Design
for a better
future /

Ipswich City Council

Potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club

Consultation Report

October 2022

wsp

Confidential

Question today
Imagine tomorrow
Create for the future

Potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club
Consultation Report

Ipswich City Council
WSP
Level 12, 900 Ann Street
Fortitude Valley QLD 4006
GPO Box 2907
Brisbane QLD 4001

Tel: +61 7 3854 6200
Fax: +61 7 3854 6500
wsp.com

Rev		Date	Details
A		14 October 2022	Draft report for Ipswich City Council review
B		24 October 2022	Updated report for Ipswich City Council review
C		26 October 2022	Final report

	Name	date	signature
Prepared by:		13 October 2022	
Reviewed by:		13 October 2022	
Approved by:		26 October 2022	

WSP acknowledges that every project we work on takes place on First Peoples lands.
We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first scientists and engineers and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This document may contain confidential and legally privileged information, neither of which are intended to be waived, and must be used only for its intended purpose. Any unauthorised copying, dissemination or use in any form or by any means other than by the addressee, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this document in error or by any means other than as authorised addressee, please notify us immediately and we will arrange for its return to us.

Table of Contents

Executive summary 2

1 Introduction 3

2 Summary of Engagement 4

3 Online Survey 7

4 Key Themes 12

5 Recommendations 13

6 Limitations 14

List of tables

Table 2.1 Engagement Snapshot 5

Table 4.1 Key engagement themes 12

List of figures

Figure 1.1 Proposed area of sale 3

Figure 3.1 Percentage of respondents who read and understood the fact sheet 7

Figure 3.2 Number of responses from surrounding suburbs 8

Figure 3.3 Frequency of visit to Swifts Leagues Club 8

Figure 3.4 Level of support for the sale of the Swifts Leagues Club 9

Figure 3.5 Why respondents are against the potential sale 10

Figure 3.6 Why respondents support the potential sale 10

Figure 3.7 How respondents get information on what is happening in their community. 11

List of appendices

Appendix A Factsheet

Executive summary

The Swifts Sports Club, located at 95a Brisbane Road Booval, owned by Ipswich City Council (Council) has been leased to Swifts Leagues Club (Swifts) since September 2001 on a favourable agreement as a not-for-profit community sporting organisation. Now in need of significant refurbishment and rehabilitation, Swifts has put forward an expression of interest to purchase the sporting club and surrounding facilities from Council to carry out the required refurbishments to bring it up to a safe and functioning standard for community use. WSP, an independent consultant, was engaged to undertake community consultation to determine if the potential sale aligns with community expectations.

The consultation on the sale of land was advertised using local online media and direct outreach to Ipswich residents. Consultation activities provided a four-week window for an opportunity for the community to have their say. The engagement approach considered community values and contemporary engagement tools to offer multiple communication channels, expanding the reach and accessibility of the engagement.

Consultation activities were undertaken between 5 September and 30 September 2022 and included:

- Online survey
- Community pop-up events
- 7,000 fact sheets letter box dropped
- Social media posts
- Community hotline

The online survey received 126 responses and was the primary engagement tool. It was hosted online via Shape Your Ipswich, receiving 1,715 page views. With 59% of residents surveyed indicating support for the potential sale of 95a Brisbane Road, the majority of respondents believe the disposal of land reflects the best interests of the Ipswich community.

Key themes that emerged from the engagement included:

- **Impact to Cameron Park** – Strong shared sentiment among those both for and against the potential sale that maintaining Cameron Park as a green space is considered a priority for the community.
- **Value for money** – Some residents were concerned refurbishing the site with public funds would not demonstrate value for money at the estimated $7.4m to refurbish the site, while others believed retention of the public asset would offer long term financial benefit over divestment.
- **Recreation** – While recreation is generally supported, there is a need to provide greater clarity around what types of recreation facilities are potential for the site. Those supporting the sale believe selling the property would allow Swifts to develop a facility that would improve recreation service offerings in the immediate area.
- **Trust** – Questions around the current state of disrepair of the site were raised by residents who believed early action could have prevented the estimated $7.4m expense to refurbish the club, with survey responses indicating concern around future redevelopment plans.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

95a Brisbane Road, Booval is in Division Three of the Ipswich City Council (Council) Local Government Area (LGA) and consists of a club house, two lawn bowls greens and parking around the perimeter. The club house requires significant repairs which cannot not be recuperated through the current lease agreement. Swifts currently lease 95a Brisbane Road, Booval on a 20-year term, and is now seeking to purchase the land and facility from Council. By purchasing the land, Swifts would be able to conduct its own renovations of the property through a Development Application (DA) process. To ensure a decision regarding the disposal of public land is made in accordance with the Local Government Regulation 201, Council have engaged the community to determine public views of the potential sale.

