

Update on Saltash Leisure Centre – 17th July 2024

Attendees:

Cornwall Council - Julie Zessimedes, Elly Hammersley, Catherine Thomson, Kevin Reader, Laura Gardner, Jo Wenborne, Celia Davis, Cllr Hilary Frank, Cllr Sheila Lennox-Boyd
Saltash TC - Sinead Burrows, Cllr Richard Bickford, Cllr Rachel Bullock
GLL - James Curry

Cornwall Council - JZ welcomed all and explained albeit an informal update this is the start of an exciting journey, with the intention to ensure that all are fully informed and engaged. GLL have been working positively with CC. Saltash is a pilot and creates an example of how bringing services together in a leisure centre could work elsewhere, with the key priority of health and wellbeing for all at the heart of the plans. The intent is to grow the leisure centre offer, bring in the registration service, add a Safe and Well presence, plus add meeting rooms and drop in for CC officers and to enable the community to seek access to services. There will also be significant investment in the changing facilities.

The Built Facility Strategy, which will feed into the Leisure Strategy, has identified Saltash as a priority area. There will be consultation on the Strategy late summer, with a plan for face-to-face engagement locally, if possible. The Strategy will be presented to CC Neighbourhoods Scrutiny in November. Schools are a big user of leisure centres so one element is looking at how to support schools/leisure operators to provide swimming lessons. There is also recognition of the number of clubs using the centre too.

GLL update/insight – JC advised that the café was contracted out to local operator and is a success, which brings in more people. The core offer is to increase memberships and provide school swimming – there are currently 800 members, the aim being 1,000, and this investment will help drive that target closer. There are now 21 schools that have swim lessons, which is higher than pre covid times. The GLL board had originally given the centre a 2-year window, but the Directors have met with CC Directors and made a commitment that GLL would work to move this proposal forward. GLL will also invest more into the gym. This is a big commitment that has secured board and investment group approval. Furthermore, the Saltash LC team have embraced the challenges and played a big part in getting the centre to where it is now.

The proposed layout of the building was shared which incorporated a space for CC registration, a Safe & Well hub (with a separate entrance), meeting rooms, together with drop down meeting space in the café. There will also be pods for users of the health & fitness area to replace the dry changing rooms.

All agreed that one aspect that will need further consideration is what the space will be called, to represent the mix of customers/users, as well as coordination within the building.

JC confirmed that there will be enough space for the bikes (with the potential to have a fit for purpose container solution) and that there will be no change to the dance studio.

In response to queries about the provision of a separate door for the registration service, although not part of the current plans, it was acknowledged that how the space is used and how it works will be reviewed, especially as times change and space may be used differently.

Registration service – the reinstatement of this service is great news and it's opening hours will be based on their previous offer in the town, which will be 1 day per week. Demand shows that should be sufficient. There will be a dedicated registrar for Saltash, though no ceremony room but will have a ceremony team operating out of there. An out of hours service is not in much demand but this will be the base all week for the face-to-face team. The main aim is to start to offer the service for the residents of Saltash again.

Some disappointment was expressed that there was no opportunity to include a service/ceremony space in the proposal. The feedback was that there is no obvious demand for such a space as only 20 couples from Saltash got married at other CC ceremony space. There is also a need for resources to retain such a facility to a high standard. However, given the planned growth of the town, the population will increase so there will need to be a review of use and needs.

Discussion about alternative venues in the town.

Safe & Well hub - the development of this will be based on the need in Saltash and work with the community to bring benefits for them, not compete with existing community hubs - it needs to be fitting for the town though it is early days for the concept. The key is to create a system of services where they can support people in a more co-ordinated way, thus allowing services to work in a co-located space. It creates a unique opportunity to create collaborative solutions, work with different organisations, help with the upskilling of the workforce and work more effectively by bringing all together. There are different examples of what works elsewhere so there is no set route and plans can be adapted for the needs of the area. The use and offer will evolve over time, and this is the start of the journey. Kim Hager will provide evidence of need required to define/develop the offer.

Next steps:

The immediate action will be for JC to update the GLL staff and from that issue a generic press release, with a more detailed one to follow once timelines are known.

In the coming weeks, there will be a need to collate details of organisations who should be involved/to engage with, and all were requested to send details to CT.

Notes of the meeting will include contact details of all involved.

Thanks were given for keeping Saltash on the map, especially JZ, and to GLL for their work to keep the centre open.

Saltash TC commented that they were impressed and felt positive about the future of the centre.