

Harpenden Leisure and Cultural Centre FAQ's – October 2019 update

General	
<p>Why is the Council redeveloping and upgrading sports and leisure facilities in Harpenden?</p>	<p>The proposals are part of the Council's ambitious strategy of upgrading its leisure facilities across the District. New sport and leisure centres have been built at Westminster Lodge and Batchwood in St Albans, and at Cotlandswick in London Colney.</p> <p>Harpenden's sport, leisure and cultural facilities, are in need modernisation, form the final upgrade of the Council's leisure facilities.</p>
<p>What were the Council's guiding principles for the project?</p>	<p>Our guiding principles for the redevelopment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver the new facilities in a way that is self-funding, with no financial requirement from Council Tax; • To increase and enhance our current facilities and the sports & social activities offered; • To provide a quality development, which is future proofed for at least 30 years; • To engage proactively with residents, users, local stakeholders and Councilors throughout the planning and design process; • To provide additional car and cycle parking to accommodate the larger facilities and cater for Harpenden's growing need; • To have continuity of service & to keep closure of facilities to a minimum; • To use the enabling development (Harpenden Public Halls) to fund part of the cost.
<p>How have residents and stakeholders been able to participate in the shaping of the development?</p>	<p>The Council welcomed contributions from local organisations, businesses, residents and stakeholders in shaping the development. Our targeted stakeholder community engagement and consultation included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harpenden Leisure and Culture (LC) design consultation events – July through to December 2016; ▪ Harpenden LC community engagement events – January through to March 2017; ▪ Harpenden LC design review events – August 2017; ▪ Harpenden Public Halls design consultation events – November 2018.

How much will it cost and who is paying?	<p>The budget for the development is £18.8 million. It will be paid for by the enabling development of Harpenden Public Halls, Council borrowing (repaid via increased income from the expanded facilities) and contributions from Harpenden Town Council (for the shared Depot), Harpenden & District Local History Society (for the new history room) and the Swimming Club.</p> <p>The development will be delivered at no extra cost to Council Tax payers.</p>																											
What will happen to the Public Halls?	<p>The Harpenden Public Halls will close and be redeveloped to help finance the improved Leisure and Cultural facilities in Harpenden.</p> <p>A specific community design consultation (design charrette) in November 2018 has helped shape ideas for this. The final report is published on the Council's website (https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/facility_developments/default.aspx).</p>																											
Are parking control measures changing for the new Leisure Centre?	<p>92 additional car parking spaces are proposed.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to the use of new enhanced technology to make sure that only users of the leisure and cultural facilities can use the additional 92 park spaces.</p> <p>We expect Leisure Centre users to still be able to obtain a free period.</p>																											
Construction information																												
What are key project dates and planned closures?	<p>Project dates:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="784 845 2072 1268"> <thead> <tr> <th>Activity</th> <th>Start</th> <th>Finish</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Construction phase start date</td> <td>29 April 19</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Swimming Pool closed</td> <td>29 April 19</td> <td>26 May 19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leisure Centre development (main swimming pool remains open)</td> <td>27 May 19</td> <td>May 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leisure Centre development (swimming pool closed for final phase of construction)</td> <td>May 20</td> <td>Dec 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cultural Centre (sports hall closed but the rest of the building remains active)</td> <td>9 Sept 19</td> <td>Jan 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open temporary gym, studios and creche</td> <td>Mar 20</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cultural Centre (sports centre closed for construction)</td> <td>Mar 20</td> <td>Dec 20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction phase completion date</td> <td></td> <td>Dec 20</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Activity	Start	Finish	Construction phase start date	29 April 19		Swimming Pool closed	29 April 19	26 May 19	Leisure Centre development (main swimming pool remains open)	27 May 19	May 20	Leisure Centre development (swimming pool closed for final phase of construction)	May 20	Dec 20	Cultural Centre (sports hall closed but the rest of the building remains active)	9 Sept 19	Jan 20	Open temporary gym, studios and creche	Mar 20		Cultural Centre (sports centre closed for construction)	Mar 20	Dec 20	Construction phase completion date		Dec 20
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I normally park in the Amenbury Lane Car Park. Will this still be open?	<p>Yes, the Amenbury Lane car park will be open as normal throughout the construction period. You will be able to collect your parking tickets from the Swimming Pool and Sports Centre.</p>																											

