



metriX

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

St Athan Community Facilities Workshop – Project Team Response April, 2009

OVERVIEW

This document provides a record of the comments made during the Community Facilities Workshop that took place at RAF St Athan Golf Club on Thursday 4 December, 2008 and the project team's responses to them.

These points have now been fed into the master-planning process and whilst it is impossible to commit to acting on every point, they have all been considered by the project team as part of the consultation process.

i) Sports Facilities

a) Access to facilities

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What guarantee is there that the public will be able to use the facilities at times of high security?

As with any public facility when there is a security alert, safety comes first. If there is a security lock down, access will be temporarily suspended to the sports and leisure facilities until the MoD is fully satisfied it is safe to re-open them.

There have been very few security alerts at the base in recent years and when these have occurred they have tended to be at periods of heightened national security when many facilities, particularly transportation hubs such as train stations and airports, have been similarly put on alert.

2. If there is a security lock down, how long could access be prevented for? If there are clubs using the facilities for competition training, any interruption in their training schedule could be very damaging.

We would hope that any lock down would be short lived and disruption minimised. However, safety comes first and the facilities would not be reopened until the MoD was fully satisfied it was safe to do so.

3. What would security levels be, will there be a pass system?

Whilst security is obviously of key importance, the sports and leisure facilities have been deliberately located in a less security sensitive area to the North of Eglwys Brewis Road, 'outside the wire' and away from core teaching facilities. Accordingly, it is anticipated access will work in much the same way as with any other facility of this nature and that general security will be based on keeping vehicles a set distance from the buildings which will not affect the daily access for most users.

4. Will the leisure facilities be outside the wire?

Yes, a significant proportion of the sports and leisure facilities have been deliberately located in a less security sensitive area 'outside the wire' to the north of Eglwys Brewis Road.

5. How will people access the facilities from Eglwys Brewis Road?

There will be an estate road directly off Eglwys Brewis Road which will lead to a public car park.

6. How will people from Llanmaes access the facilities? Could there be additional access from the road bordering the western boundary of the sports facilities site?

People from Llanmaes would access the facilities in the same way as everyone else via access from Eglwys Brewis Road. There are no plans to create additional access from the road bordering the western boundary.

7. Will people from West Camp have access to the facilities and at what times?

People from West Camp will have access to these facilities outside the core training hours (Mon – Fri, 0800 – 1800hrs) as members of the public.

8. By keeping military and civilian use to different times, will a 'them and us' conflict be created?

An interesting point. Students and military personnel will be free to use the sports and leisure facilities on an individual basis along with the community when these facilities are open to the general public. This will provide a good opportunity for the community and military personnel to intermix. However, there are good reasons as to why members of the public would not be able to use the facilities during the training day, primarily the facilities will be fully occupied.

9. What will be the hours of access for public use? Most people would like access during the day – what will be in the small print?

The sports and leisure facilities will be used mainly by the students, trainers and MoD civilian personnel during core training hours (Mon - Fri 0800 - 1800 hrs). The public would have the opportunity to have access to these facilities outside of these hours.

As with other facilities of this nature, the peak periods of public demand tend to be at evenings and weekends and not during the day in the working week.

10. What access will be provided for local clubs, schools and the local Further Education College?

This is still to be fully determined and a subject of discussion. However, all parties are keen to see the sports and leisure facilities utilised by local clubs, schools etc.

11. Will local use of the facilities be incentivised e.g. with reward points or a loyalty scheme?

This is a good point and something that it is now being discussed with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

12. Had heard that you would only be able to access the sports facilities as part of an organised group – is this true?

At the times specified for public use, the majority of facilities, such as the swimming pool, and fitness suites, would be open to individual members of the public. However, if looking to use the football pitches, for example, you would need to book as a group.

13. What will be the impact on other facilities in the area?

Metrix does not intend for these new facilities to have any impact on existing facilities in the Vale. Management of other facilities is the responsibility of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and they would make any decisions in this respect.

14. How much will people be charged to use the facilities?

This is still to be agreed but charges will be comparable with those made at similar facilities across the Vale.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

15. It's important that schools and clubs have access to the facilities. They should also receive preferential treatment

We think it is important as well. Whilst this is still to be fully determined and is a subject of discussion, all parties are keen to see the sports and leisure facilities utilised by local clubs, schools etc.

16. Local schools need to be involved in the decision-making process and access for young people to the facilities must be provided

A good point. We are consulting closely with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. Part of this consultation will include ensuring the needs of young people are represented.

