

PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL

5th September 2013

CATMOSE SPORTS CENTRE SWIMMING POOL

Report of the Operational Director for Places

STRATEGIC AIM:	Building our infrastructure Creating an active and enriched community Meeting the health and wellbeing needs of our community
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a brief overview of the current position relating to the swimming pool facilities at the Catmose Sports Centre and the issues that have arisen forcing its closure with effect from Wednesday 21st August 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Places Scrutiny Panel notes the current position and supports the urgent assessment of options with recommendations being presented to Cabinet in September 2013. A copy of this report will be forwarded to the Places Scrutiny Panel prior to the Cabinet meeting.**

3. BACKGROUND TO REFURBISHMENT

- 3.1 A swimming pool has been in existence on the site of the Catmose College (formerly Vale of Catmose College) since 1981. Prior to replacement in 2006/07 the pool enclosure was fabricated from a pre-formed fibreglass metal framed panelling. A decision was taken in September 2005 by full Council (Report No. 231/2005) to refurbish the pool with a short to medium term solution to replace the roof, superstructure, key equipment and the changing facilities. A medium to long term option to develop a new build facility at a cost of circa £3m was rejected. It was expected the new pool roof would have a 10 year life.
- 3.2 At the time of the approval of the project the Council did not have a capital projects team or project management resources. As such a project management consultant firm E C Harris were engaged to scope the project to the council's brief and procure and manage the works.
- 3.3 The scheme was tendered on a design and build basis and awarded to Wilcott Sport and Construction Ltd in July 2006 for completion in February 2007. Wilcott Sport and Construction Ltd delivered the package of works, but the actual pool enclosure was sub-contracted to Telescopic Pool Enclosures Ltd. Towards the end of the contract prior to completion of the snagging during the defects period both contractor and sub-contractor went into receivership and the companies were dissolved.

- 3.4 An ongoing dispute on the contracted works was not remedied and an element of the project budget was used on third party contractors to complete some aspects of the defects. Final payment to the contractor was withheld. Recourse for action against the contractor to remedy defects was considered in 2008 alongside defence against action to recover outstanding costs by Wilcott Sport and Construction. No legal action has been taken as a positive outcome was not expected given the position of the companies.

4. STRUCTURE AND LEAKS

- 4.1 Following completion of the project the new swimming pool structure consists of a light aluminium portal frame supporting polycarbonate sheet roofing panels and glass wall panels. The frame is supported by a ridge beam comprising two large timber glulam beams, spanning 29m. The ridge is supported by glulam posts with bracings for longitudinal sway resistance. These beams in turn have steel knee braces installed for lateral sway resistance – these were installed after the main structure design at the request of Building Control.
- 4.2 Ongoing complaints over leaks through the panelled roof in particular over the last year have led to a broad options review being instigated with a framework contractor and a report was received on 24 July 2013. Investigation identified the detailing of the aluminium structure allows ponding of rainwater at the longitudinal glazing bars, many of which have become ill fitting and are not water tight. The glulam beam has suffered some deflection and warping, and the very lightweight nature of the structure indicates it is susceptible to movement during times of wind and snow loading. This movement together with already ill fitting panels has caused failure of the bond between the glazing and the seal, creating leaks. Examination of the Building Control file and snagging reports indicate there were leaks evident before completion.
- 4.3 The contractors report outlined a range of options from low cost, short-term to high cost long-term. It also recommended a full structural survey given the initial noting of movement. A site survey took place on Friday 16th August 2013. This resulted in receipt of a report on Tuesday 20th August 2013. That report detailed problems and symptoms of structural movement including fatigue. The lightweight structure continues to be subject to flexing under wind, snow and live loading. This flexing can cause fatigue in the joints of the aluminium framing system given the repeated changes in stress within the material. The fatigue status of the structure is impossible to predict and can lead to sudden system failure.
- 4.4 As a consequence of the findings and concern of the engineer actions to close the pool were instigated that day and the pool was closed until further notice from 7pm. It should be noted whilst the report indicated risk of further movement particularly in high wind that could cause failure in the structure the circumstances that day (no snow and no high wind) did not warrant immediate closure. A planned shut down in agreement with Stevenage Leisure Ltd, the current service management contractor, was instigated.

