

Development Management  
Tim Naylor/ Barry Lomax. Harsh Bhundia  
Kingston Council  
The Guildhall  
Kingston

Kingston  
KT2

Sent by email to:

[Development.management@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Development.management@kingston.gov.uk)  
[Barry.lomax@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Barry.lomax@kingston.gov.uk)  
[Harsha.bhundia@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Harsha.bhundia@kingston.gov.uk)  
[Tim.naylor@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.naylor@kingston.gov.uk)

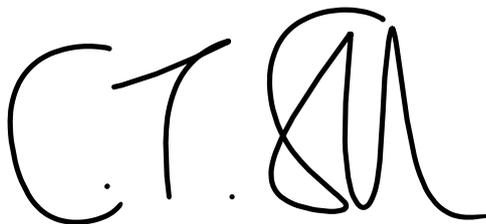
6 May 2022

Dear Development Management at Kingston Council and Mr Lomax and Ms Bhundia and Mr Naylor

Please find my further comments on the above planning application which are under the following headings:

1. The plans for a new leisure centre are fundamentally unsound, provision of any facilities is in no way certain and there are no finalised Leisure Facilities Strategies for Kingston
2. Addition of new document with no notification
3. Limited consultation extension by council
4. Failure to publish full Sport England Response of 23 March 2022 prevents informed and intelligent public debate and informed comment and assessment of Council's response and could be materially misleading, allowing the council to engage in "spin"
5. Specific issues arising from The Council Response to Sport England's comments on the planning application.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. T. S.' followed by a stylized flourish.

Caroline Shah

**1. The plans for a new leisure centre are fundamentally unsound, provision of any facilities is in no way certain and there are no finalised Leisure Facilities Strategies for Kingston**

- i. The Council Response to Sport England regarding the Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy is misleading as the Strategy that was approved by the council on 10 February 2022 is only a DRAFT strategy and is therefore subject to change.

**Resolution of Kingston Council's Place Committee on 10 February 2022**

**5. Transform Kingston: Replacement Community Leisure Centre Appendix F**

RESOLVED that:

1. As part of the Transform Kingston Programme, the Council commits to the provision of a new community leisure centre in Kingston Town Centre subject to planning permission and subject to the financing being confirmed at budget Council on 1 March 2022

2. It be noted that the facilities mix for the Town Centre, as set out in section 7 of the report, is aligned to the need and latent demand identified in the draft Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2022.

Voting:  
 For: Councillors Archer, Moll, Davey, Heap, Kirsch, Thayalan, Wehring, and Yoganathan. (8)  
 Against: None. (0)  
 Abstain: Councillors Arora, Cunningham, Hughes, and Tolley. (4)

The facilities mix for the new centre is subject to change if assessment of "need and latent demand" changes.

The assessment is shoddy and could easily be subject to change

**Decision Notice:**

**ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES**

10 FEBRUARY 2022

**Resolution of Place Committee of Kingston Council**

**Appendix F**

**Replacement Community Leisure Centre**

The report noted that the new community leisure centre was a key component of meeting the strategic aim of heritage-led regeneration across Kingston town centre. Officers were satisfied based on current proposals for the facilities mix that the new leisure centre would be at least quantitatively and qualitatively equivalent to the existing leisure centre whilst it was still operational, and would improve the offer, in line with the needs of the locality set out in the draft Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy 2022. The report recommended that the Committee commit to the new community leisure centre so that, subject to the planning process in early 2022, progress could be made at pace to move into the construction phase of the project. The report sought to provide full transparency regarding the current thinking in terms of facilities mix and design principles. It noted that, although those may be subject to evolution through the town planning process, there was no expectation the result would be anything other than a significant improvement on the existing leisure centre (whilst it was still operational). The May 2021 report to the Response and Recovery Committee had given an outline of the potential facilities mix and this report explained the facilities mix presently proposed with the rationale for that mix in the context of the borough-wide leisure strategy. This had been informed by the community engagement carried out, in addition to the professional advice received on meeting local sports and recreation needs.

**Plans:**

"may be subject to evolution"

"anything other than a significant improvement on the existing leisure centre"

"an outline of the potential facilities mix"

"the facilities mix presently proposed"

- ii. No final assessment has taken place and been approved of need for indoor leisure facilities in Kingston Town or for the facilities that will be provided at a new leisure centre in Kingston town
- iii. The Resolutions to approve the Indoor Facilities Leisure Strategy at Place Committee on 10 February 2022 are only to approve a DRAFT Indoor Facilities Leisure Strategy incorporating therefore a draft assessment of need and latent demand and – by connection between resolutions made at the committee – a

- DRAFT list of facilities to be provided in a new town centre leisure centre, all of which are subject to change at any time
- iv. No Outdoor Facilities Leisure Strategy or Playing Pitches Strategy has yet been completed to support proposed provision of facilities such as the rooftop football pitches at a new leisure centre in Kingston Town
  - v. The Council Response mentions the future production of an “RBK Leisure Strategy”. This strategy should also inform the facilities that are contained within the new leisure centre
  - vi. A planning application for a new leisure centre simply cannot and must not be approved on the basis of draft and as yet non-existent documents, including a draft list of the facilities that the leisure centre may contain

## **2. Addition of new document with no notification**

I note that an additional document named "Response to Sport England" and to which I shall refer as the “Council Response” has been added to the planning application 22/00602/FUL since consultation on the planning application closed.

