

# Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2012



**Plans for a new school and leisure centre in North Kensington were given the green light at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's December Cabinet.**

**After carefully considering a number of design and cost options, the Council's Cabinet has committed to funding both a new academy and brand new leisure centre. This decision amounts to a £57.8m investment in North Kensington.**

**Over the next few months we will be focussing on developing the option chosen at Cabinet and consulting with the local community on the plans.**

This leaflet is intended to explain:

- ▶ where we have got to with the project so far
- ▶ additional funding agreed for the project
- ▶ progress on the leisure centre plans
- ▶ resident, leisure and academy groups
- ▶ consultation events
- ▶ the next steps

## ▶ Background

We know that our young people can do well when they get a place in a Royal Borough secondary school and have a good chance of going on to A-level study, college and university. But places in our schools are in short supply, especially in North Kensington, and the indications are, that unless something is done, that shortage will continue to grow.

At the same time, the Council is committed to improving the health of residents in North Kensington and wants to make it easier for local people to keep active and stay healthy. For these reasons the Council's flagship ambitions for North Kensington are to build a new secondary school and a new leisure centre, more tailored to the needs of local residents.

Kensington Leisure Centre was built in the 1970s and its sprawling layout does not make the most efficient use of its site. It is expensive to run and it is hard to see it continuing to provide adequate sports and leisure facilities in its current form beyond 2025. We would like to see it replaced by a modern, energy efficient building that offers sports and leisure facilities that meet the needs of the community and which can be enjoyed by residents of all ages.



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## ► Consultation so far

There have already been a number of academy and leisure centre-related consultations. The site for a new academy was identified as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process back in 2008, and this process offered many opportunities for local people to have their say. Consultation to date includes:

- ▶ during May and June 2010, architects John McAslan and Partners, carried out a site feasibility study to see how the proposals could integrate into the local area. Several workshops were held to enable local people to influence the study
- ▶ in September 2010 there was a public meeting organised by local ward councillors
- ▶ in late 2010/early 2011 the Council's planning department held a number of consultation events on the planning brief for the site
- ▶ in May 2011 the Aldridge Foundation (the lead sponsor of the academy) also held a public meeting to discuss the new academy and to enable local people to air their general concerns
- ▶ the formal academy consultation period ran from 16 May 2011 to 26 June 2011. The academy project team met with local resident and community groups as well as local parents
- ▶ in September 2011 there was an exhibition and opportunity to comment on the designs of the six shortlisted architects for the academy and leisure centre
- ▶ since September 2011 a residents' forum has met monthly and will continue to meet as the plans progress
- ▶ a Sponsor Partnership Group has also been formed for advocators of the academy
- ▶ in November 2011 a leisure centre users group was formed and will continue to meet on a regular basis as the plans progress.



## Leisure Centre

**The proposed new centre will have three pools, a 120 station gym and an eight-court sports hall.**

Concerns have been raised over the size of the proposed main pool, which we propose changing from 33m to 25m. Whilst we appreciate that some leisure users prefer the larger pool the Council is proposing to build an eight lane 25m pool as it meets Sport England and Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) standards. It will also give us the capacity to offer much more opportunity for general and lanes swimming, as well as a wide variety of club pursuits, lessons and school sessions.

## ► How the plans have progressed

We have made significant progress developing the plans for a new academy and leisure centre. In addition to agreeing an increased funding package for the overall development we have:

**achieved formal approval from the Government for £17.6m of funding as a contribution towards the cost of constructing the new academy**

**appointed Studio E architects, who are working with the Council and local community to shape the designs**

**instructed LA architects, who in conjunction with Studio E, are working towards designing a bespoke leisure centre**

**set up forums so that the local community and those interested in the plans have an opportunity to have their say.**

# ► Additional funding agreed

**On 12 December Cabinet agreed to take the proposals for a new academy and leisure centre forward and committed to providing further funding that will see a total of £57.8m provided for the project.**

During the meeting Cabinet reviewed a range of options for the development and agreed on one which includes an additional investment of £10.4m towards the new academy from the Council. The Cabinet also committed to providing £24.7m for a new leisure centre and £5.1million for public realm improvements and other enabling works. This is on top of £17.6m of funding already confirmed by the Government for the academy.