- 17. It was noted that public access to facilities currently benefited when the schools were on holiday but the MOD would obviously be a full time user**

As previously noted, the sports and leisure facilities that are planned are there foremost to serve military personnel. These facilities will be used mainly by the students during core training hours (Mon - Fri 0800 - 1800 hrs). Outside of these hours, certain facilities (outside the wire) will be available for public use. These include the following:

Fitness suite

Indoor Sports Courts

Swimming Pool

Running Track

Outdoor Sports Pitches (including Floodlit and Astro turf)

- 18. It would be good to have public access in the mornings, evenings and at weekends**

Please see the answer to question 17 (above).

- 19. Access to the facilities should be fully integrated with military and civilian populations having access at the same times**

Please see the answer to question eight (above).

- 20. Full disabled access needs to be considered – both externally and internally – and the needs of all sectors of the community should be taken into account**

A good point and something we are already considering in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. We are committed to ensuring those facilities that are available to the public can be accessed by all parts of the community.

- 21. The sports facility may be overused by the military academy. Will there actually be much benefit to the local community?**

Yes there will. Please see the answer to question 17 (above) for more details.

- 22. Charges for use should be comparable with other local facilities and should be priced within the range of the general public with concessions available. They should also be comparable to other local facilities so they are not closed as a result**

We agree. As previously noted, whilst final charges are still to be agreed, they will be comparable with those made at similar facilities across the Vale.

23. **Service personnel and their families shouldn't be able to use the facilities in St Athan. They should be made to use the facilities inside the wire**

Given the excellent quality of the new sports and leisure facilities and their proximity to the Defence Technical College and Service Families Accommodation, it is anticipated that the vast majority of military personnel will choose to use them rather than travel elsewhere in the Vale.

24. **Opening times for the public should be reasonable and community use should be prioritised. There should also be ring-fenced times for use of facilities such as the swimming pool for learner groups/baby groups/schools etc.**

Please see the answer to question 7 (above).

25. **The leisure facilities will create more cycle traffic from Llantwit Major**

Access demands to the leisure facilities are being considered as part of the Green Travel Plan. Cyclists coming from Llantwit Major would be able to use the new cycleway created along the new Northern Access Road.

26. **We need to concentrate on facilities for children and the over 60s**

We are committed to ensuring those facilities that are available to the public can be accessed by all parts of the community. We are also considering specific facilities that may appeal to younger and older age groups.

27. **Heard a lot of talk over the years, what we want now is certainty so we (as councillors) can go out and sell the scheme**

The MoD and Metrix are both fully committed to this project and over recent months much good progress has been made. Everything is on track and we will be submitting planning applications to the Vale of Glamorgan Council in May.

b) Facilities

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **Will these facilities complement rather than replace other local facilities, particularly those in Llantwit Major?**

Metrix does not intend for these new facilities to have any impact on existing facilities in the Vale. Managing of other facilities is the responsibility of the Vale of Glamorgan Council and they would make any decisions in this respect.

2. **Will adequate parking be provided?**

Adequate parking will be provided and will be in accordance with guidance from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

3. **The police and ambulance service are looking for a facility (issue brought up in a police partnership meeting) – has Metrix spoken to them?**

We are in close consultation with the Police and they regularly attend the St Athan Partnership Group meetings. The issue of new facilities has been discussed but there are currently no plans for either the police or ambulance services to relocate to St Athan.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

4. **It was noted that the community stood to gain a lot from the development of the new sports facilities and this would be welcomed in the Vale**

Yes, we think the community will gain a lot from the new facilities and we hope they will be well used.

5. **The swimming pool will be welcomed**

We think it will as well.

6. **The facilities could become a centre for sporting excellence, particularly following the 2012 Olympics**

There is no doubt the sporting and leisure facilities that will be provided will be of a very high standard.

7. **It was noted that the current facilities that will be made available to the public are aimed at older age groups and there is little by way of facilities for younger children and toddlers. This needs to be considered, for example mini-pitches for young children**

A good point and one that was raised by a number of people at the event. This is something we are actively progressing.

8. **There need to be more squash courts provided**

It is felt that the current number of courts being provided will be adequate to cope with anticipated demand.

9. **Important that it's not just the facilities that are provided but also the equipment to allow the public to make the most of them e.g. hurdles for the athletic track**

It is and we will be supplying equipment as part of the redevelopment.

