

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES
PORTFOLIO,
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
PORTFOLIO
AND
REGENERATION, LIVEABILITY AND
HOUSING PORTFOLIO
DECISION SCHEDULE**



Monday 11th December 2006

at 8.30am

in Training Room 3, Municipal Buildings

Mayor Stuart Drummond, Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing, Councillor Hargreaves, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Councillor Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Performance Management will consider the following items.

1. KEY DECISIONS

No items

2. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

- 2.1 Brinkburn Swimming Pool – *Director of Children's Services*
- 2.2 Rossmere Leamer Pool – *Director of Children's Services*

3. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items

JOINT PORTFOLIO
Report to Portfolio Holders
11th December 2006



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: BRINKBURN SWIMMING POOL

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek the views of the portfolio holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool at this time and to seek authority to take action consistent with this.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report includes background of the current swimming facilities available to schools within the town, the risk implications and financial considerations of the proposals put forward and a recommendation for action by officers in accordance with portfolio holders' instructions.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBERS

The Portfolio Holders for Children's Services, Performance Management and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing each have areas of responsibility that will be impacted upon if authorisation is given for the installation of a moveable floor at Brinkburn Pool.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Joint meeting of the Children's Services, Performance Management and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holders on 11th December 2006.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

To seek the views of the portfolio holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool at this time and to seek authority to take action consistent with this.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: BRINKBURN SWIMMING POOL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of the portfolio holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool at this time.
- 1.2 To seek authority to take action consistent with 1.1 above.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Although Hartlepool has seven swimming pools, including school swimming pools, Rossmere Learner Pool was the only swimming pool in Hartlepool in recent times with a constant 1 metre depth. Rossmere Learner Pool was closed in December 2004 and the Authority is currently considering whether it should be demolished. In light of the closure of Rossmere pool it has been suggested that a moveable floor could be installed in Brinkburn pool, allowing it to function at either constant or variable depth and provision was made for this in the 2006/07 budget (£90k).
- 2.2 The possible installation of a moveable floor at Brinkburn Pool was discussed at the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee meeting held on 22nd April 2005. The Committee was advised that a Swimming Strategy was being prepared and that this would focus on
 - A review of how development of swimming skills should be coordinated
 - The potential development of the H2O centre
 - Consideration of the Institute of Sport and Recreational Management report that highlighted the short remaining life span of many of the town's swimming pools.
- 2.3 Having considered these issues, members of the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee felt that the swimming needs of the town needed to be assessed before a decision on learner pool provision could be taken and it was resolved that the Chair of the Committee would write to the Mayor recommending that:

“No decision be taken on the installation of a moveable floor in the Brinkburn pool until the Swimming Strategy is completed, at which time the proposal could be considered within the context of the strategy.”

At the current time the Swimming Strategy has not been completed.

2.3 In Hartlepool there are operational swimming pools at:

- Mill House Leisure Centre
- Brinkburn Youth Centre
- Brierton School
- Dyke House School
- English Martyrs School and Sixth Form College
- High Tunstall College of Science
- Manor College of Technology

When St Hild's moved to new premises in 2004, the swimming pool at the former site was not replaced

2.4 Primary schools have a responsibility to ensure that all primary age children are taught to swim before they leave the primary phase of education. In Hartlepool, schools either buy pool time and swimming teaching from the Authority through a service level agreement, or make their own arrangements.

2.5 Primary swimming teaching, through the Authority's buy-back scheme, is currently provided at Mill House, Brinkburn, Brierton and Dyke House. Manor College makes swimming teaching provision for three primary schools by private arrangement. No primary swimming programme teaching takes place at English Martyrs or High Tunstall.

2.6 Hartlepool Borough Council is currently preparing for formal engagement on the government's Building Schools for the Future Programme. This programme will provide opportunities to replace or remodel all existing secondary schools and will provide a further opportunity for a strategic consideration of swimming pool provision.

2.7 It appears that there is a variety of opinion on whether a learner pool of constant water depth is essential for primary swimming teaching. It has not been the practice in Hartlepool to teach all beginners in a learner pool environment. In the school year 2003-2004, when Rosmere Pool was last open, only 9 out of 30 primary schools used this facility for swimming teaching. At the present time 5 schools use the small pool at Mill House Leisure Centre; this is an extremely shallow water facility and more able swimmers are taken into the main pool in order to progress their skills. Professional opinion is that more able swimmers should have opportunities to experience swimming in water of variable depth, particularly in a seaside town.

2.8 In preparing this report an expert opinion has been sought from a senior official of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). The advice given suggests that it would not be practicable to install a hydraulic moveable floor or a removable wedge into a pool as small as that at Brinkburn.

The ASA official recommended that primary age pupils should be taught in pools of variable depth.

- 2.8 Swimming pools are generally regarded as having a shallow end and a deep end, with a sloping section in between. Swimming teachers generally welcome this variation of provision, asserting that it can be used to meet the needs of swimmers of all abilities. Less able or beginner swimmers are normally taught to swim across the width of the shallow end of the pool and this area is normally cordoned off for additional safety, unless all swimmers in the group are able to swim a minimum of 10 metres.

