



## Report to Scrutiny

Item No:

<b>Contains Confidential OR Exempt Information</b>	No
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<b>Subject of Report:</b>	Call-in: New Lido Facility in the Borough
<b>Meeting:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Thursday, 5 October 2023
<b>Service report author:</b>	Sam Bailey – Head of Democratic Services 020-8825 7497 <a href="mailto:baileysa@ealing.gov.uk">baileysa@ealing.gov.uk</a>
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<b>Cabinet Responsibility:</b>	Cllr Polly Knewstub (Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities)
<b>Director Responsibility:</b>	Peter George (Strategic Director for Economy & Sustainability)
<b>Brief:</b>	To consider the Cabinet report attached, with reference to the purpose and reason for it being called in.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, decide whether to uphold the decision, or to refer it back to Cabinet for reconsideration.

## **1. Call-In: New Lido Facility in the Borough**

The Cabinet considered a report at its meeting of 13 September 2023. The purpose of the report was to provide an update to Cabinet on progress towards provision of a new Lido facility within the borough in line with the Council Plan 2022-2026 commitment. The report also sought approval to a long list of potential sites upon which to locate a Lido facility and to further explore these sites to arrive at a shortlist. The report also sought approval to undertake a review of procurement strategies and to undertake soft-marketing exercises.

### **1.1. Recommendations agreed by the Cabinet**

After considering the report, Members agreed the following:

That Cabinet:

1. Reaffirmed the commitment to provide a new Lido facility within the borough in line with the Council Plan 2022-2026 commitment and agreed to the vision statement for the facility as shown at paragraph 3.1 of the report.
2. Noted and agreed the longlist of sites which had been identified for the possible location of a Lido facility as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report.
3. Authorised the Strategic Director of Economy and Sustainability following consultation with the Cabinet member for Thriving Communities to further explore the proposed long list of potential sites identified in Appendix 1 of the report (Lido Site Longlist) and to commission further, more detailed feasibility study work, including surveys, searches, procurement options and viability, to identify a preferred location.
4. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Economy and Sustainability following consultation with the Cabinet member for Thriving Communities to decide upon a shortlisted site.
5. Approved a revenue budget of up to £0.250m for the purposes of commissioning the activity outlined at paragraphs 3 and 4.
6. Noted that a Sounding Board was to be established, with membership consisting of key stakeholders to support and assist in steering the future direction of the project.

#### **Reason for Decision and Options Considered:**

1. Provision of a new Lido facility in the borough was an objective set out in the Council Plan 2022 – 2026. Cabinet considered the report which set out a recommended vision for the project in the context of the strategic objectives as set out in the Council Plan and sought a basis on which to take the project forward for further feasibility work and analysis. The proposed vision for the facility would be to create a new outdoor swimming facility in Ealing which was inclusive, family orientated, promoted health and wellbeing and had sustainability at the heart.

2. The Ealing Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facility Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 31, produced in line with Sport England’s latest guidance provided an accurate and robust evidence base to inform Planning policy decisions regarding the protection, enhancement and provision of existing and future indoor and outdoor sports facilities providing an understanding of the best location(s) for any new facilities. By following Sport England’s assessment process, this strategic document identified that the existing indoor and outdoor sports facility supply in Ealing fell below the needs of the existing population as evidenced by the projects identified across the borough.
  - a. As with other sports facilities, swimming pool provision was reviewed and an assessment made of the existing and potential future supply and demand of indoor swimming facilities; current and future trends in participation were also considered as well as the views of National Governing Bodies of Sport and local sports clubs. The assessment showed that Ealing had a current and future need for more indoor water space, the level of which supported the need for new and enhanced swimming pool facilities at both Gurnell and Dormers Wells Leisure Centres; even with these two facilities Ealing may still have demand for more water space.
  - b. Although not included in the formal Sport England facility strategy swimming pool assessment process, a new outdoor swimming facility in the borough would, to some extent, help meet Ealing’s need for more swimming space.
  - c. Swim England’s top eight benefits of swimming were: full body workout, great for general wellbeing, de-stresses and relaxes, burns calories, lowers the risk of diseases, water supports the body, increases your energy levels and allows you to exercise without sweating. There were extra health benefits unique to open and cold water swimming, both disciplines were slightly more extreme forms of outdoor swimming than swimming in a heated outdoor pool, but still relevant to a certain extent; these four additional benefits were better sleep, increased happiness, boosted immune system and preventing and managing long term health conditions.
  - d. Whilst there was abundant evidence for the physical and mental health benefits of swimming, social connection was arguably as beneficial as the physical exercise for participants’ health, particularly their mental health. Designing environments that enable people to connect with others and live well was vital to improving the health and wellbeing of local people and achieving the ambitions set out in the manifesto. It was therefore vital that the Lido was inclusive, actively working to break down social, cultural and financial barriers to bring people together. In addition, a new Lido facility was going to support the Council’s plans for Good Growth by creating employment and enhancing green spaces.
3. Work to date had focussed on reviewing sites across the borough to identify those which would suit the accommodation of a new Lido facility. Various sites had been considered and assessed to arrive at a longlist based upon the following criteria:
  - Deliverability
  - Sustainability, energy, transport links, active travel

