

POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

5th December 1966

JOINT PLANNING AND JOINT USE OF SPORTS FACILITIES

BINGHAM AND WORKSOP PROJECTS

Paper presented to the East Midlands Sports Council

on 21st November 1966

by the Assistant Clerk of the County Council

When the Joint Circular of the Department of Education and Science and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was issued in August 1964 the County Council gave consideration to its contents. They decided upon two courses of action but in this Paper I am concerned only with that which they have followed as Local Education Authority. It was propitious that in the following year the Government asked local education authorities to consider how best comprehensive education could be introduced into their areas. At the same time consideration had to be given to providing the necessary school places for the raising of the school leaving age. All in all it became apparent that in this County it would be necessary to build several new comprehensive schools and also several large extensions at existing secondary schools to make the necessary provision. Furthermore, when the three-year building programme called for by the Department was prepared it became clear that quite a number of these schools would be started in the next four years.

With the first two factors in mind the Education Committee decided that where they were building large new secondary schools or large extensions of existing secondary schools they would investigate with the county district council or councils concerned the possibility of providing joint sporting facilities at the school.

The first project which came up for consideration was the extension of a 2½ form entry secondary school at Bingham to a 9 form entry comprehensive school with a sixth form. The cost of this was to be just under £500,000. The second project was the extension of a 510 place secondary school to a 930 place comprehensive school. This was to cost just over £200,000. Both projects are in the current building programme. The first is situated in the south of the County about 11 miles east of Nottingham, in a rural area with an increasing population. It has no large centres of population closer than 8 miles away. The other project is in the Borough of Worksop which has a population in excess of 35,000 and other sizeable urban areas within 8 miles to the east and the south. Each of the schools is likely to be enlarged again at a later date.

Discussions were then held at officer level between the County Council and the two county district councils. When it became apparent that in each case the officers were keen on the idea of providing joint facilities arrangements were made for a team of officers from the County Council covering all the services involved to talk to the County District Council in one case, and a joint committee of the Finance and Parks Committee of the County District Council in the other case. At that stage an outline was given of what could be provided and the manner in which it could be provided if the County District Councils were prepared to enter on a joint scheme with the County Council. An indication was given of the capital which would be involved for either party upon various schemes and of the benefits, hidden or otherwise, which would accrue to the parties. Both County District Councils showed great enthusiasm for the principle and attention was then given to which of the various schemes suggested would most suit the County District Councils. In the event both plumped for the same overall scheme though in the working out of the details there have been quite considerable differences.

Local Government to ensure that loan sanction would be forthcoming when required. The Department of Education and Science with their dual responsibilities for education and sporting facilities were extremely enthusiastic and some of their enthusiasm appears to have rubbed off on to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. In fact, as matters have proceeded the latter seem to have lost any scepticism they may have had and have been extremely helpful to the County Council. This original approach was made early in the year so, as soon as the Prime Minister announced the pay pause and the cut back in Government expenditure, it seemed prudent to approach the two Ministries to ensure that no change of heart would take place in relation to these two schemes. The necessary assurances have been given.

The schemes have not moved at equal pace as one is due to start on the ground before the other. In that case the County District Council concerned set up a special committee of the Council with Sub-Committees to consider with the County Architect what facilities, in detail, should be provided. Many meetings were held and several visits were made to other places with first-class facilities so that the best possible solution could be achieved with the knowledge which could be obtained. Much of that knowledge has been used in the second scheme and because of this a special sub-committee has not so far been thought necessary by the County District Council. The position reached in that case is that the County District Council have now approved the sketch plans drawn up by the County Architect for the sports provision which have also been agreed with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's architect.

In dealing with the financial arrangements let me say that the contribution of the County Council has been limited, as far as capital is concerned, to the sum which they would have spent, as local education authority, on the provision of a swimming bath and covered games area. This has amounted to about £40,000. The balance is being provided by the County District Council. In one case the balance amounts to about £130,000 and in the other to rather more than £170,000. There are certain hidden benefits which accrue to the County District Council. In the first place the land upon which the buildings are to be erected and the car park provided, is in the ownership of the County Council and will not be charged for. Secondly, the architectural services are being provided by the County Council free of charge which constitutes a contribution of some £10,000. Finally, there will be the benefit of letting the contract for the sports complex as part of a larger contract for the whole school. Insofar as any payments are made to private architects or private surveyors for work relating to the sports complex a proportion of this would be charged to the County District Council concerned.