10. **Requests were made to consider adding the following facilities and making them available to the public:**

Suggestion	Response
- Indoor Astro turf pitch	There are no plans to provide indoor Astro turf pitches
- Climbing wall	A good idea and something we are considering
- Youth club	If a youth club was created to help encourage younger children to utilise facilities, this would be welcome
- Splash pool/children's pool/shallow end in the main pool	A good idea and something we are now considering
- Flumes and diving boards	There are no plans to provide flumes and diving boards
- Trim trail around edge of site	An interesting idea and creating a trim trail around the edge has been considered but has been ruled out because of space constraints
- Outdoor pursuits provision	An interesting idea but this is not something we are considering
- Cinema (the one in Barry has just closed – problem of keeping young people entertained)	There are no plans to create a public cinema on site
- Ten pin bowling/Bowls	There are no plans for a ten pin bowling facility but we are looking into providing indoor bowls facilities as part of the main sports and leisure complex
- Equipped play area for children	Service Families Accommodation will include Childrens Play Space provisions in line with the Vale of Glamorgan Council requirements
- Community centre/thrift shop	A community centre will form part of the facilities that will be available to the public
- Sailing centre	This is not something we are considering
- Sports hall to be set up as multi-use facility	The sports hall will have this facility

- Dance

The community centre and the leisure centre have the potential to be used for this purpose

- Library and internet café

An interesting idea and we are now considering including an internet café as part of the leisure centre. There are no plans for a library

c) Location

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- 1. Why can't the sports facilities be provided on or near the golf course and move the SFA site off the golf course?**

The proximity of the Defence Technical College has dictated where the best location for the sports and leisure facilities will be. These facilities, whilst available for the public, are there foremost to serve the military as they will be its heaviest user. Clearly, it makes sense for these facilities to be as close to the DTC as possible.

- 2. Why aren't the sports facilities located closer to the local population e.g. nearer St Athan?**

The proximity of the Defence Technical College has dictated where the best location for the sports and leisure facilities will be. These facilities, whilst available for the public at certain times, are there foremost to serve the military as they will be its heaviest user. Clearly, it makes sense for these facilities to be as close to the DTC as possible.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

- 3. Important that facilities are made as accessible as possible and this means giving careful thought to location**

We are committed to ensuring those facilities that are available to the public can be accessed by all parts of the community. As already noted, the proximity of the Defence Technical College (DTC) has dictated where the best location for the sports and leisure facilities will be. These facilities, whilst available for the public at certain times, are there foremost to serve the military as they will be its heaviest user. Clearly, it makes sense for these facilities to be as close to the DTC as possible.

- 4. Need to make sure the sports pitches are placed in good draining land – not marshy**

The engineering solutions for the pitch facilities will include comprehensive drainage solutions.

d) Other

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Will the RAF School of Physical Training be moving to the site?

There are currently no plans for the RAF School of Physical Training to relocate to the site.

2. Could groups of interested residents be taken on site visits to see the existing facilities at MOD St Athan?

This is an interesting idea and something we will consider. We appreciate that a number of local residents would be interested in looking round the site as it is now.

3. What will happen to the golf course – already a popular facility? If holes are lost for building houses will they be replaced?

172 homes, which will provide accommodation for Service Families, will be built on the stadium/golf course site and will result in four of the existing holes being affected. However, the MoD, Welsh Assembly Government and Metrix have been in close consultation with the RAF St Athan Golf Club throughout this process and have already committed to replacing these holes.

4. Who would be responsible for the long term maintenance and upkeep of facilities and how would this be paid for?

Metrix would be responsible for the long term upkeep of the facilities paid through the 30 year PFI agreement. Some of the local facilities / play spaces on the SFA sites may be adopted for maintenance by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

5. Who will run the facilities?

Metrix would run and operate the facilities but the involvement of the Vale of Glamorgan Leisure Services is being discussed.

6. As equipment breaks or needs replacing, who will pay for this?

Metrix would be responsible for maintenance, repair and replacing of equipment paid through the 30 year PFI agreement. See question 4 re: play spaces.

7. Concern was raised over ensuring adequate policing was in place. Are there any plans to have a police station on site?

There are currently no plans for a police station on site but there will be Military Police who will fulfil a similar role on the base.

8. What activities will take place on the boundaries of the site and how would this affect people who walk around it?

There are no activities planned to take place on the boundaries of the site.