Community consultation on the potential disposal of land was completed by Swifts in 2019, however the process and outcomes were deemed unacceptable by Council. Initial research indicates the community would likely support the disposal of land to allow the redistribution of funds towards other community priorities.

Council engaged WSP Australia Pty Ltd (WSP) to undertake an independent community consultation process to consider whether the disposal of the land to Swifts is within the community interest. At the conclusion of consultation, Council will make a final decision on the disposal of the land.

It is imperative that decisions regarding the use and disposal of public funds and assets is transparent, considers community sentiment and values, and adheres to Council's relevant and endorsed policies. Consultation on the potential disposal of the Swift's facility must align with Council's commitments to inclusive, purposeful and genuine engagement.

It is estimated the cost of refurbishing the facility is $7.4 million over the next 20 years, and if Council does not sell the part of the land identified in Figure 1.1 within Cameron Park to Swifts, it will be required to commit public funds to complete the works.

A Community Engagement Plan was prepared to guide consultation for the potential disposal of land. The Engagement Plan focused on providing community members and stakeholders an opportunity to obtain information on the potential sale and provide their feedback. It considered community values and contemporary engagement tools to offer multiple communication channels, expanding the reach and accessibility of the engagement.

WSP's independence and impartial perspective is key to ensure a fair and transparent engagement process with the community. This report outlines consultation activities undertaken and considers all feedback received to make recommendations based on the community's feedback and sentiment.

Figure 1.1 Proposed area of sale



2 Summary of Engagement

This report summarises the activities and outcomes of community consultation that occurred from 5 September to 30 September 2022. Consultation activities undertaken provided community members and stakeholders an opportunity to obtain information on the potential sale and provide feedback to determine community sentiment around potential disposal of land.

2.1 Stakeholders

The Ipswich community was the key stakeholder engaged throughout the consultation period. This includes:

- Local Booval and neighboring suburb residents
- Former and current Swifts Leagues Club patrons
- Broader Ipswich community and ratepayers.

2.2 Overview of approach

The engagement approach for consultation was guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusive** – providing multiple opportunities for Ipswich residents to provide feedback on the proposal, targeting a diverse audience as representative sentiment of the greater community.
- **Accessible** – providing engagement opportunities across a range of platforms, including an online survey, multiple pop-up events at different locations, letterbox distributions and social media posts.
- **Transparent** – being open with residents about the reason for consulting with them and sharing the outcomes of feedback with them.

The following activities were undertaken in alignment with these principles and the approved Engagement Plan.

2.2.1 Online Survey

An online survey was available online via Shape Your Ipswich and sought feedback on the potential disposal of land. Available for a four-week period, the survey asked respondents 10 questions to capture feedback and opinions on the potential sale. A detailed breakdown of the results can be found in Section 3.

2.2.2 Community Pop-up events

Four community pop-ups were held at locations throughout Ipswich over the consultation period. The sessions were managed by two WSP project team members who stationed themselves in high foot traffic areas at Cameron Park, Riverlink Shopping Centre, Booval Shopping Centre, and the Ipswich Handmade Markets. A factsheet was used to explain the proposal while directing readers to the website and survey. The locations of pop-ups were selected to encompass the central Ipswich region, targeting residents with an invested interest in potential disposal of land.

2.2.3 Project website

The project website hosted via Shape Your Ipswich provided an overview of the potential land divestment with a link to the online survey. It included additional information such as FAQs, the Swifts Renewal report summary and relevant Council minutes.

2.2.4 Social media

Two social media posts were featured on Council's Facebook page to inform the Ipswich community of the potential sale and promote the online survey.

2.2.5 Collateral

A graphically designed factsheet was prepared to help inform people about the potential land disposal. The factsheet was developed and distributed to properties in the neighborhoods surrounding Cameron Park as is attached as Appendix A.

