

£10m leisure centre dream nears reality

'Lifestyle centre' bid reaches final stage

By Dave Goodban

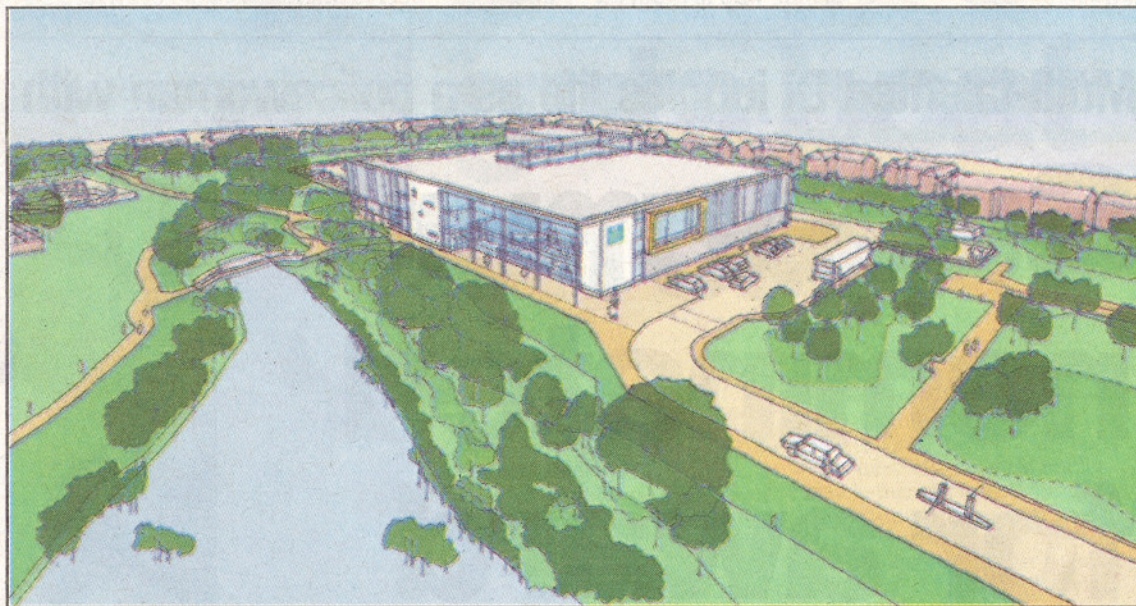
THE building of Winsford's new £10m leisure centre could start as early as November.

Detailed plans and designs for the 'Winsford Lifestyle Centre' are nearing completion, and should get the seal of approval after a final planning application is submitted next month.

After consultation with possible contractors, Vale Royal Borough Council's executive group will have the final say, and if approved the innovative designs will become a reality.

The plans were provisionally approved in October.

Vale Royal's head of leisure services Chris Bottomley said: 'When we submit the plans next month we will have a fair idea of how the final design will look. It won't be down to the colour of the lockers but we'll know the layout and some of the finer details. The elevations are fixed and we're now consulting users.'



VISION OF THE FUTURE: How Winsford's new £10m leisure centre may look.

The centre will stand on the site of the existing Winsford Sports Complex, while Winsford Civic Hall will be shut and the site sold off.

Original plans to close the Dingle Centre to fund the development were scrapped following opposition.

The council previously allocated £8m

for the new facility and blamed inflation for the rise in costs which will be met by savings on running costs.

Mr Bottomley said providing planners give the project the go-ahead, work could start in November. He added: 'We will identify a list of contractors and invite them to tender by

July. There will then be an evaluation period until October's final decision on whether to proceed will be made.'

The facility will include a 25m pool, 600-seater performance hall, 50-station gym, squash courts and cyber cafe with internet access. Plans for a health suite were dropped to save cash.