- Accessibility for all of borough residents
  - Financial attractiveness to operators, proximity to existing leisure facilities.
4. The potential sites were included at Appendix 1 to the report and constituted the longlist of options. To move the proposals forward, it was necessary to carry out further analysis to determine from this longlist:
- optimal location
  - projected current and future demand
  - commercial viability and financial return including capital and revenue projections
  - scope of facility and design brief.
5. By coming to this decision, Cabinet established a budget for further feasibility work to be completed on the longlist of sites and determined a recommended site through an officer delegation.

## **1.2 Reasons for Call-in**

Councillors Gary Malcolm, Athena Zissimos, Connie Hersch, Gary Busuttil, Jon Ball and Andrew Steed from the Liberal Democrat Group and Councillors Julian Gallant, Anthony Young, Seema Kumar, Fabio Conti, Gregory Stafford, Anthony Young from the Conservative Group called in cabinet's decision on 21 September 2023,

The reasons given for the call-in are as follows:

- Proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome).
- Due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers.
- Respect for human rights and equalities.
- A presumption in favour of openness.
- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes (i.e. link between corporate strategy and implementation).
- Consistency with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, Contract, Financial and other Procedure Rules, legislative requirements and any other requirements set out in this Constitution.

### **Detailed Reasons for Call-in:**

Call-in to consider recommendations 9.1 to 9.4 in the Minutes of the meeting that Cabinet had agreed because:

- the decision to move ahead without full costing suggests no real intention to build the facility; and
- a new Lido will by definition only benefit residents living close by the facility and not all Ealing residents.

Call-in also to question:

- whether a new outdoor lido will meet Ealing Council's desired health outcomes;
- whether officers advised that a lido facility could ever be built on Ealing's public parks or common land;

- why the decision to move ahead with the Lido was not introduced with substantial notice
- if the proposed Lido project is simply a distraction from stalled plans to redevelop the Gurnell Leisure Centre.
- why no sporting facilities apart from swimming are planned on the site of the proposed Lido facility.
- whether Ealing needs an outdoor swimming facility that can only be used for a few months in the year.
- whether a major West London Lido facility can be planned without provision of substantial parking included;

and to give details of:

- any negative effect on the flora and fauna in the area caused by any works or relating to the Lido facility.

### **1.3 Purpose of Call-In**

The Constitution identifies the purpose of call-in. A decision may only be called-in for one of the reasons set out in paragraph 15(e) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

## **2 Legal Implications**

Part 2 Article 6.03 of the Constitution gives the Overview and Scrutiny Committee authority to hear called in decisions. Paragraphs 15(f) and (g), of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out the Call-In procedures.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may either confirm the decision, or refer it back to the Cabinet, setting out the nature of the Committee's concerns.

## **3 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to Overview and Scrutiny Committee hearing called-in decisions. Scrutiny has a role in supporting democratic renewal.

Value for money is obtained through scrutiny enabling and supporting transparent decision making and ensuring that debate on called in topics is heard in a timely manner and in a public forum.

The Cabinet report attached, identifies the financial implications with respect to the issue under discussion.

## **4 Other Implications**

Any other implications relating to the matter under discussion are also dealt with in the Cabinet report, which is attached at Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Cabinet Report: New Lido Facility in the Borough

Appendix 2 – Call-in form

## **5 Background Papers**

Background papers are identified in the Cabinet Report.