5. REMEDIAL WORKS

- 5.1 The design and build contractor and the commissioned engineer together with Stevenage Leisure Ltd are now reviewing the scope of works to remedy the leaks including strengthening the structure. It is anticipated there will be a number of

options which will have a range of longevity to the products and solutions and a range of costs from bracing, support frame, cloaking and mastic to new frame and new envelope. The Council will need to consider the costs and benefits of each of the options alongside the financial aspects of operating the wet side facilities with the service management contractor. The options will be presented to an urgently convened Project Board comprising the Chief Executive, the Portfolio Holder, Operational Director and service managers for Property and Culture and Leisure. Recommendations and funding proposals will be presented to Cabinet in September.

- 5.2 Other issues with the pool such as the continued heat gain from sunlight due to glazed construction and the failing mechanical & electrical plant will also be considered as part of the cost benefit analysis. £15k has been spent in 2012/13 on solar reflective treatments which have provided some improvement.

6. CATMOSE SPORTS CENTRE CONTRACT

- 6.1 The Catmose Sports Centre, comprising the old hall and pool plus the new sports hall, gym, fitness studios and outdoor all weather pitch, Multi Use Games Area and grass pitches are managed and operated by Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL) under a contract which commenced in April 2011. SLL operate both for the College and the community facilities under terms of the Sports Centre Contract within the framework of the Joint Use Agreement and the leases negotiated between the Council and Catmose College at the time of the development of the new Catmose Campus.
- 6.2 Whilst SLL are responsible for the repairs and maintenance of the old and new sports facilities under the terms of their lease from the Council, under the head lease from Catmose College to the Council their exposure to capital works is capped. They are required to contribute to a capital investment fund but this did not commence until 2013 so has no significant reserve for use to address the problems with the pool building. The Council as tenant of Catmose College have full responsibility for capital works at the old sports hall and pool.
- 6.3 The revenue operating costs of the sports centre are monitored against the business plan. A review will now take place with SLL on the impact of the closure to their business plan alongside the investment options to bring a wet side facility back into use.
- 6.4 Discussions have taken place with other pool providers (Oakham School, Oakham C of E Primary, Uppingham School) to identify availability for block bookings for sessions to transfer over from Catmose Sports Centre. Sessions at pools in Melton, Stamford and Corby are also being considered. Details are currently being finalised for the highest take-up sessions, aqua-ed classes and school swim programmes to be transferred. Details will be notified by SLL direct to their users and members as well as via the Council's web site.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	HIGH	Immediate action needed to be taken once the engineers report indicated a level of concerns over the structure. Whilst the pool is closed to use the plant and dosing continues to operate as temporarily de-commissioning the plant and pool is not feasible. As such costs continue

		to be born by the contractor without any income from pool use. This will impact in their net position and cannot be sustained, as such early decisions needs to be taken.
Viability	HIGH	The practicability of addressing the structural and weather tightness issues in the pool will make selecting a cost effective option a difficult decision.
Finance	HIGH	Capital costs will range from tens to hundreds of thousands of pounds depending upon which option is deemed appropriate. The cost benefit analysis will need to consider the detail of the revenue operating position and the capital investment.
Profile	HIGH	The closure of the pool has been a high profile subject in the community and continued closure will create high levels of negative publicity, even though the actions were in the best interests of public safety.
Equality and Diversity	LOW	An EIA questionnaire will be completed once the immediate urgent actions have been undertaken and a clearer way forward is known.

Report Author

Victoria Brambini

Tel No: (01572) 722577

e-mail: enquiries@rutland.gov.uk

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