



# Western Way Development Consultation Report

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July 2019

## **1. Background**

In 2016, the Council updated its masterplan for the Western Way Development (WWD) to extend not just the area of the site but also the ambition of the project. This included adding not only a larger Public Service Village (PSV) but new commercial and student accommodation elements, creating an even wider range of benefits. At the same time, it was agreed by the Council to work on delivering such a scheme.

The new facilities extends the current site, providing new facilities replacing the current Council depot. This depot will be vacant from 2021 onwards. This will potentially bring together a large amount of new employment space, student accommodation, education, leisure facilities, health and multiple other public, voluntary and community services in a single area to improve public access, service delivery and efficient, and promote skills and enterprise.

The leisure centre is being attached to this project, with hopes of working with and improving on the already existing centre. Working with the public we are looking to see what could be improved to ensure this build is both received well by the public but also effective in meeting the needs of the general populous.

West Suffolk Council and its partners are committed to encouraging and maintaining a dialogue with the public and existing stakeholders throughout the project using innovative and existing ways to involve local communities during this development. The aim of this is to ensure the project is explained to the public but also to ensure their opinions are maintained when refining the plans and designs, where feasible and appropriate.

## **2. Consultation Plan**

To appropriately engage with users and non-users of health and leisure services the council proposed a staggered approach. Initially aimed to engage more broadly with people on how they currently use services and what they hope to see for the future. The council want to co-create a venue that encourages activity and promotes accessible support for healthy lifestyles for them, their family and friends. Phase two of the consultation the council anticipate that we will be able to share initial plans for the health and leisure facilities within the Western Way Development.

Phase 1 of the consultation plan approach a wide range of people, ensuring that we encapsulated the broadest section of our intended demographic.

<b>Who</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Disability forum	Forum meetings and survey	1 May 2019	Lauren
Schools	Sessions in schools	tbc	Lauren/Ellie/Will
Western Assembly of Youth	Through Will at next forum	July	Will
Residents Associations	Through the BAA and survey	28/29 May	Lauren/Ellie/Sabrina
Internal (West Suffolk council)	Intranet/Survey	18 April – 31 May	Mark B
External – West Suffolk councils Families and Communities connections	Social media and website Email and forums	18 April – 31 May	Mark B Lauren/Ellie lead
Users of the leisure centre and instructors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Active</li> <li>• Mums groups</li> <li>• Swim lesson customers</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• Leisure Card Holders</li> <li>• Clubs</li> <li>• Schools Swimming Service – Suffolk Norse</li> </ul>	Survey and face to face engagement stalls in reception and cafe		Kate/Warren/Abbeycroft staff
Health and Social Care (inc Hospital)	Alliance platforms	18 April – 31 May Put on the agenda 29 April at Alliance meeting (Ellie)	Lauren/Ellie
Patients/users of Health and Social Care services	Survey through Alliance	18 April – 31 May	ACS, WSFT, NSFT, CH

VCS and community groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Life Suffolk (prevention)</li> <li>• Gatehouse (dementia and older)</li> <li>• Realise Futures (Learning Disability and Autism)</li> <li>• Suffolk Family Carers</li> <li>• Falls prevention</li> <li>• Art Heads</li> <li>• Skate Park</li> </ul>	Survey through VCS	18 April – 31 May Group dates tbc	Lauren/Ellie/Sabrina
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Phase 1 has been successfully rolled out, with the exception of the Western Assembly of Youth and the Patients/users of Health and Social Care services, successfully and has received responses in which we can incorporate into the shaping of the Western Way Development.

**The following consultation survey was created:**

# Western Way Development - Health and Leisure Consultation

As part of the Western Way development we want to co-create an exciting new public and business offer for the town and this presents an opportunity to build a new Leisure Centre for the people of Bury St Edmunds and surrounding area.

Abbecroft and West Suffolk Council want to work with other agencies and our communities to ensure that the leisure offer is accessible for all residents to lead healthy and active lives.

To help us inform our decision making we would like to hear your thoughts and current experience/usage of the current facilities and what you would like to see for the future. This is the first stage in our consultation process and there will be additional consultation in the near future.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and can be completed on behalf of others and/or for yourself.

## Privacy Notice

As you complete this survey we will collect your personal information (as a legitimate interest, under the Localism Act 2011) to help us assess and improve service delivery in the council's area and share these improvements to our services with you through regular communications.

