

Consultation on a proposed new leisure and community facility for Ashington



NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Proposal for Leisure and Community Facility in Ashington

We are proposing to invest £20 million in a new leisure and community facility for the town of Ashington. To make this project the best it can be we need your ideas and opinions. We particularly welcome your thoughts about the sort of activities and services we could add to those already set out in the proposal below. We're also keen to hear your opinions on the choice of location for this new centre. We'd like to hear from you whether you use the current facilities or not. **Let us know what you think and you could win a Kindle electronic book reader.**

We have included some examples from similar facilities elsewhere, to give you an idea of what is possible.

Example 1: East End Pool and Library, Newcastle

The East End Pool opened in 2000 and has leisure facilities to cater for everyone in the community. There are three pools, including a toddler pool with a bubble machine, studio pool and the main leisure pool with a wave machine and fountains. The East End pool also has all the latest in fitness activities and equipment, including a modern dance studio and a gym.



Afterwards you can relax in one of the two cafes or explore the library. Services include a wide book collection, reading groups, newspapers and magazines, CDs and DVDs for hire, fax, free internet access, printing, photocopying, community information and welfare service, exhibitions, under 5s play provision, storytelling, and lifelong learning courses.

What is being proposed?

The plan is to build a new, high quality, inspirational centre for those who live, work or study in Ashington and surrounding areas. The facility will also attract new investment and increased visits to the town, and increase activity for existing businesses – placing it at the heart of Ashington's future prosperity.

CORE SERVICES/ACTIVITIES proposed:

- Sports facilities, including a pool, gym and studio spaces
- Library services
- Cafe, social and meeting spaces
- Access to information, advice and county council services
- A registrar's office

ADDITIONAL SERVICES/ACTIVITIES that might be provided (other ideas also welcomed)

- Learning and skills development opportunities
- A range of healthcare information/services, e.g. doctor's surgery, pharmacy, etc.
- Arts performances and participation activities
- A wider range of sporting activities

The proposal is to relocate, not duplicate, services and we understand that any final proposal should include consideration of the future of facilities no longer required.



Why is this new facility being proposed?

The idea of any facility like this in a community is to improve health, create prosperity and offer enjoyment. In many cases Ashington's existing community services and facilities are difficult to get the best from due to their condition, location and design.

The new proposal also offers an opportunity – through the sharing of facilities – for a greater range of services, and longer opening hours. This sharing would also make life easier for customers. For example you could visit the library, get some advice on Council services, attend a fitness class and have a coffee with a friend – perhaps while the children are at the pool – all under the same roof, and in brand new, pleasant surroundings.

Example 2: Blaydon Leisure & Primary Care Centre, Blaydon

The Leisure and Primary Care Centre in Blaydon was opened in 2010 and offers a six-lane 25-metre swimming pool, learner pool, studio space, changing facilities for neighbouring sports pitches, a full range of exercise classes and a large state-of-the-art gym.

The primary care centre, developed by NHS South of Tyne and Wear, includes a GP practice, walk-in minor injury and illness unit, community dental, X-ray, podiatry, mental health, physiotherapy, sexual health, weight management and breast screening services, as well as speech and language therapy and physiotherapy. As well as

these services, residents can access health information using a touch-screen kiosk.



The services are accessed by the same entrance and share a common atrium, seating areas and cafe.



Where might this be happening?

At this stage we are looking at two possible sites for the new centre:

- The former Asda site in the centre of the town;
- The former hospital site on West View.

These sites stand out because they are the closest to most households, as well as being best placed to contribute to town centre revitalisation.

Neither of these sites is owned by the Council. Although discussions are underway with both owners about the possibility of buying them, it may be that neither is available. If, in the end, neither site becomes available, or neither is available at a price that represents value for money, then the project will not be cancelled. We will develop alternative proposals.

How did the Council choose these sites?

We conducted a careful appraisal of all of the potential sites in Ashington to arrive at this shortlist, taking into account factors such as:

- How easy is it to get to the site for all forms of transport, and how many households are within easy walking distance.
- Will the location allow the facility to draw users from other areas who would also spend on other services or in shops in the town, and could the site attract additional investment from other sources.
- Is the site big enough to accommodate the facilities and services planned.

Example 3: Grove Wellbeing Centre, Belfast

The Grove Wellbeing Centre opened in 2008 and offers users a leisure centre, health clinics and library.

The leisure centre houses a 25 metre pool, toddlers' pool, fitness suite, multi-purpose sports hall, studio space offering a range of classes, and soft play area. The health centre includes 8 GPs, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody, health advice and information, community nutrition and dietetic service, treatment room for outreach hospital services and offices for social workers and nurses. Library facilities include CDs, DVDs, audio and large print books, and a computer suite with access to the Internet. Other wellbeing services include antenatal and parenting support, a sports injury clinic, speech and language therapy and a wheelchair service.



What happens next?

We would like to ask your views on two parts of the project:

- The possible sites;
- What additional activities and services you would like to see offered at the facility.

The proposed programme for the project is below, including the next steps in the consultation process. We hope things will go to plan, but there may be things that cause delays. We intend to keep the community informed about progress as regularly as possible.

2011/12 December - January. First phase of public consultation (this document).

This will seek views on location and additional activities and services. The consultation takes the form of a written document, plus the option to respond online. We will also be talking to people directly through focus groups and drop-in sessions at schools and public buildings.





