

Morden Leisure Centre

Welcome to the fifth Morden Park Leisure Centre newsletter, keeping you fully informed about the exciting new leisure project being delivered by Merton Council.

Further updates can be found at: www.merton.gov.uk/leisureformorden

PLANNING APPROVAL GAINED

On 16 June Merton Council's Planning Committee approved the planning application for the new Morden Leisure Centre. During the planning process many people were consulted and this included some statutory planning consultees such as Sport England and the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA in their response advised:

"The Deputy Mayor considers that the application complies with the London Plan, ... the Mayor does not need to be consulted again, and your Council may therefore proceed to determine the application without further reference to the GLA."

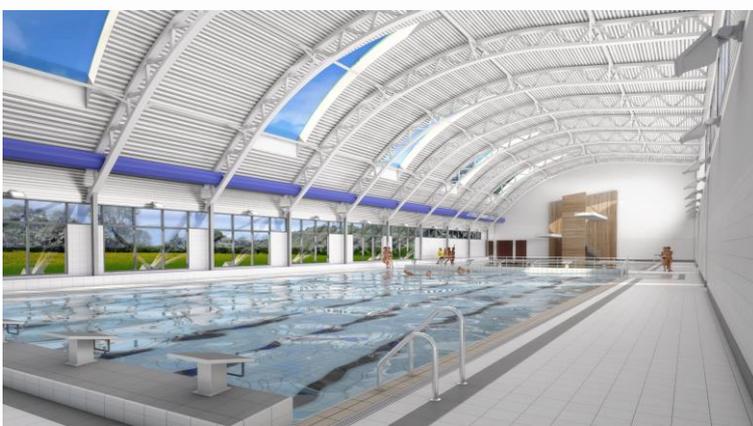
The planning permission includes the eventual demolition and re-instatement of grassland on the existing Morden Park Pools site, but that may not commence until the Morden Leisure Centre is open to the public. There are a number of other planning conditions that will also need to be addressed, and the project team will be responding to them at the appropriate time.

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR APPOINTED

Following a competitive tendering process, and subsequent Council Cabinet approval on the 18 May, Pellikaan Construction Ltd are appointed as the main construction contractor to build the Morden Leisure Centre.

Pellikaan are a leisure centre design and build specialist. They have completed over 900 sports and leisure centres with over 500 pools completed across Europe. Following their appointment, the project team will work with them to complete the design of the centre, finalise the price of the works, and prepare to commence construction activity in early autumn 2016.

The project team has always been aware of the results of the public consultation carried out back in 2014 - prioritising the facilities to be built within the available budget. The design of the Morden Leisure Centre reflects this and we will now work with Pellikaan to determine just how many of the facilities can be provided at this time.



GREENWICH LEISURE LIMITED

Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) continues to be involved in the detailed design and technical aspects of the Morden Leisure Centre. Their priority is to ensure that the design of the centre meets the needs of the users, and can be operated successfully and with minimal cost. Discussions are already underway between the Council and GLL to remove the existing Morden Park Pools from their management contract and replace it with the Morden Leisure Centre. In order for the Council to do this you will shortly see public notices notifying people of the Council's intention to dispose of public open space in Morden Park. Please do not be alarmed - this is to allow the Council to lease the land to GLL as part of the contract, so too the new electrical sub-station that will be leased to UK Power Networks.

ECOLOGY MATTERS – GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Seven Great Crested Newts were found in one of the ponds in Morden Park in the vicinity of the new Morden Leisure Centre's development site. This find, albeit relatively small, does require the Council to make an application for a licence to develop the site. That process does take time, but in the meantime we are pressing ahead with improvements to two of the ponds to improve the habitat for this protected species and other wildlife.

Once we have detailed what works are to be done and agreed the timescales when they must be carried out, we will be making contact with local residents via the Morden Park Association to establish how best we can involve the community going forwards.

PARTNERS

The Council continues to support and work with Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust (MPPFCT) on their long term proposals to open up the Morden Park sports pitches to the community, along with a new pavilion building.

MPPFCT circulated their latest newsletter to homes around Morden Park in May 2016. If you have not received a copy and would like one, email MPPFCT's secretary Ray Skinner – skinhicks@tiscali.co.uk MPPFCT hope to be at the Morden Park Fun Day on 17 July 2016 and at the AGM of the Morden Park Association.

MPPFCT Trustees have set a fund-raising target of £25,000 to push ahead with their planning application. This continues the work originally carried out by David McAlpine of MTW Consultants (in 2013 and early 2014) when £50,000 was raised and used to initiate and develop the project before the Council asked MPPFCT to pause their project to allow the Morden Leisure Centre project to be developed at the same time. We are delighted to hear that MPPFCT is now in a position to push ahead with their exciting and complementary project, subject to funds coming forward.

