



Spelthorne Leisure Centre Consultation Report

 @spelthornebc

 @spelthornebc

 @spelthorneboroughcouncil

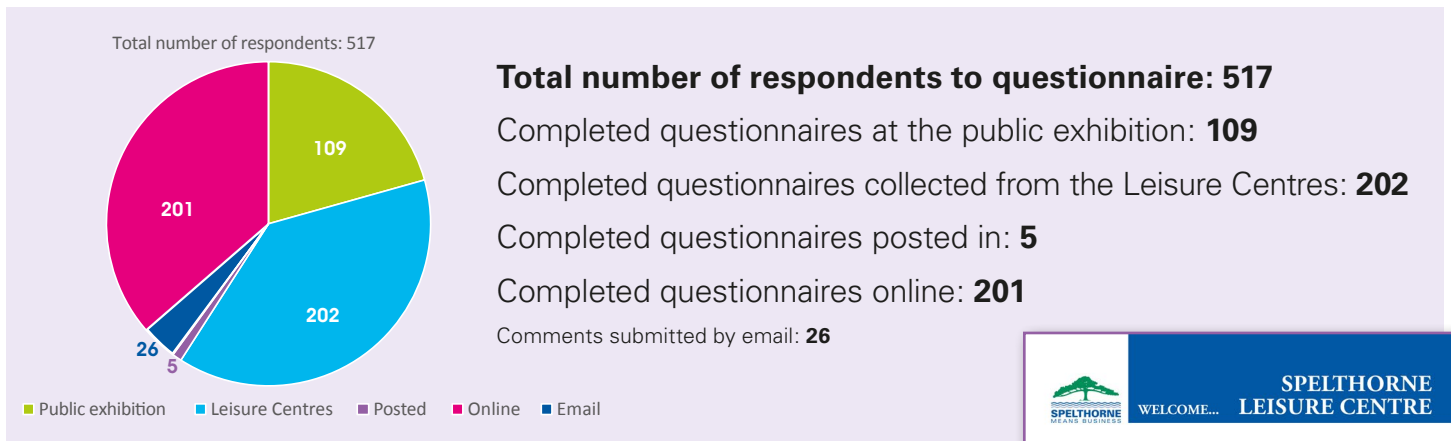
 www.spelthorne.gov.uk



The Consultation

The consultation on the Council's revised plans for a new Spelthorne Leisure Centre was originally scheduled to run from Friday 28 February to Friday 27 March 2020. However, in view of the developing Covid-19 crisis it was decided to extend the consultation by a further two weeks until Friday 10 April, to give people more time to respond.

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the consultation either submitted their responses via the interactive website or by filling in the questionnaire at the existing Spelthorne Leisure Centre. Only a small handful of residents posted in their responses to the Council. Residents could also email comments to a dedicated email address.



A public exhibition was held in the Leisure Centre on 28 and 29 February, which was easily accessible and would encourage responses from a range of groups. The exhibition consisted of a number of posters explaining the rationale for replacement and the work that had gone in to ensure the planned Leisure Centre had all the facilities residents wanted. A copy of the material used can be found on the Council's website via the following link:

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisurecentreconsultation

The exhibitions were staffed by Council Officers and representatives from the design team to answer questions and encourage those attending to give their views.

Packs for residents outlining the plans with (questionnaires) were made available in the Council Offices and distributed around the Borough to various libraries and at both leisure centres to give as many people a chance to respond as possible. The locations were chosen as there would be a high footfall and would reach a large number of people.



Engagement

The Leisure Centre consultation was communicated in a manner of ways before and during the consultation period. The consultation process was advertised by:

- posters on community noticeboards, at car parks, and in the Two Rivers and Elmsleigh Centre shopping areas
- a targeted letter drop to residents in the area around the proposed location of the new centre two weeks prior to the launch of the consultation period (over 2000 addresses)
- letters to Residents' Associations
- press releases
- articles in the Bulletin, E-News and My Alerts
- dedicated web page **www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisurecentreconsultation**
- use of social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Facebook)
- the use of an email footer on Council staff communications
- prominent branding on the front page of Council's website
- web advertising (geo-targeting on Facebook and Google)

Information on the Council's proposals was made available by the use of:

