

BEATTIE

COMMUNICATIONS

CONSULTATION REPORT LEISURE PROVISION IN STONE

ON BEHALF OF
STAFFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the stages of consultation undertaken with various stakeholders and residents regarding emerging proposals for new leisure facilities in Stone, funded by the sale of council owned land at Westbridge Park for a food store. It is prepared on behalf of Stafford Borough Council to assist in its decision making process.
- 1.2 The purpose of the programme of public consultation was to ensure residents had an opportunity to review information about the emerging proposals, ask questions and provide their views.
- 1.3 Accordingly, this Statement sets down the public consultation undertaken and the document is structured as follows:
- Consultation Best Practice
 - Background and Approach to Consultation;
 - Consultation Activities;
 - Consultation Findings;
 - Recommendations.

2.0 CONSULTATION BEST PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section of the Statement provides a succinct overview of recent Government guidance in relation to good practice in consultation
- 2.1.2 The Government has had a Code of Practice on Consultation since 2000 which sets out how consultation exercises to inform policy decisions should be undertaken.
- 2.2 The Better Regulation Executive Code of Practice on Consultation on behalf of HM Government (2008) sets out seven consultation criteria which are detailed below:

Criterion 1 When to consult

Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2 Duration of consultation exercises

Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3 Clarity of scope and impact

Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4 Accessibility of consultation exercises

Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5 The burden of consultation

Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6 Responsiveness of consultation exercises

Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7 Capacity to consult

Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

2.2.1 In its section on criterion, the document highlights in Paragraph 1.2: *“It is important that consultation takes place when the Government is ready to put sufficient information into the public domain to enable an effective and informed dialogue on the issues being consulted on. But equally, there is no point in consulting when everything is already settled. The consultation exercise should be scheduled as early as possible in the project plan as these factors allow.”*

Paragraph 1.5: “When further consultation is a more detailed look at specific elements of the policy, a decision will need to be taken regarding the scale of these additional consultative activities. In deciding how to carry out such re-consultation, the department will need to weigh up the level of interest expressed by consultees in the initial exercise and the burden that running several consultation exercises will place on consultees and any potential delay in implementing the policy. In most cases where additional exercises are appropriate, consultation on a more limited scale will be more appropriate. In these cases this Code need not be observed but may provide useful guidance.”

2.2.2 In its section regarding timing, the document highlights that policy decisions should be consulted on for 12 weeks. Subsequent Government consultation guidelines have reduced the consultation period to two to 12 weeks. See section 2.3 for more information.

In the case of this consultation, it should be noted that this was not a policy decision. It was an informal consultation to understand views and formal consultation would be undertaken at a pre-application stage in line with policy, should the proposals progress.

2.2.3 A decision was taken to provide a variety of additional means through which people could express their views in line with the Code of Best Practice, which highlights:

“When timing is tight, for example when dealing with emergency measures, or international, legally-binding deadlines, or when the consultation needs to fit into fixed timetables such as the Budget cycle, consideration should be given to whether a formal, written, public consultation is the best way of seeking views. In such circumstances it is important to consider the provision of additional means through which people can express their views.”

2.2.4 Chapter three details the clarity and scope of information. This is an extract from Paragraph 3.5: *“A mixture of open and closed questions will often be desirable, and consideration should be given to offering consultees the opportunity to express views on related issues not specifically addressed in the questions.”*

2.2.5 In addition to providing simple information, the document recommends using several approaches to reach target audiences and to state how people can participate. It also advises to keep the burden of consultation to a minimum for ease of involvement.

2.2.6 In terms of responding to the consultation, the Code of Best Practice provides the following information:

Paragraph 6.1 states: *“All responses (both written responses and those fed in through other channels such as discussion forums and public meetings) should be analysed carefully, using the expertise, experiences and views of respondents... The focus should be on the evidence given by consultees to back up their arguments. Analysing consultation responses is primarily a qualitative rather than a quantitative exercise.”*

Paragraph 6.4 states: *“Following a consultation exercise, the Government should provide a summary of who responded to the consultation exercise and a summary of the views expressed to each question. A summary of any other significant comments should also be provided. This feedback should normally set out what decisions have been taken in light of what was learnt from the consultation exercise.”*

2.3 As part of the Civil Service Reform, Government has published new Consultation Principles to replace the guidance set out in 2008. The key points of note in this documentation are set out below

2.3.1 *“The amount of time required will depend on the nature and impact of the proposal (for example, the diversity of interested parties or the complexity of the issue, or even external events), and might typically vary between two and 12 weeks.”*

2.3.2 *“Information provided to stakeholders should be easy to comprehend – it should be in an easily understandable format, use plain language and clarify the key issues, particularly where the consultation deals with complex subject matter.*

Consideration should be given to more informal ways of engaging that may be appropriate – for example, email or web-based forums, public meetings, working groups, focus groups, and surveys – rather than always reverting to a written consultation. The medium should be appropriate for the subject and those being consulted.”

2.3.3 The documentation adds: *“Sufficient information should be made available to stakeholders to enable them to make informed comments. Relevant documentation should normally be posted online to enhance accessibility and opportunities for reuse.”*

2.4 A number of Local Authorities have also published a consultation code. Bristol Council for example, has an extensive code which follows the seven consultation principles detailed below:

- Time consultations well and allow sufficient time to respond
- Clearly present relevant information and encourage informed opinion
- Be well targeted and reach out to seldom heard groups
- Offer genuine options and ask objective questions
- Be well planned, managed and co-ordinated
- Be listed on Consultation Finder and be well communicated
- Provide fair, accessible feedback

2.4.1 Bristol Council defines consultation as a process of dialogue with citizens and stakeholders which informs of a decision about a new proposal, policy or service change.

2.4.2 It highlights consultation and the democratic process stating:

“Councillors and council officers will always need to weigh the views expressed through consultation against a wide range of other factors: such as legislation and government guidance; demographic data; financial costs and environmental impacts.

“Consultation rarely throws up a single opinion – councillors and officers will often have to make their own judgement about the weight to be given to one or other of the views expressed. They may also have to consider carefully whether the aspirations and needs of future generations - who will perhaps be most affected by any change - might differ significantly from those of today’s population.

“In other words, the results of consultation are never a substitute for the democratic process – and do not replace the legitimate role of elected representatives in decision-making.”

2.4.3 This code does not have legal force and Bristol Council does not guarantee that it will run an open public consultation in every case.

2.5 The Localism Act

2.5.1 The Localism Act 2011, which received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, contains a wide range of measures to devolve more powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities greater control over local decisions.

2.5.2 It should be noted that the consultation regarding leisure provision in Stone is non-statutory and is not required by policy. However, should the proposals move to the next stage, pre-application consultation would be required as part of the planning process.

5.5.3 In the Localism Act, Part 6 Chapter 4 outlines consultation requirements setting out the requirement to carry out pre-application consultation where:

- (a) A person proposes to make an application for planning permission for the development of any land in England, and:
- (b) The proposed development is of a description specified in a development order.

2.5.4 It states the requirements for public consultation are as follows:

- The applicant must publicise the proposed application in such a manner that it will bring the proposed application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land.
- The applicant must consult each person specified in a development order about the proposed application by:

- (a) Setting out how the person (“P”) may be contacted by persons wishing to comment on, or collaborate with P on the design of, the proposed development, and;
- (b) Giving such information about the proposed timetable for the consultation as is sufficient to ensure that persons wishing to comment on the proposed development may do so in good time.

2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012

2.6.1 The NPPF sets out the Government’s new planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs of their communities.

2.6.2 The document outlines the importance of pre-application engagement and front loading.

Paragraph 118 states:

“Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”

2.6.3 The document encourages pre-application discussions with other consenting bodies to ascertain if a particular development is acceptable in principle and to resolve issues at pre-application stage.

Paragraph 189 states:

“Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they do offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community before submitting their applications.”

2.7 Summary

- 2.7.1 A Code of Conduct for public consultation has been set out by the Government for policy decisions. Public consultation is also encouraged as part of the planning system in the UK.
- 2.7.2 The consultation process for consulting on the provision of new leisure facilities in Stone, potentially funded by a food store, was not required by legislation as this was not the formal pre-application consultation on a planning application, nor was it based on a policy decision. Instead the consultation was held to ascertain views on an innovative method of funding leisure facilities in Stone for this, as well as the next, generation. Should this be positive formal pre-application consultation would have been undertaken on the detailed proposal.
- 2.7.3 A decision was made to consult and to seek to follow best practice guidelines in the preparation of the consultation approach, its implementation and the feedback provided to the community.
- 2.7.3 Should a decision be made to prepare a planning application based on the scheme outlined in this consultation, then further formal pre-application consultation would need to be undertaken to ascertain views on the detail in order to ensure that those most likely to be interested in, or affected by, the proposals have the opportunity to make their views known and considered.
- 2.7.4 The following sections of this statement provide details of the consultation exercises that have been undertaken.

3.0 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

The following section outlines the consultation objectives, methods employed, processes undertaken and individuals involved.

3.1 Consultation Objectives

3.1.1 The following consultation objectives were identified for the project:

- To reach those who are likely to be affected or most interested in the proposals at the earliest opportunity, in order to actively engage and obtain views prior to deciding whether to move forwards to formal pre-application consultation as part of a future planning application
- To provide accessible venues for the proposals to be viewed by the community
- To supplement consultation events with postal and online opportunities to comment in order to ensure responses could be given at a time most convenient to the respondent
- To allow discussion between the Borough Council and the general public to enable a thorough understanding of the proposals and to ensure the consultancy team and the Borough Council understand the community's views on the development of the site
- To allow adequate opportunity for the community to consider, understand and comment on the proposal
- To take on board the comments given during consultation and ensure that regular feedback is provided to the local community in order to reflect how those views have been incorporated into the decision making process.

3.2 Strategy

3.2.1 Following a detailed pitch and procurement process, the Borough Council decided to employ Beattie Communications as an independent company to consult with residents in Stone and the surrounding areas regarding the possibility of developing the Westbridge Park site in Stone for a range of uses including:

- A new leisure centre
- A new town park/special events area
- New healthcare facilities
- A food store and/or other forms of enabling development which would be complementary to Stone Town Centre.

3.2.2 The brief specified that activities should include:

- A public consultation exercise
- A presentation to the Council's Cabinet
- Production of a Community Consultation Report

3.2.3 Beattie Communications created a comprehensive programme of consultation which ran from the end of January 2013 to early March 2013. This included:

- Meetings with user groups of Westbridge Park and other stakeholders
- The production and distribution of a brochure outlining the proposals, providing contact details for further information. A freepost questionnaire was provided for ease of response
- Information was posted online for ease of review, regularly updated and provided the opportunity to ask questions or complete a consultation feedback form
- Four well-publicised consultation events/public exhibitions were held to provide maximum opportunity for those interested in, or affected by, the proposals to discuss the proposals, ask questions and comment.

3.3 Selection of Consultees

3.3.1 Prior to the exhibitions, a database was created of interested groups. This includes event's organisers, park user groups and other stakeholders in Stone. This database also includes a list of the local businesses which were supplied with copies of brochures advertising the events for display purposes. This database can be found in **Appendix A**.

3.3.2 Borough Council officers also asked its Ward Councillors to identify any other groups, stakeholders or interested parties with whom Beattie should connect. Councillor Hood suggested Stone in Bloom and this group was added to the database and a meeting arranged.

3.3.3 Following the receipt of flyers online, at the exhibitions or through the post, a database was created incorporating the contact details for residents who participated in the consultation process, so that they could be kept informed. *Due to the Data Protection Act, this database is not included*

- 3.3.4 A letter was issued to the stakeholders on the database advising them of the public consultation process and events. It requested a meeting in order to discuss the proposals in more detail. Copies of this correspondence with stakeholders can be found in **Appendix B**.
- 3.3.5 In order to promote the exhibition to residents closest to the proposed development site, a third-party mailshot company was hired to distribute 7,363 brochures via the Royal Mail to homes in Stone, Walton, Oulton and Aston by Stone. A copy of the brochure, as well as the confirmation of issue and postage from Smart Distribution, the mailing company, can be viewed in **Appendix C**.
- 3.3.6 The brochures were also distributed to all of the stakeholders detailed in the database in Appendix A.
- 3.3.7 To ensure that the wider area was aware of the exhibition, Beattie Communications created a database of post offices, libraries, shops, community facilities, services and businesses and posted copies of the brochure with a letter requesting that these be prominently displayed. A copy of the letter sent to shops can be found in **Appendix A**.
- 3.3.8 The consultation brochure provided a telephone number, email address and website address so residents could ask questions or request further information about the proposals. The brochure also included a questionnaire to enable residents to voice opinions even if they were unable to attend the events. A closing date was not specified on the brochure as it was deemed important to allow residents ample time to participate in the consultation. The brochure was published a month in advance of the last consultation event and the brochure advertised the date, time and location of each event to encourage attendance. A copy of the brochure can be found in **Appendix C**.