2.2.6 Community channels

The community could contact the WSP project team directly via phone or email supplied by WSP. Contact details were included on the project website and collateral.

2.3 Snapshot of Engagement

The table below illustrates total engagement numbers over the four-week consultation period.

Table 2.1 Engagement Snapshot

Engagement Activity	Engagement Summary
Community Information Pop-up Events	— 10 September 10am – 12pm: Handmade Expo Market – 24 interactions — 13 September 9am – 11am: Booval Shopping Centre – 11 interactions — 14 September 3pm – 5pm: Riverlink Shopping Centre – 15 interactions — 17 September 9am – 11am: Cameron Park – 13 interactions
Online Survey	— 126 responses — 91 additional comments made
Have your say Ipswich	— 1,715 views from 1,269 unique visitors — 71.83% of referrals from social media — 147 downloads of the factsheet — 134 downloads of the renewal summary
Newsletter Distribution	— Newsletter distributed to 7,000 properties — Suburbs included Booval, Newtown and Silkstone
Email inbox and phoneline	— Eight emails received — Three phone calls received

Engagement Activity	Engagement Summary
 Social media engagement	Post 1 – 7 September 2022 — Reach - 27,033 — Engagement - 5,536 — 136 reactions — 199 comments — 50 shares Post 2 – 8 September 2022 — Reach - 6,841 — Engagement - 952 — 13 reactions — 29 comments — 3 shares

3 Online Survey

An online survey was the primary digital engagement tool to gather and share information with participants. The survey was hosted on Shape Your Ipswich and available at pop-up sessions via an iPad and hardcopy. All pop-up attendees were encouraged to complete the survey as a mechanism of recording feedback.

The survey was promoted via:

- Council's Facebook page
- Emailed to Council's established distribution list
- Newsletter distribution with Quick Response (QR) code prompting community participation.

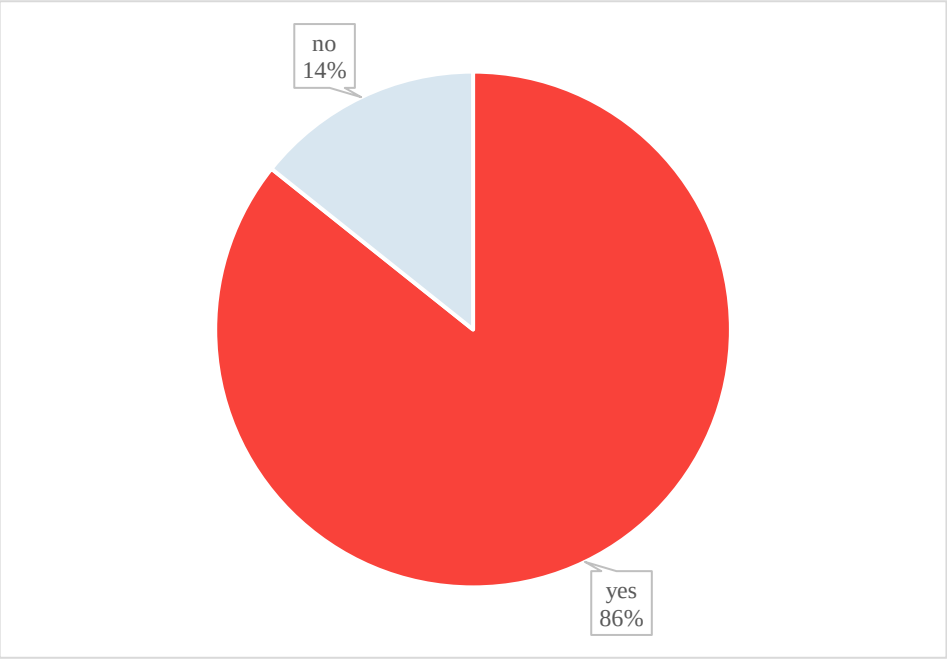
The survey asked 10 questions, including demographic information and questions relating to respondents' prior attendance at Swifts Leagues Club. Survey data has contributed to the overall community sentiment for the potential disinvestment of land.

It should be noted that most questions were not compulsory, and individual question response numbers may not reflect total respondents.

Question 1: Have you read and understood the factsheet?

The majority of respondents stated they had read and understood the project factsheet with only 14% (18 respondents) stating they had not (Figure 3.1). This indicates the letterbox drop and other outreach communications was effective in raising awareness.

