May 2016

Invitation to submit an expression of interest to develop and/or operate an indoor leisure facility within the proposed Replacement Ards Leisure Centre

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1. Introduction to Opportunity

Ards and North Down Borough Council wishes to invite expressions of interest from organisations that are interested in the opportunity to develop and/or operate a facility to target the family leisure market within the proposed Replacement Ards Leisure Centre in Newtownards, County Down.

The proposed Replacement Ards Leisure Centre will be located off John Street, Newtownards on the site currently occupied by Dairy Hall Playing Fields and will replace the existing Ards Leisure Centre at William Street, which is no longer fit for purpose. Please see site location map below.

Site Location Plan – Not to scale

A procurement exercise is currently underway to attract and appoint a suitable building contractor to construct the Replacement Ards Leisure Centre and works are currently programmed to facilitate centre opening in Summer 2018.

The proposed design seeks to replace key services currently available at the existing Ards Leisure Centre and introduce new facilities to complement those nearby and introduce an element of flexibility to meet the changing needs and demands of residents and visitors alike. The strong demand for new facilities within the area has been identified through detailed analysis and Council consultation with a variety of groups.

The Replacement Ards Leisure Centre will act as the primary leisure destination for Newtownards and the surrounding area.

Council see the inclusion of a family leisure activity within this new development as an exciting new opportunity to add variety to and complement the proposed facility mix within the Replacement Ards Leisure Centre.
The interior shell space (referred to as the ‘flexible space’ throughout this document) proposed to house this activity, will be located on the ground floor of the new centre and has the potential to be further developed and fitted out by an independent operator. Various models for development and/or operation will be considered.

At this stage in the process we do not wish to be prescriptive and are interested in exploring any proposals that are viable and compatible with the proposed facility mix throughout the centre and are in line with Council’s objectives. Please see below details of the proposed facility mix.

### Key Facility Mix

#### Pool Provision
- 6 lane 25m Gala Pool
- 20m Teaching Pool
- Water Splash Play with Paddling Pool
- Spa with Vitality Pool
- Sauna, Steam and Treatment Room

#### Court Provision
- 6 Court Sports Hall
- Covered Sports Pitch

#### Gym Provision
- Fitness Suite

#### Room Provision
- Multi-purpose Meeting Rooms
- Dance, Cycle and SPin Studios Party Rooms

#### Food Provision
- Cafe and Kitchen

#### Indoor Play Provision
- Indoor Family Activity Space
- Indoor Soft Play

#### Outdoor Provision
- Outdoor Adventure Play Area
- Outdoor Skate / BMX Park
- Outdoor Mountain Bike Area

#### Parking Provision
- 233 Standard Parking Spaces
- 16 Accessible Parking Spaces
- 23 Family Spaces
- 4 Coach Spaces
- 16 Motorbike Spaces

The above facilities are supported by full ancillary services including toilets, changing facilities and stores etc.
2. The Aim of this Market Engagement Process

This is a new and exciting opportunity for Council to explore a wide range of family leisure facility options which would ultimately enhance the proposed Replacement Ards Leisure Centre, complement the existing Council provision throughout the borough and attract a greater number of visitors.

The target market has been identified as the family leisure market, however we are keen to ensure that the proposed facility is accessible and attractive to a wide range of user groups.

We are inviting interested parties to engage with us to help us understand the current market. All information received at this stage will set the agenda and influence the design of the procurement package and process and help inform our consideration of a suitable activity, how this is fitted out and operated.

Council recognises the need to engage with organisations who have the commercial expertise and experience to deliver a project of this kind, to examine the range of possible operating models and gauge the level of interest in commercial input to fit-out the interior shell space and/or operate the facility thereafter.

The Council’s objectives for the selected family leisure activity are as follows:

1. To deliver on the Council’s vision
   “Our vision is that Ards and North Down will be a place to be proud of which is more prosperous, vibrant, healthy, sustainable and where people enjoy an excellent quality of life.”

2. To deliver on the Council’s objectives, namely;
   a) Improve health, wellbeing and promote active lifestyles
   b) Invest in and promote facilities and outdoor spaces
   c) Enhance the visitor experience to increase visitor spend
   d) Deliver high quality customer focussed services
   e) Establish and grow productive parnterships

3. To provide a quality leisure experience to both local residents and visitors to the Borough.

4. To assist in delivering the health agenda by offering an exciting active leisure product to residents of the Borough.

5. To complement existing Council leisure provision particularly at the Replacement Ards Leisure Centre; Aurora, Comber Leisure Centre and Londonderry Park.

6. To be particularly attractive to the local demographic who historically have not utilised existing Council leisure provision.

7. To encourage active leisure participation by residents and in particular families and the teenage market.

8. To encourage natural migration from the external facilities at the Replacement Ards Leisure Centre into the indoor leisure provision to encourage a lifetime of active participation.

9. To ensure that a wide range of leisure provision is on offer that will encourage all elements of the population to be active.