9. Will the road have cycling facilities? Will there be provision for a cycling track round the whole site?

The new Northern Access Road will include a cycleway. There are no plans for a cycle track around the site.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

10. The community has been promised things before that were never delivered. It would be a great shame if this followed the same pattern

The MoD and Metrix are both fully committed to this project and over recent months much good progress has been made. Everything is on track and we will be submitting planning applications to the Vale of Glamorgan Council in May.

ii) Local Infrastructure

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What exactly will the medical and dental facilities provide e.g. A&E, hospital beds?

The medical facilities will be of the same level as a Primary Care Trust and as such represent comprehensive medical facilities that will be available to military personnel and their dependents. For emergencies, students would be taken to A&E as you would expect. Dental facilities will be provided for military personnel.

2. Will there be any maternity facilities on site?

There are no plans for maternity facilities to be provided.

3. Will the civilian trainers working at the College be able to use the medical facilities?

No. The medical facilities will be for military personnel and their dependents.

4. What impact will there be on local schools? To which school will the children go?

This is a point of ongoing discussion with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. At this stage, it is not known how many children of school age will be moving to the Vale. Ultimately, which school they go to will be determined by the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

However, it is worth noting that the Single Education Plan 2006 – 2008 reports that there are currently 1,309 surplus places in primary schools across the Vale which represents 11% of total spaces. This surplus capacity is mainly within schools in the Barry and Llantwit Major areas. In secondary schools, there are currently 618 unfilled places, 6% of total places

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

5. **If people need to be referred to consultants at other, larger hospitals in the area, this will impact on waiting times**

Based on the studies we have undertaken, it is not envisaged that the development of St Athan will have any impact on waiting times.

iii) Museum

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **Will the museum include archaeological artefacts/information found during construction at the site?**

An interesting point. The museum on site will be a Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Museum (REME) so will focus on military history. However, given the length of time MoD St Athan has been in operation, it is entirely feasible that construction work could unearth items and memorabilia that would be suitable for inclusion within the museum.

2. **Could the museum showcase the heritage of the local area?**

As detailed above, the museum on site will be a Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Museum (REME) so will focus on military history. It is therefore unlikely to include details regarding the wider heritage of the local area, except in a military sense.

3. **Could a St Athan historical society be set up on site as an annex to the museum?**

As noted, this will be a military museum but there could be the potential to explore the creation of a St Athan historical society being set up in the longer term.

4. **How many people will it attract and will this cause a problem with traffic?**

The Traffic Assessment takes account of all activities at the site. Whilst we hope the museum will be very popular, it is not felt it will create a problem with traffic.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

5. **The museum might be better in Barry along with the railway museum**

The museum is very much part of the overall military and training ethos of the site and it is felt it would be inappropriate to locate it anywhere else.

6. **It would be good to keep the museum open later to attract youngsters in the evening – there is a lack of facilities for younger age groups in the area**

An interesting idea. Opening hours are still to be confirmed but this is something we will consider.

7. Link it in with heritage coast

There are no plans to link the museum with the heritage coast.

8. Need toilet facilities and a café for kids to eat sandwiches

Both toilet and refreshment facilities are likely to be included as part of the museum.

9. Would be good if the museum reflected a 'sense of place' the history of the local area and St Athan itself

Reflecting St Athan's long association and history with the military is highly likely to form part of the museum's exhibits.

iv) Creche

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Would a new crèche complement the existing one at The Gathering Place?

A crèche is to be provided close to the sports facilities. The crèche will be of an appropriate size to accommodate the military population needs. There will be an opportunity for the wider community to make use of the facility if there are spaces available once the requirements of the military and Metrix dependants have been accommodated.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

2. The crèche is generally supported as more crèche spaces are always needed/wanted

Please refer to the answer above.

3. Child care in the Vale is generally expensive

Please refer to the answer above.

4. Because of the Gathering Place crèche, it would be good to have the one on the base placed further west. Near to sports centre would be good. There always used to be two crèches on base (E and W)

A crèche is to be provided close to the sports facilities.

v) Spar Shop

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **Will there be retail facilities on site for people at the College to use?**

Yes. The existing Spar facility will be retained/improved.

2. **Is the post office on site being retained?**

The sorting office will be relocated from the site to a more suitable location. However, a counter service could potentially be retained for trainees and could form part of the Spar shop.

3. **Is the Spar Shop still owned by the NAAFI?**

The Spar shop is owned by the Welsh Assembly Government but is run by Aramark on behalf of the NAAFI.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

4. **Retail facility is vital for local people – especially those on lower incomes**

Thank you for your comment.