3.4 Engagement with Consultees

- 3.4.1 Throughout the consultation period meetings were held with user groups including:
- 05/02/13 – meeting with Stone Festival Committee including representative from Bonfire Committee and Alleyne’s School Governors
 - 05/02/13 – meeting with Westbridge Park Canoe Club
 - 06/02/13 – meeting with Westbridge Park Guide Leader
 - 06/02/13 – meeting with Guide and Scout Band

- 13/02/13 – meeting with Westbridge Park Scouts
- 13/02/13 – meeting with Alleyne’s Head and School Governors
- 13/02/13 – meeting held with Trinity Skills for Life
- 13/02/13 – meeting held with Stone Marathoners
- 25/02/13 – meeting held with Stone in Bloom
- 27/02/13 – meeting held with Food & Drink Festival
- 28/02/13 – meeting held with residents at The Moorings
- 04/03/13 – meeting held with Stone Bonfire Committee

3.4.2 In addition to engaging with the consultees outlined above through the public consultation events, the brochure included a tear-off freepost questionnaire and a contact number if further information was required. The document also provided details of the website where information could be reviewed and comments could be submitted.

3.4.3 It should also be noted that prior to contracting Beattie Communications to implement the consultation, on the 20/11/12, the Borough Council presented to residents at Alleyne’s High School. It is also understood that meetings were also held between the Borough Council and Stone Town Council during autumn 2012.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETINGS

4.1.0 A series of consultation meetings were held with park user groups. Information from these meetings is detailed below:

4.1.1 **Stone Festival Committee, 05/02/13.** This included approximately 20 attendees. Beattie Communications outlined the consultation process and circulated copies of the brochures. The festival committee explained that in the last few years between 3,000 and 5,000 people attended the event over the week (the event is held in the first week of June), raising between £3000 and £5000 for local charities. The event is in its 43rd year. Some of the committee members are also involved in the annual bonfire event which seeks to raise funds for local causes. Local charities are also invited to erect stalls and raise funds throughout the festival.

4.1.2 The discussion covered the following topics:

- Size of the proposed food store
- Location of the guide hut
- If festival parking will continue to be free of charge
- Clarification regarding the retail report (particularly Aldi provision)
- Can the food store have undercroft parking to reduce land take?
- Impact on the High Street
- Transport infrastructure at entrance to the site
- Artist's impression
- Levelling of the site
- Concerns with regards to development on this site
- Consultation with Alleyne's School, there was a request for meeting with the Governors and a chance for the school to comment on the text within the brochure.

4.1.3 The festival committee's requirements were also set out as follows:

- Would need use of new car parks shown on the plan
- The additional land at the rear of the park is used for helicopter rides and can't form part of the main festival site
- The shopper car park would need to be available for festival visitors
- An area is required for a fun fair, an area for parking fun fair trucks as well as an arena
- Need continued use of the serviced road

- Pedestrian safety issues during festival a concern with additional shopper cars
- Need to fence around the site so can charge
- Preference for no tree lined boulevard
- Festival committee agreed it would be advantageous to have access to more parking/hard standing
- The festival committee preferred not to have a football pitch on the site if it wasn't required as it would save the cost of needing to seek to protect the goal areas
- Relocation of ponds shown in indicative plan would be required.

4.1.4 Following the meeting, Beattie Communications provided the following response on behalf of the Borough Council:

- The architect is providing an overlay of the new proposal onto the existing which will be displayed at the exhibitions. In terms of the layout of the festival there would need to be some changes in terms of layouts in order maximize the use of space that would be available so that everything can still continue on site. SBC happy to get its event planners involved with the committee so they can assist in finding more efficient layouts for a successful event on the new area available. SBC would also welcome the festival considering some of its activities being in the town centre to attract footfall to the High Street – perhaps some of the charity stalls could make use of the stalls provided for the farmers market in this area but we would welcome the opportunity to discuss/share ideas in this regard.
- SBC is happy to ensure its event planners can work with the committee to ensure Park can be barriered effectively to continue to allow for paid for entrance
- In terms of the type of food store and exact layouts, this consultation cannot provide all of the detail in terms of road changes, type of food store etc. The consultation is to find out if in principle residents would like to consider a mix of food store/leisure centre/green & event space on the site. If they do, then SBC would create a liaison group and invite a festival committee member to sit on this. The group would work with SBC on taking the detail to the next stage. In addition there would need to be a planning application for a food store on a specific site and the same for a leisure centre – both of which would be subject to further public consultation.
- In terms of the access/pedestrian safety this would form part of planning applications for food store/leisure centre and would be subject to further public consultation on this detail. Planning permission would not be granted unless these elements satisfy the authorities.

- In terms of the type of food store there has been interest from four operators but discussions will not take place unless residents of Stone are happy in principle for SBC to move to the next stage of detail.
- In order to fund a leisure centre the new food will need to be larger than Aldi but smaller than Morrisons, but the space required on site would be determined by the layout the food store wanted and this would be discussed and debated with the liaison group so residents can remain involved during this process. The Retail Report we discussed at the meeting did take into account the planning approval for Aldi.
- A query was raised regarding levelling or banking of the uneven site and the intention would be to level rather than bank.
- The tree lined boulevard is a design feature from the architect on the indicative plan, we'd be happy to discuss this with the liaison group if we move to the next stage.
- In terms of long term provision for the next generation at Stafford Leisure Centre a sinking fund was created which can fund future investment into leisure. Investment into leisure facilities is not a statutory obligation of the council so a similar mechanism would happen here so that leisure could still be funded in the long term in Stone.
- In terms of the impact on the high street, with proven capacity for a food store planning policy is such that it would be very difficult to refuse an application that meets planning policy requirements therefore Stone will ultimately get a new food store or supermarket but Westbridge Park is the only location for a food store that would deliver the funds for the new leisure centre.
- SBC is happy for some of the parking to be used by the festival committee.
- In terms of the location of the guide hut we are in discussion with the guides.
- In terms of festival parking SBC will be happy to consider parking arrangements for the festival in order to make it a success.
- The existing service road could be retained - it is removed on the architect's plans as there can be alternative highway improvements which would then allow this area to be available for open space and events rather than service road.
- The football pitch is shown for illustration purposes but it may be a requirement to retain in order to satisfy Sport England. We are liaising with them and we would still ensure that the festivals and events can use this if it is retained.

4.2.1 **Canoe Club** - A meeting was held with the canoe club on site on the 05/02/13. The topics of discussion included:

- Car park needs resurfacing if possible (in a very poor state of repair)
- The club owns the land across the river (currently overgrown woodland) happy to gift that
- Doesn't feel that the proposals will have a lot of impact on the club, but want to ensure there is enough parking for canoe club events
- Would like to have use of the new pool if possible (happy if that is at hours not usually used by the public). The canoe club can't use the pool at Alleyne's due to the relining
- Red Lion Pub and Stone Cricket Club both use the football pitch on site
- The canoe club car park is free, used by dog walkers as well as canoe club. Canoe club trying to keep it maintained by struggling for funds and it is being damaged by other users. IF SBC does assist with resurfacing would they want to charge? If so could free parking badges be provided for canoe club members?
- Dog bins and signs needed at the canoe club side of the park
- Would like to know who is responsible for the river erosion near the canoe club/Westbridge park
- There are manholes at the back of the canoe club (park side) these often get damaged by festival vehicles – can this be resolved when park is overhauled as it may get worse if the land available for events is narrower?
- Is any lighting proposed on the riverside path?
- At what stage would information be available regarding the architecture and design of the buildings?

4.3.1 A meeting was held with the leader of **Westbridge Park Guides** on 06/02/13. The following topics were discussed:

- The guide hut provides storage for the guides and other groups and is also used by other community groups.
- The land lease is currently up for renewal
- Can the leader work with the Council regarding this?
- Guides happy to move provided have space and storage (ideally with a separate entrance to the scouts) couldn't share the space as both groups have meetings every evening. This would all be dependent on the terms/cost of the lease. Would need access to kitchen/toilets
- Happy to rent space when they require it rather than taking control of the building

- Ideally would like to see a number of options in terms of space/cost of space so a decision can be made
- Parking and lighting near the scout hut need to be improved.

4.4.1 A meeting was held with the **Guide and Scout Band** on 06/02/13. The key topics discussed included:

- The Guide and Scout Band store all of their equipment at the Scout Hut. They meet here and use Westbridge Park for practice (using the grass when dry and hard standing on the car park at the far end when wet.) Want assurance can still continue to do so
- Parking – currently people use Westbridge car parks and walk into town, will the supermarket charge and limit hours? High Street would need to ensure still viable and parking would be essential part of this
- What will the new road system look like?
- Pedestrian access and safety
- Scout hut - Needs refurbishment
- No concerns re guides/scouts being together in the same building
- Youth facilities - need more, in addition to play areas can we consider community youth club building?
- Events area - can festivals use football pitch still? VW confirmed this was the case
- Leisure centre - good idea on one site and would welcome rooms for hire
- Band uses overspill car park at back for practice can they continue to do this? VW explained this wouldn't be changed as part of the plans
- Need more child friendly provision in Stone.

4.5.1 A meeting was held with **Westbridge Park Scouts** on the 13/02/13. Topics discussed included:

- Consultants discussed the rebuild of the scout hut with the troupe 3-4 years ago. The pump house was renovated by the scouts but there is very little money towards its upkeep and the building needs repairs
- The building is fragmented with a number of different rooms over different levels, it is not disability friendly. The storage is in the eaves of the building and some rooms are difficult to access. It would be useful to have access from outside to the underneath of the building to store trailers
- The scouts are not averse to sharing the site with guides but a separate main hall would be required as there are beavers, scouts and other groups using the

building each evening so there would be conflicting timetable issues

- The toilets and kitchen could be shared but a separate kitchen would be required and the toilets need improving
- The building includes a climbing wall, main hall, meeting room and storage. There is access for a truck to come behind the building to collect equipment
- The Scouts would still like parking, hardstanding and space to practice lighting camp fires
- The pumphouse is not a listed building
- The scouts would be happy to work with the Borough Council and the guides on a plan for an extension or a reworking of the internal space (some high ceilings where mezzanines could go) to ensure all could use the building effectively
- Need to show the hard standing at the far end of the park as currently coloured in green on our plan.

4.6.1 A meeting was held with **Alleyne's High School Head Teacher and Governors** on the 13/02/13. Topics discussed included:

- Wording of the brochure, school does not see relevant to its application to become an Academy
- Is Stafford Leisure Centre is available for school use? The Borough Council explained this was the case and on some occasions this is exclusive use but it does not preclude the pool being used during all school hours. Therefore at Westbridge Park although on occasion it may be closed it would be available for public use far more often than Alleyne's can provide
- Will SBC continue to fund the pool at Alleyne's if Westbridge Park pool is built? It was explained that the Borough Council could not fund two pools
- Has investment into facilities at Alleyne's been considered. It was explained this was the case but it was not cost effective and the school site is restricted in terms of parking, access and it cannot be used in school hours and the Borough Council has a responsibility to look at the best solutions for everyone in Stone
- Would the Borough Council fund turning Alleyne's pool into an alternative productive use. It was explained the Borough Council does not own this facility and it belongs to the school and County Council but the Borough Council would work with the County on a solution
- It was clarified the new pool would be 25m long so it could be used for competitions

- Beattie Communications agreed to let the school have sight of the exhibition boards using at the event which refers to Alleyne's and was happy for the school to provide copy for consideration on the boards
- It was agreed that the Borough Council's lease for the use of Alleyne's pool had expired
- It was highlighted that school use of pools is in decline across the UK, most schools only want a ten-week block for lessons and the rest of the time the pools needed to be in productive use to make them more cost effective.

4.7.1 A meeting was held with **Trinity Skills for Life** on 13/02/13. Topics of discussion included:

- There are two Trinity Skills for Life centres in Stone and they offer activities for young people 5 days a week as well as offering a personal assistant services
- The organisation is based on Stone Business Park and uses Westbridge Park in good weather (particularly in the summer months) for activities with their 47 students who are young adults (18-30 years old) with special needs
- The Park is a free option for them to use as a location for exercise, which is a vital activity as many students are overweight as a result of their conditions. They also use the gym at Westbridge Park once a week
- Would like to see the children's play area include equipment for disabled children – the existing area is too challenging
- Would be keen to see as much green space as possible be retained to maintain the „rural feel“ of the park. Also, the current space gives an added sense of safety for the team as students can be seen and located at all times.
- Would still look to avoid membership fees at the leisure centre (mirroring current arrangement)
- Can more details be provided regarding transport, road layouts and access
- It was agree facilities need updating on the park

4.8.1 A meeting was held with **Stone Marathoners** on 13/02/13. Key topics of discussion included:

- The club has approximately 140 members (aged 18 – 74) and is based at Stone Tennis Club but uses the park as part of routes run on Wednesdays and Thursdays

- The park is the location for the „Westbridge 5“ annual race event held on the 1st Sunday in June (same week as Stone Festival) – this is a popular speed race event attracting runners from up and down the country
- The event generates significant income for the club and is recognised by UK Athletics as part of the official racing calendar
- Want Westbridge 5 event to be unaffected by the proposals
- Tennis Club under threat
- The Westbridge 5 event base is currently the Scout premises – the club would be keen to continue this arrangement or have use of new leisure centre
- How much parking would be available during the Westbridge 5 event? They currently use the car park and grassland.