Figure 3.1 Percentage of respondents who read and understood the fact sheet



Question 2, 3 & 4: Demographics

Respondents were asked to describe their connection to Swifts Leagues Club and use of land, followed by a request for further information about themselves. This section of the survey was conducted as part of a registration process, however 33% of respondents (42 total) were unwilling to provide personal data.

Respondents who supplied personal data came from a total of 40 suburbs around Ipswich with one from Brisbane and four who did not provide an answer. Figure 3.2 demonstrates the number of respondents per suburb, with Booval being the most common. This correlates to the factsheet distribution area of Booval, Newtown and Silkstone.

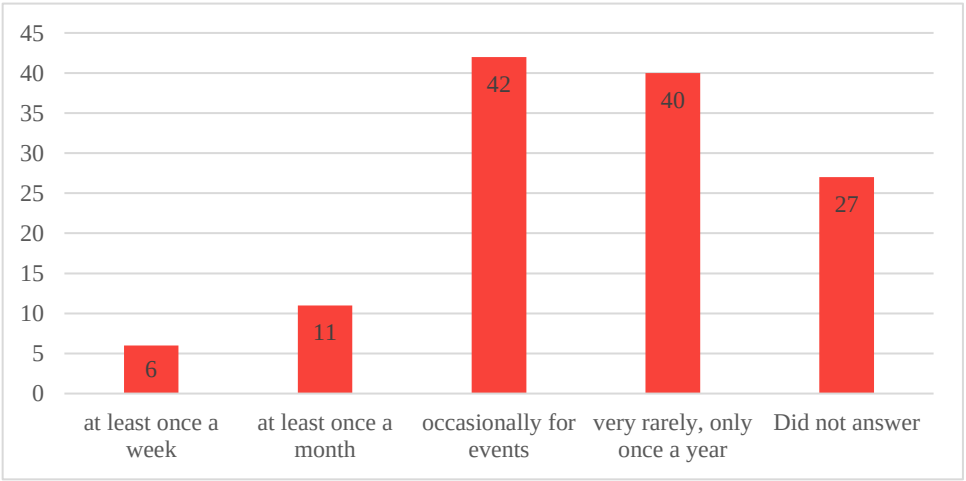
Figure 3.2 Number of responses from surrounding suburbs.



Question 4 & 5: Use of Swifts Leagues Club

Most respondents stated that they had visited Swifts Leagues Club previously, with 21% (26 respondents) not having visited the club. As seen in Figure 3.3, very few respondents visit the club on a monthly or weekly basis.

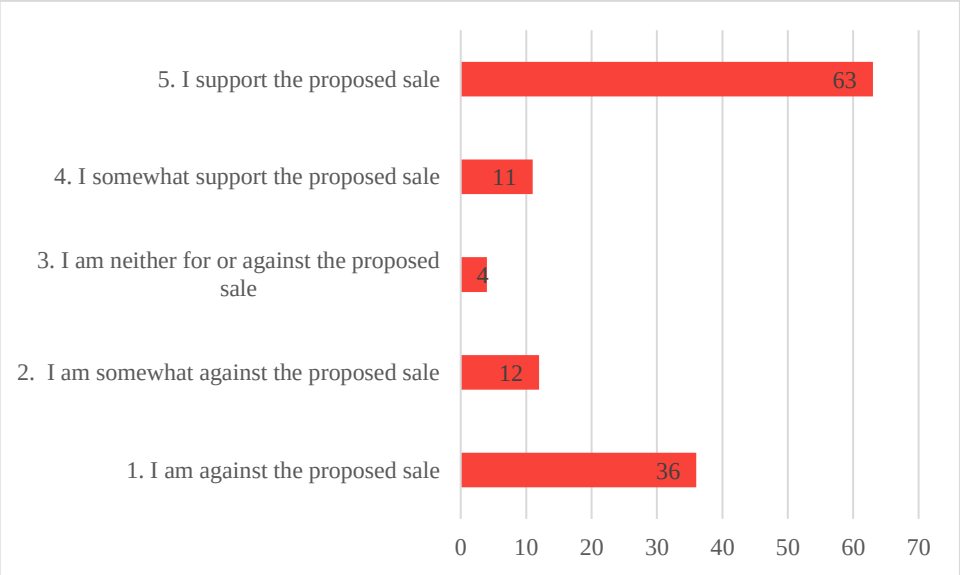
Figure 3.3 Frequency of visit to Swifts Leagues Club



Question 6: Level of support for potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club. Question 6 found that 59% of respondents (74 in total) support the sale of the Swifts Leagues Club to some extent, as demonstrated in Figure 3.4. The percentages presented in the graph indicate majority support for the potential sale of land.

