

Council to go back out to tender on Ponteland Development

Northumberland County Council is again inviting contractors to tender for the landmark project to create a combined schools and leisure campus in Ponteland.

Willmott Dixon had previously been identified as the preferred bidder for the project and over the last 18 months has been working in a pre-construction phase with the council. However, for commercial reasons a decision has now been taken to carry out a new tendering process.

Peter Jackson, Leader of Northumberland County Council said: "We are confident that going out to tender again will not materially affect the agreed design or timescale of the project in any way. We simply want to guarantee the best possible value for money for our residents and communities.

"The community was delighted with the approved design for the development and ensuring top quality learning environments are available for our young people is key to us. This exciting project will provide modern facilities for students for years into the future."

The development will see the existing Ponteland leisure centre demolished and replaced with a much improved leisure centre and a state of the art secondary school and primary school. Other schools across the partnership will also benefit from significant investment in their buildings as part of the scheme.

The development will consist of state of the art facilities included within two brand new school buildings and a fantastic new leisure facility to include; swimming pool, fitness suite, badminton courts, outdoor sports fields, 1 full size 3G pitch, library and a fire station, all based on the site of the existing leisure centre on Callerton Lane.

While the 12 week tendering process takes place the local authority will ensure preparatory work continues on site. Tree pruning and service investigations have already been carried out and applications are currently with Natural England for a licence to begin to trap newts. They need to be caught and re-homed in a nearby habitat before building work can start, because newts are protected under Natural England guidelines.

In addition a planning application for additional temporary classrooms was submitted, to ensure the temporary accommodation can be provided to accommodate the additional secondary pupils in September 2019.

The new development is scheduled for completion by September 2020.