4.9.1 A meeting was held with **Stone in Bloom** committee comprising of 12 attendees on 25/02/13 key topics discussed included:

- Planting/gardening happens most of the year in preparation for annual judging in July. 50/60 volunteers are called upon for planting and key areas are around the canoe club, river walkways and some of the Crown Meadow site. Last year for the first time the group was also involved in the Stone festival
- The group is self-funded and fundraise in partnership with the Lions and other local groups
- Visual impact of development
- Committee would like a storage facility onsite if the proposals go ahead
- That the badger set on-site is protected
- High Street viability

4.10.1 A meeting was held with the **Food and Drink Festival Committee** on the 27/02/13. Key topics discussed included:

- The Food and Drink festival committee does not like the zoning of the mixed use nature in the local plan as this suggests further development.
- Levelling of the site was discussed
- Concerned regarding the High Street – discussed whether out of town supermarket or whether a food store within walking distance would have more effect
- The festival runs events in the high street and wants solutions regarding how to remove the barrier so that it is a more pedestrian friendly route between the park and the high street
- Concerned regarding highways

- Want to know if the football pitch can be used for the food and drink festival in October (football season)
- Drainage of the site is a priority
- Agree ponds to be relocated to allow for the bonfire
- Want solutions regarding the lack of hard core track behind the canoe club – potentially egg box concrete slabs
- Currently hire in large generators, electricity provision on the site would be welcome – paid for by meter
- Water and drainage would be welcome on the site
- Grey waste disposal would be useful
- Connectivity to the town needs to be improved.

4.11.1 A meeting was pre-advertised and held with 24 residents of **The Moorings** on the evening of 28/02/13, these are residents who overlook the canal and the existing leisure centre/tennis courts at Westbridge Park. Key topics discussed included:

- Residents had received an elevations plan detailing the height of the buildings from Keep Westbridge Park Green. VW highlighted that as heights hadn't been determined this was unlikely to be factually correct
- A highways assessment was requested and VW explained that would form part of pre-application consultation and was not available at this initial consultation. This was to find out if residents were happy to accept the principle of selling part of Westbridge Park to a food operator to fund new leisure provision. Further consultation would be held and a liaison group created which a representative from the Moorings could sit on
- There was a request for the earlier proposed community building
- A query was raised regarding any applications for sports lottery funding so a new food store wasn't required
- A request was made regarding relocating the buildings
- Views over the canal and park from the Moorings were a key concern
- The pedestrian route from the Park to the Town Centre would require improvement and concerns were raised regarding how narrow this path is
- More information was requested regarding the need for more retail
- Attendees confirmed they were against any proposals

4.11.2 A petition was subsequently submitted by The Moorings residents, with 39 signatures of either residents or owners of the apartments.

4.12.1 A meeting was held with six organisers of the **Stone Bonfire Committee**. Key topics discussed included:

- Bonfire/fireworks display attracts 5,000 people to the Park each year
- To set up and hold the event access to the site is required over two days, including access from heavy goods vehicles/articulated lorries bringing in pallets for the bonfire and parking temporarily on the Scouts car park
- Event has been held for 27 years and is fully marshalled/health and safety compliant
- Crowds need to be 15m away from bonfire/fireworks and these activities need to be 18m away from the Scout building. The bonfire is usually 6-7 metres high and is themed each year (previous years have been pirate ship/Snow White).
- The event also raises around £6k for local charities by charging admission for attendees and concession stalls on site. Other volunteer groups involved that also profit from the event are Guides/Scouts/Red Cross/PTA and Macmillan
- Concerned there will be less space for people to view the display, and their view will be affected by the tree lined boulevard
- They need a hard core surface for the bonfire to take place, can't be held on grassland
- Access to the site needs to be via a hard core road for the lorries/heavy goods vehicles
- Concerned that green area will be levelled as this would affect the view of the display, the current „dip“ means that everyone can see very clearly
- Bonfire cannot be in the same field/area as fireworks as this is against health and safety
- A road leading along the side of the canoe club to access the bonfire/fireworks area would be welcomed
- Electricity/power points for this event and others would be welcomed
- Toilets on-site would be welcomed
- More contact with the Borough Council would be welcomed.

4.12.2 A response to initial queries was provided by Beattie Communications on behalf of the Borough Council. This outlined:

- With regards to the tree lined boulevard potentially obstructing views of the bonfire and fireworks, if the proposals are approved then this element of the park's design

would be very much up for discussion as part of a liaison group that we would be keen for a member of your committee to be a part of this

- Space for public – There would be 4.5 acres of space available for the public should the proposals go ahead and we would be keen to discuss views and vantage points with you to ensure that your display maintains the same visual impact
- In terms of your request for an additional access road to your site, this is something which, again, can be considered as part of any future liaison group

4.13.1 A meeting was also requested via the Youth Candidate MP, Jack Taylor, to engage with younger people interested in the future of Westbridge Park. Unfortunately during the five week period offered the candidate was unable to arrange this meeting. A meeting is recommended, and this could be organised through local schools, if the proposals progress to the next stage of further consultation is held.

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

- 5.1.1 A brochure, which included information about the exhibition and a freepost questionnaire to leave comments, was posted to more than 7,300 homes in the locality at the beginning of February.
- 5.1.2 In addition to providing details about the proposals, the flyer included a freepost questionnaire and hotline number so that residents could find out more and provide their comments. The flyer also invited residents to attend the exhibitions.
- 5.1.3 Copies of the brochure were also available in Stone Library and Westbridge Park Leisure Centre.
- 5.1.4 Copies of the brochure were provided to town and parish councils in areas across the north of the borough where residents would be likely to use leisure facility provision in Stone.
- 5.1.5 A copy of the brochure can be found in **Appendix C**.
- 5.1.6 Information about the consultation, the proposals and a comment form went live on the council's website www.staffordbc.gov.uk/westbridgepark on the 31st January 2013. The web address was publicised in the brochure and was also promoted in the media and on a variety of online channels.
- 5.1.7 Some examples of the press and online coverage which promoted the exhibition dates and venues are provided below:



A Little Bit of Stone · 2,109 like this

February 27 at 11:08am

✕

👍 Like

There are Westbridge Park consultation events today in Eccleshall (community centre, 11-2) and Barlaston (Methodist church, 4.30-7.30). Events in Stone on Thursday at Christ Church Centre (4-8) and Saturday at Alleyne's High School (10-2).

The online consultation is open until Saturday too, so make sure you have your say if you haven't already



Westbridge Park consultation nears end - A Little Bit of Stone

alittlebitofstone.com

Like · Comment · Share

👍 Jack Taylor and Limestone Brewery like this.

Write a comment...

From **The Sentinel**
8th Mar 2013



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BREAKING NEWS

 West Ham fan claims he was banned from Stoke City ground

New store plan for part of town park


The Sentinel
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Thursday, January 31, 2013

By ALEX CAMPBELL

MAJOR plans to build a new leisure centre and [supermarket](#) on a town's park will not encroach on green space used for a series of popular annual festivals, a council has promised.

Thousands of residents in Stone will receive leaflets from Monday outlining Stafford Borough Council's latest proposals for Westbridge Park.



What the park could look like

CHANGES: Stafford Borough Council unveils its latest proposals for Westbridge Park in this annotated map.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'A Little Bit of Stone'. The header features a navigation menu with links: Home, Food & drink, What's On?, Stone in Bloom, News, Westbridge Park, Pics, Music, and History. Below the navigation is a blue banner for an 'OPEN DAY' on Saturday 9th March from 9.30AM to 1.00PM, mentioning St Dominics Priory School. The main article is titled 'Westbridge Park consultation nears end'. It includes social media sharing options for Twitter and Facebook, a map of the park, and a list of consultation events:

- Wednesday 27th February at Eccleshall Community Centre, Shaws Lane, between 11am and 2pm
- Wednesday 27th February at Barlaston Methodist Church, Park Drive, from 4.30pm until 7.30pm
- Thursday 28th February at Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone, between 4pm and 8pm
- Saturday 2nd March at Aleyne's High School, Gulton Road, Stone, from 10.30am until 2.30pm

6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS

- 6.1.1 A series of public consultation events were advertised by writing to user groups, stakeholders, parish and town councils, online, in the media and through the distribution of a brochure to more than 7,300 households in Stone.
- 6.1.2 A variety of methods to publicised the events were used to ensure residents had an opportunity to attend an event close to them.
- 6.1.3 The events were held in a variety of accessible venues during the day, weekend and evening to maximise the opportunity for residents to attend, discuss the proposals and comment on the information provided.
- 6.1.4 The events were held on:
- Wednesday 27/02/13 at Eccleshall Community Centre, Shawls La, Eccleshall, ST21 6AY between 11am and 2pm
 - Wednesday 27/02/13 at Barlaston Methodist Church, Park Drive, Barlaston, ST12 9DP between 4.30pm and 7.30pm
 - Thursday 28/02/13 at Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone, ST15 8ZB between 4pm and 8pm
 - Saturday 02/03/13 at Alleyne's High School, Oulton Road, Stone, ST15 8DT between 10.30am and 2.30pm.
- 6.1.5 The events in Eccleshall and Barlaston were poorly attended. This is likely to be due to the fact that each house did not receive a brochure publicising the events. However, all of the events were well publicised in the press, on local social media pages and also by brochures being sent to the parish councils so it may also be due to the fact that even though these village residents use leisure facilities in Stone, residents felt less affected by the proposals.
- 6.1.6 In order to ensure that all residents who visit Stone to use leisure and retail facilities had an opportunity to comment, the team also manned a stall at the farmer's market in Stone High Street between 10.30am and 3pm on Saturday 02/03/13. This displayed a copy of the masterplan and enabled residents to complete and submit a questionnaire.

6.1.7 An image from one of the events can be found below:



6.1.8 The information detailed in the brochure, website and exhibition materials was simple, clear and self-explanatory. Contact details – telephone and email – were provided on the brochure and website if questions needed clarifying and the team were available to discuss and provide answers at the event. A closing date for the consultation was not published on the brochure.

6.1.9 A Q&A was uploaded to the website to seek to ask questions raised in the freepost flyer returns. This highlighted that the last consultation event would be held on the 2 March and following that event, a report would be published detailing the responses received to date.

6.1.10 A press release was issued before the end of February reminding residents to attend the events and submit their comments. This release requested that residents submit any comments at the event or via the website or freepost flyer to arrive no later than 12 noon 6th March 2013 in order to have the information included within the consultation report which was being produced for the Borough Council. This ensured that residents attending the last event on the 2 March 2013 still had time to consider the proposal and comment.

6.1.11 In line with best practice, the information provided on the exhibition materials was clear, informative and easy to understand setting out the following key facts:

- The consultation sought views on whether residents wanted to see a new leisure centre and improvements to the event space and parkland setting at Westbridge Park, which would be provided with the help of funds from the sale of council-owned land for a new food store
- The park would continue to be the focus for community events

- The remaining event space could be gifted to Stone Town Council
- The Borough Council would only go ahead with the proposals if there is support from residents in the north of the Borough
- The team were available to answer questions
- The existing facilities are old and require investment and modernisation
- Leisure funding is non-statutory therefore a solution has been sought to ensure Stone has quality modern facilities in the long term rather residents having to travel to facilities in Stafford
- Alleyne's squash court, Astroturf and sports hall are unaffected by the proposals
- If a new pool is constructed at Westbridge Park the pool at Alleyne's may close if the school/County Council opts to do so
- Schools would be allowed to use the new pool
- In addition to funds from a food store operator, SBC would put in a substantial sum based on the savings achieved by only running one new, energy efficient building to ensure the new leisure centre can be delivered
- A retail study highlighted need for additional retail in Stone, this took the new Aldi into account
- If a food store does not go on this site, it is likely to go elsewhere in Stone, but that would not fund a new leisure centre
- A food store should ideally be located as close to the town centre as possible to enable linked trips
- A liaison group would be created to work on the detailed plans and a representative from Stone Town Council, event committees, park user groups as well as local residents could join the group and get involved in the detailed masterplanning process.

A copy of the exhibition boards can be found in **Appendix D**.

6.1.12 The information also set out how a new leisure facility at Westbridge Park could be delivered and provided an indicative masterplan which clearly showed that the proposed food store would fit on the footprint of the existing leisure centre/tennis courts but land take would be required for the new leisure centre and parking provision. The masterplan was also overlaid on the existing site to enable people to better understand the land take.

6.1.13 In order to consult as flexibly as possible, a comprehensive frequently asked questions section sought to clarify the questions raised during the consultation process to date.

6.1.14 Residents were asked to complete a questionnaire at the event, providing their views. The exhibition materials and comment form were made available on the website. A copy of the event questionnaire can be found in **Appendix E**.

6.1.15 More than 300 residents attended the events.

6.1.16 The brief specified that residents in Stone and the surrounding areas should be consulted regarding the possibility of developing the Westbridge Park site in Stone for a range of uses including:

- A new leisure centre
- A new town park/special events area
- New healthcare facilities
- A food store and/or other forms of enabling development which would be complementary to Stone Town Centre.

It specified that activities should include:

- A public consultation exercise
- A presentation to the Council's Cabinet
- Production of a Community Consultation Report

The consultation activities detailed in the section above clearly outline that the consultation process was effective in providing a variety of methods of promoting the consultation including:

- Freepost flyer delivered to homes in Stone, Walton, Oulton and Aston by Stone. For those in other outlying areas who use Stone's leisure facilities there were opportunities to find out about the consultation via the local media, online news sites and social media channels. Barlaston and Eccleshall Parish Councils were also notified of the consultation events.
- The consultation provided a variety of methods of getting involved.

6.1.17 As a result of the consultation activities detailed above, the brief specified has been delivered.

7.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE

7.1.1 The following section of this report identifies the range of comments raised by members of the community.

7.1.2 The event was directly promoted to more than 7,300 householders. Out of a resident population in Stone itself there are approximately 16,300 people of all ages. A total of 1,369 responses were received to the Borough Council's flyer, online form and exhibition forms.