Figure 3.4 Level of support for the sale of the Swifts Leagues Club



Question 7 & 8: Justification

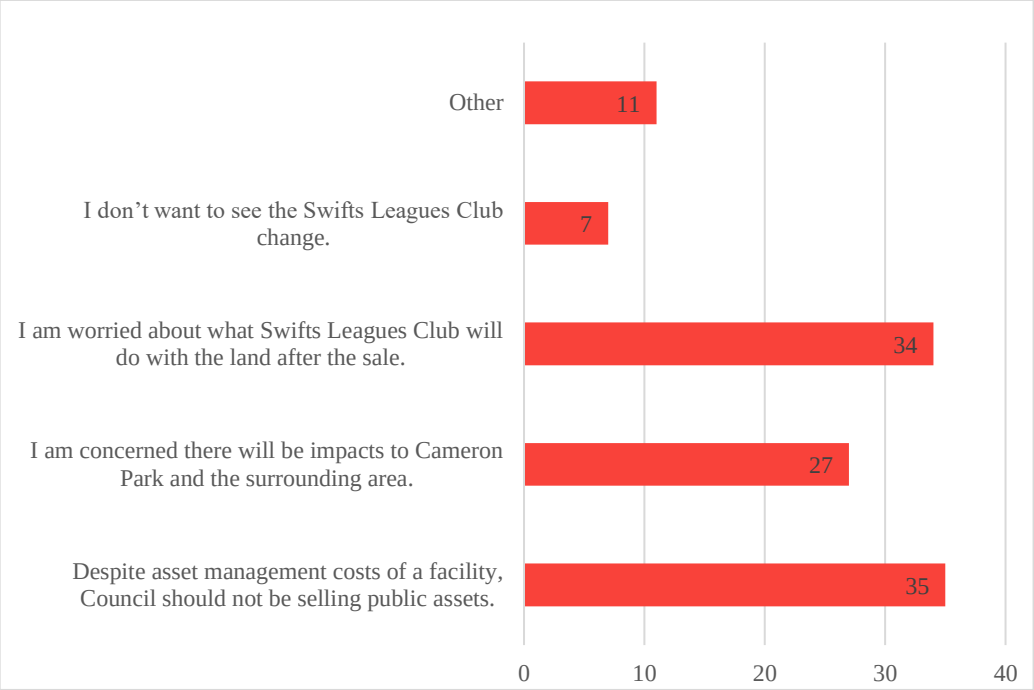
Question 7 and 8 presented respondents an opportunity to provide further information regarding their level of support for the potential sale of land.

Of the 48 respondents against the potential sale, 31% (35 responses in total) cited concerns over what Swifts Leagues Club will do with the land if purchased. Similarly, 30% (34 responses) held the view that Council should not sell public assets. Other feedback noted concern regarding the lack of an open bidding process.

As demonstrated in Figure 3.5, it should be noted that respondents had the opportunity to select more than one answer.

Respondents in favour of the potential sale most commonly agreed it is a good financial decision for Council to sell the land, and they were also confident there would not be impacts to the surrounding Cameron Park, as demonstrated in Figure 3.6.