<p>How will construction traffic access the development?</p>	<p>The primary route into the development site will be via Leyton Road and a short distance along the Lime Avenue. All construction vehicles in and around the development must be authorised by Willmott Dixon and access to the site will be managed by banksmen to make sure the vehicle movement is managed safely.</p> <p>To ensure the Health and Safety of users of the Leyton Road entrance, one of the brick pillars has been temporarily removed by specialist contractors. This will be safely stored during the works and re-erected in the same location after the works finish.</p> <p>A secondary access is provided via Amenbury Lane car park, this will be similarly managed by Willmott Dixon banksmen to ensure the health and safety of the car park users and leisure facilities and to minimise disruption.</p>
<p>What will happen to the skate park</p>	<p>The site compound areas will be established around the skate park to enable its continued use throughout the construction period.</p> <p>There are no plans to demolish the skate park either during the works, or when construction is complete.</p>
<p>Leisure Centre (General)</p>	
<p>How will facility closures be communicated to customers?</p>	<p>The Council and 1Life (the leisure operator) have a communication plan in place to make sure people are notified well in advance of any planned closure(s). 1Life will regularly email their members to keep them updated through the redevelopment process & will continue to update internal signage and communication displayed in their facilities in the District, as well as on their website. Details will also be included on the Council's website. Information will be available at each centre and on the council website.</p> <p>We anticipate that member communications from 1Life regarding the full closure of the sports centre and the opening of the temporary facility will begin in mid-November.</p>
<p>Will you still offer the same facilities when the learner pool is closed?</p>	<p>The café and viewing area are now closed. The entrance to the pool has changed, with our reception area moving to the corridor by the poolside entrance. The temporary reception is smaller than the original reception. There is signage directing you to the new entrance and reception area.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued cooperation and patience during the construction works.</p>
<p>Will the Swimming Pool be closing at any point?</p>	<p>The remaining section of the Harpenden Swimming Pool will be closed from May 2020 until the new facility opens in January 2021. We are currently in discussion with other local facilities in the District to try and offer alternative arrangements for members. The Council & 1Life will communicate with members & customers in Winter 2019/Spring 2020, prior to the closure.</p>
<p>Will the opening times of the crèche be changing in the new leisure centre?</p>	<p>It is envisaged that the crèche opening times will remain unchanged. Plans are in place to have Crèche facilities in the temporary facility (subject to planning permission) to allow members & customers to continue to use this facility during the redevelopment</p>

When will the new Leisure Centre open?	We currently anticipate the new Leisure Centre will be open in early 2021.
Swimming Pool	
Will the Swimming Pool be closing at any point?	In May 2020, Harpenden Swimming Pool will close until the new facility opens. Alternative arrangements for members are being planned and members will be notified in Winter 2019/Spring 2020, prior to the closure.
If the pool closes, will I be offered casual swim and swim lessons at another location?	The Council and 1 Life are in the process of identifying alternative locations to be used while the main pool is closed from May 2020 until the new facility opens. This will be communicated when the alternate arrangements are confirmed.
I like to watch my child do swim lessons so where can I do this from?	There will be an area on poolside where you can watch your children. Due to space and safety, this seating area will be limited.
Will the main pool water temperature increase?	No, the main pool will remain at 29°C.
Will there be a swimming pool band system?	Yes, we will monitor use and expect to use this system during busy/ peak periods.
Will you still be offering the Fun session on Saturday's and children's birthday parties?	Yes, we will still be able to accommodate both these sessions on the new timetable.
Gym/Sports Hall facilities	
Will the Sports Centre be closing at any point, and will an alternative location be offered for displaced activities?	<p>Sports Hall (partial closure)</p> <p>The Sports Hall has now closed as part of the next phase of the re-development. Badminton, trampolining and gymnastics has been transferred to Batchwood Sports Centre until the new facility opens. Please ask the 1life team for more information or contract the 1life team direct at Batchwood</p> <p>The gym, studios, crèche and changing rooms will remains open and operational during the sports hall closure.</p>
	<p>Temporary Sports Facility (full closure)</p> <p>The gym, studios, changing facilities and creche will transfer to a well-equipped, purpose-built temporary facility adjacent to the current centre (subject to planning approval) in March 2020. Images of the temporary facility are being finalised and will be released when the planning application is submitted.</p> <p>This will enable the construction period to be shortened by up to 4 months.</p>

What will be in the temporary structure?	The temporary facility will have a gym consisting of cardio machines, resistance machines and a free-weight area. There will also be one large main studio, crèche, male & female changing area with toilet & showers as well as the reception and office area.
Will the temporary facility have air conditioning?	Yes it will.
Will the temporary facility offer a gym and studios the same size as the current facilities?	The final proposals are subject to planning, but the intention is to where possible provide like-for-like facilities. However, this may be difficult to achieve given any planning limitations.
Will the group exercise classes continue as normal in the temporary structure?	Yes, but there may be some scheduling adjustment at certain class times. The new finalised studio timetable will be communicated to members in January.
My child goes to the boxing session, will this be affected if it is moved to a studio in the temporary structure?	1Life are in the process of finalising the studio timetable, where they will be looking to still provide children's boxing classes in the temporary studio. 1Life will communicate these classes along with the temp facility studio timetable in January to customers & members
I sometimes hire a court for basketball or badminton at the centre. Are there any alternative plans for us?	You can now use the use portable badminton courts at Batchwood for casual badminton, please visit or contact Batchwood 1Life centre for current timetable. Unfortunately, there will no alternative for Basketball at Batchwood, there are basketball sessions are available at Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre, please check https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/westminster-lodge-leisure-centre/
How many badminton courts are we getting in the new sports facility?	Four badminton courts have been included in the new Leisure Centre
What happens to gymnastics and trampolining on a Saturday?	Gymnastics and trampolining have now moved to Batchwood Sports Centre 9am on a Saturday morning. Please contact either Batchwood or Harpenden leisure centre to book your child/children on to this.
I play football in the Sports Centre hall. Are there any other options for playing?	You will be able to use our outdoor football pitch which also has floodlights, or you could look to rent pitches at the 1Life Cotlandswick.
Will you still be offering birthday parties when you close the sports hall?	<p>Unfortunately, we will not be able to cater for our normal parties such as Laser gun parties, football, disco and bouncy castle. 1Life Cotlandswick have a range of party offerings for children's parties, please check out www.1life.co.uk</p> <p>Fit for Sport holiday camp will continue to run but will now be held at the Batchwood Leisure Centre during the redevelopment, please contact either Harpenden or Batchwood for further details. Alternatively, 1Life have partnered with Next Generation Football Camp who will now be running all their holiday camps at the 3G pitches at Cotlandswick 1Life. Please contact Next Generation or Cotlandswick 1Life to book your space.</p>