3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Given the impending production of a Swimming Strategy for the town, the opportunity to review arrangements under Building Schools for the Future and the ASA advice, the portfolio holders' views are sought on whether it is appropriate, at this time, to install a moveable floor to the Brinkburn Swimming Pool.
- 3.2 That portfolio holders instruct officers to take action consistent with their decision at 3.1 above.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any views on whether there are any potential risks posed by teaching beginner swimmers in a pool of variable depth need to be balanced against the potential risks of not teaching developing swimmers to cope with the variable water depths that they will undoubtedly encounter when swimming in public swimming pools, the sea, rivers and natural pools. Swimming teachers and instructors are specifically trained to ensure that children and young people are kept safe at all times and strict procedures are applied.
- 4.2 A Health and Safety inspection of Brinkburn Pool was carried out on 15th November 2006. It points to a number of relatively minor defects, all of which are in the process of being addressed. The pool can continue to remain in use, pending any review of swimming facilities.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Financial provision for a possible moveable floor at Brinkburn Swimming Pool was made in the 2006/07 budget, with £90,000 earmarked for this purpose.

- 5.2 In June 2006 the cost estimate was revised to £107,000 including fees and in September 2006 a further revision suggested a likely cost of £145,000.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To seek the views of the portfolio holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool at this time.
- 6.2 To seek authority to take action consistent with 6.1 above.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

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JOINT PORTFOLIO
Report to Portfolio Holders
11th December 2006



Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: ROSSMERE LEARNER POOL

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the demolition of the Rossmere Learning Pool.

2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report includes a summary of previous reports and decisions made by the Mayor and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee in respect of the future of Rossmere Learner Pool. The report also includes the risk implications, financial and asset management considerations of the options and the recommendation for the demolition of the pool.

3. RELEVANCE TO PORTFOLIO MEMBERS

The Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holders each have areas of responsibility that will be impacted upon if authorisation is given for the demolition of Rossmere Learner Pool.

4. TYPE OF DECISION

Non key decision.

5. DECISION MAKING ROUTE

Joint meeting of the Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder on 11th December 2006.

6. DECISION(S) REQUIRED

That the Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder authorise the demolition of Rossmere Learner Pool and the landscaping of the cleared site.

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Subject: ROSSMERE LEARNER POOL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the demolition of the Rossmere Learning Pool.

2. BACKGROUND

In November 2004 a health and safety investigation concluded that the Rossmere Learner Pool did not meet the required standards.

In December 2004 the Mayor exercised his executive decision making powers and agreed to the closure of the Rossmere Learner Pool.

In March 2005 the Mayor confirmed to Council that he had reconsidered his original decision and had resolved that the Rossmere Learner Pool should remain closed.

In April 2005 Scrutiny Coordinating Committee began the process of scrutinising the decision that Rossmere Learner Pool should remain closed.

In November 2006 Scrutiny Coordinating Committee concluded their enquiry into the closure of Rossmere Learner Pool. The committee supported the Authority's intention to demolish the pool.

In preparation for the joint portfolio meeting of 11th December, tenders have been sought in relation to the demolition of Rossmere Learner Pool and the landscaping of the cleared site. An oral report on the tender progress will be made at the meeting on 11th December.

3. PROPOSALS

That authority be given to demolish the Rossmere Learner Pool and landscape the cleared site.

4. RISK IMPLICATIONS

The Rossmere Learner Pool building is currently closed and boarded up. Apart from graffiti, there is little evidence of any interference with the building. There is, however, a potential risk of intrusion leading to

physical injury. Concerns have also been expressed about the presence of asbestos in the fabric of the building.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

On 20th October 2006 the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee were presented with a report that identified estimated costs of four possible options in relation to Rossmere Learner Pool. These estimates are presented below :

i) The full refurbishment of the pool	£515,000
ii) A stop gap scheme to get the pool up and running	£208,000
iii) To build a new pool on the existing site (including demolition)	£600,000
iv) To demolish the pool and reinstate the area	£36,000

The current estimate of the capital cost of demolition of the pool and landscaping of the cleared site suggests expenditure in the region of £36,000.

No specific funding exists to carry out this project, although the balance of capital funding available to the Children's Services Department means that demolition could be achieved within existing resources, provided that tender costs do not greatly exceed estimates.

Specialist contractors have been invited to submit tender prices for a potential contract to demolish Rossmere Learner Pool. This action has been taken in order to minimise any delay between decision and implementation, should portfolio holders authorise the demolition of the pool. It is anticipated that demolition could be achieved before the end of January 2007. An oral update on tender progress will be given at the meeting.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Rossmere Learner Pool was closed in December 2004 because it did not meet the required standards and further use might lead to a potential risk to children and young people.

Since December 2004 only very minimal work has been undertaken to ensure that the premises did not pose a serious health and safety risk to the public.

The Children's Services Department considers that the Rossmere Learner Pool is surplus to requirements, as alternative arrangements have been made at other pools and further capacity is available.

7. RECOMMENDATION

That the Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder authorise the demolition of Rossmere Learner Pool and the landscaping of the cleared site.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rossmere Learner Pool has been closed for two years. It is not cost effective to reinstate the pool to a suitable condition.

School swimming lessons are provided at a number of pools around the town and there is unused swimming pool capacity at the present time.

Building Schools for the Future and the potential development of the H2O Centre will provide opportunities to reconsider and reconfigure swimming pool provision in Hartlepool

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 15.09.06 Report of Scrutiny Manager
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 20.10.06 Reports of Children's Services Department and Chief Personnel Officer
Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee 20.10.06 Report of Adult & Community Services Department (costs)

10. CONTACT OFFICER

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