

Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 24 Aug 2017 12:56

Information from from East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd - 24th August 2017 -

Q. Please give details of any contact and/or discussions since January 2017 with East Renfrewshire Council or other parties regarding Eastwood Park Leisure Centre and the points made in your email of January 2017.

A. We have had discussions with the council regarding a building condition survey of Eastwood Park Leisure Centre which the Council has commissioned. My understanding is that this is being withheld at present pending publication by the council sometime in the next 3 months.

Information from from East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd - 2nd August 2017 -

Q. Can you give a more positive response as to when a further update will be available -

What meetings are proposed?

Who with?

When?

Have any further reports been commissioned?

If so, please give details.

Will any further reports be commissioned?

If so, please give details.

A. As I said last time I do not think there will be an update until Autumn at the earliest.

EASTWOOD PARK LEISURE CENTRE

Information from from East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd - June 2017

As at June 2017 There is no change to the position outlined below.

When will an update be available?

.....do not know at this point, but it is unlikely to be before the autumn.

EASTWOOD PARK LEISURE CENTRE

Information from from East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Ltd - January 2017

‘.....We discussed this at the Information and Consultation Centre in December, The centre is scheduled for closure in 2019 for major maintenance and repairs, and the Council approved £6M for this in 2014.

We are currently working with council colleagues to look at options around this, as the £6M falls somewhat short of the amount required, and other approaches may allow us to leverage external funding; and realise new facilities whilst refurbishing Eastwood Park too.

However, other than for the necessary works, we do not envisage closing it.

We are currently looking at significant programmes for developing and growing our gym membership, swimming lesson take-up and theatre sales at Eastwood.

However, most of our money comes through sport and it is the case that Eastwood struggles to meet the needs of the communities, and we face increased competition, especially in gyms and fitness, that Eastwood cannot at present compete with due to scale, condition and design.

A report by Tuner Townsend was commissioned by the Council in 2014 into Eastwood Leisure Centre.

It noted that it was at that point tired and nearing a point of criticality, with a £1.3M backlog of maintenance.

This maintenance was also just that –remedial works, not improvements to maintain competitiveness.

The report proposed three options.

Option 1

was to do nothing and allow the centre to close.

The second option of the two

was to invest £6.5M to address the immediate maintenance issues.

However, the report noted that “Even by spending £6.5m under Option 2 to keep the facility open, this still does not address the step change in facilities that is necessary to compete with local competition and retain / expand the customer base.”

(The third option was costed at £10M. The Council responded by identifying £6M in the Capital plan for 2019/20.)

One of the options we are looking at is whether we could keep the existing centre, but refurbish it as theatre/gymnastics/fitness/performing arts/function suite, and build a new centre nearby, leveraging the council’s capital with external funding to create a long-overdue new centre for East Renfrewshire (three of our four leisure centres are 30+ years old), together with a centre of excellence in Eastwood Park.

That very much depends on finding a suitable site nearby.

However, this is at an early stage and in either case we do not propose that the Eastwood Centre close (other than for works to be done).....‘

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 07 Feb 2019 15:37

Sent: 04 February 2019 15:26

To: Ireland, A (Cllr); Fletcher, J (Provost); Swift, Jim (Cllr); Miller, Stewart (Cllr); Gilbert, C (Cllr); Grant, B (Cllr); McLean, J (Cllr)

Subject: Re: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

Dear Audit & Scrutiny Chairman and Committee Members.

An acknowledgement/reply with the requested information would be appreciated.

Thanks

-----Original message-----

From :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Date : 06/02/2019 - 13:37 (GMT)

Subject : RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

I acknowledge your email.

I haven't quite figured out what to do with it.

Please accept my apologies, I have been rather busy, but will attend to it.

Sincerely,

Jim

-----Original message-----

From :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Date : 06/02/2019 - 13:52 (GMT)

Cc :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Subject : RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

I have had a chance to read it now.

As I see it, Mr Cahill was already in dialogue with PBA, but it would appear had not commissioned the work back in April of last year.

The rules have changed and he would need to put this out to tender now.

However, the decision to commission this work was taken prior to the change in ceiling and as such, seems to be perfectly in order.

I am also comfortable that the consultancy appear to be acquainted with the issues, in that they have had background reports and I assume briefings) and what requires to be addressed and what the focus of their work is to be.

Given the overwhelming desire of people in our communities to see how Eastwood Park could accommodate a new leisure centre and a quick result and the background familiarity of PBA and Ralston McKenzie in particular (he is an ex-Council employee) with this specific project, I cannot see what your issue is.

Sincerely,

Jim

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 07 Feb 2019 15:42

-----Original message-----

Date : 07/02/2019 - 15:25 (GMT)

To :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Subject : RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

Hi Jim

Thanks for your reply....is this a personal reply or are you acting on behalf of all A&S committee

members?

However, I do have a few comments and would appreciate your comments.