Cultural Centre	
What is the seating capacity of the new theatre within the Cultural Centre?	The proposed new auditorium seated capacity is 511. This is an increase on the existing provision of 400 at the Harpenden Public Halls.
What parking provision will there be for hirers / users of the Cultural Centre?	Parking provision will be increased by 92 spaces in Amenbury Lane Car Park. Limited disabled parking will be available at the rear of the new Cultural Centre.
Where will the access be for the unloading of equipment to stage and other deliveries at the new Cultural Centre?	The new Cultural Centre will have a loading area and loading bay at the rear of the building with direct access to the stage area.
How will publicity be addressed as the new theatre will not be as visible from the main road as the current Public Halls?	The Council and 1Life will develop a marketing plan for the proposed new facilities.
What soundproofing measures are being made to ensure loud events do not affect nearby residential properties?	Acoustic reduction measures have formed an important element of the redevelopment proposals. Soundproofing measures will include creation of a new, purpose-built auditorium containing a number of carefully modelled acoustic treatments to very significantly reduce performance noise levels to the rest of the new cultural centre structure and outside the building to accepted national standards for comparable facilities. The performance of these measures is expected to be both an improvement on the current Harpenden Public Halls, and comparable with noise levels generated at the existing Sports Centre.
When will the new Cultural Centre open?	We anticipate the new centre to be open in early 2021.
Harpenden Public Halls	
What will happen to the Public Halls?	The Harpenden Public Halls will close and be redeveloped to help to finance the improved Leisure and Cultural facilities in Harpenden. A community design consultation (design charrette) in November 2018 has helped shape ideas for this. The final report is published on the Council's website (https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/facility_developments/default.aspx).

<p>Will there be a break between the Harpenden Public Halls closing and the new Cultural Centre opening?</p>	<p>There will be no break, but a phased transition of performances and hirers from one site to the other. We are putting in place arrangements so that the transition from the Public Halls to the new Cultural Centre will be seamless and with as little disruption as possible.</p>
<p>Will my current booking times be protected when the new Cultural Centre is opened?</p>	<p>1Life intends to protect existing bookings/hires. 1Life will keep hirers and users informed of any likely changes. 1Life plans to contact current hirers in early 2020 to confirm their requirements in 2021. Only when current hirers' needs are identified, will new hirers be given the opportunity take up bookings.</p>
<p>I don't currently use the Harpenden Public Halls but would be interested in booking a space in the new centre. How do I register interest?</p>	<p>Existing hirers will be given until early 2020 to confirm their requirements within the new centre. Once existing hirers commitments have been met, new booking requests be considered. 1Life will provide the opportunity for new hirers to register their interest at the earliest opportunity. In the first instance please contact the Harpenden Public Halls Administration Manager by email: HPHAdmin@1Life.co.uk</p>
<p>Soil Retention on site</p>	
<p>Why is the soil not being taken offsite?</p>	<p>By retaining the soil on site, we will reduce the number of heavy goods vehicle movements by 1400 in and around Harpenden and Rothamsted Park across the life of the project. This will reduce significantly the environmental impact of the works.</p>
<p>Where is the soil being placed?</p>	<p>The soil is being temporarily stored as it is excavated along the side of the lower football pitch. Subject to Planning Permission, it will be retained in the area between the Harpenden Leisure and Culture development and Lime Avenue (inc. one of the football pitches). This is shown as Figure 1 below. This area was deemed the most appropriate in consultation with the District Council's Parks & Green Spaces team and the Hertfordshire County Council's Sustainability Drainage System (SuDs) team. The will help alleviate flood risk through the park and the recontouring of the football pitch will improve the playing surface and lead to an increase in community use.</p>
<p>Will this require Planning permission?</p>	<p>Yes. We applied for planning permission in autumn 2019.</p>

Figure 1