2012 February - March. Feedback and second phase of public consultation.

We will offer people a more concrete proposal, including a preferred site and a more definite list of services and facilities. The consultation will be in the form of a touring exhibition.

2012 April. Final proposal goes to the County Council Executive.

We will submit a report to the County Council's Executive Committee. This report will include a summary of the consultation and a detailed proposal, including costs.

2012 Summer. Commence designing and building the new facility.

We hope to begin the design work. Current and potential customers of services will be asked for their views during the design process.

2014

Opening of new facility.

Please complete the questionnaire at the end of this document and return it using the prepaid service. You could also complete it online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/ashingtonproject

Please respond whether you use the current facilities or not. All responses will be read and considered, and a report on the consultation will be made available at the end of the process.

Public drop-in sessions

There will be four public drop-in sessions, one each at Ashington High School, Northumberland Church of England Academy (NCEA) Josephine Butler Campus, Ashington Library and Ashington Institute, where staff involved in developing the project will be on hand to answer questions and hear your thoughts. The meetings will be held at:

Ashington Library 20th December 10.00am - 2.00pm
Ashington Leisure Centre 12th January 4.00pm - 7.00pm
NCEA Josephine Butler campus 18th January 4.00pm - 7.30pm
Ashington High School 25th January 4.00pm - 7.30pm

We are also holding some focus groups in early February 2012 to discuss the proposal in more depth. Please complete question 6 in the questionnaire if you would like the opportunity to become involved.



Tell us what you think-your views are very important

Please return before Friday 27th January 2012. Your response will be entered into a prize draw – **to win a Kindle.**

1. Which town or village do you live in? _____

2. What is your postcode? _____

The Council plans that the facility will definitely include the following facilities and services:

- Swimming pool, for swimmers, learners, leisure users and clubs
- Gym and studio spaces (for classes, e.g. Zumba, dance)
- Library – including internet access
- Council customer services outlet
- Registrar's office
- Social space and cafe

3. Which additional services, activities and facilities would you like to see offered?

The Council also wants your views on other possible activities & services. Please choose up to SIX things from the table below that you'd like to see included at the new facility. Rank the six in order of preference (with 1 being the thing you'd most like to do, 2 the second most, and so on). If there's something you think we haven't thought of – and you think others would be interested too – just add it to the list next to 'Other' and include it as one of your six preferences.

Activity or service	Rank
5-a-side football	
10-pin bowling	
Badminton	
Basketball	
Bicycle hire/group rides	
Boxing	
Children's soft play	
Climbing wall	
Gymnastics	
Indoor bowls	
Indoor cricket/cricket nets	
Indoor hockey	
Martial arts (e.g. Judo, Karate)	
Netball	
Sports coaching	
Squash	
Table tennis	
Trampolineing	
Volleyball	
Watersports (e.g. canoeing)	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	

Activity or service	Rank
Access to higher education	
Advice service e.g. CAB	
Arts performances (e.g. music, theatre)	
Arts workshops (e.g. writing, art)	
Beautician	
Chiropodist	
Complementary medicine, (e.g. acupuncture)	
Counselling	
Creche	
Dentist	
Employment support services	
GP surgery	
Health and diet advice	
Healthy cooking courses	
IT skills development	
Optician	
Other skills, e.g. adult literacy	
Physiotherapy	
Other:	
Other:	

4. Which Council services would you like to access at the facility?

Please tick the Council services below that you would like to be able access. If we have missed any please put it at the bottom, next to 'Other', and then tick it.

Activity or service	Tick
Planning	
Social care	
Licensing	
Other:	

Activity or service	Tick
Trading standards	
Housing services	
Blue badges	
Other:	

5. Which site do you think is most appropriate for the facility?

Please tick one of the options below.

Site	Tick
Either – don't mind either way	
Former hospital site on West View	
Former Asda site	

6. Focus Groups

We will be holding some focus groups to discuss the proposal in more detail. These groups will be made up of customers of existing services, residents and other interested people. We will choose names at random from those that have expressed an interest in joining a group. If you would like the chance to join one of these groups please tick the box below, and indicate which times would suit you best. You would only need to attend one meeting, and it will be in Ashington. Don't forget to include your email address in the address section.

I would like to participate in a focus group (tick)

The best time for me would be:

Thursday February 2nd, 4.00pm – 7.30pm (tick)

Friday February 3rd, 1.00pm – 4.30pm (tick)

Saturday February 4th, 9.00am – 12.30pm (tick)

7. Your details

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone: _____

If you add your email address we will include you in our mailing list, and keep you up to date with progress on the project. We will also use it to contact you if you are selected to attend a focus group.

8. Current use

Have you used any of the existing facilities in Ashington within the last 12 months?
(Please tick)

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Library			
Leisure Centre			
Customer Services			
Registrar			

9. Any comments

If you have any other comments please use the box below. If the box isn't big enough please write on a separate sheet of paper and include in the consultation return.

Comments:

Please hand in at your local council office, leisure centre, library or post to: Culture Leisure & Tourism, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/ashingtonproject

If you need this information in Large
Print, Braille, Audio, or in another format
or language please contact us:-

Telephone 0845 600 6400

Fax 01670 511413

Text phone 01670 542521

Text Relay 18001 0845 600 6400

Email ask@northumberland.gov.uk