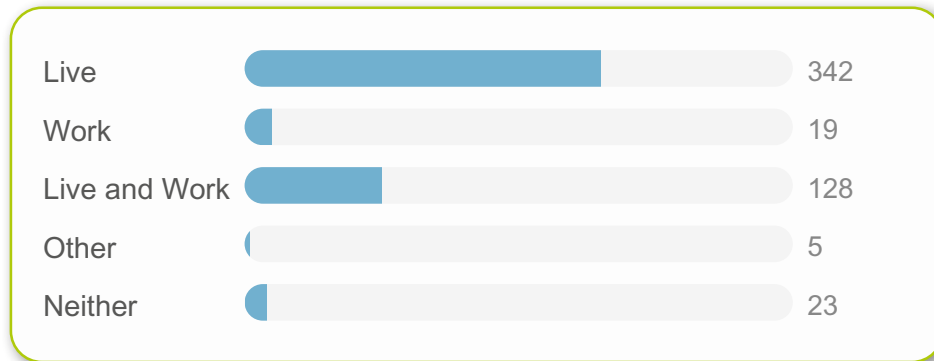
- dedicated email and web pages on the Council's website
- social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram)
- social listening tools and Google analytics for tracking and responding
- FAQs (online and hard copy documents)
- hard copy consultation documents, available at the Council offices, libraries and leisure centres
- briefings to Borough Councillors and Residents Association representatives before consultation opened



Summary of Responses

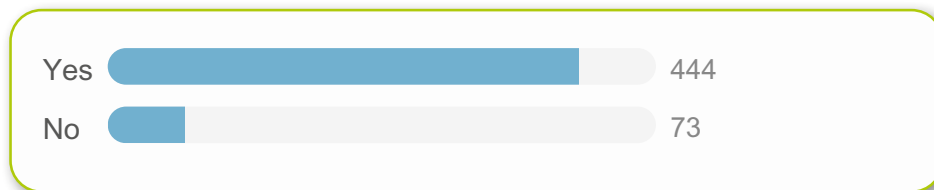
1. Do you live/work in Spelthorne?

91% of respondents said they were Spelthorne residents and 28% said they worked in the Borough. Just 5% of respondents were from outside the Borough.



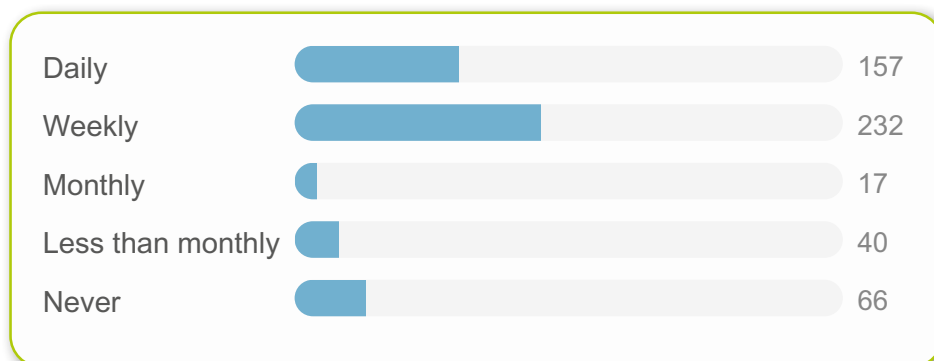
2. Do you use the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre?

88% of those who responded said they used the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre.



3. How often do you use the current Spelthorne Leisure Centre?

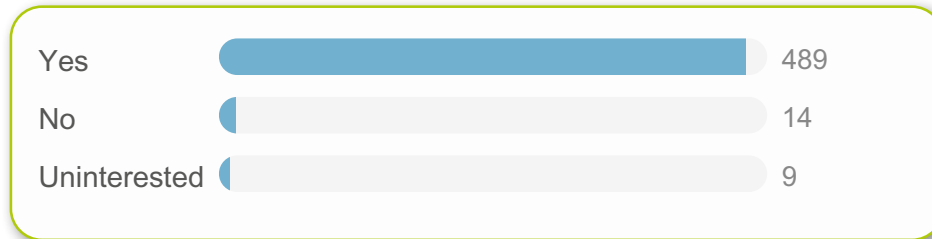
31% said they were daily users of the Leisure Centre, while a further 45% said they used it on a weekly basis; many of them noting they went multiple times a week on the written submissions.