Your feedback may be included in any reports, publications and/or website updates relating to this project. Your individual responses and personal details remain confidential to West Suffolk Council, and will be used in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Any responses will be anonymised and aggregated so that no individuals can be identified.

For more information visit our website: [How we use your information](#)

## 3. About you

1. I am going to complete this survey on behalf of... (please select one option)

Myself

My child

Family member

Friend/colleague

**If you are a parent (or guardian) of a child, or a relative of a family member, who uses the centre (where you do not), please answer all of the following questions on their behalf.**

**2. Please indicate the age group you belong to:**

- 0-15
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- Over 75

**3. What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

**4. We are keen to ensure we take account of the views of residents from across West Suffolk. To enable us to do this please provide us with the first 5 digits of your postcode below. We will not be able to identify respondents from this information:**

## **4. Your current use of Abbeycroft Leisure**

**5. What type of customer are you? \***

- A current Abbeycroft customer who has used the centre within the last 12 months
- A previous Abbeycroft customer no longer using the centre/last used over a year ago
- Someone who has never used the centre before.
- A member of a club or organisation using Abbeycroft. Please specify name of club or organisation in the box below:

**6. What do you/did you value and like about the current leisure centre?**

**7. As a current/previous user, what type of customer are/were you?**

Annual member

Monthly Member on a Direct Debit Membership

Pay & Play/Casual user without a inspire card

Pay & Play/Casual user with a inspire card

None of the above

**8. How do/did you typically travel to Abbeycroft?**

Walk

Cycle

Car

Bus

Train

Motorbike

Other (please specify):

**9. What activities do/did you typically use Abbeycroft for? (Please tick all that apply)**

Gym

Exercise classes

Indoor cycling

Family/fun swimming

Lane swimming

Badminton

Basketball

Tots Fun

School's Out

Personal training

Football

Athletics

Club use (please state in the box provided at the bottom of the page)

Other (please specify):

**10. We want to understand what is important to you in terms of how you would like to use the new leisure facility. Please rate how important each of the following are (where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important):**

	1	2	3	4	5	No opinion
Dedicated car park area for leisure and health users						
Improving physical accessibility						
Using the latest technology to improve customers booking & payment experience						
Main pool that is suitable for competitions & galas						
Flexible learning pool with moveable floor						
Fun splash water area for family and leisure use						
Flume within pool complex						
Children's soft play area						
Café and hospitality area for leisure and social						
Access to other health and support services. e.g Community Health, GPs, Physio						
Fitness suite						
Exercise classes						
Health Suite (Sauna and Steam Room)						

Please use the box below to provide any additional comments:

**11. What are the reasons why you might not currently access the health and wellbeing services you need?**

**12. Please let us know of anything else you would like captured at this stage:**



**13. If you would like to be involved in further consultation, workshops and/or events regarding this project please leave your details.**

Full name:

Email address:

Postal address:

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.**

**Please hand this survey into reception at Abbeycroft or send to:**

Families and Communities – Western Way Consultation  
West Suffolk House  
Western Way  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 3YA

**Consultation deadline is 31 May 2019**

### **3. Overview of Consultation**

**The Council Received a total of 780 completed surveys.**

The consultation survey questions focused on what facilities were already in significant use at the existing leisure centre, and what the participants would prefer to see in their leisure centre. The survey did provide a range of open questions in order that residents and users could add comments about facilities that were not mentioned.

Demographic

- The majority of responders completed the survey on behalf of themselves - 88.3% (754 respondents)
- There was a high level of female respondents – 64.41% (485 respondents)
- The majority of responders were current Abbeycroft customers who have used the centre within the last 12 months – 54.21% (412 respondents)
- Of current/previous users, 35.2% (207) are Pay & Play/Casual users with an inspire card, 32.82% (193) are Monthly Members on a Direct Debit Membership, 18.54% (109) are none of the above, 6.8% (40) are annual

members and 6.63% (39) are Pay & Play/Casual users without an inspire card.

- 66.38% (391) of members travel by car to the centre with 24.11% (142) walking, 4.58% cycling, 2.38% other (14), 2.04% (12) traveling by bus, 0.34% (2) by motorbike and 0.17% (1) traveling by train.

Comment: Car usage at 70% is considered to be low for leisure centres and highlights the benefit of a central location. It does highlight the importance of securing sufficient car parking on site.