7.1.3 The discussions at the consultation event generally focused on:

- Retail need
- Transport and access
- The Local Plan process
- Leisure provision
- Funding

7.1.4 By enabling the opportunity to attend out of working hours and providing the brochure and freepost questionnaire, as well as an opportunity to comment on line, this encouraged a high response rate.

7.1.5 The comments and responses generated through the Borough Council's consultation – online, in the post and at the exhibitions – is detailed below.

7.2.1 Respondents were asked a question in order to understand how they wanted to see the green space on site utilised. Question one therefore asked: Westbridge Park will retain a green and open space. What would you like that to include? Of those who answered the question, the response was:

Use of Space	Number of respondents requesting this
Event space (e.g. festivals)	953
Football pitch	685
Circular, landscaped walk including the riverside path	896
Picnic areas	761
Play areas	868

7.2.2 Respondents were also invited to make other suggestions or comment on the use of the green space within the proposals. The comments are grouped together in themes below:

Suggestion	Number of respondents making this suggestion
Skate Park / BMX area/ Something very similar to Victoria Park for teenagers/for all ages not just teens	24
Nothing leave the Park alone	18
Disability and older adult friendly/sensory park for the blind/ disabled facility for children	13
Coffee Shop / tea rooms/café with play area next to it	12
Tennis courts	11
Medical centre/Doctors surgery	10
Large, free car park to encourage footfall onto the high street	9
Swimming pool	9
Park benches / seating	8
Cinema/ A community building for theatre / meetings etc, with a cinema screen/cinema	8
Scout / Guide facilities must be retained	8
CCTV	7
More open space/guarantee open space	7
Keep green space and enhance facilities	6
Retain festivals	6
Picnic area will be rubbish dump, risk of glass smashing, already got picnic areas elsewhere, relocate picnic area	6
Outside gym/green gym	6
A fast food outlet (KFC or McDonalds)	6
Safe cycle paths	6
Bowling alley	4
Plenty of dog poo bins/rubbish bins	4
Parking - Car park / parking under the food store / parking under the leisure centre / better parking for the canoe club	4
Good lighting (to prevent anti-social behaviour/evening use)	4
Exciting things to look at in the trees– carvings, fairies, sculptures/ Lots of signage to encourage understanding and appreciation of nature (a bit like Monkey Forest)	4
Park equipment for toddlers	2
Allocated dog walking area	2
Safe pedestrian paths	2
Canal Leisure Area/ Wide protected zone of open space alongside the Conservation Area of the canal corridor (opp Moorings)	2
Crazy golf	2
Bird and bat boxes	2
Landscaping to make the most of the currently underused and uninspiring open space	2
Somewhere to do arts and crafts	1
A place for watching films and hearing bands	1

Suggestion	Number of respondents making this suggestion
Youth club	1
A wet zone in the play area	2
Adventure activities – climbing, rope bridge, zip wires, barefoot walk	2
Not just football, but basketball, netball, rounders, cricket, rugby etc	3
Secure, protected cycle storage	1
A park keeper/police patrols	3
Ice cream stall	1
Maze	1
A visitor's centre	1
Equestrian access around the walkway	1
Better facilities for guides	1
Native trees to be planted	1
A petanque (boules) pitch similar to those in Stockport and Bath	1
Bowling green	2
Wild adventure children's play areas no pre constructed ones	1
Wetland / Wildlife / nature conservation	3
Children's paddling pool	1
Badminton	2
Lanes in the pool, or adult only times	1
Place for young and old to play/with seating	2
Footbridge to Cherryfields	1
Climbing wall inside the leisure centre	2
Public toilet	7
Bandstand for local musicians to have an opportunity to perform/performing arts centre	3
Make more of the riverside setting by linking green transport routes, cycle tracks and walking tracks	1
Retain the present green space	2
Any non-commercial activities	1
Jogging / running track	1
A laundry for boaters and those without washing machines. How about where the White Elephant or health food shop was?	1
The tree lined boulevard will look nice	1
Kid friendly pool with floats etc	2
Sauna	3
Tea Dance Hall for over 55s	1
Fish and chip restaurant	1
The Farmer's Market should also go here. You can't get about in town a Saturday	1
Things for families to do together	2
Sheltered seating for people who like to watch the world go by	1
Football pitch should be for 3g or 4g	1
A swimming pool for members that benefits current members	2
A bigger gym with more equipment	2
New access from Walton to town centre via footbridge from the Fillybrooks	1
Football Stadium/small stadium	4

Suggestion	Number of respondents making this suggestion
Canal Bridge	1
Sports centre	3
Affordable housing	1
Wet zone	1
Flood lit area	1
Parking for coaches	1
Bigger event space	2
Football pitch elsewhere in town/no football pitch have these elsewhere, pitch hardly ever used	3
None of this is used, we need a supermarket/need a bigger supermarket	2
Build on Crown meadow and address flooding	1
No bikes/motorbikes on landscaped walk	1
Don't want swimming pool or supermarket	2
Involve teenagers in planning their own area, this would help them appreciate it and look after it	2
Relocate children's play area, not near supermarket, not where trouble makers will gather at night	3
Sports hall	1
Don't want high price stores	1
Disabled access to the pool	1
Walk by the river, little development	1
Look to Austria, Slovenia, Prague for good examples of outdoor leisure facilities	1
Retain canoe club	1

7.3.1 Respondents were asked a question in order to understand their views on the proposals. Within the flyer an introduction to the proposals was provided stating that by accommodating a food store at Westbridge Park, which would be smaller than Morrisons, this will provide the funds to deliver a new leisure centre with a 25m pool. Respondents were then asked to answer yes, no or unsure as to whether they supported the proposal.

At the exhibition respondents were asked to circle if they supported, did not support or were unsure about the proposal.

The responses in terms of support were:

- 757 – supported the proposal
- 471 – did not support the proposal
- 104 – were unsure or had questions
- 37 – did not answer.

7.3.2 Respondents were provided with an opportunity to comment on why they did or did not support the proposals. The following answers were provided:

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
Stone doesn't need another supermarket/don't want supermarket	123
High Street concerns	53
Traffic concerns/no more traffic lights	35
Keep the park green/leave open space as it is	34
M&S or Waitrose please	29
We need a larger supermarket which should be situated elsewhere, prefer Vision Trust proposal/ A food store should go on the A51 off Ashton/ Westbridge Park not big enough to accommodate supermarket we need, prefer bigger out of town supermarket	26
No mixed-use designation - there will be further building on Westbridge Park in time, if this is allowed to happen	15
We already have swimming pool and facilities, got Alleyne's provision	17
Concerned about the view from the Moorings	13
Statutory obligation for SBC to use tax payers money to deliver facilities	12
This is not an appropriate place for a supermarket	11
According to its organisers, this plan does not leave enough space for the food and drink festival	9
If the selling of council land is the only way the development of Westbridge Park can be completed, then I support the initiative	8
Westbridge Park was given to the people of Stone for leisure purposes. There should be no commercial development/ Westbridge Park should be purely for leisure and events purposes	8
Stone has ample facilities/This is a sweetener I don't like	8
If we don't have a medical centre here I don't know where one will go. This is top priority and much more important than a supermarket	7
Covering green space will exacerbate the flooding / drainage problems we have	6
We need a supermarket that sells reasonably-priced children's and adult's clothes as there is nowhere in Stone for this at the moment	5
As long as we have enough space for community events and can keep green space, then I am behind this plan	5
We need a purpose built community centre with adequate space to allow our many groups and activities to expand. It is a great shame that the needs of these activities, which give the town its vitality and attractiveness, have been ignored/space for public meetings, concerts, shows, cultural activities	5
I'm concerned about the safety of putting a play area so close to busy supermarket traffic	4
I don't understand how a smaller food store would be able to compete with Morrisons when Morrisons is supposedly already over-trading. I cannot see how a smaller store will resolve the issue of over-trading at Morrisons and bring people in.	4
Only develop what is already tarmac / concrete. We are lucky in Stone to have such an expanse of green space so close to the town centre	3
Which supermarket would consider smaller site? Too small to fund	3

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
Capacity not proven for further food and shopping space, capacity not same as need	3
It's unfair to the residents of The Moorings to put a teenage sports area so close	3
Should not impact on rate payer, if it does do not action. Spend supermarket income to cut taxes, would take years to recoup the expense of the building	3
Complete leisure centre first	3
No Tesco	3
More parking	3
What square footage will the smaller store be? What size will the frontage be?	2
Private companies would find a gym in this prosperous area. Has this option been investigated?	2
Locate commercial elsewhere	2
Loss of green space will destroy a major canalside amenity/lose ambience/discourage boaters, who are of significant economic value to the town, from staying and visiting.	2
It looks like you are trying to justify what has already been decided	2
Consider cost of parking – too expensive, ensure can use it to go to town	2
We probably need the supermarket in order to fund this, but please keep it as small as possible	2
Will we have to pay to use the new facility? Too expensive/no increase	2
I need to see retail report re demand	2
Don't want to lose festivals	2
Keep Waitrose out	1
Re-landscape the existing area to save money	1
Tourists would stock up at the supermarket and not explore the town	1
More sympathetic if council hadn't wasted money on a clock which does not work.	1
Present arrangements for leisure facility would be viable if council and former council members paid for car parking and the same admission rate as other members of the public	1
I support the leisure and parkland development but not the supermarket	1
How come Stafford has a new leisure centre, park renovated and office block?	1
Designate as village green	1
Save our money and do not build expensive buildings, such as a leisure centre, that are short-lived and costly to run	1
Thousands of new houses have been built in Stone over the last 20 years, many more new houses are to be built soon. SBC should use the new homes bonus it has received (and not spent in Stone, and the new homes bonus it is going to receive to build the leisure facilities. The SBC own many sites in Stone where a small supermarket could be built without turning our park into a supermarket	1
People in Stone do not want, ill-conceived and financial benefit of supermarket	1
The original Trent and Mersey Canal Company headquarters buildings, should be kept clear of any construction in order to retain the important historical link with the town.	1

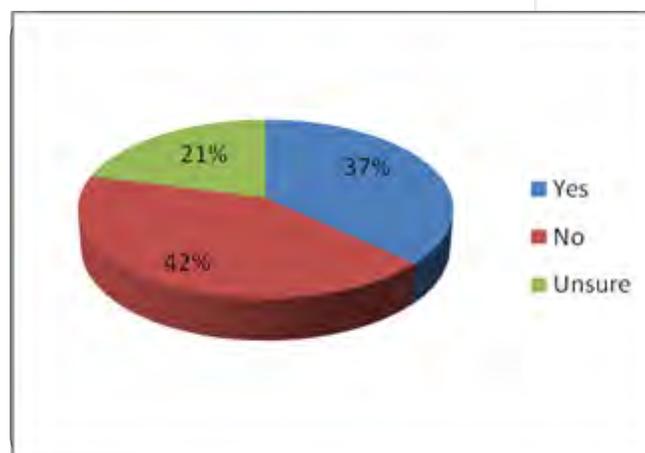
Comment	Number of respondents making comment
The continuous combination of river/green space/canal lies at the very heart of the character and appeal of Stone. Moving the guide hut will be good. The existing leisure centre is already misplaced, and if replaced should be much further from the road.	1
More consultation with festival organisers	1
Scout hut too isolated	1
This will further move the leisure facilities away from the north of the town towards Walton	1
Will kill farmer's market	1
Older people will feel shopping facilities are more inaccessible	1
Would like to see a footbridge over the river between Bridge crescent and Westbridge Park	1
The leisure centre would have a room large enough for long mat bowling and table tennis for more mature people as there is very little provided for them in Stone	1
As long as no other supermarkets are built on the flood plain	1
Yes, but I insist on green space being retained to include the football pitch	1
Rental of land to supermarket, not sale	1
No further maintenance to Alleyne's if nobody uses it	1
I'd prefer a Sainsburys or Asda	1
As long as we do not lose any leisure facilities	1
Yes, as long as the plan doesn't change once we've given you the go ahead	1
I would prefer the finance to come from elsewhere to secure the space for a community building and possibly the food and drink festival	1
Please make sure the design of the supermarket is in keeping with our lovely town	1
You've changed from a small to a „medium“ supermarket“. Keep it small	1
As long as the food store is inexpensive	1
Only if we have adequate protection from vandals	1
Need sports hall	1
I would like to see less political one-upmanship from councillors, and more adult debate	1
A department store would be welcome rather than a supermarket	1
The viability of a pool is dubious	1
Stone is fast becoming an overcrowded park	1
We don't want a tarmac river path	1
This is an unwanted expense. Money would be better spent improving what we have	1
As much "stuff" as possible as the current, underused, dog-fouled grass is useless 95% of the year	1
Will the „Boulevard of trees“ allow enough space for the vehicles to pass to the event space, for marquees, the funfair etc?	1
Spend money elsewhere – e.g. the Walton Estate and resurfacing Manor Rise	1
We need to see the deed of the gift of the land to establish whether anyone but the people of stone is able to sell it. I suspect not	1
Doesn't compare to Stafford scheme	1

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
The £3m you're sending on this would be better spent elsewhere, enhancing the cultural and economic vitality of the town	1
Can you not fund without supermarket?	1
Supermarket too small to fund	1
Having read alternative literature, we feel this isn't viable and would impact greatly on the festival tourism, which brings in a lot of money for hotels / restaurants etc	1
Sell land for Doctor's parking	1
You are trying to fit too much into a small area. The pool and supermarket should be located elsewhere	1
It would need to be a food store that made a commitment to stock local produce and was designed to complement the area	1
What car parking space would be retained?	1

7.4.1 The questionnaire at the exhibition posed additional questions as further space was available. The first question asked if respondents had previously commented on the freepost flyer or website. The response was:

- 25 residents had already submitted a comment form online
- 37 residents had already submitted a comment form via the brochure.