5. **Will the retail facility remain open throughout construction phase? This is seen as important**

The main construction of the Defence Technical College will not directly impact on the retail facility.

6. **Will the shop increase in size? Local retailers would not be happy if it did**

Whilst the facility will be improved and modernised, its overall size is not likely to increase.

vi) Other Facilities

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. **Will the cinema be open to the public?**

At one point, the construction of a cinema was being considered as part of the proposals but due to cost and likely levels of demand, this is no longer the case. Instead, trainees will be able to watch films in a general common room. This would be for military personnel only.

2. **Will the brass band continue on site? Could it be integrated with the REME band?**

It is anticipated that the brass band will continue on site as well as the REME band. There are no plans to integrate the two.

3. Could space be made available for 'extracurricular activities' such as evening classes?

The Community Centre would be available for exactly this type of activity.

4. Could there be an internet café for young people to use?

An interesting idea and we are considering including an internet café as part of the leisure centre.

5. Will there be cadet training facilities on site?

There is currently cadet training on site and it is anticipated this will continue.

6. Will there be an educational 'shop' for people wanting to join the Armed Forces to visit for information?

An interesting idea and something we will consider.

7. Will the faith centre be used as a community hall? If so, this would compete with the Gathering Place

The faith centre would not be used as a community hall.

8. Are you building the faith centre because it sounds good or because there is demand?

It is an MoD requirement for a development of this nature to contain a multi faith centre. It is felt important that there is a place on site where individuals can worship which caters for multiple religions.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

9. Need to have children's play areas near the accommodation – this has happened in the past, but maintenance is a problem

Service Families Accommodation will include Children's Play Space provisions in line with the Vale of Glamorgan requirements.

10. St Brise would be good for small groups that can't fit into other locations (cf Cowbridge has rooms for painting, photography etc)

An interesting idea but as a listed building of significant importance it is felt that the work required to bring the building to a standard suitable for community use would either detract from the building itself and/or require significant alteration of the building. It is the

Metrix proposal to arrest the decline of the building, and ensure it is available to the public to visit in order to see the internal wall paintings and/or use as a place of quiet contemplation.

To be used effectively, St Brise would need to be heated etc – ready to use whenever you step in

Please refer to the answer above.

vii) General Comments

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Will signs on the site be in dual language (Welsh/English)?

It is normal that all permanent and temporary signs which give information to the public are bilingual and, whilst still to be confirmed, it is anticipated that this practice will be adopted for all areas of MoD St Athan accessible to the public.

With regards to the Aerospace Business Park, the Welsh Assembly Government is required to follow its Welsh Language Scheme which states in respect of signs on and in buildings:

'All temporary and permanent signs and new and replacement signs will be bilingual in respect of land and properties owned and used by the Assembly Government.'

2. Could the development's website include 'fly-throughs'?

A good idea. This is something we are currently looking at producing and, once completed, would aim to put on the web-site.

3. Are the local police being consulted with?

Yes. The police have been consulted with from the very beginning.

4. Why is it essential to build on the golf course?

It is important that the Service Family Accommodation is built close to the Defence Technical College to meet as many of our sustainability goals as possible.

172 homes, which will provide accommodation for Service Families, will be built on the stadium/golf course site and will result in four of the existing holes being affected. However, the MoD, Welsh Assembly Government and Metrix have been in close consultation with the RAF St Athan Golf Club throughout this process and have already committed to replacing these holes.

5. The Old Camp used to have an amateur radio club – can we have a new one?

An interesting idea but there are currently no plans for an amateur radio club on site.

- 6. There is a fallow area to the north of the camp near the sheds on the boundary fence – can this be kept?**

This is something we will need to look into further.

- 7. The original brief talks about 7.5 acres of masts on site – where will they go?**

The current masterplan shows an area for aerial erection and military training situated towards the northern part of Picketston.

COMMENTS & RESPONSES

- 8. The redevelopment is on too big a scale for the local area. It will no longer be a rural community**

Whilst parts of the redevelopment do extend beyond the current boundary, such as the Service Families Accommodation, much of the redevelopment is within the current site.

It is also worth remembering that MoD St Athan has been a part of the community since 1938 and at its peak was home to some 10,000 military personnel. Whilst the redevelopment plans are significant, even when completed and fully operational, the population of St Athan will still be far less than this figure.

- ends -