Thank you for coming

This consultation event provides information on the proposed redevelopment of the Morpeth Riverside site on Gas House Lane for a new leisure centre and community hub.

We are at a very early stage and this is your opportunity to view our initial thoughts and share with us your views on what the new facility should include.

The project team representing Northumberland County Council are here today and are happy to discuss the proposals with you.

Questionnaires are available and we would ask that you complete one and submit it in the box provided.
New Leisure Centre and Community Hub at Morpeth Riverside

Development Context

A proposal has been developed through the Council’s Market Town Investment Programme to create a new Leisure Centre and Community Hub on a new riverside site. The facility would also incorporate a Library and Customer Services, and potentially a cultural performance venue.

The combination of these uses into one facility allows economies of scale and will create a new exciting venue appealing to a wide range of people.

The development of the riverside site will greatly increase the value of this area of the town to residents and visitors. The aim is to create a destination that serves essential leisure and information needs, whilst adding to the town’s vibrancy and appeal.

Why Consolidate Services

The vision for Northumberland is to create opportunities for delivering better efficiency and effectiveness of public services and a greater customer experience through the co-location and alignment of local services.

Through the Market Town Investment Programme buildings are being rationalised in the town centres with the aim of bringing services closer together and making more efficient use of the available resources.

To realise this, staff and services are assembling at sites that are being developed to deliver a range of interlinked services from a single point of access to benefit customers.

Flooding

The site lies within Flood Zone 3 and benefits from flood defences along its boundary with the river Wansbeck. Any new building will have to account for the effects of flooding and further modelling will need to be undertaken to determine the building design and finished floor levels.

Heritage

The site borders Morpeth Conservation Area and has a number of heritage assets in close proximity and two non-designated historic buildings within the site. These two buildings were previously damaged in the recent floods and no decision has been taken as to their future; studies will be undertaken to fully understand the cost benefit of restoring the buildings for a future viable use.

Parking

The existing car park is well utilised and the issues with parking in the town are recognised by the Council. The need for car parking on this site will be considered in the context of the recently announced multi storey.
New Leisure Centre and Community Hub at Morpeth Riverside

Development Opportunity

We see the potential benefits of the scheme as:

- Morpeth’s current leisure centre, built in 1991, is in need of extensive investment to provide suitable facilities for the town’s current, and projected population.
- The design of the current leisure centre does not make the most effective use of the site given its position overlooking the park and river. The new facility will provide high quality opportunities to support future community health, wellbeing and exciting leisure opportunities to complement the town’s existing offer. We envisage a potential mix of facilities to enable dry sports, swimming, exercise to music, fitness and spa.
- The new leisure centre could include a cultural performance venue serving the needs of local cultural organisations and contributing to the town’s visitor economy and vibrancy.
- Library and Customer Services are currently located in Manchester Street. Integration of the two services is proving very effective and popular with customer; however the current building is not Council owned and a new permanent location is needed.
- Library services will be included within the Leisure Centre developed around new and innovative ways of working - the use of technology will be at the forefront of design.
- The new Library and customer services will allow customers to benefit from a “one-stop shop” for their leisure and library needs enabling services to be accessible for extended hours supported by staff and self-service terminals.
- A new hotel and restaurant to support employment, complement existing shopping and leisure attractions and support the town’s growing visitor economy.
- Creation of attractive public realm offering wider access to the riverside.
Next Steps

The scheme could provide a range of Council facilities in one integrated hub which are consistent with the Council’s aspirations to support the economy and wellbeing of Morpeth and the wider County.

Please fill in the questionnaires and either place them in the box provided or e-mail to morpethriverside@nlpplanning.com

You can also answer the questions and submit your comments using the following:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/morpethriverside

or post to:

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners
The St Nicholas Building
St Nicholas Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1RF

All responses to be received by Friday 6th January 2017.

After considering the comments received during this consultation, the next steps will be:

Early 2017
Further Public Consultation on First Proposal

March/April 2017
Submission of a Planning Application

July 2017 (approx)
Determination of Planning Application

Thank you for attending the event today to view the plans and proposals for this development.