7.4.2 A further question on the event questionnaire asked; There may be an opportunity to reduce the amount of parking proposed so that the green/open/event space can be increased. Would you prefer to see less parking and more green space in the proposals? Of those who answered the question, the response was:



7.5.1 On the flyer, online and event questionnaires space was provided for any general comments, concerns or ideas. Respondents made the following points:

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
Leave park as it is, leave green space	108
Need more info/detail	29
Traffic issues, consider road and access carefully	28
Build it asap, excellent proposal, absolutely support proposal	24
High end supermarket, M&S, Waitrose	21
Welcome updated leisure centre	17
Noise pollution concerns	12
Town and residents will benefit from this plan	11
Build it elsewhere	10
Cinema, community, cultural facilities, community building needed	10
More parking/free parking	9
The Food Festival fuss is a red herring – plan for our everyday lives please/ The events may be popular, but our everyday lives are more important	7
Good I won't have to drive out of town to entertain the kids, to Stafford/Trentham	6
Not enough festival space	6
Make sure play areas and big and full	6
Light pollution concerns	6
High Street concerns	6
This will bring people to Stone, This will encourage me to shop locally, rather than drive to Stafford, Stone is a lovely canal town with a great history, so all of these additions are important. We should encourage visitors to explore, not just shop	6
Why are you consulting people from Eccleshall and Barlaston?	6
Artist's impressions are inaccurate and to a dishonest scale	5
New scout and guide hut needed/ long lease low rent	5
Want play area like Stafford, make it like mini Stafford park	5
Through road	5
Investment into Stone is essential	5
No supermarket/don't need supermarket	4
Do not ignore public opinion, listen to us	4
Job creation is good	3
Sport centre/pool needed	3
Make it like Stafford Park	3
Revamp Alleynes	3
I would welcome further consideration by the borough Council around alternative locations to ensure that we have the best possible development and not just something that fits the strategic and financial plan and doesn't look wider and listen	2
Great for young people	2
If it's going to be such a small store, use the vacant Post Office or the shop next to the greengrocers, or another vacant store	2

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
25% of green space will be lost to development, don't want less green	2
Shops in Stone need more competition, more shops will attract new visitors into Stone	2
Disabled access/facility	2
Need express store in town centre instead	2
Need low profile contemporary design with high quality natural materials, need to comment on building designs	2
Problem for the Moorings	2
No Tesco	2
Steam room and sauna, spa	2
Will existing retailers fund the leisure centre?	2
My earlier support for the petition against this development is hereby withdrawn, as the basis of that petition can now be seen to be misleading.	2
Public toilets needed	3
Not enough for children in Stone	2
Doctors surgeries fine as they are	2
Plan will increase house prices and bring business to the area	2
This will smarten up area and canal	2
The council needs to listen to the views of the population instead of being hell bent on their own plans	2
Just update Alleyne's, its natural light makes it lovely	2
We need a larger sports hall to incorporate tennis and badminton. We won't have space in this plan because of space taken up by a supermarket, which I do not support	2
You say that the current building was only designed to last 12 years. This is appalling. I hope the new building will be more robust or it will be a waste of taxpayers' money	2
Nice modern pool welcomed, pool vital	2
Build behind football pitches where bonfire is held	1
Encourage inexpensive events	1
Pool not necessary	2
Circulate retail report	1
Keep festivals	1
SBC good history of leisure facilities in Stone and keen to see it continue	1
Hate to see community promised this and supermarket built first	1
Children's play being food store away from road	1
No Tesco	1
Convenient for parents one can shop while the other looks after the kids	1
Great to have somewhere disability friendly	1
Plan not as bad as I thought	1
Like wild look not too much landscaping	1
No picnic area or designated walk	1
Alleyne's pool needs to be urgently replaced and Leisure Centre is an eyesore. I support small store and more kids play especially if parking similar basis to Morrisons	1
Confirm health centre not part of final proposal	1

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
Need larger supermarket	1
Festivals can use grass space at the back	1
Can't understand why people would not want new facilities, even if food store needed to pay for it	1
Westbridge Park underused except during festivals. Food Store offering Stone millions	1
Stone population growing need new play and leisure	1
WYG report shows need new space this is obvious if use Morrison at peak times it's the third busiest supermarket in Borough and they need some competition	1
Won't compete with town centre	1
Need leisure centre in walking distance of schools, it is positive and will help reduce childhood obesity which is increasing	1
Support pool on same site as fitness centre	1
What happens to Alleyne's Pool?	1
Comment strategy in time of austerity need funding from the private sector if want improved facilities	1
Lock play area	1
Disabled parking	1
Supermarket would be fantastic	1
Bigger pool than 25m	1
Distance from Alleynes a worry	1
Great health of population should be a top priority	1
This has been a success in Stafford ideal for Stone	1
Consult with users	1
Concerned about the canoe club pressures on race days	1
Would like to see the area used for more events around the year instead of being used by just dog walkers	1
Indoor team sports are poorly represented in Stone	1
Why has the current leisure centre had such a short life span? Why does it cost more than Nuffield for a membership when it's a council community organisation?	1
We need the festivals and guest events – let's make more use of the park for all ages and abilities	1
As the new development will not have a sports hall, squash courts and artificial pitch where will residents be able to play badminton, 5-a-side football and squash?	1
Alleynes kids need continued use of their pool	1
Alleynes pool in good condition not end of life	1
Fitness gym is not a leisure centre	1
Consult youngsters	1
Building a supermarket away from the high street might actually encourage people to use the high street to shop / have lunch / dinner in the town	1
Please make this happen as the high street is dead	1
The old leisure centre is outdated and we don't use it but go out of town instead	1
Keep leisure centre prices reasonable	1

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
I would also support new development for shops etc to the west of town	1
I am confident the plan will be economically sound	1
The Borough should manage the whole site as only they have the capability	1
There is no parking provision anywhere in the town to encourage visitors to come by private coach or to shop or attend minor events	1
Patronising questionnaire need sensible debate and balance with loss of event space and traffic issues	1
Listen to the petitioners	1
Do not like boulevard of trees, boy racer's paradise	1
Health centre needed	1
Happy to support if it will deliver new pool	1
How many use supermarkets out of Stone?	1
Can income from leisure centre fund development?	1
Park and ride	1
Food store only (no electrical goods)	1
Would you develop the park without the supermarket?	1
Changing for petrol	1
Small supermarket	1
Sport Hall	1
Paint shed from blue to green	1
This could be like Telford Town Park on a small scale – where it's always busy and people spend money	1
Crack down on dog walkers who leave a mess	1
I don't like that the car parks are central – why does there have to be a road through the middle of the park?	1
Put leisure elsewhere	1
Why leave back land as it is	1
Ornate bridge and include land at Trent Close in plan	1
Improve canoe club car park, member permits and rest pay and display with traffic calming	1
Supermarket could fund CCTV	1
Do you have to be a member to use leisure centre	1
Will there be a baby pool	1
Festival organisers have not been consulted	1
There is a need for improvement to the leisure facilities in Stone, but in principal I don't agree with feeding the obsession for gyms. I think we should encourage outdoor exercise and limit car use	1
Any current traffic problems are due to the ill-conceived island that presents traffic in the left lane going over the canal	1
Report pre Aldi	1
Needs better maintenance	1
Need better kids facilities	1
These proposals will restrict use of the park, and probably move the play area and Guide hut to a less accessible area	1
An upmarket supermarket will draw custom from Stafford. Stafford is going down the pan	1

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
I am 21 and fully in favour of a Waitrose and a swimming pool, so don't think it's only older people who are in support of Waitrose!	1
Could an indoor bowls area be incorporated into the gym area?	1
I wouldn't use a Waitrose even if it was next door to me as it's too expensive	
I would like to see a small Waitrose or M&S, but the high street is very important and I don't want anything to detract from the retailers there	1
The borough should help the High Street Aides Alley Project, scandalous tax avoidance for landlords	1
I have just joined a private gym as the facilities at Alleyne's are poor and its opening hours don't suit me	1
Most supermarkets have insufficient space to get around, leading to „trolley rage“ e.g. case of 60 year old man felled by trolley	1
Most supermarkets waste food. Third world poverty	1
If play areas across the area are being looked at overall, please look again at Aston Lodge where there is no play equipment available for children aged 4-11	1
Please fight the Trent Vision Trust proposal!	1
Stone is so behind with facilities compared to Uttoxeter, for example (ice skating rink, cinema, bowling, major named stores etc)	1
If you made all the car parks free for the first hour – 50p 1 hour thereafter, you would revitalise the town centre	1
The only people who oppose this plan are aged 75-85, and they oppose change of any kind	1
Make the event space free for children as they tried to charge my 1 year old!	1
One updated leisure facility that encompasses all of Stone is more cost effective than trying to run and maintain two separate units	1
This will be really useful to me!	1
Please, I've spoken to so many young people and they would love a bmx park to save them going to Stafford or Crewe	1
Stone is lovely because of the openness of Westbridge Park and our busy high street. Do not spoil it	1
Yes, the park in Stafford is well supported and is necessary for youths to let off their energy, and is most forward thinking. I do hope that it is a success	1
The leisure centre and pool should be kept separate. A lot of people in Stone do not work in town and use a gym / pool in a larger town on the commute	1
I also wish something would be done about the ailing high street	1
Jill Hood and Rob Kenny do not speak for everyone in Stone. They think that by shouting the loudest they will win. I am an open minded resident and welcome the redevelopment as a positive thing for Stone. You have my full support	1
The siting of a teenage activity are next to a sports centre and a supermarket will lead to illicit drinks being purchased and consumed	1
A riverside walk in a boggy area is absurd	1
The insulting arrogance of a certain councillor at a public meeting last year served to strengthen my view that this is a fait-accompli	1

Comment	Number of respondents making comment
No value proposition in another supermarket	1
Wilkos or B&M	1
Common ground	1
Yes to fitness centre and no to supermarket	1
You will ignore us	1
Stone changing, not for the better	1
Improve what we have	1
Fence off football pitch	1
I am a member of Westbridge Park fitness facility. The park and leisure facilities are vital to the town, and the leisure staff are courteous and attentive. I am in full agreement with the proposals	1

7.6.1 Eleven members of the community provided their contact details at the events or via the website in order to register to get involved with the liaison group which would take the proposals to the next stage of detail.

7.6.2 Of those providing contact details, one of the respondents includes a resident living outside of the area. More information regarding this is detailed in a later of this report.

8.0 ACTION GROUP CAMPAIGN

- 8.1 An action group, Keep Westbridge Park Green (KWPG) was created in 2012 to fight development on Westbridge Park. This group had also undertaken a number of activities in 2012 in order to object mixed use development on the park.
- 8.2 This action group ran a campaign during the consultation process being undertaken by the Borough Council. In response to the brochure distributed by the Borough Council, KWPG issued a press release on the 11th February as well as a flyer which was distributed to local homes.
- 8.2.1 Extracts from these written documents are included below. Some of this information was refuted by SBC in its Q&A fact document on the SBC website.
- “SBC recommends that the whole of Westbridge Park be designated a zone for „mixed use“ development. If this recommendation is adopted the entire Park will be open to potential development. Residents should understand that, whatever the current stated intentions of the Council, the Park in its entirety is under threat. We have consulted Planning Professionals who advise that:*
- *the formats used for both the supermarket and leisure centre are unrealistic*
 - *there are serious issues with access and location of the facilities*
 - *the plans do not conform to planning guidelines.*
- F&D has not been consulted or contacted by the Borough Council either formally or informally. There is nowhere in the plan where we could build and light a bonfire.*
- We have concluded that the drawings on the SBC brochure do not fairly represent reality and that the plans for the Park are not viable, threaten its very existence and are a misguided attempt to minimise adverse comment.*
- Please remember that, if you disagree with the proposal to sell land on Westbridge Park for commercial development, SBC still has an obligation to provide leisure facilities appropriate to the needs of Stone residents.”*
- 8.2.2 Following the distribution of its flyer, KWPG erected a marquee in the town centre throughout the week of the exhibitions and gave information to residents.
- 8.2.3 This displayed a KWPG press release, flyer and their own artist’s impressions of what they expect the development to look like.

The information highlighted that KWPG were making people aware of:

- “Whole park allocated as Mixed Use and stating further development therefore difficult to resist
- Passing ownership to STC will not make it easier to resist development. Be aware STC voted in favour of „mixed use“ designation
- SBC should provide adequate leisure facilities without selling land.”

KWPG concluded that the drawings on the SBC brochure did not fairly represent reality and that the plans for the Park are not viable, threaten its very existence and are a misguided attempt to minimise adverse comment. The information also included an artist’s impressions showing KWPG’s elevation drawings of the proposals. At this stage, the Borough Council did not have any details about the height and size of the final buildings.

8.2.4 Some residents raised concerns about the KWPG information and the Borough Council clarified information on its Q&A document on the website to ensure that residents had answers to points raised.

8.2.5 At the KWPG marquee, photocopies of the questionnaire included within the Borough Council’s brochure were distributed.