Summary of Responses

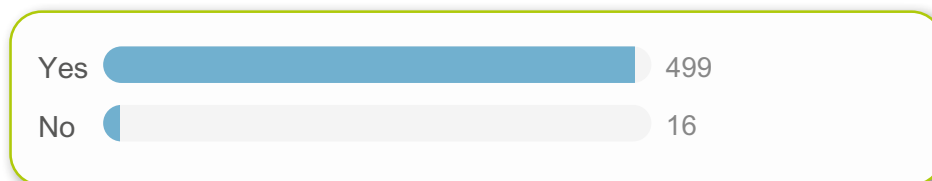
4. Would you like to see a new Leisure Centre with enhanced facilities?

Responses to this were overwhelmingly positive with 96% of people saying yes. 3% said no while the remaining responders were uninterested.



5. Do you support the new location proposed for Spelthorne Leisure Centre?

The location proposal is to build it between the Council offices in Knowle Green and the current centre site, which will ultimately be used for customer parking. In response to the question, 97% of respondents said they were in favour of this as a location for the new leisure centre.



Comments in relation to this question included:

- *“It is a convenient location for rail journeys and there are other public buildings in the vicinity eg council offices, health centre, which could be useful to visitors.”*
- *“The land between the council offices and the existing leisure centre have been unused for a long time. This is the best use of the land and is the best option to keep the existing facility open whilst the new one is built. It worked well for Egham Orbit.”*
- *“Existing transport links are good to this location also, walking distance from the mainline station as well.”*
- *“Yes 100% - it is the perfect solution and actually be more suitable in enabling the centre to have a bigger carpark which at peak times will be really useful as the existing facilities are somewhat restricted. The current location is far enough away from the town centre which means if there is a bigger uptake in usage of the centre it should not have an adverse affect.”*

A handful of residents expressed conditional support, with their concerns centered on the loss of green space between the Council Offices and the existing Leisure Centre site as exhibited by the comment below:

- *“As long as the relevant environmental/wildlife surveys are carried out and there is no loss of wildlife habitat. Also the new build should be built as environmentally friendly as possible e.g reclaimed/recycled materials, run on solar panels/other renewable sources, blends in with local area, uses grey water, recycling etc.”*