It was only at the Full Council Meeting on 31 October 2018 That the Director of Environment was instructed -

'The recommendation was accepted that

'(C) That the Director of Environment will now undertake the master planning of Eastwood Park and this will specifically explore the feasibility of a new build leisure centre within Eastwood Park based upon the latest information on Council property options for schools and office accommodation"

The Director of Environment has been negotiating with Peter Brett Associates(PBA) since 27 April 2018.

There have been reports published 2014, 2017 & 2018, and an Accommodation report published - All concerning Eastwood Park.

Now another report at Â£49,000,00 is to be commissioned - There can't be much left of Eastwood Park that has not been surveyed and documented.

You would have thought that with all this information at their fingertips, Turner & Townsend could have provided this service considerably cheaper.

At the A&S meeting on the 24th The Director of Environment praised Turner & Townsend and said they were the right people for the job.

What made the Director of Environment change their mind?

Why are Peter Brett Associates now flavour of the month?

Again, it was not very clear to those sitting in the Public Gallery who the Director of Environment was in contact with regarding this work and if more than PBA had been approached or expressed an interest.

What happens to all the expertise Turner & Townsend have regarding Eastwood Park.

What are Peter Brett Associates going to recommend that Turner & Townsend could not?

Peter Brett Associates are only going to do what the Director of Environment tells them to do - again the Director of Environment is less than open & transparent with Residents/Council Tax Payers, in their instructions to PBA and on what work they are to carry out.

Should PBA not consult with Residents/Council Tax Payers via an open public meeting, where they can be questioned on their intentions & approach to this work.

I applaud your perceived optimism in that just because someone worked for ERC(Ralston McKenzie in particular (he is an ex-Council employee)) that they know what they are doing !!

It is of course feasible for a new build leisure centre within Eastwood Park.

These previous reports (There have been reports published 2014, 2017 & 2018, and an Accommodation report published - All concerning Eastwood Park) did highlight that there were options available to keep Eastwood Leisure Centre in Eastwood Park -

- The Council and the Trust just chose to ignore them in pursuit of their £40m vanity project.....which probably cannot be accommodated within Eastwood Park (It is important to recognise that the footprint for a site as suggested in option 4 in the consultation exercise requires to be sufficient for a building footprint of 5500 m² along with 8500 m² for parking and external pitches. Allowing for buffer planting and infrastructure such as sustainable urban drainage schemes the full estimated site area is 2 ha (or 20,000 m² or almost 5 acres).)

- so someone has to compromise.

It is not the build but the associated problems put up by the Council and the Trust that they say accompany a new build that are a problem - These do not just simply disappear -

Demolition - This would have an enormous impact on the Eastwood Park site, management of construction and site, traffic management, health & safety and the inevitable impact on St Ninians during exam times. Furthermore, the associated cost and impact of demolition and construction on a multi-use site would greatly increase risk to the Council throughout the project life cycle

â€¢The Trust and Eastwood Leisure Centre / Theatre / Carmichael Hall users would incur a detrimental loss of service.

â€¢There is hard evidence to show that once people are deprived of a facility, many do not return as they will have made alternative arrangements during the period of closure

â€¢As a result of the loss of service, the Trust will incur a dramatic loss of revenue

â€¢Health and Safety; one of the Council's key concerns on this site is level of traffic and congestion at peak times. The new build Eastwood Leisure Facility would only increase this as it is of a larger scale than the current facility and will attract an increase in attendance

Again, it has always been feasible for a new build leisure centre in Eastwood Park, but it needs the Council and the Trust to curtail their pursuit of a Â£40m vanity project for this to happen.

Thanks

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 08 Feb 2019 14:29

-----Original message-----

From :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Date : 07/02/2019 - 16:13 (GMT)

Subject : RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

This is my reply, which I have not run past anyone for comment or agreement, but copied in the Director of the Environment (the relevant officer), so he could comment if he wished to.

I agree with your assertion that the Council does not require a new leisure centre, but that is not the matter at hand.

You ask a range of questions, some of which I think are fair, but others I consider unreasonable because the answers are self evident, others are just daft and your insinuation around Mr McKenzie, who I had always considered competent when here at the Council, is I think rude and unnecessary.

I therefore consider our dialogue on this matter closed.

Perhaps you can try your ward Councillors, as they may be willing to indulge your line of questioning, but I would doubt that and that is I think the rub that you should consider.

It is my opinion and so is probably worth what you paid for it, but you would be better served by not asking dozens of pointless questions that people don't have to answer.

I suspect you get people's backs up needlessly by not thinking through what it is you want to accomplish and asking one or two pointed questions.

Sincerely,

Jim

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 08 Feb 2019 14:33

-----Original message-----

Date : 08/02/2019 - 14:26 (GMT)

To :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Subject : Re: RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

Hi Jim

I addressed my request to the Audit & Scrutiny Chairman and Committee Members.

The Chairman of the A&S committee is Cllr Miller one of my ward Councillors.

He did not reply...thus I was seeking to clarify if you were answering for all of the Committee.

My apologies if you thought I was rude. It was not my intention to be so. My comment was made 'tongue in cheek'.

I am sorry you consider some questions daft. I am sure you have asked quite a lot of daft questions during your time as a Councillor.