- Some residents completed these and posted them directly to the Borough Council – this data is included within the SBC responses already detailed in the previous chapters of this document.
- In addition, 708 responses were collated by KWPG and handed in by a KWPG representative to SBC at the end of the last exhibition on the 2nd March. These included:
 - 689 – against the proposal
 - 11 – in favour of the proposal
 - 9 – unsure
 - None of the respondents who completed the questionnaires handed in by KWPG did not answer this question.

9.0 DUPLICATE STATISTICS

9.1.1 Of those who provided their contact details, a number of respondents submitted duplicate entries with the same answer in terms of whether they were in favour of the proposals or not. These duplicate entries were either via SBC's online form or its postal or event questionnaire or via a response form handed in by KWPG).

- As a result the following duplicate answers have been removed
 - No – 29 duplicate forms
 - Yes – 9 duplicate forms
- Many other respondents submitted more than one response. However, because they stated No to the KWPG consultation but then went on to reply as Unsure, Yes or No Answer on the SBC consultation brochure, event form or online form, for the purposes of this consultation none of these have been removed and all of the respondents' choices data remain in the final statistics.
- Not all of the respondents provided a postal address which means that it is not possible to remove all of the duplicate responses. However, for the purposes of this consultation it was important that all residents had an opportunity to put forward their views and submissions with no contact details, whether a yes, no or an unsure response, so these have been included within the report.

9.2.1 Of the KWPG responses where an address was supplied, a number were from out of the leisure catchment area and have alternative facilities closer to their homes. These included:

- 1 x St Albans – said no via KWPG forms
- 6 x Stoke on Trent – said no via KWPG forms
- 1 x Hanley – said no via KWPG forms
- 1 x ST6/Bradley – said no via KWPG forms
- 1 x Oakmoor/ST10 – said no via KWPG forms
- 1 x Longton – said no via KWPG forms
- 2 x ST16 – said no via KWPG forms
- 4 x ST18 (Marston, Dunston and Yarlett) – said no via KWPG forms

9.3.1 Of the online submissions of those providing address details, one from Newcastle under Lyme – said no via online submission.

10.0 SUMMARY

10.1.0 The consultation process adhered to best practice guidelines in that:

- Consultation took place prior to a decision being made
- It was well publicised to those most affected by the proposals
- The documentation was written in simple language and the purpose of the consultation and how to respond was clear
- The information made available by the Borough Council and its architects was included on the exhibition boards (there have been many questions for more specific detail (in terms of transport and design for example) but it has been explained this level of detail is not available at this initial consultation stage)
- More than one method of consultation was allowed
- The consultation was accessible – online, at central events and via a freepost flyer
- Time was provided to respond in line with best practice recommendations
- It was flexible and sensitive to the needs of those being consulted.

10.1.1 The consultation process has been thorough and allowed residents to express an opinion. More than 10 per cent of households in Stone responded to the brochure distributed by the Borough Council, on the council's website or at the event.

10.1.2 The majority of residents who responded through the Borough Council's brochure, online or at the event were in favour of new leisure provision funded by a new food store at Westbridge Park.

10.1.3 There were a number of respondents who wanted further information before making a decision.

10.1.4 Following its campaign, a KWPG member handed in copies of consultation forms, the majority of which were not in favour of new leisure provision funded by a new food store at Westbridge Park.

10.1.5 The Government's best practice guidelines in terms of consultation do not give any advice as to whether a campaign group handing in questionnaires to a consultation should be considered within the responses

10.1.6 It is our professional opinion that the responses should not be ignored but should be detailed separately as we cannot verify the accuracy of the information which was given out to these respondents as we were not in attendance to listen to information or clarify any points. Although there were more supporters of the proposed new leisure facilities than those against at the Borough Council's events, the overall consultation and KWPG's campaign clearly shows that there are concerns about the whole park being developed as well as concerns about the need for another supermarket in the town centre. It is our opinion that the Borough Council should therefore take all of these concerns into account before making a decision and a number of recommendations are made in the chapter below.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1.1 One of KWPG's key concerns was the designation of Westbridge Park as a mixed use site. Although in policy terms „mixed-use“ legitimately includes green space, this has posed a key concern. It is recommended that if possible, the specific areas proposed for commercial space and the leisure centre should be ring fenced. Then, the specific area which would remain as green and open space could also be ring-fenced and an agreement made to protect this green space in perpetuity should this proposal go-ahead. If this recommendation is approved, then residents should also be notified and provided a further opportunity to comment before a decision is made.
- 11.1.2 If that additional consultation takes place, Beattie further recommends undertaking the following activities as part of that activity:
- 11.1.3 A number of respondents wanted more information in order to effectively respond to the consultation process, particularly details about elevations, designs, size and layout of the buildings. It is recommended that the Borough Council distributes any further information which can be made available to residents providing another opportunity for them to comment on this detail.
- 11.1.4 One of the key concerns related to retail need in Stone and the impact on the High Street in terms of another supermarket. It is recommended that the Borough Council undertakes a further study and provides that information to residents allowing a further opportunity to comment. If the eventuality of another supermarket is proven, respondents should have the opportunity to confirm which of the possible site options they prefer.
- 11.1.5 It is also recommended that as part of the further consultation all of those who responded to the KWPG consultation should also be given the additional information along with a key fact sheet and invited to respond with their opinions.
- 11.1.6 In order to make any further consultation as cost effective as possible, it is recommended that the Borough Council uses the database of those who participated in the consultation to send the above information as well as answering the other questions raised through the consultation process. This additional information and Q&A should also be uploaded to the website and promoted via the local media, online channels and sent to Stone Town Council.

If further exhibitions are considered, it is recommended that the Borough Council seeks to work with KWPG as this would avoid claims of misleading information being levelled against any party.

11.1.7 Eleven individual residents have also provided contact details and agreed to participate in a liaison group with the Borough Council. In addition, a number of the Park user groups have voiced a willingness to participate on this group. It is recommended that this liaison group is created and the individual residents who offered to participate, as well as all park user groups, The Moorings and the Town Council are notified and invited to nominate one representative to sit on this group. The group should then meet quarterly in order to work in partnership and engage constructively with the Borough Council on issues regarding Stone.

Group	Key contact	Type	Address	
Stone Master Marathoners	Lisa Russell	Running Club	Lisa Russell 2 Chandlers Way Stone Staffordshire ST15 8LY	
Stafford and Stone Canoe Club	Andy Neave	Canoe Club	Westbridge Park Stone Staffordshire ST15 8QW	
1st Stone Scouts	Jeremy Cotton	Scout Club	The Pump House Westbridge Park Stone Staffordshire	
Stone Scout and Guide Band	Kerry Dawson - Bandmaster	Band	189 Brookside Lane Walton Stone Staffordshire ST15 0HZ	
Stone Town Band	Not given	Band	No address provided	
Trinity Skills for Life	Ann Hunt	Project in Stone for young people with learning difficulties	The Clifford Project Stone Unit 10 Emerald Way Stone Business Park ST15 0SR Staffordshire	
Stone Lions Club	President - Mrs Chris Handley Secretary - Mike Ward	Members club	Meet at: St Dominic's Community Centre, Station Road, Stone	

Stone and Eccleshall Girl Guiding HQ	Pauline Mckie - Leader Dawn Groom - Division Commissioner	Brownies/Guides club	Wells Bladen Guide headquarters Westbridge Park Stone Staffordshire	
Wildlife charity	N/A	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	The Wolseley Centre Stafford ST17 0WT	
Stone festival committee	No contact name stated on website	Stone Festival Committee	C/O Fairway Service Station Litchfield Road Stone ST15 8QB	
Food and Drink Festival committee	Richard Stevens	Stone Food and Drink Festival	Stone Food and Drink Festival, PO Box 3494, STONE ST15 9DP	

Organisation	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4
Stone Library	Market Square	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8AT
The Crown Hotel	38 High Street	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8AS
Stone Youth & Community Centre	Station Road	Stone	ST15 8ER	
The Royal Exchange Limestone Brewery	Radford Street	Stone	Staffordshire Stone	
St Dominic's Priory School	The Old Brewery Mount Road	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8LL
Christ Church C of E First School	21 Station Road	Stone	ST15 8EN	
Meaford Fields Day Nursery	Northesk St	Stone	ST15 8EP	
	Whitebridge Lane	Stone	ST15 8LQ	
Giggle and Wiggles Day Nursery	Mount Industrial Estate	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8LL
Alleyne's School	Oulton Road	Stone	ST15 8DT	
Pirehill First School	Tilling Drive	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 0AA
Walton Priory Middle School	Beacon Rise	Stone	ST15 0AL	
St Michaels C of E First School	Weavers Lane	Stone	ST15 8QB	
Smartys Day Nursery	The Bungalow	Lichfield Rd	Stone	ST15 8QU
Doctors Surgery	8 High Street	Stone	ST15 8AP	
Mansion House Surgery	Abbey Street	Stone	ST15 8YE	
Mansion House surgery	Eccleshall Road	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 0HN
Stone House Hotel	Stafford Road	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 0BQ
West Bridge Park Fitness Centre	Stafford Street	Stone	ST15 8QW	
Old Road Fish & Chip Shop	19 Old Road	Stone	ST15 8JE	
Dragon Palace	6 Oulton Road	Stone	ST15 8DZ	
	Unit 2			
Subway	Mill Court	Mill Street	Stone	ST15 8BA
Pizza Di Piazza	12 High Street	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8AW
Golden Stone	3 Old Road	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8HE
Ovalish Restaurant & Takeaway	36 Radford Close	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8DA

Stone Kebab House	10 Church Street	Town Centre	Stone	ST15 8BD
Priory Fish Bar	7 Lichfield Street	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8NA
Eastern Delight	11 Lichfield St	Stone	ST15 8NA	
Valleys	2A Lichfield St	Town Centre	Stone	ST15 8BB
Stone Cricket Club	Stone	Staffordshire		
Walton Community Association	Whitemill Lane	Walton	Stone Staffordshire	ST15 0EQ
The Immaculate Conception and Saint Dominic Catholic Church	Tation Road	Stone	Staffordshire	
Christ Church Vicarage	Radford Street	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8ED
St Johns Methodist and United Reformed Church	Granville Terrace	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8DF
St John The Evangelist	Christchurch Way	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8ZB
St Michaels Church	Church Street	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 8AA
Stone Baptist Church	Manor Rise	Stone	Staffordshire	ST15 0HU
Barlaston Post Office	Longton Road	Barlaston	Stoke on Trent Eccleshall	ST12 9AA
Post Office	Bishops Offley	The Garage	Stafford	ST21 6ET
Swynnerton Post Office	Forge House	Stone	ST15 0RA	
Fulford Vilage Hall	Fulford Road	Fulford	Staffordshire	ST11 9QT
Milwich Post Office	Prospect House	Milwich	Staffordshire	ST18 0EH
Yarnfield Post Office	The Post Office Bungalow	Greenside	Yarnfield Stone	ST15 0NA
Tittensor Post Office	7 Winghouse Lane	Tittensor	Stoke on Trent Staffordshire Stafford	ST12 9JG
Sandon Post Office	Co-op Superstore	Silkmore	Staffordshire	ST17 4JD
Meir Heath & Rough Close Village Hall	15 Willows Drive	Stoke-on-Trent	Staffordshire	ST3 7LZ
Rough Close Post Office	4 Grindley Lane	Meir Heath	Stoke on Trent Staffordshire	ST3 7LW

<TO BE SENT ON BEATTIE HEADED PAPER>

<INSERT ADDRESS>

<INSERT DATE>

Dear <INSERT NAME>

Re: Consultation regarding Leisure and Recreation Facilities in Stone

As one of the groups using Westbridge Park, I would like to organise a meeting with you on behalf of Stafford Borough Council to discuss the forthcoming consultation regarding leisure and recreation facilities in Stone.

We have been appointed to manage the consultation process and would like to discuss the proposals with you in more detail.

The public consultation events will be held in local venues in late February/early March, enabling residents to find out more about the options for the future of the Park. I can clarify that all of the options will include retaining the open space and events space at the park as well as continuing to provide accommodation for the scouts, guides and canoe club. The options include:

- Doing nothing – There will be no change to the existing Park and Leisure Centre. Alleyne's School in Stone is considering becoming an Academy and, while they envisage that the squash court, AstroTurf and sports hall will continue to be available for public use, the swimming pool is nearing the end of its lifespan.
- Sell a small amount of land at Westbridge Park to a food store operator. Use the funds from this sale, coupled with a substantial sum from SBC (based on the savings in running costs by having all of the facilities under one roof) to improve the Park. This would include the provision of a new, purpose built Leisure Centre with gym, pool and aerobic studios, improved event and open space, football pitch, landscaped circular/riverside walk, picnic area and a new children's play area and teenage sports park. This would retain the canoe club house and scout hut, which could be expanded to include facilities for the guides.

Please contact me on 07876 548498 to agree a convenient time for a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria Walker

Beattie Communications

Beattie Communications
Piccadilly House
49 Piccadilly
Manchester
M1 2AP

TEL. 0844 842 5285

WEB. www.beattiegroupp.com

<Insert address>

20th February 2013

Re: Proposals for Westbridge Park

Dear <insert name>,

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the proposals for Westbridge Park.

As you may be aware, I have been appointed by Stafford Borough Council to undertake a consultation process with local stakeholders and residents regarding the proposals for the park.