The stated date on which the additional document was added is the 21 April 2022.

I received no notification from Kingston Council that additional documents had been added to the planning application.

As a person who responded to the full planning application, I should have received notification that the Council Response had been added to this planning application, especially a document that contains comments by Sport England which are a material consideration in any decision on this planning application.

## **3. Limited consultation extension by council**

The council appears to have changed the revised consultation deadline for comments on the planning application to 6 May 2022. Firstly, this is only two weeks from the date on which the new material was posted. This is insufficient time to allow considered and informed public responses. Secondly, this period of time fell over the run up to local elections and the election day itself when the council knows that the public across the Borough and the whole country would be otherwise engaged. The deadline for comments needs to be extended to six weeks after the full Sport England response has been published, which needs to happen with immediate effect.

The need to allow time for fully informed public debate on the council’s proposals for a new leisure centre is critical given the current circumstances in which Kingston Council has already approved demolition of the existing Kingfisher Leisure Centre without firm plans or funding to rebuild the leisure centre that is the subject of this planning application, given that a new leisure facilities strategy for the Borough has yet to be finalised and given that the council has heavily and widely publicised the facilities that the centre will contain as a certainty.

**4. Failure to publish full Sport England Response of 23 March 2022 prevents informed and intelligent public debate and informed comment and assessment of Council's response and could be materially misleading, allowing the council to engage in "spin"**

The Response to Sport England only contains excerpts from the Sport England response dated 23 March 2022 (the "Sport England Response") to which it refers and responds. This is materially misleading.

*I have had sight of the Sport England Response and the council has omitted and ignored and failed to address a number of substantive issues that Sport England and other sporting bodies raised in its response*

- i. The small number of excerpts from the Sport England Response quoted in the Council Response – 9 excerpts and one statement (the “excerpts”) do not reflect the whole of the Sport England Response or therefore allow a complete understanding of all the issues raised in the Sport England Response. By quoting only selected excerpts from the response, much critical contextual information surrounding the excerpts which makes up the bigger part of the Sport England Response - and which is needed to understand fully the position of Sport England and other sporting bodies in relation to this planning application - has been omitted, as have comments and doubts about details of the planning application expressed by Sport England and other sporting bodies
- ii. The excerpts, taken out of context, and omitting other related comments made and concerns expressed and questions asked by Sport England on a specific issue, do not reflect Sport England's full position on the planning application
- iii. Having published a response to some of the issues raised in the Sport England response, it is imperative that the whole Sport England response is published so that the public can know if the Council Response has addressed all the issues raised by Sport England in the Sport England response and if it has addressed them adequately and in full
- iv. There is a strong public interest in understanding all of the issues and all of the issues in full that Sport England raises in the Sport England response in order to allow a “full picture” to be formed of Sport England's position relating to the planning application. This would assist an informed assessment of the council's responses given in the Response to Sport England and would remove any impression of manipulation of the facts or “spin”. It would allow people to form their own impression and permit intelligent public comment and debate on this important planning application and of the adequacy of the council's response

## **5. Specific issues arising from The Council Response to Sport England's comments on the planning application**

- i. The rooftop football pitches at 16.5m x27.5m overall do not appear to meet Football Association pitch dimension requirements for affiliated football of 37 x 27 m
- ii. Temple mentions that consultation made the council aware of the opportunity "to use the roof top ...to provide complimentary additional facilities in the form of recreational 5 a side courts". However, no consultation has yet taken place on a revised Playing Pitch Strategy because no work has not yet commenced on such a strategy as laid out in the Council Response under "Strategic Local Need".
- iii. Opportunistic use of the roof of the leisure centre to provide limited football activities is not sound or robust and needs to be reconsidered as part of the Outdoor Leisure Facilities Strategy before this planning application goes to Committee
- iv. There is draft lobby for the proposed leisure centre which relies on a revolving door to keep out drafts
- v. There will be no reception desk in the new leisure centre.
- vi. The lack of reception desk raises significant equalities issues for people with protected characteristics who may not be able to check in "via remote stations or digital pods with the foyer space"
- vii. The lack of reception desk will prevent people with enquiries or problems from seeking help from leisure centre staff
- viii. The toddler pool will be completely separate from the other main pools with no line of sight
- ix. Separation of the toddler pool from the other pools will make it difficult or impossible for a parent or carer to monitor one child in the toddler pool and another in one of the main pools
- x. The packing of the centre with dry sports facilities above the training and toddler pool will have significant implications for families and restrict their use of the swimming pools if they have children who wish or need to use different pools
- xi. The lack of entrance to the café from inside the leisure centre means users of dry sports facilities at the centre will have to leave the centre, passing out of the payment barriers, in order to access the café. It appears that only pool users will be able to access the café from inside the leisure centre.
- xii. The Council Response does not respond fully to the issues that Sport England raises about the lack of an easy internal route from inside the leisure centre to the café but rather focuses on access to swimming areas. The response is thus incomplete
- xiii. It sounds like the café on the external side of the barriers is not targeted primarily at leisure centre users but may be a more commercial bar/ restaurant. Details need to be laid out given the effect the arrangements will have for users of dry side facilities
- xiv. Studio storage is in a corridor outside of the studios. This could be dangerous as people may fall on objects that impede the corridors if they are not stored properly

and impractical as people may not bother to store items properly if there is no storage within the studios.