The additional funding for the academy will ensure that the design and construction of the building can support the high level of education and first class curriculum that the Council aspires to in all its schools.

In addition, the Council's Cabinet also carefully discussed the different options available for the leisure centre. The current leisure centre was built in the 1970s and is coming to the end of its useful life. The option to refurbish the existing leisure centre was rejected after architects estimated that full refurbishment would cost in the region of £14m, and would only extend the centre's life by ten years. A brand new leisure centre should last much longer.

The £24.7m allocated to a new leisure centre demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving the health of residents in North Kensington by providing improved, modern facilities to make it easier for local people to keep active and stay well.

The preferred option also includes the provision of some new housing along Bomore Road. A more detailed appraisal of this element of the project will be undertaken in the coming months.

The Council's commitment of £40.2m to the academy and leisure centre alongside the Government funding for the academy is a very significant investment in North Kensington. We are now looking forward to sharing the emerging designs with local communities and getting their views.



Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, said: "This decision is very good news for North Kensington and represents part of the Council's ongoing commitment to the redevelopment and regeneration of the area.

"We are prepared to invest the cash necessary to really tackle the disparity between the north and south of the borough. This initiative will not only help to address the shortage of school places but give the community brand new leisure facilities to enjoy for decades to come.

"However, before we submit a planning application we have a lot more work ahead of us and promise that we will continue to involve and listen to people every step of the way."

Following Cabinet's decision, Chairman of the Aldridge Foundation, Rod Aldridge, said:

"The additional funding will enable us to provide an incredible Academy school for the young people of North Kensington and parents will be proud of the high standards we are aiming for. It will also be a valuable community asset, from which the local residents will benefit."

## ► Community groups

**We want local people to get involved and as part of our consultation programme we have formed several forums so that residents, leisure centre users and those interested in the academy can have their say on the emerging proposals.**

Progress on the plans for the leisure centre will also of course be publicised through leaflets, in the Council newspaper, in the local press, the local library, local schools, in the leisure centre and through local residents' associations. They will also be on our website, where you can register to receive email notifications about the academy and leisure centre.

We want to reach as many people as possible and appreciate any feedback people have on the format of these meetings. If you would like more information on any of the different groups and how you can get involved please contact [kalcenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:kalcenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk)

## ► Next steps

**Now that Cabinet has met and selected a preferred option for the development plans we would like to continue engaging with the local community and will be organising several consultation events in the new year.**

The aim of these events is to tell people about the preferred option we'd like to develop, listen to feedback and then finalise the plans before a planning application is submitted in the late spring or early summer of 2012.

We will be hosting a drop-in session on Thursday 26 January from 4 to 8pm and Saturday 28 January from 10 to 2pm at the Kensington Leisure Centre to discuss what was decided at Cabinet in more detail. The Council, architects and other members of the project team will be on hand to answer any questions you may have. Details on the event will also be advertised on the Royal Borough's website and in the local press in the coming weeks.

Following this we will be holding further consultation with local people and the Department of Education on the designs as part of the legal requirements of seeking planning permission in the borough. An application is expected to be submitted in the spring or early summer and a decision by the Council's Planning Application Committee will be made in the summer.

## ► Contacts

You can continue to email us with your concerns, support and comments at [kalcenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:kalcenquiries@rbkc.gov.uk) or by writing to:

**Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
(KALC)**

**Att: Shelley Gittens  
Room B153 Town Hall  
Hornton Street  
London W8 7NX**

You can read more about the project on our website at [www.rbkc.gov.uk/kalc](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/kalc)

And at [www.kensingtonaldridgeacademy.co.uk](http://www.kensingtonaldridgeacademy.co.uk)

Information from this leaflet can be made available in different languages.

For more information please contact 020 7361 3008.

