GEOGRAPHE LEISURE CENTRE

MASTERPLAN

KEY FINDINGS 2017
Dave Lanfear Consulting was contracted by the City of Busselton to undertake a review of current operations at Geographe Leisure Centre and develop a Master Plan to provide a long-range vision for the facility. The Master Plan establishes a framework and guides and supports evolving community sport and recreation programs, services and facility developments over the next 20 years plus and makes recommendations having regard to current and potential future use.

The Master Plan has not been developed in isolation, but incorporates and is informed by the input of the broader community, sporting groups and users of the Centre and outlines potential investments to meet a variety of identified needs as the population continues to grow. The Plan is underpinned by a detailed analysis of changing demographics, industry trends, facility benchmarking, facility capacity and design limitations. The Master Plan is intended to guide the design and implementation of projects as well as the day-to-day operations and ongoing maintenance of the facility.

It is important to understand that projects identified within the Master Plan may be re-prioritised over time, but any investment decision taken should have regard to the long term vision for the facility.

This document is therefore provided as a summary document to inform interested parties/users of the current recommended priorities for Council to consider. It is provided as a summary for planning purposes, where priorities may change over time due to financial, operational and user considerations.
Executive Summary

Background

The strategic review of the performance of Geographe Leisure Centre (GLC) was undertaken to ascertain options to improve financial performance and ensure the facility could be adapted and developed over time to meet the growing needs of the community. This approach is consistent with the Strategic Directions for the Sport and Recreation Industry (SD6) 2016-2020 which advocates the need for the industry to optimise the value derived from public and private funding in tight fiscal circumstances.

The 2017 City of Busselton Strategic Community Plan seeks to create sport and recreation hubs to service local and regional communities.

- Under ‘Community: Welcoming and Friendly Key Goal Area 1’ there are a number of key objectives that are relevant to the GLC, including; 1.2 A community with access to life-long health and education opportunities; 1.3 A community with access to a range of cultural and art, social and recreational facilities and experiences and 1.4 Community services and programs that support people of all ages and backgrounds.

The GLC plays a critical role in delivering on this objective and currently performs a significant strategic role in the delivery of a variety of sport, recreation and leisure opportunities for all ages on one site.

Current demographic considerations indicate that the City grew by 3.5% annually between 2010 and 2015; double the increase of comparative local governments. Growth between 2016 to 2026 is anticipated to continue. Long term population forecasts indicate that whilst the age of the population will gradually increase, between 2031 and 2051 over 34,000 people are likely to be added to the City’s population across all household unit types. This has a consequential impact on the need to increase accessibility and functionality of social infrastructure necessary to service the growing community. The GLC will ultimately need to plan to accommodate a catchment population within a 5km radius of up to 60,000 (currently it is just over 20,000).
Comparison to other Regional Leisure Centres and Financial Performance

In comparison to other similar regional centres it is to be noted that the GLC:

- Performs exceptionally well, particularly when assessed against the immediate catchment population of the site. The GLC attracts in excess of 3 times the normal visitation per head of population for similar leisure centres (i.e. the equivalent of an industry standard 60,000 catchment);
- Has combined labour costs at 79% of the average labour costs for similar centres. It can therefore be considered as operating very efficiently. Conversely the lower labour costs could indicate that the Centre is under-resourced which could impact on effective programming and servicing;
- Operates a staffing structure which is marginally below the full time equivalent (FTE) staffing structure of similar centres;
- Is a relatively effective user of energy being below industry benchmarks;
- Has 2,500 learn to swim enrolments which is double that of Esperance but approximately 400 to 800 below that of Albany, Kalgoorlie, Leschenault and Bunbury. Only Bunbury and Kalgoorlie have more facility members, indicating that the Centre is highly valued within the local community, but noting the GLC has restrictions for growth;
- Has extremely low corporate overheads and depreciation. Operating costs are relatively low in comparison to other leisure centres which has a consequential impact on relatively static operating revenues;
- Cost recovery in comparison to other regional centres is high;
- Gym income increased by nearly $100k in the last financial year. However, the retention levels are low and are a significant concern which requires addressing; and
- Is one of the most popular community facilities serving the residents of the City.