When the question of loan sanction came up the Ministry of Housing and Local Government made it quite clear that for their agreement to be forthcoming to such a large contribution from the County District Council they needed to be satisfied that the County District Council would get an amount of use from the facilities commensurate with their contribution. This is only equitable and an assessment of normal school use shows that it constitutes roughly 40% of available use. Clearly, it is during school hours that the County District Council would, in any case, find it difficult to make a reasonably economic use of the premises. It is anticipated that evening institutes will wish to make use of the sports facilities for evening activities but they will do this as clients of the County District Council rather than the Local Education Authority.

It is hoped that these ventures will be run as commercially as possible and with that in mind it seems to have been accepted that the complex shall be run by a manager to whom a substantial salary is paid, one of whose duties will be to popularise the venture. At this stage it is extremely difficult to be certain of the annual running costs but dependent upon the number of staff employed an estimate has suggested that it will be in the region of £30,000 per annum. To this the County Council will, in principle, make a contribution based upon the usage they make of the facilities.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS. THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

the necessary changing accommodation and staff provision. Each project has a main pool, 82'6" x 42', and a small teaching pool. No diving facilities have been provided but these could be added at a cost to the County District Council. The sports hall is 120' x 60' x 26' high with 3 practice areas 39' x 39' x 18' high. These sizes can, of course, be varied but in each case the County District Council has preferred the scheme outlined. A point at which the two schemes differ considerably is in the provision for refreshments and social activities. In the Bingham scheme, which caters for a country area, provision is being made for a bar and also for light refreshments. A meeting room is being provided for clubs to use for team selection and the like. At Worksop where the people will not have to travel far to use the facilities it has been thought sufficient to provide a space where machines dispensing tea, coffee and soft drinks can be provided and where there will be chairs for people to sit around. In each scheme provision is being made for an all-weather pitch. In the Bingham scheme it was not thought necessary at present to provide additional playing fields for the local populace. The position was rather different at Worksop where the Corporation are short of playing fields. By involving the all-weather pitch it will be possible to make available to the Corporation during the winter four football pitches for the price of two and also two cricket squares in the summer. To enable this to be done agreement has been reached between the Worksop Corporation and the County Council that the final word upon whether a pitch is playable or not shall rest with the sports manager and the groundsman.

I have not tried to outline the provision in detail and have confined myself to the two schemes which have been produced. However, there is an infinite variety of possibilities regarding what is provided, how it is provided, and by whom. In the main the determining factor will be money.

It is envisaged that each of the sports complexes will be under the control of a sports manager who will be answerable to a joint committee of the County District Council and the County Council. It will be essential that there should be the fullest co-operation between the headmaster of the school and the manager of the sports complex and both of them should be available, either personally or, in the case of the headmaster, possibly by the head of the physical education department, to advise the joint committee. I anticipate that each authority will be able, by its finance committee, to overrule any expenditure proposed by the joint committee where this lies outside normal expenditure. As already mentioned the sports complex will be under the control of the sports manager but he will not interfere with the use by the school during school hours provided they comply with the rules laid down to avoid damage to floors etc.

From the point of view of Clerks of Authorities let me say that we propose to draw up an agreement with the County District Council which will set out the rights of the various parties. Furthermore, as the land belongs to the County Council and the major proportion of the capital for the sports complex is being produced by the County District Council a long lease at a peppercorn rent will be entered into.

When the County Council entered into these negotiations we were rather sceptical of the chances of successfully concluding them. The enthusiasm and the help that we have received from the two County District Councils so far involved and also from the Department of Education and Science and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has persuaded us that, given goodwill on all sides, the many difficult problems that are posed by ventures such as these can be overcome and indeed should be in the interests of the many people who can benefit from such schemes.

J.R. SPENCER

Assistant Clerk of the
Nottinghamshire County Council