It would appear that you only want me to ask the questions that you want to answer. How does that work?

I am sorry that I cannot phrase my requests as articulately as yourself but I am not a BA MSc.

I consider your reply somewhat rude.

However, as usual I do appreciate your time and effort in replying to me but.....ouch !

Thanks

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 08 Feb 2019 19:36

-----Original message-----

From :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Date : 08/02/2019 - 16:45 (GMT)

Subject : RE: RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

I was not trying to be rude. I was trying to be honest; albeit perhaps bluntly.

Other people, I suspect, just ignore your correspondence and I was trying to explain why.

I donâ€™t see why I should try to trawl through reams of questions that are unnecessary and read insulting commentary on someone who was actually good at his job.

My suggestion was you should try to be more focused, as asking people to answer pointless questions just irritates people, as does needless insinuation.

In the end Councillors donâ€™t have to answer you and most people value their time.

I hope you take that as a positive, so I may have been harsh, but I am still here and still in dialogue with you.

As you know I took issue with you being threatened by the Director of Education, I suspect no-one else was in your corner then either, which was likely related to reams of FOIs, again possibly needlessly.

I hope I have been less blunt and you will take this email in the spirit it was sent; i.e. trying to be helpful.

I hope you have a pleasant weekend.

Jim

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Re: Eastwood Park Leisure Centre

Posted by RM64 - 08 Feb 2019 19:40

---Original message---

Date : 08/02/2019 - 19:19 (GMT)

To :

This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

Subject : RE: RE: Director of Environment reply to A&S Committee meeting Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 2.00 pm Council HQ

Hi Jim

Pot, Kettle, Black ?

'I don't see why I should try to trawl through reams of questions that are unnecessary and read insulting commentary on someone who was actually good at his job.'

It is my understanding that you accused the Director of Environment (a Council Employee who some may say was actually good at his job) of compiling a biased consultation - some may say this was insulting?

Pot, Kettle, Black ?

'reams of questions' -

(Posted on save Shawwood Greenspace Public Facebook page)

'Jim Swift

14 January at 06:37

Some questions I have for the director of the environment (DoE) at the Council at our next Audit and Scrutiny meeting. I have sent these to him. If you feel you can add to the beneath, I would as always welcome your thoughts.

1. In a consultation, my position would be there should be an equivalent weight given to each of the elements on offer. Does Mr Cahill agree with that statement or should one particular outcome, if it is preferred by staff be promoted within a consultation and if so, should it not be outlined as such?

Option 4 had the longest description in the consultation with a shopping list of benefits and no dis-benefits (unlike the others), emotive but actually meaningless phrases like “future-proof” were used and no costs like opportunity cost, loss of wildlife, loss of free greenspace amenity, access constraints and travel difficulties etc. were not explored. Photos showing large and expansive gym areas in option 4, unlike cramped photos in options 1 and 2. I could go on, but hopefully the DoE gets the point that I and others including an expert do not think the consultation was anything other than very substantially biased.

2. Why was the consultation held prior to the evaluation of sites by T&T? This would have enabled a fairer consultation, as people would have understood better what they were opining upon in relation to access in particular and a more concrete view of what would be lost.

Why was Eastwood Park not included in the sites made available for a proposed new leisure centre?

Why was the T&T report on the future of Eastwood Park not made available to Councillors and the public prior to the consultation?

3. Elderly people who will pay for the LC through Council Tax, but be very unlikely to care about extended LC facilities were excluded by the predominately on-line nature of the consultation. Why was the consultation not extensively promoted beyond the social media environment, given the enormous potential spend and that the Council has a duty to consider the opinions of older people?

4. It is not nimbyism to consider the impact of development on those who live closest to the site of development. Why was no special consideration given to the proposed sitesTM nearby residents, so those who would potentially benefit most from the enhanced facilities and / or benefit the least by the loss of green space and all of the issues that are associated with that to enable more of a voice for those most advantaged / most disadvantaged, many of whom did not know about the consultation?

5. In the other T&T report that sought to identify potential sites for a leisure centre. There was no scoring mechanism proscribed for the sub-domains, so that all the sites would be treated equally and the actual analysis could be taken apart and fully understood, as to how and why the scores arrived at were arrived at?

6. Does the DoE agree that not being transparent with pertinent information, biasing a consultation, excluding key information from the initial report on that consultation and a black box methodology for the choice of sites gives room to the view that the outcome was predetermined and the Council has not acted in an even handed and open way?

7. It is my contention that this exercise has damaged the Council's reputation for being an honest broker. Surely the best way to restore people's faith in ERC would be an admission of the mistakes made and a plan to regain the trust of the public. What will the DoF do to try to restore the public's trust in ERC?

Pot, Kettle, Black?

This is not intended to be rude or blunt but positive, focused and hopefully an honest observation.

Again, as usual I do appreciate your time and effort in replying to me, and appreciate that you feel you were the only person to help me,but maybe you should practice what you preach.

But I am still here and still hope to be in dialogue with you in the future.

Thanks

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