#### Most popular activities

- 347 (59.11%) – use the pool for family/fun swimming
- 202 (34.41%) – use the gym (excluding exercise classes and personal training)
- 183 (31.18%) – use the pool for lane swimming

Comment: The swimming pools were reported as the most popular activities. Yet there were also a lot of comments about the physical accessibility to the pools and the inflexible timeline. Many comments addressed the swimming pools as being good for kids and also for lane swimmers, but the middle demographic of teenagers and young adults seems to be missing.

Comment: The facilities at the gym were widely commented on as a positive thing, however a few comments mentioned the openness of the gym and the lights as making them feel uncomfortable.

#### Sports Clubs –

84 (11.05%) of respondents specified that they were using Abbeycroft for a particular club or organisation

- West Suffolk Swimming Club – 43 of respondents said they used the centre for this club

#### Importance of features in new facility:

- 395 (52.7%) rated a dedicated car park area for leisure and health users as '5' on importance to them. With a further 207 (27.7%) rating it '3' or '4'
- 321 (43.0%) rated a fun splash water area for the family and leisure use a '5', with a further 231 (31.0%) rating it a 3 or a 4.
- 299 (39.8%) rated the fitness suite as a '5' on importance to them in the new leisure centre, with a further 277 (37.1%) rating it a '3' or a '4'.

Comments: This reiterates early and later suggestions, the importance of three core themes: car parking, pool and fitness suite. The importance of car parking

has been addressed in the plan for WWD and should address the needs of the public.

### **Appendix – The Consultation Survey – Open Questions**

The survey received a significant amount of written information in the sections relating what they valued about the current centre and what they hoped to see in the new one. Respondents were free to put down anything they regarded important.

The survey contained 3 open questions which gave rise to a significant amount of information which have been categorised into different groupings and the top themes from each of the main areas are highlighted.

<b>Q6 – What did you value and like about the current leisure centre: Main Themes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Swimming/Pool</b> – both family fun and lane swimming	239	
<b>Gym</b> - facilities and equipment	87	
<b>Activities</b> – wide range of activities and things to do all under one roof	70	
<b>Classes</b> – variety of classes, their value for money, subsidised classes etc.	70	
<b>Location</b> - proximity to town/central location	40	By remaining in the same area we will be ensuring that the location is not affected significantly.
<b>Staff</b> – friendliness/welcoming	51	
Other comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleanliness (13)</li> <li>• Price of membership (11)</li> <li>• Astro/football pitch facilities</li> </ul>		

Comments:

The swimming pool proves to be the most popular feature of the current leisure centre. Being used for both family/fun swimming and lane swimming. The respondents are keen to ensure that the pool is significant part of the new development. Although it is later commented on that despite its popularity the swimming pool, as it is, is causing the most problems/disillusion with the current leisure centre; due to factors such as ageing and ability.

<b>Q11 - What are the reasons why you might not currently access the health and wellbeing services you need?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Price</b> – too expensive for people/ cost outweighs the facilities provided	60	
<b>Time</b> – free time/ other commitments to prioritise instead of going to a leisure centre	47	
<b>Timetables/Availability</b> – many felt the timetables were out of sync with every day working and academic lives	45	
<b>Parking</b> – difficult to find a space/ decreased accessibility	27	
Other comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of support for those with autism</li> <li>• No reason</li> <li>• Don't need it</li> <li>• Outdated</li> </ul>		

Comments:

Comments on the swim timetable, comments that there were not appropriate times for toddler and child swim. Furthermore people commented on the lack of availability around working hours, asking for morning or late evening classes instead of during the day. Additional comments were noted about the leisure centre being overstretched meaning not everyone could be catered to effectively.

<b>Q12 – Please let us know of anything else you would like captured at this stage:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Disability</b> – access for disabled people, more exercise classes for them and a proper changing wet room.	9	
<b>Swimming</b> – range of comments: from cleaner pools, updated pools, demands for a 50m pool and spring boards.	60	
Other comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth club for kids</li> <li>• Car parking</li> <li>• Creshe provision</li> </ul>		

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Covered cycle storage would be useful</li></ul> |
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Comments:

Increasing demands for 50m pool but most of the responses come from participants who are members of the West Suffolk Swim Club.

#### **4. Summary**

The consultation and community engagement has been very helpful in understanding the needs of the public in regards to the current leisure centre and how that can be applied to the development of Western Way. The response has been fairly significant and the input will shape the future WWD. It is clear that the current facilities, although providing an adequate service, are not quite fulfilling the needs of the local populous.