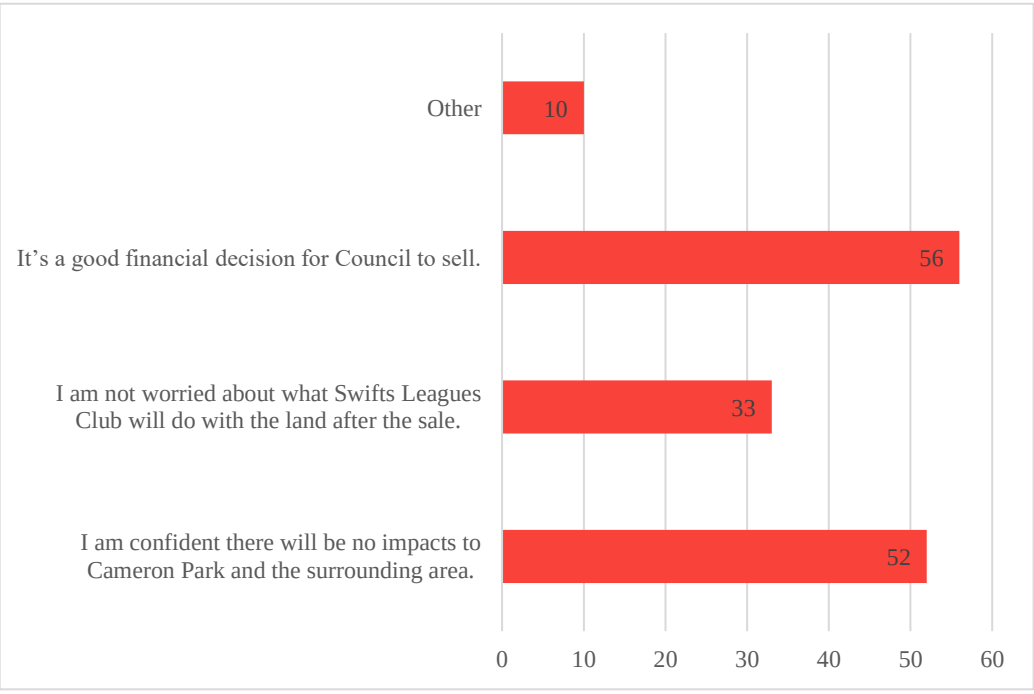
Figure 3.5 Why respondents are against the potential sale



Other responses:

- Requests for public tender process.
- Desire for increased green space.
- Requests for improved recreation facility.
- Requests to repurpose the facility as housing.

Figure 3.6 Why respondents support the potential sale



Other responses:

- Support for partial sale of property.

- Concern regarding perceived potential impact to Cameron Park.
- Lack of support for Council to refurbish the facility using public funds.

Question 9: Has the potential investment of public funds influenced your level of support for the potential sale of the Swifts Leagues Club?

Of the 114 survey responses, 107 comments were made in response to Question 9. The majority of comments indicated that the use of public funding did influence their level of support for the sale. Feedback included:

- Acknowledgement that the revenue from the lease would not cover refurbishment costs.
- Desire to see funding diverted elsewhere to recreation and infrastructure.
- Consideration that the asset should be retained by Council for future use.

Question 9: Additional comments

Of the 91 additional comments made to the survey, most provided further context to previous responses, including:

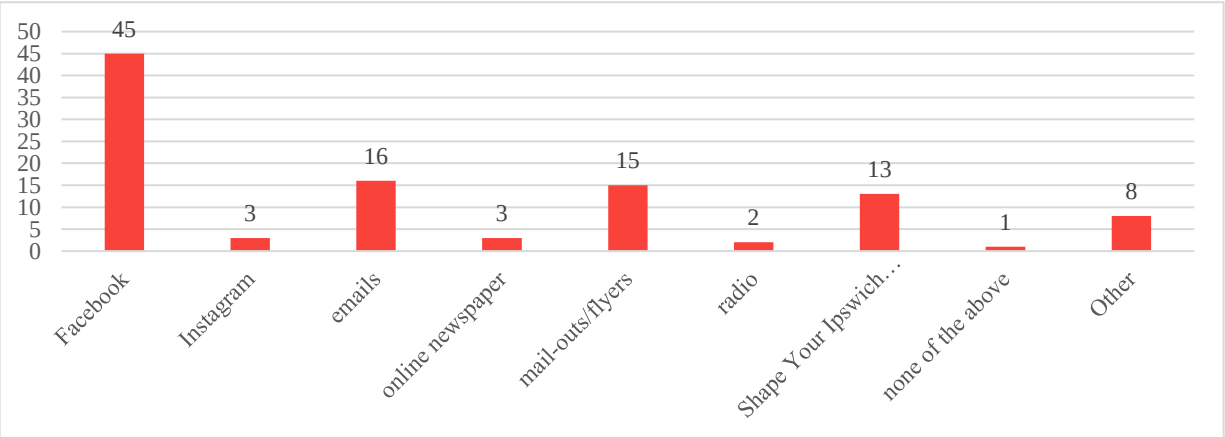
- Concern regarding Swifts' obligations as a landowner and the possibility of on selling the facility to a private developer.
- Requests for the conditions of sale and/or lease amendments to include a commitment to renovations and longevity of facility.
- Concern regarding traffic, noise and social impacts of potential increase in gaming machines.