10. To provide within the Borough an affordable option for residents who wish to be active and are seeking an alternative to traditional leisure and sporting pursuits.
The following section is intended to give your organisation as much information as possible to inform your response but please do not hesitate to contact us should you require anything further.

Traditionally, leisure centres are comprised of pre-defined spaces proposed for specific functions. However the Council propose to include a space within the facility mix which can be flexible and adaptable to allow for change and refreshment over time should tastes and demands dictate.

Ideally, the selected activity will encourage participation from the family leisure market and attract the local demographic who has historically not utilised existing Council leisure provision to spend time in the proposed leisure centre and therefore ultimately increase the number of users, spend per head, dwell time and encourage active participation.

The flexible space is primarily an interior shell which has been designed to give potential developers/ operator’s greater flexibility to fit-out and complete the design in accordance with their own specific requirements.
Interested parties will note that the interior shell of the flexible space occupies a prime location on the ground floor and benefits from the following:

- Interior shell comprises open flexible space with an area of approximately 675 m² and 2no. adjoining store rooms with areas of approximately 16 m² and 20 m².
- Minimum of double height space throughout with extended height available to the majority of the space where it follows the roof profile. Height ranges between approximately 6.8 m and 12.3 m at the highest point.
- Occupies a corner site within the centre and benefits from 2no. external walls with windows and therefore natural light.
- Accessed off the junction between the main circulation corridors and is located beside the main reception desk and therefore a premium location for centre footfall.
- Located close to soft play space and main public access stairs and lifts and all ground floor level communal facilities such as the café.
Please see below for further detail on the interior shell proposed to house the flexible space:

**Interior Shell Finish Specification**

There are no internal finishes to the interior of the space with exposed blockwork to all internal walls but the inner face of the building perimeter wall is plastered to aid air tightness.

The ceiling will simply be the underside of the roof construction as no separate finish has been included.

The floor will be left as an exposed structural slab with no screed. This leaves a zone of approximately 140mm above the slab to accommodate a future floor finish to suit the proposed activity. A number of drainage upstands and manholes will be included for potential future use.

No trims such as skirtings, architraves or blinds will be provided although internal doors will be provided to match doors elsewhere in the building. Round structural concrete columns will be left exposed.

**Structure & Form**

The flexible space has been provided as an interior shell with internal access from the main circulation “Street”.

The space has double door width access with large glazed panels within the doors and to either side. In addition there are two double door width fire escape openings to outside.

The flexible space includes two dedicated stores with double door access and has 7no. unopenable double glazed windows to outside with louvre openings from the store closest to the outside perimeter wall. It also has 6no. internal glazed screens which allow views into and out from this space to the adjacent “Street” circulation space.

Note: There is a line of structural columns with one bay of cross bracing at approximately one third distance along the length of the main part of the hall and this coincides with the end of the flat roof over. The roof over the remainder of the hall is pitched and creates a high void as can be seen from the associated sections.

**Mechanical and Electrical Provisions:**

- Independent sub-metered mains water supply
- Gas-fired roof mounted fresh air units for ventilation and warm air heating with independent sub-metered gas supply
- Independent lighting & power distribution board
- General power provisions
- Automated external door access
- Suspended hi-bay dimmable LED lighting
- Emergency Lighting
- Wired for data point and wifi provision
- High-bay aspirating fire detection and alarm system
- Induction Loop System
- PA System with Local Sound Rack
- CCTV
- Sub-zoned intruder alarm system
Plan of Flexible Space  (not to scale)

Flexible Space Long Section  (not to scale)

Note: Dimensions are measured from the equivalent FFL level proposed for the rest of the Ground Floor.
4. The Process Going Forward and Response Requirements

The process going forward

Council proposes to seek expressions of interest from a wide variety of commercial organisations who are interested in submitting proposals. This engagement process is intended to help Council achieve the aim of attracting leisure activity developers/ operators, develop a fuller understanding of the potential for the development of the flexible space and to help the Council understand the current market and therefore inform the procurement strategy and process.

This market engagement process comprises the following:

- Advertising the opportunity widely
- Seeking responses from interested parties
- Producing a market engagement report to inform the procurement process. This is likely to be based on a chosen activity and model for fit-out and operation.

Response requirements

At this stage interested parties are required to complete the corresponding Market Engagement Questionnaire for the Replacement Ards Leisure Centre Flexible Space and return the completed questionnaire by post or email on or before Friday 17 June 2016, if possible. Submissions received after this date may not be able to be taken into consideration.

The Council does not have a firm and absolute closing date for responses as this market engagement process is not part of a formal procurement process. However, it would be helpful to respond by the above date so that views expressed can help to shape the next steps to be taken by the Council.

Should your organisation be interested in submitting more than one proposal, please feel free to do so and use a separate questionnaire for each.

Contact information and suggested closing date

Closing Date and Contact Details

Closing Date: Friday 17 June 2016

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