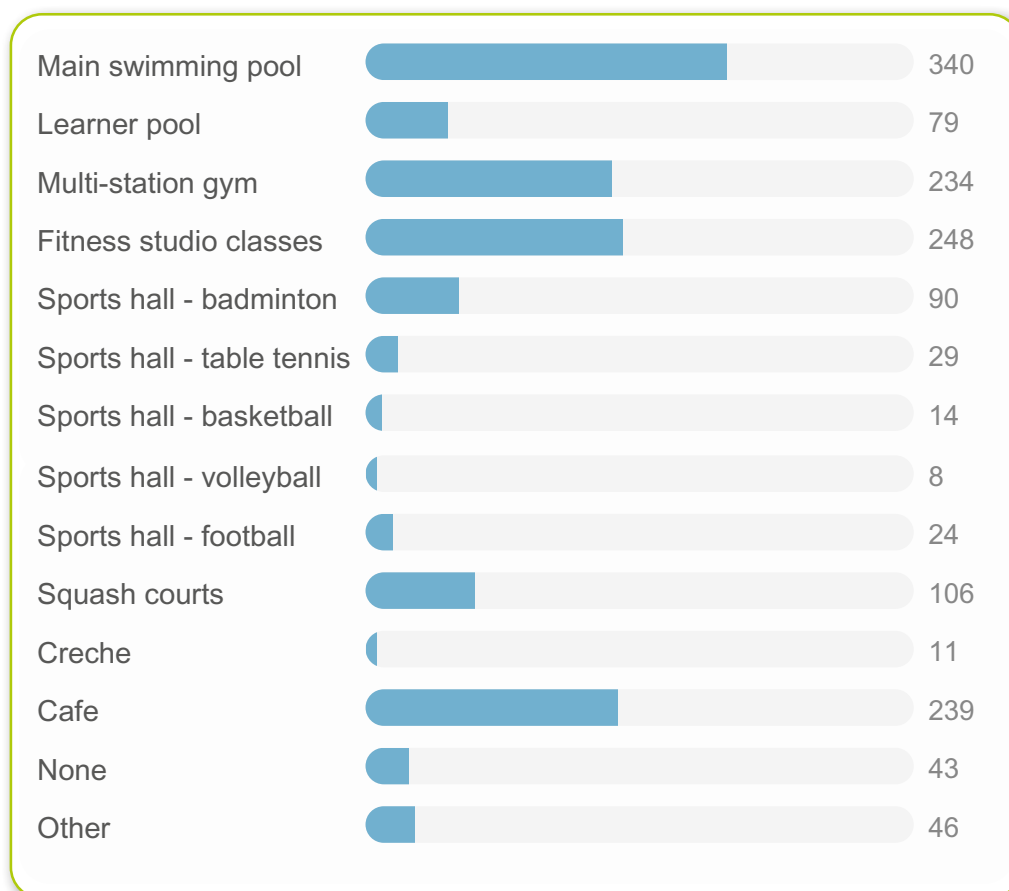
Summary of Responses

Other comments regarding the proposed location include:

- *“I would support the newly extended leisure centre if it also presents a solid case as an environmentally friendly facility. I would like to see more trees around and a roof garden there, just producing less carbon footprint and generating green energy is not enough, we need to encourage wildlife.”*
- *“I am strongly objecting to the suggested new location. This green area is of extremely high value to me and I do NOT want it destroyed by being built on. Too much of Spelthorne, Staines in particular, is being destroyed by over-development. The new leisure centre should be built on brownfield land. Best of all, the old centre should be refurbished, as was done about 30 years ago.”*

6. Which facilities do you or your family currently use?

The main swimming pool was the most popular response with 66% of those using the facilities going for a swim in the main pool, while 15% used the learner pool. The fitness studio classes, which would include yoga, pilates and spin, were the next most popular with 48% of respondents saying they used those facilities. 45% of those who answered the questionnaire said they used the multi-station gym, slightly more than those who said they used the cafe. The sports hall was used by approximately 32% of users with the majority of those being for badminton and a handful of people using it for table tennis, basketball, volleyball and football. 21% of the responders used the squash courts available at the Leisure Centre. A number of respondents commented that they also used the sauna facilities in the Leisure Centre.



Summary of Responses

7. Which of the proposed facilities for the new Leisure Centre are you or your family most likely to use?

The 25m, eight lane main pool was the most popular choice with 75% of residents saying they would be wanting to use it. 52% of respondents would use the learner pool and the splash zone for children. Nearly 59% of those responded said they would likely use the health and fitness suite with 78% saying they would use the multi-activity studio and the spin studio.

The interactive climbing facility was a popular choice with 31% of people expressing an interest and the sports hall and squash courts would be used by over half (52%) of the respondents.

Away from the activities, 63% said they would use the café and 48% would be interested in a roof garden.

As far as arriving at the leisure centre, 67% found car parking important, while 30% would be using the bike sheds.



Summary of Responses

8. Does this range of facilities meet your needs?

For 92% of respondents, the range of facility does meet their needs.



9. Is there anything else you think should be included?

208 responses were received to this question. 16% of comments received related to the need for more studio space, either for them to hold more people or an additional studio, citing the fact that demand exceeds supply for the classes available at the current Leisure Centre.

- *“An extra multi activity studio. I am only a member as I attend yoga, Pilates, body balance. The yoga classes in particular are now virtually impossible to book due to increased demand. Too many members for too few classes. There is a definite trend for well being classes such as yoga. More classes in this area should be provided to meet demand. Would love to see ‘hot yoga’ added to the mix like they offer at The Thames Club.”*
- *“Make sure the spinning classes have a 40 (at least 30) person capacity and machines to accommodate.”*
- *“Need the spin studio to have a minimum of 30 bikes. Yoga and pilates are always oversubscribed. Need enough room for 40 members.”*

The swimming pool also had a small number of comments encouraging the building of a 50m pool with the idea to be able to hold galas and trials. Other comments included installing additional features such as waterslides and diving boards.

- *“There should be a 50M pool. We have a lack of 50M pools in the South yet long distance swimming (outdoor and triathlon) is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK right now.”*
- *“There should be sufficient periods for general swims in pool since nothing worse than it being booked out for most of the day to groups and schools etc.”*

Squash courts were also popular with residents with a handful commenting about the need to have further squash courts.

- *“I think there needs to be dedicated squash courts with coaching sessions available.”*

Other respondents requested facilities that included netball, indoor bowls, facilities for cross fit and a skate park.

Summary of Responses

10. Do you have any comments on the proposed design of the Leisure Centre?

231 of those who took part in the questionnaire responded to this question. Comments ranged on a variety of issues but there were some common themes.

