

EXECUTIVE

DATE: 5th OCTOBER 2009

SUBJECT: LUTON AQUATICS CENTRE CHANGES TO
EXECUTIVE APPROVAL PROCEDURES

JOINT REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	STAFFING	
EQUALITIES	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
FINANCIAL	✓	RISKS	✓
ENVIRONMENTAL	✓	OTHER	

CONSULTATIONS:

COUNCILLORS CONSULTED	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CONSULTED
STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: All

LEAD EXECUTIVE MEMBER(S): Cllr Simmons

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Executive is recommended to approve the following changes to the project approval process in order to shorten the project programme and make the Aquatics Centre available for potential use as an Olympic pre-games training camp;
 - a. Delegating both interim approvals for the project proposals to the Project Director, Robin Porter, in consultation with Cllr Simmons and Cllr Ashraf. The decision would be reported to Executive at the earliest opportunity. Executive would still retain the decision on the final business case.
 - b. Referring the project board's decisions on approval to proceed to Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT

Purpose

2. The purpose of the report is to outline proposed changes to the approvals procedure for the project approved by the Executive on 20th April 2009. The report sets out the reasons for seeking a change, the benefits of making the change and the measures proposed to maintain the accountability of the project.

2012 London Olympics Pre-Games Training Camp

3. The principal driver for the change is a request from the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to review the programme for delivery of the Aquatics Centre to see if it could be made available as a pre-games training camp for the 2012 London Olympics. The original estimated opening date of July 2012 was too late for it to be considered by the Olympic Delivery Authority.

Programme Review

4. The design and construction programme for the project is constantly reviewed as the design progresses. The project team and Luton Learning and Community Partnership (LLCP) undertook an additional review on the basis of providing facilities for an Olympic team rather than a full opening of the Centre, i.e. available for the public. Although the principal sport facilities would need to be ready, other elements such as the café or gym would not, subject to providing appropriate training facilities for any potential team.
5. The review identified possible time savings in the design process around the approval of LLCP's proposals by the Executive at various stages of the project. Currently the proposals are referred to Executive at end of each work stage, three times in the space of less than a year. The programme involves LLCP preparing an end of stage report to submit to the project team who will assess it in conjunction with project technical advisors and prepare a report for Executive. There is also the period between publication of the reports and the meeting itself when work stops pending approval to commence. Overall the process adds between 6 – 8 weeks each time.
6. Removing the two approvals of the interim proposal will, combined with other minor changes, shorten the programme sufficiently to allow the Centre to be open for use as a training camp on 30th March 2012 without affecting the cost of the project. The approval of the final business case by Executive would not be changed.
7. As the project is still at a relatively early stage, there is some degree of flexibility in the programme. The required savings would not be achievable if a decision is deferred to a later date.

8. A number of measures are proposed to ensure that the project team can scrutinise LLCP's proposals effectively and provide an appropriate level of accountability to the Executive:
 - A rolling programme of reviewing design deliverables as and when they are available,
 - A workshop with the project team, technical advisors and LLCP at the end of each work stage to review all deliverables for the work stage and ensure that the work stage has been completed,
 - Approval of the proposals by the project board at the end of each work stage,
 - Referral of the proposals to Scrutiny Committee after project board approval,
 - The reporting of the project board decision to the Executive for information.
9. The proposed changes would not affect any other aspect of the programme. Planning, public engagement and consultation, design quality and safety would not be affected.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no legal implications to this report and this has been agreed with Mary Cormack in Legal Services on 23 September 2009.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no equalities implications of the changes sought in this report. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared for the project before a planning application is made, which is expected to be early December 2009, and will be reported to Executive as part of the Final Business Case. This has been agreed with Val Grant, Head of Equalities, on 23rd September 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no additional costs associated with the proposed shortening of the project programme.
13. If the Aquatics Centre were to be used as a training venue there are likely to be additional costs. It would also delay the public opening of the Centre but, without any details of the likely usage, it is not possible to estimate when the Centre would be available for public use. There may be a need to keep Wardown Pool and the Luton Regional Sports Centre building open until after the games if the Aquatics Centre is not fully open to the public. If this were the case there would be an additional cost to staff, equip and run the Centre as well as the cost of any provision made solely for the teams. In order to provide the necessary level of reassurance to any prospective Olympic team, it would be necessary to guarantee the availability of a training facility. None of these costs are part of the project budget.
14. If, subsequently, a decision is made not to host an Olympic team, there are benefits in opening of the Centre earlier. It would make the most of the

Olympics build up and there may be reductions in operating costs as the other centres could be closed earlier. This has been agreed with Jean Stephenson, Principal Accountant, on 23rd September 2009.

15. The project risks are managed through a risk register that is regularly reviewed by the project board. LLCP also manage a risk register for construction risks.
16. If approval to proceed is given there is a risk that:
 - The Aquatics Centre will not be available on time. This will be mitigated by requiring LLCP to provide, at their expense, alternative facilities as part of the contract.
 - The Centre will not attract an Olympic team. Discussions with the Amateur Swimming Association indicate that, given the quality of the facilities, this is unlikely.
17. If a decision is taken not to proceed there is a risk that:
 - The Aquatics Centre will not be considered as an Olympic training venue. A vital opportunity to market the Centre will be lost and the ability of the town to attract a major Olympic team will be reduced.

ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

18. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. Consideration to highest environmental standards in design and build of the Centre should be outlined in the future. Agreed by Trevor Brennan, Principal Climate Change Officer, on 23rd September 2009.

COUNCILLORS CONSULTATIONS

19. The lead Executive Member, Cllr Simmons, has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATIONS

20. The Amateur Swimming Association have been consulted.

OPTIONS

21. Executive can accept the recommendations as set out or decide leave the project approval process unchanged.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Executive Report 17th November 2008 – Item 8 Luton Aquatics Centre Feasibility Study

Executive Report 20th April 2009 – Item Luton Aquatics Centre Outline Business Case