The GLC is, in comparison to regional benchmarks, an extremely high performing centre given the current limitations. In 2014/15 a $1.3m expansion was undertaken to address capacity issues experienced in the fitness areas, cater for increased utilisation, and provide increased revenue opportunities to assist in reducing the burden on rate payers to finance the operations of the Centre. The 160m² gym was relocated and more than doubled to 400m² in size, the crèche was expanded and relocated, a dedicated cycle room was built, and meeting/training rooms, offices, health suites and café were added, and the reception area was reconfigured. The objectives of this expansion have been achieved within three years with memberships increasing from 800 to over 1,800 and revenue generation increasing by over $280,000.
Infrastructure Development Recommendations

To capitalise on investment and address the needs of the City’s growing population this Master Plan recommends a series of options for the future development and resourcing of the GLC which Council may consider over the next 20-year timeframe. These options are prioritised with the objectives of providing the most sustainable solutions for the ongoing financing of the GLC’s operations, and providing the greatest return on investment to reduce the burden on ratepayers, noting that the GLC will never break even or become a profit generating centre.

Community and club consultations identified the following requirements:

- Development of a 50m pool;
- Warm water pool;
- A new squash court facility;
- Development of shallow/zero depth play area;
- Swimming club/water polo club rooms;
- 3 additional Basketball Courts; and
- Larger crèche and re-aligned reception area

With the exception of squash infrastructure, which due to the relative inflexibility of space and high cost of development associated with limited financial return, all of the other components were considered to have merit unless the squash infrastructure is funded by the private sector. The relative merits however need to be prioritised in accordance with:

- The current capacity, functionality and potential capital and ongoing operational costs;
- The relative facility development priorities, having regard to increasing income at the GLC; increasing flexibility and capability of the Centre to deliver a wide range of programs and services; and reducing the net subsidy for each user; and
- Needs assessed against current and projected usage; industry trends and the changing demographic implications.
A series of design principles have been established which focus on minimising operational costs and maximising financial return whilst having regard to current capacity issues and immediate to long term needs of the community. An assessment of the GLC facility composition highlighted a number of critical facility components which needed to be addressed through a long-term master planning process in order to improve functionality and financial performance.

These include, in order of general priority

**Immediate: Planning and development:**
- Review the current extent and functionality of the indoor water space with a view to provide;
  - Water entry for toddlers - currently substandard and to be addressed as a matter of urgency
  - Re-align the irregular shaped pool to provide more effective programmable space for learn to swim
  - Enclose the 25m indoor water body to create a separate lap pool
- Replace the outdoor pool lining as a short to medium term solution whilst its ultimate replacement is being considered and resourced;
- Upgrade and enhance the existing wet changing facilities to incorporate family changing and the ability to service more effective and functional programmable water space;
- Swimming club/water polo club room and associated storage;
- Improve current air flow functionality on the existing courts;
- Temporary car parking re-alignment; and
- Review existing use of court space throughout the district to maximise usage beyond the GLC.

**Medium Term: Planning and Development:**
- Reduce excessive and unnecessary circulation spaces;
- Relocation of group fitness to align with gym activities;
- Re-align spinning room to be adjacent to gym and group fitness activities;
- Enhancing functionality and entrance by the introduction of a crèche and café area to the front of house (prior to entering the centre);
- Extending the entry point for the reception area and provide a secure retail browsing area; and
- Re-align the staff office area and staffroom to improve functionality.