Some comments were out of scope, including desire to see the land redeveloped into other uses such as housing and additional green space.

Question 10: Which of the following do you use to get information about what's happening in your community?

Facebook was the most common way respondents received information on their local community, with 44% of respondents (44 in total) stating this a common tool (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7 How respondents get information on what is happening in their community.



4 Key Themes

The table below illustrates key themes that emerged during engagement. Feedback was recorded through the online survey and during the pop-up events.

Table 4.1 Key engagement themes

RECREATION	LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE	ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SGGESTIONS	CAMERON PARK	VALUE FOR MONEY	TRUST	COMMUNITY
The idea of improved recreation facilities is supported however there is an identified need to provide greater clarity around what types of recreation facilities are potential for the site. Those supporting the sale believe selling the property would allow Swifts to develop a facility that would increase recreation service offerings in the immediate area. Some community members would like an improved children's playground, playing fields. There is a shared concern for the potential increase of gaming machines and recreation actives that may have a negative community impact.	Parking and traffic considerations factor into the feedback with concern redevelopment will worsen congestion at the intersection of Green Street and Brisbane Road. Community members identified the sale of land would enable Council to allocate public funds to local road infrastructure and parking improvements in the area.	Few responses suggested alternative land use options such as a community centre, low-income housing and additional green space.	Strong support for maintaining the heritage of Cameron Park. It was a shared sentiment among those for and against the potential sale that maintaining Cameron Park as a green space is considered a priority for the community. The majority of respondents opposing the sale are concerned that selling the public asset would have a negative impact on Cameron Park, may lead to further private development or divestment of Cameron Park and ultimately limit public access.	Some concern refurbishing the site with public funds would not demonstrate value for money at the estimated $7.4m to refurbish the site, while others argued Leasable Public Assets should be retained and used to generate revenue for the public. The idea that the sale of land would have a positive economic impact was generally supported. Respondents opposing the sale shared the sentiment they would like Council to demonstrate that the financial performance of retaining the land and existing lease exceeds long-term yield on property investment.	Questions around the current state of disrepair of the site were raised by residents who believed early action could have prevented the estimated $7.4m rate payer expense to refurbish Swifts. Some residents believe the sale of land should be an open market disposal via public tender to ensure a transparent sale approach. Some residents were concerned with a perceived lack of transparency and believe Council should undertake further assessment to determine if refurbishing the facility with public funds is or is not commercially viable for Council and the community.	Demonstrated by the demographics of respondents, those directly impacted by the potential sale of land are a highly engaged, yet small percentage of the Ipswich population who are willing to participate in discussions. There is a high interest in the disposal of land from Swift club members, local sports clubs in the area, neighboring residents and Cameron Park users.

5 Recommendations

The community was provided an opportunity to have their say through an approach that considered community values and contemporary engagement tools, offering multiple communication channels to expand the reach and accessibility of the engagement. Consultation on the sale of land owned by Ipswich City Council was advertised through online media channels and direct outreach to residents via direct mail out and pop-up sessions. The consultation program provided four-weeks to apprise community members of the potential disposal of land and elicit feedback to determine the level of support for divestment.

A mixed response to the potential sale was acknowledged among local Ipswich residents, with varied interest in the future use of the land. Ultimately, consultation results indicate majority support for the sale of Swifts Leagues Club.

With majority of respondents located in Bundamba, Newton and Booval, the potential sale of Swifts League Club proved a highly localised issue.

Additionally, 59% of survey respondents indicated support for the potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club, highlighting the general view that the sale of land reflects the best interests of the Ipswich community.

The following next steps are recommended:

- Provide update to local residents and the community with a divestment decision.
- Ongoing engagement with local residents and the community as future plans for 95a Brisbane Road are finalised.
- Facilitate transparency around potential development plans and refurbishment costs, demonstrating that the cost of retaining the land and existing lease exceeds long-term yield on property investment.
- Consider conditions of lease or sale to ensure community concerns are addressed.
- Map future stages of engagement and communicate this with the community.

