

## **Frequently asked questions - Proposed Deal Leisure Centre**

### **1. Why do we need a new leisure centre in Deal?**

Built in 1987, Tides Leisure Centre now needs major investment to provide facilities to meet today's customer expectations, and to address concerns regarding an ageing and tired building with deteriorating pool plant & equipment. In July 2019, councillors approved £700,000 to undertake urgent plant refurbishments so that the leisure centre can continue to function while long term replacement options are considered, to better meet the current and future needs of the local community and the wider district

### **2. What has been done so far?**

We commissioned a team of consultants to complete a feasibility study for the long-term replacement of Tides Leisure Centre. Their reports have concluded that major investment in a new build facility would be more cost effective than refurbishing the existing centre. A new build would also deliver a transformation of the centre to better meet the current and future sporting needs of the community.

### **3. Does the new Dover District Leisure Centre offer enough sports provision for the district?**

Dover District Leisure Centre has provided a significant improvement in provision for the district. However, we still need to increase the provision of lane swimming in our district, so it makes sense to consider a lane swimming pool in Deal, alongside a learner pool (with moveable floor) and splash pool/aqua play. By doing this, we will be delivering a more comprehensive sports offer to the local community and increasing availability of facilities for all. It is also important that we consider suitable dry-side facilities for Deal residents, which will reduce some pressures at the Dover District Leisure Centre.

### **4. Did you consider other locations for a new build leisure centre?**

Twelve potential sites were reviewed, during the initial options appraisal work, against a range of criteria. The results of this investigation strongly supported the proposal of keeping the centre at the existing site. By developing it in the existing location, the four-court sports hall and indoor tennis centre can be retained.

### **5. Why not increase the number of pool lanes from four to six or eight lanes and/or increase the pool size from 25m to a 50m Olympic pool?**

While the draft Indoor Sports Facility Strategy recognises a six-lane 25m pool would help to address future growing demand, the increase in cost to provide more lanes is not within the affordable project budget.

A four-lane pool provides a significant improvement to existing provision at Tides where there is currently no 25m lane swimming. It would complement Dover District Leisure Centre, which already offers a county standard competition pool, by providing lane swimming as well as an established focus on leisure swimming and family fun. The addition of a learner pool also creates flexibility to provide swimming lessons and / or aqua fitness classes which will allow the 4 lane pool to be swimming-focussed, ensuring better availability of water space.

A 50m Olympic pool is unaffordable (both in capital and revenue terms). Supply and demand modelling, completed by Sport England and consultation with Sport England and Swim England have confirmed that there is not sufficient demand to support a 50m pool in this location. In addition, a

50m pool cannot be accommodated within the footprint of Tides Leisure Centre and is therefore not deliverable.

#### **6.What will happen to the indoor tennis centre and sports hall?**

The tennis centre and sports hall were built relatively recently (opening in 2005 and 2011 respectively). Both are in a good condition and will be retained as integral parts of the new leisure centre.

#### **7.Will the Tides centre have to close while the work is being done?**

The leisure pool will have to close while the new build work is completed however, we intend to maintain as many dry-side facilities as possible. Alternative options are being explored, such as temporarily accommodating the gym in part of the sports hall or Indoor Tennis Centre, while the new build work is carried out. The Council and the site operator will work to ensure that disruption to users is minimised, as far as possible for the duration of the works.

#### **8.What about facilities for young people?**

Alongside a new four lane main pool there are proposals for a new learner pool with a moveable floor which allows the depth to be adjusted from relatively shallow water to deep water to cater for a range of uses. A replacement leisure water area with aqua play and flumes is also proposed. The centre is located next to Dover District Council's skate park and Kent County Council's Youth Hub. The proposed facilities will greatly increase the range and quality of facilities for young people.

#### **9.How much will it cost to build?**

We are currently developing the Concept Plans and considering funding options, with a proposed project budget of £24.8m.

#### **10.Will Council Tax be going up to pay for it?**

The project will be paid for through a combination of Council reserves and borrowing, based on the improvement of the revenue performance of the facilities following completion. We are working with Sport England and others to identify potential funding sources for the project.

#### **11.How will you borrow money?**

The Council can access a range of borrowing at very competitive rates through the Public Works Loan Board. The Council intends to use the improvement in the revenue performance of the site to help fund the loan repayments.

#### **12.When will the new centre be built?**

We are still in the very early stages of developing proposals for a new leisure centre in Deal. These proposals will be subject to a rigorous feasibility and affordability test that will be considered by Cabinet towards the end of this year.

#### **13.Who will run the new leisure centre?**

Your Leisure are the managing operators of Tides Leisure Centre. Options for future management of the proposed new build facility are currently being explored, alongside the development of the building plans, to ensure that the highest quality of service is provided at Tides

#### **14. Will the parking be free?**

It is intended that there will be free parking for 150-175 vehicles, including disabled spaces and drop-off facilities, with similar arrangements at present (up to four hours free).

#### **15. Will the new building be accessible?**

Yes, we're designing access for all. To ensure the new designs meet the highest accessible design standards, the consultant team will:

- follow guidance for designing accessible leisure centres
- take account of feedback from accessible user groups during public consultation workshops
- apply lessons learnt from newly designed accessible leisure centres

The swimming pool, changing rooms and toilets will all be accessible. There will be lifts between the two floors and parking for blue badge holders.

#### **16. Will the new centre have publicly accessible Toilets?**

Design proposals will incorporate publicly accessible toilets and take a similar design approach to Dover District Leisure Centre, locating these before the controlled access areas.

#### **17. How will the new centre be sustainable?**

As with many local authorities, Dover District Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and made a pledge to become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030.

Leisure centres are high energy consumers with space heating and hot water loads higher than any other building type.

Our approach to sustainability for the new Deal Leisure Centre will consider this high energy demand and carbon targets, building in some low energy design principles including:

- Compact form and orientation of the building
- Thermal zoning (warm, neutral and cool zones)
- Photovoltaics (solar electricity panels)
- Other renewable energy sources
- Efficient pool filtration
- Future proofing and flexibility of spaces

#### **18. Will there be electric vehicle charging points?**

Yes, 10% of the available parking will offer EVC points.

#### **19. What about Outdoor Play, Gym, and Teen Facilities?**

The intention to improve wider park facilities including the relocation & provision of a new Multi Use Games Area is currently outside the scope of work for Tides Leisure Centre proposals, however the project is being developed taking future potential work into consideration. Improvements to outdoor park facilities can be funded in the longer term by exploring other potential budgets and possible external funding programmes.

**20. Will there be a Sauna & Steam Room in the new Leisure Centre?**

While this provision can be tested through this current phase of work, in order to be taken forward, it is essential that the additional cost sits within the project budget.

**21. What are the next steps?**

There will be a review of these early design concepts following this period of consultation (20 September – 9 October 2022). A report will be submitted for Dover District Council's Cabinet approval towards the end of the year. If the project is given the go ahead to proceed to the next stage, more detailed designs will be worked on in early 2023.

**22. How will residents and local businesses be kept informed of the project?**

We will work with the local community and keep everybody up to date with project news. You can sign up to the Council's 'Keep Me Posted' online news bulletin. Project newsletters will also be produced and distributed, the Council's social media channels will provide regular updates and Tides Leisure Centre itself will have an information board.