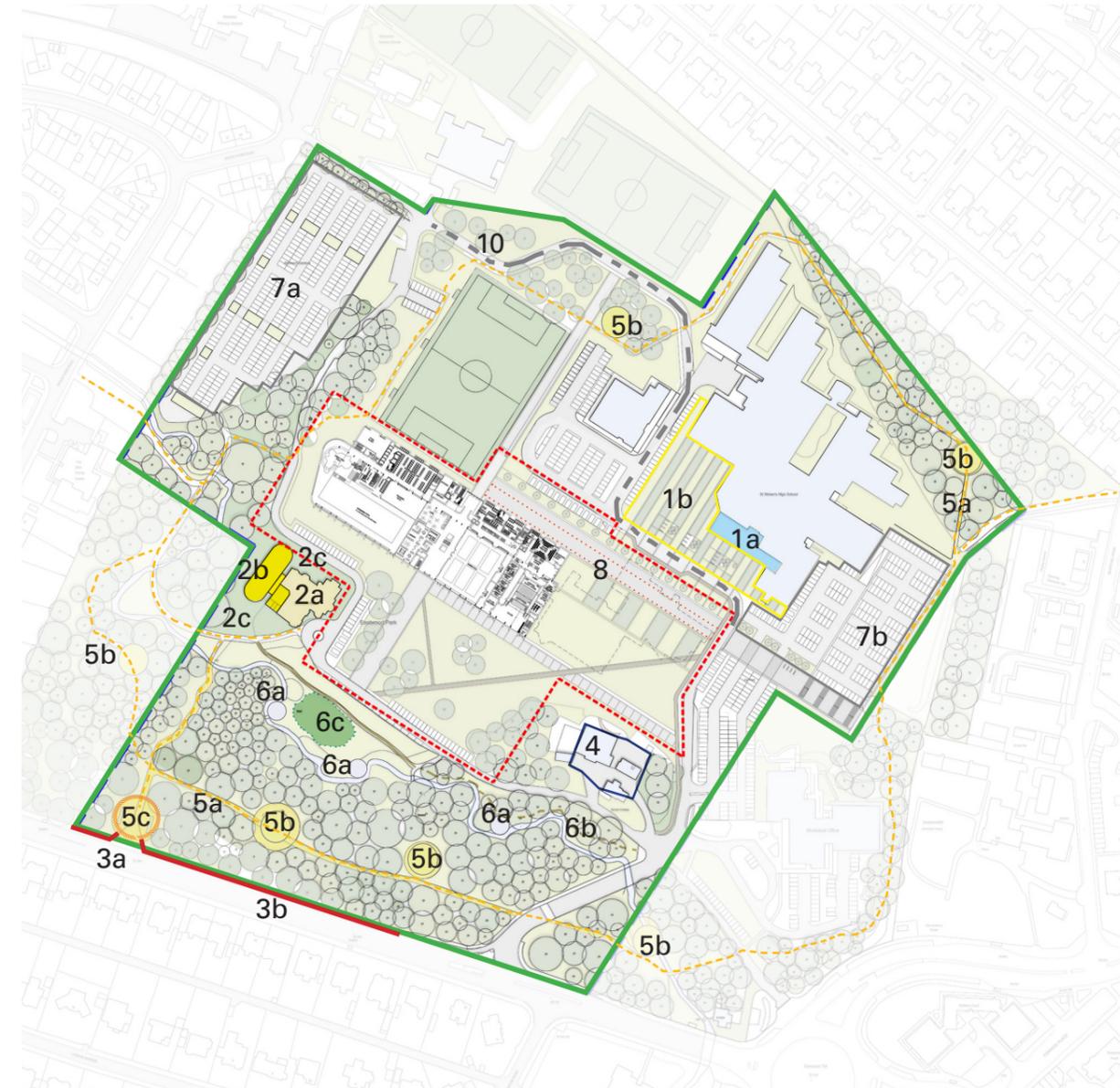
Length 200m, height 5m, timber structure with upright post with metal base connection to offer overhead shelter. Extends from the new leisure hub to parking areas.

**9.0 Signage & Wayfinding**

20no new signs/banners across the park. Route maps / cycle paths / educational banners

**10.0 Road Improvements**

Alter path of existing road and allow for a new northern road extension to form loop road. Length 406m (0.406km)



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