I understand that you and your neighbours at The Moorings have concerns regarding these proposals and would like the opportunity to meet with The Moorings residents to discuss these in more detail, particularly considering your proximity to Westbridge Park.

I am in the area on Thursday 28th February and would be available for a meeting from 1.30pm. Please get in touch if this time is convenient for you and I will confirm a venue nearby.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Walker
Director

PHONE
5581



smartdistribution
solutions

a. 42 Price Street Business Centre, Price Street, Birkenhead CH41 4JQ
e. sales@smartdistribution.co.uk t. 0151 652 1600 f. 0151 345 4929

31 January 2013

VICTORIA WALKER
BEATTIE COMMUNICATIONS
4 CHURCH WALK
LEEDS
YORKSHIRE
LS2 7EG

Re: STONE
Job No.: 5581 Your Ref: PHONE

We are pleased to confirm your order as outlined below and on the attached client schedule. Should you wish to make any amendments to this schedule, please advise us as soon as possible.

Item Name: STONE
Item Size: A5
Quantity: 7363
Areas: See supplied schedules
Distribution Method: DIRECT MAIL
Distribution Rate:
Transport Rate:
Total Contract: £0.00 plus 20.0% VAT
Payment Terms: Prepayment

Delivery/Collection: DELIVER TO DEPOT(S)
(TRANSPORT SCHEDULE ATTACHED - if applicable)

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Yours sincerely

PHIL MORRISON
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46 THE CALLS
LEEDS
YORKSHIRE
LS2 7EY

FAO: VICTORIA WALKER

Invoice No. :	44254/P
Invoice Date :	1 Feb 2013
Payment Terms :	100% Prepayment
PAYMENT DUE :	31 Jan 2013

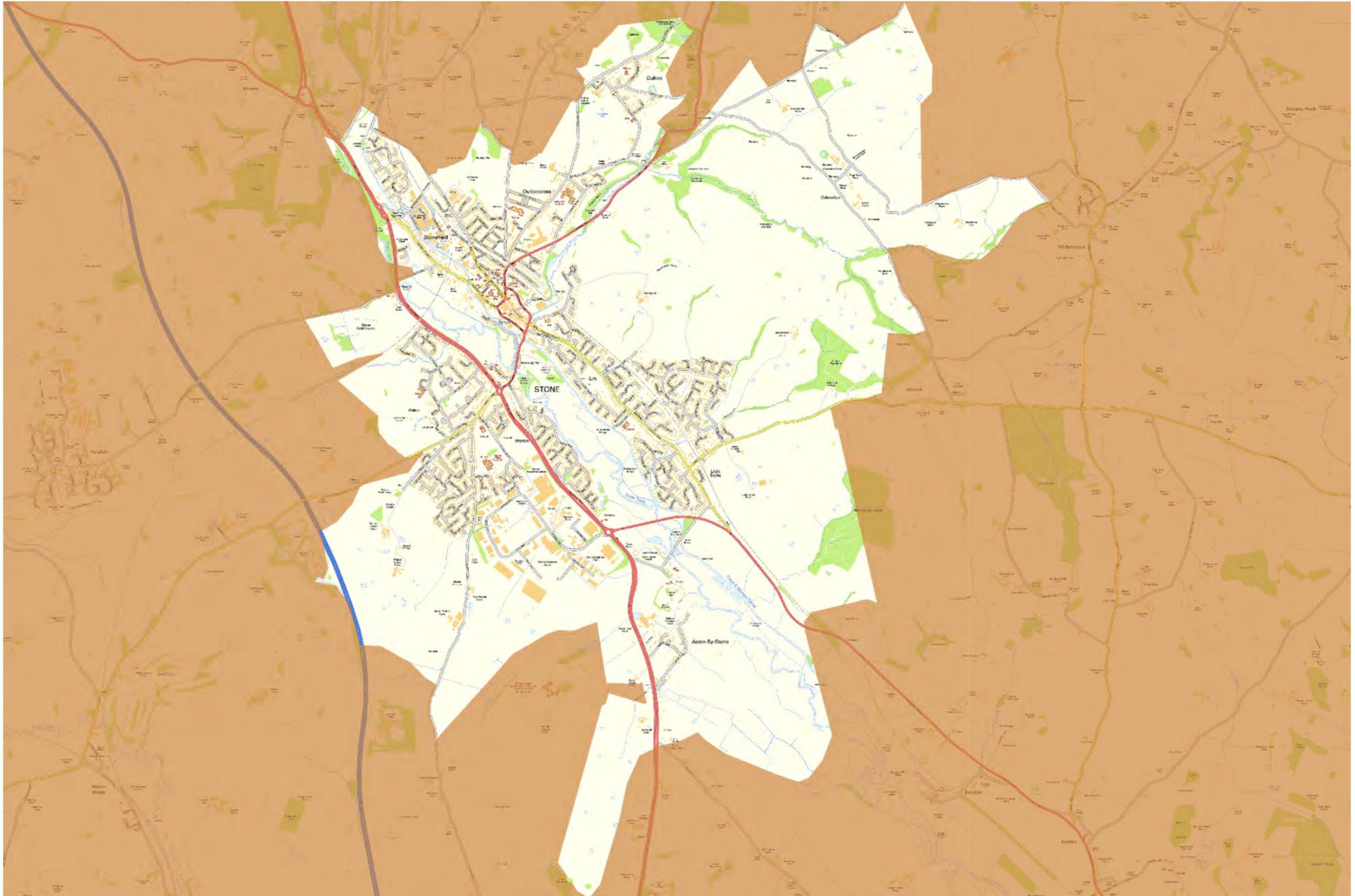
Invoice Detail:

Smart Distribution Solns Job No.: 5581
Customer Ref : ORDER NO: PHONE

B7492
STONE - DIRECT MAIL
A VAT INVOICE WILL FOLLOW UPON RECEIPT OF PAYMENT
I/C:007 N/C:4005

Description	Quantity	Rate	Sub Total
1 DIRECT MAIL	7,363 @	=	
2 FILE SET UP	1 @	£45.00 =	£45.00
3 FULFILMENT	1 @	£662.67 =	£662.67
4 POSTAGE	1 @	£2208.90 =	£2208.90
5	@	=	
6	@	=	
	100% prepayment		
	Sub Total:		£2916.57
	VAT:		£583.31
	Prepayment Total:		£3499.88

VAT Registration Number: 130 8714 31
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Consultation About Leisure and Recreation Facilities in Stone

Stafford Borough Council invites you to public consultation events which will be held on:

Wednesday 27th February

Eccleshall Community Centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall, Staffordshire, ST21 6AU: Between 11.00am – 2.00pm

Barlaston Methodist Church, Park Drive, Barlaston, ST12 9DP: Between 4.30pm – 7.30pm

Thursday 28th February

Christ Church Centre, Christ Church, Christ Church Way, Stone, ST15 8ZB: Between 4.00pm – 8.00pm

Saturday 2nd March

Alleyne's High School, Oulton Road, Stone, ST15 8DT: Between 10.30am – 2.30pm

Aims and Objectives

- Improve open space and event area provision at Westbridge Park
- Reduce taxpayer's contributions to operating costs by bringing leisure facilities in Stone into the same location
- Retain the scout hut and canoe club and improve guide provision
- Deliver a new Leisure Centre with better equipped gym and new pool
- Provide toddler, junior and teenage play facilities at Westbridge Park

Contact Details:

T: 08448 425270

e: westbridgepark@staffordbc.gov.uk

w: www.staffordbc.gov.uk/westbridgepark



Leisure Facilities In Stone

Stone's leisure facilities are nearing the end of their lifespan and investment is required. They currently cost the council a lot to run and repair, due to the age and inefficiency of the buildings and the fact that two separate sites need to be managed.

Stafford Borough Council (SBC) delivered a new, state-of-the-art leisure centre in Stafford which was developer funded through the sale of a council-owned site. A new leisure centre in Stone will also require the sale of council-owned land to help meet the costs.

The Borough Council is keen to assess public opinion and will not go ahead with the investment into a new leisure centre in Stone unless there is positive support from the community in the north of the borough. Any proposals would be subject to planning permission.

The Borough Council also recognises that Westbridge Park will continue to be the focus for community events, including the annual Stone Festival, the Food & Drink Festival and Bonfire Night.



Artist's impression showing how the event area can still be accommodated at Westbridge Park

Existing leisure and recreation facilities

Westbridge Park

Next to Stone Town Centre, the Leisure Centre provides a health and fitness facility and has 70,000 visitors a year. There are also football pitches, tennis courts, scout and guide huts, a canoe club, a teenage sports park, play areas and open space for events and recreation.

The current leisure centre was constructed in 1989 with a life expectancy of 12 years. It has been internally refurbished, but structurally the building has exceeded its design life.

Other Facilities

Alleyne's High School in Stone is considering becoming an Academy and the squash court, AstroTurf and sports hall are not affected by the proposals. However, the swimming pool is nearing the end of its lifespan. The Borough Council also provides tennis courts and bowling at Stonefield Park and football at Tilling Drive.



Proposed leisure facilities at Westbridge Park

It is proposed that new state-of-the-art facilities will provide the following:

- A 6-lane, 25m swimming pool
- Fitness gym to accommodate up to 80 pieces of cardio vascular and resistance equipment
- 3 multi-purpose rooms/aerobic studios and a consultation/training room
- Improved changing accommodation
- A new children's play area and teenage facilities

Funding new facilities

The council will put in a substantial sum, based on achieving the savings in running costs of bringing the leisure facilities together. But developer contributions from the sale of council-owned land are essential to meet the costs.

Why is a new food store required in Stone?

There are a number of food operators interested in Stone and there is proven capacity for a new food store. Putting this on part of Westbridge Park means it is:

- Only 200m (within walking distance) of the High Street and would provide parking and encourage visitors into town
- Council-owned, therefore every penny of the money a food operator would pay for the site would be reinvested in Stone
- Able to help fund a new leisure centre and improvements to the event area at Westbridge Park

If there is no public support for a food store in this location it is likely a food store will go elsewhere in Stone, but this will not deliver the funds needed for a new leisure facility.

As part of this consultation, the Borough Council is asking if local residents would be prepared to see a new food store in a town centre, council-owned site, if it helps fund new leisure facilities and improvements to Westbridge Park.



Artist's impression looking into the proposed Westbridge Park

What the park could look like



Frequently Asked Questions

Q) Is housing proposed for Westbridge Park?

A) No, housing is not included.

Q) Why is another supermarket required?

A) An independent report, commissioned by the Borough Council, has shown that there is capacity for further food and general shopping space.

Q) Can the supermarket go elsewhere?

A) Yes, but Government policy is for shops to be as close to the town centre as possible to protect the High Street. There is interest from a supermarket operator for a site and store off the A51 at Aston and another for a site next to the Fire Station. This would not deliver the developer contributions that are required to build a leisure centre.

Q) Is there a proposal for a doctor's surgery on Westbridge Park?

A) Initially the plan was for the two existing doctor's surgeries to come together on Westbridge Park. We still think this would be a good location for a doctor's surgery, but the only way this could be provided would be at the expense of green space.

Q) If the food store and leisure centre are developed at Westbridge Park, what will happen to the Food & Drink Festival and the Stone Festival, scouts, guides and canoe club?

A) We have ensured that a substantial green area is retained for these important events at Westbridge Park and would be happy to consider gifting the event area to Stone Town Council. The scouts and canoe clubs will remain where they are but we would provide replacement facilities for the guides.

Q) What effect will the flood plain have?

A) Parts of the park are in the flood plain, but there is sufficient land outside the flood plain to allow the proposals to go ahead. We have already discussed the proposals with the Environment Agency.

Q) When would the leisure centre and food store be delivered if this were to go ahead?

A) The replacement leisure centre would come first in 2015 and the food store would follow.

Questionnaire

Please complete the questionnaire, detach from this leaflet and post using the freepost address overleaf. Alternatively email westbridgepark@staffordbc.gov.uk or visit www.staffordbc.gov.uk/westbridgepark to complete an online form.

Name / Address

Email

Q1) Westbridge Park will retain a green and open space. What would you like that to include?

Tick your preferred options

- Event space (e.g festivals)
- Football pitch
- Circular, landscaped walk including the riverside path
- Picnic area
- Play areas
- Other ideas (use box below)

Q2) By accommodating a food store at Westbridge Park, which would be smaller than Morrisons, this will provide the funds needed to deliver a new leisure centre with a 25m pool, fitness centre and aerobics studios as well as retaining the open space and event area, scouts, guides and the canoe club at the park. Do you support this proposal?

- YES NO UNSURE

If you have comments/questions insert here. Use additional paper if required. Feedback will be circulated to respondents who provide contact details.

Thank you

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2



Stafford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Riverside
Stafford ST16 3BR

Welcome

Thank you for attending today's public consultation event

Stafford Borough Council is keen to understand if residents would like to see a new leisure centre and improvements to the events space and parkland setting at Westbridge Park, which would be provided with the help of funds from the sale of council-owned land for a new food store.

The park will continue to be the focus for community events, including the annual Stone Festival, the Food and Drink Festival and Bonfire night, and a substantial events space is incorporated which the Borough Council is happy to gift to Stone Town Council.

The Borough Council would only go ahead with the proposals if there is support from residents in the north of the Borough.

Please review the information provided today, ask questions of the team, provide your views on the questionnaire and post in the box at the event.

Thank you for participating in this consultation.