Residents were particularly interested in arriving at the Leisure Centre, notably the bike storage area, requesting that it be well lit and not positioned in the far corner of the car park.

- *“Parking is a significant distance from the main entrance. Could the route from the car park to the main entrance be weather protected in some way or more provision made for drop off and pick up at the entrance.”*

The environment was another concern from residents with one of them noting concerns about noise and light pollution from the football pitches as well as the traffic during the construction period.

- *“The roof top pitches are a brilliant idea. Will lighting be considered and will there be a time limit to their use at night to prevent disturbance to local residents. The car park lights in the law courts/probation office are a nuisance so with the height of the new complex, this needs to be considered carefully.”*

Some respondents also wanted to share their concerns about the impact of the leisure centre on local wildlife.

- *“I would support the newly extended leisure centre if it also presents a solid case as an environmentally friendly facility. I would like to see more trees around and a roof garden there, just producing less carbon footprint and generating green energy is not enough, we need to encourage wildlife.”*

Changing areas were another aspect respondents were particularly keen on with the view of those expressed suggesting the rooms should be made larger.

- *“Looks promising, the only comment is that the changing room area looks quite small.”*
- *“Much larger wet changing area - currently do not have enough to meet the demand and cannot keep the area clean due to high foot fall. Spelthorne Leisure Centre has 36 changing rooms - you are proposing near 60 and larger pool. More storage areas for equipment please and better office space.”*
- *“Separate changing and washrooms for men, women, and additional single spaces for gender neutral/binary.”*

The squash players are also keen to see the movable walls to incorporate doubles squash and are keen for glass floors to be considered in order to provide easy conversion.

- *“Very serious consideration should be given to having the new ASB glass floors. They would make the area so much more flexible. Using the sliding walls with the floors and LED lighting we could have single/double squash courts and easy conversion into badminton courts.”*

Summary of Responses

Enhanced swimming options was another key area that respondents focused on with a particular wish to ensure that the facilities are more widely available in the evenings.

- *“I use the pool regularly every morning for swimming 5 times a week but I currently have to swim in the morning only because the evening time table is taken up heavily by the swim club. It would be good to have more evening availability for swimming in the new centre. Appreciate the club need to swim somewhere but they could split their time between other pools - Sunbury/Egham etc.”*
- *“More adult swim time myself and a friend have to swim at 9pm which is quite late or very early morning due to the swim club. Sometimes go to Sunbury pool but this is also late evening due to club - could they not swim earlier.”*

11. Do you have any other comments on this proposal?

There were 190 comments from respondents on this question. Bicycle parking facilities were touched upon and the entrance/exit access to the car park.

- *“Access to the car park off Knowle Green is two way and there appear to be no pedestrian routes within the car park, other than the crossings marked adjacent to the side ‘entrance’. This means that there is potentially pedestrian conflict with cars. This is particularly of concern to me when considering access to the Centre from disabled parking places. Visually impaired people would particularly be at risk. I suggest separate access and exit routes would reduce the hazard.”*
- *“The drop-off point, if in front of an entrance, will be of positive benefit if this removes pressure on the disabled parking places, a very common abuse at the current centre.”*
- *“A segregated cycle way/footpath runs along Knowle Green adjacent to the Centre. Pedestrian access to and from the car park from Knowle Green means passing the bicycle storage and this increases the potential of conflict with cyclists. I suggest bike storage is placed further into the car park with cyclists using the one way entrance proposed above.”*

There were certain concerns from residents who lived close to the current Leisure Centre and they were keen to ensure minimum disruption.

- *“Concerned about parking proposals for 300 vehicle spaces. Consider one way in, another way out. I’m already suffering the convoy of headlights beaming into my house in the early hours (day and night) and the five security lights. Parking area needs to be screened by a high as possible close-board fencing and ground level lighting.”*
- *“Leisure Centre will be open? You may be interested to know that commuters take advantage of the present leisure centre car park so they will have a field day with the new proposal.”*
- *“The congestion down this road is very high (I use the nursery) people drive very dangerously, and I think with the increase of work vehicles etc. in this area during construction phase we should be putting in place some provisions.”*

Summary of Responses

- *“The roundabout at the end of the road, drivers don’t stop to let you out even with your right of way when exiting to Kingston Road especially when heading to Ashford....A filter light to support comings and goings of the increased traffic at this pain point would be very beneficial.”*

Comments were made about installing electric charge points in the car park with some residents also suggesting the car park be multi-storey to allow for additional cars.