**Long Term: Planning and Development:**
- Consideration of the development of a replacement outdoor pool of up to 50m x 20m (8 lane);
- Incorporate new wet changing facilities and convert existing wet changing facilities to service dry-side activities;
- Potential re-alignment of plant/machinery (subject to determination of the extent to which the existing plant has to increase to facilitate expansion of water areas);
- Enhance the outdoor areas for BBQ, casual seating and children’s water play;
- Consideration of extended court space with associated storage and dry changing infrastructure to accommodate future growth; and
- Consider the development of water slides as a destination attractor.
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Operational recommendations

In addition to the broad development parameters identified above, a series of operationally significant processes and investments have been identified:

• Introduce a customer relationship software system aligned to a financial accounting system and asset management planning to provide greater analysis on programs and users to ascertain whether current services and programming are meeting existing and potential users needs;

• Review and update the current staffing structure at the GLC. As a minimum, there should be:
  • Two lifeguards, as a minimum on duty at peak periods to cover indoor and outdoor water areas (this has currently been allocated within the 17/18 financial year budget). Ideally this should be increased to three to cover supervision to all main water bodies;
  • A program officer to expand group fitness, personal fitness and other service opportunities;
  • The appointment of a gym manager/supervisor to provide direct client and membership relationships in the gym area and provide relief to senior management (this in part has been addressed through the provision of part time hours’ in the 17/18 financial year budget);

• Establish a monitoring and evaluation process aligned to both the financial and customer relationship systems;

• Increase staff capability and expand the service and programming offer;

• Upgrade the gym at the GLC to enhance the ambience and improve services;

• Consider the provision of a 24/7 gym entry option by incorporating a secured second after hours entry point to the gym;

• Re-programming of group fitness in response to the needs of the local market (information derived through the customer relationship software program and customer feedback/surveys);

• Explore opportunities to increase alliances or partnerships with local business aligned to healthy workplace initiatives;

• Enhance and upgrade the Website;

• Explore the use of an app associated with gym and fitness use and market the Centre through a dedicated facility app;

• Development of an energy management plan for the site in addition to the following elements:
  • Install sub metering within the Centre including the pumping station;
  • Install a power factor correction unit;
  • Undertake an independent review of the Building Management System (BMS);
  • Upgrade/improve the BMS to provide additional performance information; and
  • Improve water consumption logging and compare against centre use to see if there is a correlation between consumption and centre use.
Executive Summary

Where to from here?

An assessment of the potential 10-year financial position following the development of the indoor aquatic infrastructure from year six onwards was undertaken. This indicated a progressive net reduction of deficit following the enhancement to the GLC from year six onwards, therefore ensuring the sustainability of the facility and optimizing the contribution from ratepayers.

The key findings of the GLC Master Plan is to be advertised for Public comment for a period of 21 days and will be subject to a further report to Council should comments be received.

The final report is to be endorsed by Council as a guide for future planning. The contents of the Master Plan are to be considered in future reviews of the City of Busselton Long Term Financial Plan and yearly Centre operational budgets.

Note: the key findings are subject to future environmental assessments.

For more information contact

Dave Goodwin
Recreation Facilities Co-ordinator
City of Busselton
Locked Bag 1
Busselton WA 6280

Phone: (08) 9781 1797
Dave.Goodwin@busselton.wa.gov.au
Proposed Alterations

Room Schedule

- Wet Changerooms
- Creche
- Creche Outdoor Play
- Creche Indoor Play
- Gym Office 1
- Gym Office 2
- Gym Office 3
- Gym Office 4
- Gym Male Change Rooms
- Gym Female Change Rooms
- Gym UAT
- Spin Class Room
- Fitness Class Room
- Gym Lobby
- Dry Change Rooms
- Store Room
- First Aid
- UAT
- Gym Lobby

Existing Wet Change Rooms

- Family Change Rooms
- Lobby

Existing Pool

- Spa
- Plant
- Gym Offices

Existing 25m Pool Lining to be Replaced

New 8 Lane 50m Pool

Existing 3 Courts

New Outdoor Seating Area

- 450m²

New Splash Deck & Water Slides

New Splash Deck & Water Slides

New Learn to Swim Pool

- 12x8.5m

New Wall to Separate Pools

Existing Pool

- Existing Spa
- Existing Plant

New Parking (90 Bays)

New Parking (26 Bays)

Bins to be Relocated

Immediate Need

- Medium Term
- Long Term

Subject to Environmental Assessment