Artist's impression showing how the event area can still be accommodated

The proposal

Existing leisure facilities in stone

- Westbridge Park Fitness Centre provides a health and fitness facility
- There is a football pitch, tennis courts, scout and guide huts, a canoe club, teenage and children's play facilities and open space at Westbridge Park
- Alleyne's High School provides a squash court, AstroTurf, sports hall and shared use swimming pool
- Tennis courts and bowling are available at Stonefield Park
- Football pitches are available at Tilling Drive

The issue

- The current leisure centre was constructed in 1989 with a 12 year life expectancy. It has been internally refurbished but structurally the building has exceeded its design life
- The facilities at Alleyne's High School belong to the County Council. The Borough Council subsidises the running of the pool but its lease has now expired
- The pool is old and although it was re-lined a few years ago it will ultimately require investment and modernisation and the Borough Council will find it hard to commit funds to this in the long term as it is not economically viable
- As funding for leisure is non-statutory, the Borough Council wants to find a solution which will mean Stone has quality modern facilities in the long term rather than residents having to travel to the facilities at Stafford
- The school also offers a squash court, AstroTurf pitch and sports hall which are unaffected by the proposals
- All of the facilities at Alleyne's can only be used out of school hours
- The facilities cost the taxpayer a lot to run because two separate sites need to be managed and maintained. The repair costs are high and the buildings are old and inefficient
- If a new pool is constructed at Westbridge Park, the pool at Alleyne's may close, but this would be a decision for the school and the County Council as the Borough Council does not own this facility
- The Borough Council would allow schools to use the new pool if required but could manage the timetable effectively so that public use of the pool would still be allowed for the majority of the school day. This works effectively at Stafford where 27 schools use the pools, up to 14 schools may want use of the new pool at Stone

The proposal

To deliver new state-of-the-art facilities for residents in Stone and north of the borough, including:

A new leisure centre with:

- A 6-lane, 25m swimming pool
- Fitness gym with 80 pieces of cardio vascular and resistance equipment
- 3 multi-purpose aerobics studios and a consultation/training room
- Improved changing accommodation
- A new children's play area
- Teenage sports facilities
- A football pitch (which can still be used for events)
- An events area totalling 4.5 acres at the front of the park and a further space at the back of the park allowing event space of more than 8 acres
- New landscaped circular/riverside walks
- A picnic area



The masterplan

Indicative masterplan



Indicative masterplan overlaid on existing park



How the proposal can be funded

Investment into leisure is non-statutory. This means that Borough Council funding for leisure can be reduced if there are more important things the council needs to fund.

However, the Borough Council wants to seek ways to ensure continued provision of new, modern leisure facilities in Stone so that residents do not have to travel to Stafford to access these services.

The Borough Council delivered a new state-of-the-art leisure centre in Stafford. This was developer-funded through the sale of a council-owned site.

A new leisure centre in Stone would also require the sale of council-owned land to help meet the costs.

There is currently interest from food store operators keen to find a suitable site in Stone and their funds could be used to help deliver a leisure centre if secured on Westbridge Park.

The council would also put in a substantial sum, based on the cost savings achieved by only running one new and energy efficient building. A sinking fund would also be created to ensure the funds are available for the ongoing running and maintenance of these facilities.

Why is a food store needed in Stone?

The Borough Council commissioned an independent firm to undertake a retail study. The study took the new Aldi store into account and it highlighted that, even with the new Aldi, capacity exists for further food and general shopping space.

The planning system means that if a policy compliant application for a supermarket comes forward and there is proven capacity it is likely to get permission.

Can the food store go elsewhere?

There is interest from a supermarket operator for a site for a new store off the A51 at Aston and from another for a site near the fire station. Planning permission would only be granted for one food store and ideally this should be as close to the high street as possible.

If a food store goes elsewhere, onto a site which is not council-owned, this will not deliver the funds for a new leisure centre.

If a food store goes onto a small part of Westbridge Park this would be:

- Only 200m from the high street and it would provide the opportunity for shoppers to link trips with the town centre
- Able to help fund a leisure centre as it is a council-owned site so every penny of the money a food store operator will pay for a site would be reinvested in Stone

Today is your chance to have your say. If there is no support for a food store in this location it will ultimately go elsewhere in Stone and there will be no investment into Westbridge Park.

You can also tell us what type of food store you would prefer to see in Stone.



Frequently asked questions

Q) What does mixed-use development mean?

A) Mixed-use means a variety of uses (for example food store, leisure centre and green space).

The term 'mixed-use' development in the Local Plan does not mean that the whole of Westbridge Park will be developed. The Borough Council has committed to retaining green space for recreational use/events and is willing to gift this to Stone Town Council.

Q) Would planning permission be granted for the whole site?

A) No. There would be a planning application for the leisure centre and for the food store and they would be on specific allocated sites not for the whole park.

Q) Are the plans finalised?

A) The plans shown in the consultation leaflet are indicative but are based on the footprints needed to deliver a food store which can fund the leisure centre. The exact sites and sizes of things such as the balancing ponds, roads, planting and walkways are still subject to change. If this goes ahead, a liaison group would be created so that interested parties could participate in the detail.

Q) Can the festivals continue to use Westbridge Park?

A) Yes.

The Borough Council's event management team is happy to work with the festival committees to plan the use of all of the available green space and some of the proposed car parks to achieve the best layouts so the events can successfully continue to operate at Westbridge Park.

Q) Have the festival committees been consulted?

A) Yes, letters were sent to user groups of the park requesting a meeting in early February. Copies of the consultation leaflet have also been distributed.

Q) How much space is available for events in the proposed plan?

A) There is more than 4.5 acres for events at the front of the park on the grass land and football pitch and some of the new car parking provision could also be used for events. In addition, there is a further 8+ acres at the back of the park which can be used for events. The Borough Council would also welcome the events using space in the town centre so visitors to the festival visit the high street as well.

Q) How big is the proposed food store?

A) It is a medium sized food store, smaller than Morrisons but larger than Aldi. This is large enough to provide more choice, convenience and competitive pricing and will meet the existing gap in provision. This is a realistic and achievable proposal and it can provide the funds needed to help deliver the leisure centre.

The food store would take up the space currently in use for tennis courts and the existing gym.

Q) What is proposed in terms of access and transport improvements in association with the food store?

A) The layout, servicing, access and transport improvements would form part of a planning application. Residents would be consulted regarding this detail and planning permission would not be granted if safe access, servicing and road capacities are not proven.

Q) Does the Retail Report which details the capacity for a new supermarket include Aldi?

A) Yes, this report takes account of the Aldi provision and identifies that even with Aldi now in Stone, there is still capacity for more supermarket provision in the town. The report can be found on the Borough Council's website.

Q) Why is another supermarket required in Stone?

A) The Borough Council would find it difficult to prevent another food store or supermarket coming to Stone if there is proven capacity and a suitable site/proposal.

Westbridge Park is the closest site to the town centre; this meets planning policy and helps to encourage linked trips to the high street. If a food store is located here, because the site is owned by the Borough Council, every penny of the money a food store operator pays for the site would be reinvested in Stone, helping to deliver a new leisure centre and improvements to Westbridge Park.

Frequently asked questions

Q) Can a supermarket on the fire station site deliver a leisure centre?

A) A food store here would require a substantial financial commitment regarding a junction off the A34 and would therefore be very unlikely to be able to afford to also contribute the significant sums of money required to deliver a leisure centre.

Q) Would the food store charge for parking and restrict hours?

A) Most food stores like to provide a period of free parking. Discussions would take place at a more detailed stage if residents want the Borough Council to progress with this proposal. There would be a further opportunity for consultation.

Q) What will happen to the facilities at Alleyne's school?

A) The sports hall, squash courts and AstroTurf at Alleyne's are in good condition and can continue to be used.

The Borough Council does not own the pool at Alleyne's; it is owned by the County Council. The future of the pool at Alleyne's would therefore be a decision for the school and the County Council.

The Borough Council would like to find a solution to provide modern facilities for the next generation. Following studies, the most cost effective solution would be the sale of some of the council owned land at Westbridge Park to a food store operator and using this developer-funding to help deliver a new leisure centre with a modern gym, pool and studios. This would guarantee investment into leisure provision in Stone.

Schools would be given some exclusive access to the pool if required, but it would still be open to the public for much of the daytime, even during school hours, something which cannot currently be provided in Stone.

Q) If Alleyne's chooses to close its pool where will the children learn to swim?

A) The Borough Council is happy for schools to use the new pool at Westbridge Park in the same way as schools use the Stafford Leisure Centre Pool. Currently, 27 schools use the Stafford pool and this is managed well so that for much of the school day it is still available for public use. As there would only be up to 14 schools in Stone wanting use of the pool it would be open to the public for much more of the school day.

Q) How are the needs of toddlers, young children and teenagers catered for in the proposals?

A) Specialist play equipment for each of these groups will be provided. There will also be classes and improved pool/sports facilities for the use of every resident in the north of the Borough, including toddlers, young children and teenagers. Extensive consultation with local young people took place to deliver the successful Victoria Park scheme in Stafford in order to cater for all ages which is an approach we would look to take on this scheme.

Q) What will happen if residents do not want to see this proposal come to fruition?

A) The Borough Council will not impose this proposal and the new leisure centre and food store would not be delivered if residents do not want this to happen.

Q) What about a theatre or community building?

A) This was looked at some years ago under the Stone Market Town Initiative. Feasibility studies were undertaken, and a business plan was offered up to Stone, but there were no takers.

Q) Is housing proposed for Westbridge Park?

A) No, housing is not included.

Q) Is there a proposal for a doctor's surgery on Westbridge Park?

A) Initially the plan was for the two doctors' surgeries to come together on Westbridge Park but this would be at the expense of further green space.

Q) Will the leisure centre be delivered if there isn't a food store at Westbridge Park?

A) No. Developer funds are essential to cover the significant costs of building a new swimming pool and gym. This is how Stafford Leisure Centre was delivered. Even with the sale of council-owned land at Westbridge Park, the council will still need to put in a substantial sum based on the cost savings achieved from the lower running costs of a new energy efficient building on one site.

Q) Doesn't the Borough Council have an obligation to provide new, modern leisure facilities in Stone?

A) No, leisure funding is non-statutory therefore funds can be reduced if the council requires them elsewhere.

Q) What will happen to the canoe club, guides and scouts?

A) The scouts and canoe clubs will remain where they are but we would provide replacement facilities for the guides.

Next steps

Thank you for attending today's event. This consultation is your chance to have your say.

Westbridge Park's future is for the communities of Stone and the north of the borough to decide.

The Borough Council will not invest in the proposal unless residents are happy to see a new food store, leisure centre and improvements to Westbridge Park.

The events space, canoe club, scouts and guides can all remain on the site with or without the investment.

The Borough Council will ensure that space is provided for all of the events held at Westbridge Park and will provide assistance to the festival committees to plan the space effectively if required.

A liaison group would be created to work on the detailed plans and a representative from Stone Town Council, event committees, park user groups and local residents would be invited to join that group and get involved in the long term planning of Westbridge Park.

The Borough Council is happy to gift the event space to Stone Town Council if this would be welcomed.

Please complete a questionnaire today and let us know your views.

If you provide contact details we will write to you and keep you informed about the consultation process, providing feedback once we have reviewed all of the comments made online, in the post and at the consultation events.

Further information will also be available on:

w: www.staffordbc.gov.uk/westbridgepark

e: westbridgepark@staffordbc.gov.uk

t: 08448 425270



PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT – WESTBRIDGE PARK

Your response will be analysed anonymously, but please leave your contact details so we can write to you and provide feedback about the consultation process:

Mr/Mrs/Ms/other (please specify):

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Thank you for attending this exhibition. If you have any questions about the proposals for Westbridge Park or this questionnaire please ask a member of the team today. This event aims to provide background information regarding existing and future leisure provision in Stone and we are keen to understand your views.

Completing this questionnaire will be of great assistance - space is provided on the reverse for general comments, concerns or ideas and your answers to the questions below regarding the proposals shown at today's event will also enable us to respond to the points raised through the consultation process.

- 1. Have you completed a response form online or via the freepost questionnaire in the brochure?** Please circle your answer below

YES I SUBMITTED A QUESTIONNAIRE ONLINE	YES I POSTED THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE BROCHURE	NO, I HAVE NOT YET SUBMITTED A QUESTIONNAIRE
--	--	--

- 2. The proposals include the retention of 4.5 acres of green and open space at Westbridge Park and a further 8 acres of green space. Should the proposals go ahead, the Borough Council would be happy to gift that space to Stone Town Council. Which of the following amenities would you like including on that open space?** Please tick all which apply below

	Tick here if you want to see this included
Event space	
Football pitch	
Circular, landscaped walk including the riverside path	
Picnic area	
Play areas	
Other – please state below:	

- 3. There may be an opportunity to reduce the amount of parking proposed so that the green/open/event space can be increased. Would you prefer to see less parking and more green space in the proposals?** Please circle your response below

YES	NO	I AM UNSURE
-----	----	-------------

PLEASE TURN OVER

4. Is there anything you would like to see changed in the indicative masterplan shown today?

5. Which of the following best reflects your response to the proposals you have seen today?

Please circle your response below

I SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL	I AM UNSURE – I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION	I OPPOSE THE PROPOSAL
------------------------	---	-----------------------

6. If you have any additional comments, concerns or suggestions please state them below
(additional paper can be provided as needed):

THANK YOU - PLEASE DEPOSIT YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE DROP BOX PROVIDED TODAY