- *“Would like to see electric charge points in the car park”*
- *“2 storey car park rather than just a ground level facility which appears to be the current plan. The roof could be used for additional facilities i.e. indoor bowls, ice rink etc.”*

Ensuring that the Leisure Centre is accessible for all to allow residents with health conditions to use all of the facilities.

- *“Need to ensure it is fully inclusive - Changing places changing/toilets, pool access, lifts, signage etc and look into shapemaster / power assisted equipment to enable greater access for residents with disabilities / health conditions.”*
- *“Please make sure there are some separate changing / toilet facilities for women. Must have adequate lifts / disabled access to all floors: (not marked on display drawings)”*

Residents, whilst they welcomed the new Leisure Centre proposals as outlined in their responses to previous questions, are hopeful that their costs are not drastically increased.

- *“Everyone Active is a good operator in my opinion. The costs to members needs to remain largely the same in line with it being a community leisure centre.”*
- *“I realise this will be an expensive investment but don’t price the community out of it by making it expensive like private gyms locally.”*
- *“For the end cost for attending swimming, gym etc to be a reasonable price still. The current prices are reasonable.”*
- *“I buy 12 sessions for the price of 10 for both classes and gym, and I hope this will continue.”*

Residents want an improved range of refreshments available to them with a mixture of healthy food as well as beer for the post exercise pint.

- *“Good beer and food in cafe/bar not burger and chips only”*
- *“Healthy fresh snacks”*

Summary of Responses

The relationship with the nursery is something residents want to see considered, for instance installing a buggy park and allowing the nursery parking facilities to be expanded.

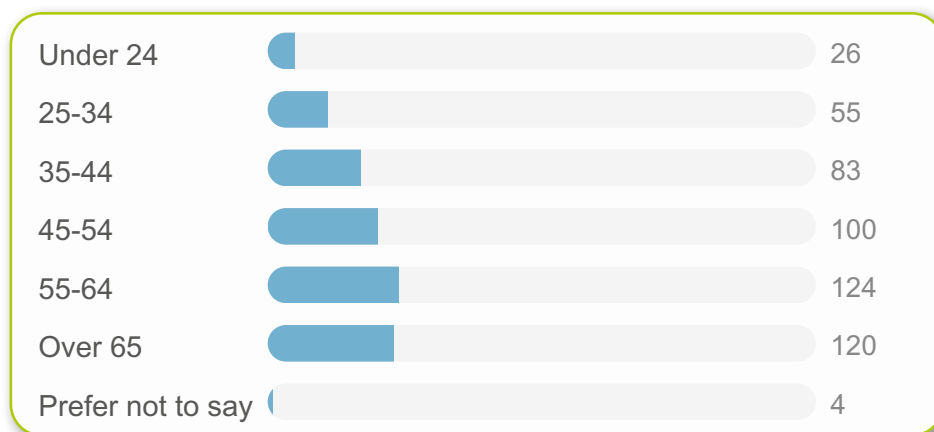
- *“A fit for purpose for Buggy Park to make use of crèche/learner pool and splash activities. The current one doesn’t support the local residents and therefore more drive/park. I would walk to/from if there was a buggy park.”*

Members are also concerned about access to the Leisure Centre, even if they just want to go to the roof garden.

- *“What will happen about access to the leisure centre? At the moment I can use a card to gain access if I have booked a class, or gym session, but it doesn’t work reliably.”*
- *“But what if I just want to go up to the roof garden?”*

12. Age

48% of residents who responded were either in the 55-64 bracket or over 65. 20% of those who responded were aged between 45 and 54. At the other end of the scale, 5 percent of those who replied were under the age of 24.



13. Postcode

The questionnaire was of most interest to those in the Staines-upon-Thames postal district with 56% of those responding coming within that boundary. Just over a quarter of respondents came from the Ashford postal area. A further 5% each came from the Sunbury, Shepperton, Stanwell and Egham postal areas. This is to be expected given the proposed location of the Leisure Centre.

The End

A full list of FAQs and design documents for the proposed leisure centre can be found on our website at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisurecentreconsultation

Thank you for being part of our consultation.

Respondent numbers may vary slightly due to some answers left blank on the hard-copy returned questionnaires.