6 Limitations

This report is provided by WSP Australia Pty Limited (*WSP*) to Ipswich City Council *(client)*.

WSP has prepared this report with parts of the report being provided by the Client for inclusion including the data set for the online survey.

The report is without regard to any special interest of any person when undertaking the summary described in the Report.

6.1 Qualifications and assumptions

The services undertaken by WSP in preparing this report were limited to those specifically detailed in the report.

Except as otherwise stated in the report and to the extent that statements, opinions, facts, conclusion and/or recommendations in the report (*observations*) are based in whole or in part on information provided by the Client and other parties identified in the report (*Information)*, those Conclusions are based on assumptions by WSP of the reliability, adequacy, accuracy and completeness of the Information and have not been verified. WSP accepts no responsibility for the Information.

6.2 Use and reliance

This report can only be relied upon for the Permitted Purpose and may not be relied upon for any other purpose. The report does not purport to recommend or induce a decision to make (or not make) any purchase, disposal, investment, divestment, financial commitment or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the Client to accept (if the Client so chooses) any observations and recommendations contained within the report and implement them in an appropriate, suitable and timely manner.

6.2.1 Validity of responses

The Client provided data from the online survey, which provided de-identified survey data as such, an IP address or single respondent providing duplicate survey responses is unable to be confirmed.

Appendix A

Factsheet

Fact Sheet

Potential sale of Swifts Leagues Club

Shape Your Ipswich

What's happening?

Ipswich City Council (Council) is considering the potential sale of the land and facilities currently leased to Swifts Leagues Club (Swifts) at 95a Brisbane Road, Booval.

The potential sale would include the club house, bowls lawns and carpark area. The balance of Cameron Park would remain under Council ownership and management. The area proposed for sale is highlighted in the map on the right. The potential sale is based on the existing area operated by Swifts.

Have your say by 30 September 2022

Council and Swifts have engaged WSP Australia to conduct community consultation to collect feedback and understand community views on the potential sale.

Your feedback will help inform Council's decision on whether to sell the leased land to Swifts or continue the existing lease for the term of 20 years.

Provide your feedback through the online survey by scanning the QR code or visiting the website.

The WSP project team will also be available in the coming weeks to speak in person about the potential sale, or you can contact them on the details over the page.



Legend

Proposed sale of land leased by Swifts Leagues Club and facilities

Visit us

The Handmade Expo Market
Tulmur Place, Ipswich
Saturday 10 September, 10am - 12pm

Riverlink Shopping Centre, North Ipswich
Tuesday 13 September, 9am – 11am

Booval Shopping Centre, Booval
Wednesday 14 September, 3pm – 5pm

Cameron Park, Booval
Saturday 17 September 9am – 11am

City of Ipswich



Why is Council considering selling the leagues club?

After decades of use, the Swifts Leagues Club needs significant rehabilitation and refurbishment to ensure it meets existing standards.

Major works to refurbish the facility to current standards will cost up to $7.4 million. This depends on allowances made for contingencies, preliminaries and hazardous materials, determined by a report by an external quantity surveyor. If Council continues to own the land, public funds will be required to complete the refurbishment in accordance with lease obligations.

Swifts has expressed interest in buying the land and has plans to refurbish the property at their own cost, to provide the Ipswich community with a contemporary sports club.

What happens if the property is sold to Swifts?

If the sale proceeds, Swifts will fund the refurbishment costs and upgrade the facility. Swifts will be required to lodge a Development Application with Council which considers building heights, noise, parking and visual amenity. The community will have further opportunities to comment on these changes during the Development Application process.

What happens if the property is not sold to Swifts?

The land and facilities at 95a Brisbane Road, Booval, have been leased to Swifts Leagues Club since September 2001 with the current agreement allowing them to continue the lease for another 20 years.

If the property is not sold to Swifts, the lease will be maintained, and Council will be required to continue to meet their obligations in accordance with the lease.

What happens next?

Following community consultation, Council will receive a report outlining feedback received on the potential sale. Council will use this information to help decide whether to sell the land to Swifts.

Council is committed to keeping the community up to date and will provide an update in the potential sale in the coming months.

Get in contact

Phone the WSP Project Team on 07 3368 6693 or send an email to communityengagement@wsp.com

More information

For more information about the proposed sale and consultation opportunities, visit shapeyouripswich.com.au/swiftssportsclub

City of Ipswich