

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



**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007**

**at 8.30 am**

**in Committee Room 'A'**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, responsible for Regeneration, Liveability and Housing, Councillor Pam Hargreaves, responsible for Children's Services and Councillor Peter Jackson, responsible 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*

**3. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS**

No items

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

Report to Portfolio Holders  
2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007



**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Subject** BRINKBURN SWIMMING POOL

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## SUMMARY

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report the views of the of the Amateur Swimming Association on the viability of installing a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool, to report the outcomes of consultation with Hartlepool Borough Council swimming teachers and to seek the views of Portfolio Holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool.

### 2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

This report includes extracts from email correspondence from senior officers of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and the views of four of the Council's swimming teachers who responded to the consultation invitation.

### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007.

**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.

**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Subject** BRINKBURN SWIMMING POOL

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the outcomes of email correspondence with senior officers of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA).
- 1.2 To report outcomes of consultation with Hartlepool Borough Council's swimming teachers.
- 1.3 To seek the views of the Portfolio Holders on whether to proceed with the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn Pool.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Children's Services Portfolio Holder, Performance Management Portfolio Holder and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing Portfolio Holder met on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006 to consider whether to proceed with installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn swimming pool.
- 2.2 Following consideration of all information available to them at that time, the Portfolio Holders for Children's Services, Performance Management and Regeneration, Liveability and Housing requested that the views of the ASA be requested formally and that consultation be undertaken with Hartlepool Borough Council's swimming teachers.

## **3. CORRESPONDENCE WITH OFFICERS OF THE AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION**

- 3.1 During December 2006 and January 2007 email correspondence took place between Paul Briggs, Assistant Director Children's Services and Dennis Freeman-Wright and Noel Winter of the Amateur Swimming Association.
- 3.2 In December 2006 Dennis Freeman-Wright stated, "To install a moveable floor in an existing 25 metre pool with a shallow end of 1 metre and a deep end of 2 metres would immediately mean that the deeper end would be reduced to approximately 1.5 metres. This would impose restrictions on the use of the pool. There would be no diving, which would make training for competitive diving for the swimming club very difficult. The vertical movement achievable would be only about a metre and although it would increase the use of the pool for beginner swimming it would not assist with anything else."

- 3.3 Noel Winter of the Amateur Swimming Association then followed up Dennis Freeman-Wright's views as follows, "The information provided by Dennis in relation to moveable floors is correct. However, in my experience, a moveable floor cannot be used to provide a uniform depth of 1.0 metre over the whole area of the pool without major structural alterations involving the deepening of the pool to accommodate the thickness of the floor. In addition there will be a need for building works to house the mechanism which moves the floor. A conservative estimate for a moveable floor covering the area of the pool above (20 metres x 7 metres) would be £140,000 and to this would be added the cost of the structural alterations and the building works."
- 3.4 On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2007 Dennis Freeman-Wright wrote, "In our view you cannot successfully achieve your objective of having an overall 1 metre depth pool by installing a moveable floor in a pool of the dimensions you relate (20 metre x 7.5 metre – 0.9 metre shallow to 2 metre deep)...it hardly seems worthwhile putting in a moveable floor to achieve vertical variable of 0.33 metres!"

#### **4. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION WITH HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL'S SWIMMING TEACHERS**

- 4.1 A letter was sent to all of the town's swimming teachers inviting them to comment on the viability and desirability of installing a moveable floor at Brinkburn Pool. Four of the town's teachers responded to the information:
- 4.2 Teacher A's response included "I feel that, with the loss of 2 pools in the last 2 years and the possible loss of another in the next five, the money spent on changing a pool which has already had investment spent on it would seem to be closing the door after the horse has bolted! Pool facilities in the town are fair/good at this time, but may be more effective use of the training pool at Mill House would be more useful?"
- 4.3 Teacher B's response included "My opinion is that if the floor had been installed when the pool was under refurbishment it would have been an asset. However to install it now would not be viable.

There are pluses and minuses for the one depth learner pool. Ideal if you have a class of all beginners and learners, not so good if you have swimmers and improvers who need the deeper water to practice various skills.

The usual make up of the primary school classes who attend lessons is varied but never do we have a whole class of non swimmers. Classes are split with the more able using the deeper part of the pool with the remainder using the shallower part of the pool. With good organisation

the situation can be managed without comprising the safety or the teaching of the pupils.

I have been involved in the teaching and coaching of swimming for over 20 years using many pools in Hartlepool and feel we have good facilities, better than many areas I have knowledge of. As long as we can maintain these pools (school pools in particular) we will be able to deliver the teaching and development in swimming children of Hartlepool deserve. “

- 4.4 Teacher C's response included "...in my professional opinion it is waste of time and money. The disadvantages of shallow water method are: 1. pupils can become reliant on very shallow water: 2. restricted availability of appropriate pools: 3. pupils become too over confident: 4. in shallow water you don't learn to stand up.

The advantages of shallow are: 1. pupils can initially walk on their hands with their heads out of the water: 2. no problem with breathing because of shallow water: 3. generates confidence.

Deep water method is when pupils learn to swim when out of their depth. Advantages: 1. removes fear of deep water: 2. encourages relaxation and regular breathing: 3. encourages movement especially of the legs, e.g. treading water which is a lifesaving skill. Most importantly in water of variable depths regaining standing position must be taught at the earliest opportunity in their swimming development this is a lifesaving and safety skill and helps to develop confidence, e.g. lift head chin on chest arms stretched in front tuck up knees allow feet to drop to bottom and stand up.

These are my views on the possible installation of a removable floor in Brinkburn pool which I believe the money can be spent on the upkeep of all the pools in the town, upkeep of the pools is paramount.”

- 4.5 The following points are taken from a telephone response from Teacher D:
- a total waste of time to install a moveable floor at Brinkburn, no benefit for the children.
  - She teaches 5 and 6 year olds and always in deep water pools.
  - If a moveable pool is put in, it would mean that it is reduced to less than 2 metres which is more dangerous for older children (diving etc).
  - use a normal depth pool and rope off the shallow end. Any good teacher should be able to use a pool like this.
  - the money should be spent on building a new pool which is 25m x 10m which would accommodate competitive and recreational swimmers and actually be more useful than H2O.
  - a new pool should be built in the north of the town where there is currently no provision.

- enough money has been spent on the pool which "leaks like a sieve".

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 This report is concerned with the installation of a moveable floor at one of the town's swimming pools as an aid to teaching children to swim.
- 5.2 With differing opinions on the value of such an initiative, the views of independent swim professionals and our own swimming teachers have been sought in order for Members to make a more informed decision.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 As could be expected, this exercise has resulted in a variety of views and comments including a number of general points relating to the overall development of swimming in Hartlepool.
- 6.2 There does, however, appear to be a general consensus that the installation of a moveable floor at Brinkburn would, at best, be of limited value and at worst could actually hinder swimming instruction. There was also a strong underlying view that such an investment would not represent best use of financial resources.
- 6.3 Members are reminded that £90,000 was initially set aside for this scheme in the 2006/07 budget. Since then the estimated cost to carry out the work has been revised to £145,000 (September 2006).
- 6.4 If Members wish to pursue this scheme a further £55,000 needs to be identified from the 2007/08 budget.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 In view of the responses received from the Amateur Swimming Association and the Hartlepool swimming teachers, the Portfolio Holders are recommended not to approve the installation of a moveable floor in Brinkburn swimming pool.

## **8. CONTACT OFFICER**

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