



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
Telephone 01572 722577 Facsimile 01572 758307 DX 28340 Oakham

Record of a meeting of the **Special PLACES SCRUTINY PANEL** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham at 7.00 pm on **Thursday 3 October 2013**

PRESENT: Mr J T Dale (Chairman, in the Chair)
Mr M E Baines
Mrs C Cartwright
Mr W J Cross
Mr R J Gale (substituting for Mr D L Richardson)
Mr D C Hollis
Mr J Lammie
Mr M A Oxley

OFFICERS Mrs V Brambini Operational Director for Places
PRESENT: Miss M Gamston Democratic Services Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T C King Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property, Development Control, Planning Policy, Economic Development and Tourism

Mr M D A Pocock Portfolio Holder for Highways, Waste and Recycling, Transport and Parking, Revenues and Benefits, Democratic Services

ALSO PRESENT: Mr J R Munton, Mr A S Walters

APOLOGIES: Mr B A Montgomery, Mr D L Richardson and Mrs C L Vernon

444 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

445 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

446 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No Questions with Notice had been received from members.

SCRUTINY

447 INTERIM SWIMMING POOL REPORT

Report No. 227/2013 from the Operational Director for Places was received.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property, Development Control, Planning Policy, Economic Development and Tourism, Mr King, introduced the report the purpose of which was to set out the options for the pool taking into account the following factors: the remaining life of the facility; the extent of the works that are required and are feasible; the income/expenditure contribution to the sports centre business plan; and the financial implications of the current closure. Following consideration of all the factors, the Council will need to decide upon the future of the swimming pool.

Members were informed that Report No. 227/2013 detailed some of the options for the pool and had been taken at Cabinet on 1st October 2013; section 5 detailed the issues and impact of closure with investment requirements and options being detailed in section 6.

Option 1: Close the pool – members were reminded that all decision making needed to consider that the Council was a public body providing public services. Statistics showed that swimming was a high usage physical activity covering all age profiles; was a healthy activity; and that it was important in terms of health and safety around the need to learn to swim. To close the pool clearly would not help in delivering a public service or an easily available public facility. To close the pool could put the overall contract at risk.

Option 2: Repair the structure – the history of the problems associated with the structure had been covered at the Special Places Scrutiny Panel on 5th September 2013 (minute no. 336). This would be a repair to a structure where the original contractors went bankrupt so there would be no warranty. The repair would be to make the structure safe and repair the roof; to provide a standby pump and look to improve the air handling. The Council had been advised that a guarantee would not be given on sealing the roof and ongoing work is likely to be required. That the Council was endeavouring to bring to resolution the dispute over the solar reflective coating applied to the roof. This option would give the possibility of additional life to the structure although the contractor would not provide a guaranteed extension of life. This needed to be evaluated with the construction engineers.

Option 3: Renew the pool building – this would be a higher cost solution involving the investment in a new building giving a further 10 years of operational life with an extended closure period of 6 to 12 months.

Option 4: Replace with a complete new swimming pool – not appropriate at this stage. A further 6 months would be required to establish need and costs; cost estimated to be between £2m and £3.7m. Specialist engineering indicative figures, total cost for a 4 lane x 25 metres pool estimated at £2.94m. Site clearance costs and new pool situation would also need to be taken into account; if the existing site closed an additional cost would be incurred to make good.

That neither of options 2 or 3 were long term solutions therefore at some stage it would be necessary to look at what was there and undertake additional work on future requirements.

If Option 1, to close, pursued then wider consultation with the community would be required.

Option 4 would require more research and discussion with partners. Considerable investment would be required; would need to understand the return on investment.

Section 7, Financial Implications – contained broad brush figures for Option 4, a stand alone pool with facilities; no guarantee that it would be at the same location or size. Option 4 cost of £2.7m shown in terms of borrowing costs.

---oOo---

7.15 pm The meeting went into recess to consider the written questions received from Miss Waller and the officer responses, some of which referred to exempt information.

7.18 pm Mr Baines joined the meeting.

7.27 pm The meeting reconvened.

---oOo---

During detailed discussion the following points were raised:

- i) That this was the only facility in the county with public access, situated in the town most densely populated;
- ii) That other new facilities in the county had restricted access to the public, for example, the sports centre at Uppingham School;
- iii) That the previously replaced roof had been given a maximum lifespan of 10 years; we are in year 7 ;
- iv) That Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) had shown that they were able to run the facility with a marginal cost contribution therefore the Council should look to repair the structure and then investigate putting in place a long term solution;
- v) That the facility should remain in Oakham where residents were able to access on foot or by bus; drivers had the option to go elsewhere;
- vi) Concern expressed about being asked to agree to repairs costing £130/£140K to prolong the life of the facility for 2/3 years;
- vii) In response to a concern voiced over insurance cover, with the pool having been closed on safety grounds, Members were advised that the building was owned by Catmose College and the College had been insuring to date; would have to confirm with the College that the insurance company would continue to insure;
- viii) That in 2005 when the decision was taken on the previous project £190k was indicated for mechanical and electrical work with £320k for the roof; at this time the roof is intact but needs work to strengthen the structure;
- ix) That the original structure had been designed as an engineering solution by a design and build contractor. Wilcott Sport and Construction Ltd were awarded the contract, but the actual pool enclosure was sub-contracted to Telescopic Pool Enclosures Ltd. Members were advised that buildings of a similar nature could be found in France and Austria. More modern builds had a larger glulam beam;
- x) The Council had been in contact with the Managing Director of the previous company who continue to supply this style of enclosure; he had offered to

- provide advice on the structure at a cost. An alternative opinion had been sought by a structural engineer;
- xi) That costings should be available for Options 1A and B;
 - xii) That there were alternative facilities were available in the county and over the county boundary;
 - xiii) Members were advised that in terms of availability of the other pools in the county: Oakham C of E School had a small learner pool used by clubs and for classes; Oakham School had some availability but swimmers had to be linked to a club to use and Uppingham School had limited public availability but this changed on a term by term basis depending on the school's requirements. These pools were currently being used on a temporary basis booked by SLL for AquaEd classes but would be unlikely to satisfy user requirements for public accessibility;
 - xiv) That if dividing cost by asset's life then Option 2 was the cheapest short term solution; would allow sufficient time to look at where going in the future;
 - xv) That comments have been received from the public who want a swimming pool to continue to be provided;
 - xvi) That the repairs previously made to the structure had enabled a lot of people to have swimming for the last 7 years;
 - xvii) That it would be useful to have a comprehensive list of sport 106 contributions over recent years and the expected figures for the next ten years based;
 - xviii) In terms of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) it was going to become more challenging to continue services and statutory and non-statutory services need to be considered; if looking at provision of swimming there were other sectors that provided swimming;
 - xix) Option 2, as recommended by Cabinet, concern was expressed at the proposed work to be undertaken as it stated that this would not replace panels or address the ill-fitting and failed bond between the large panels and seals and as such will not prevent water ingress, therefore there was a possibility of it still leaking;
 - xx) Members were advised that asset life in each case were officers' best estimate. If looking at Option 3 would be looking at longer probably 10 years; Option 2 was expected to get to the end of the contract, best estimate;
 - xxi) That the intention was to seal the whole of the pool, add an inner roof to the changing room area and mastic seal the roof;
 - xxii) That there would be potential costs sought if the pool was closed down; if it was not to re-open it would need to be demolished at some point and the land flattened and made good. If this was proposed it would need to be costed and consultation to be undertaken;
 - xxiii) The Chairman Mr Dale, referred to a letter received from Mr Gillon on the closure of the Catmose Sports Centre swimming pool: "...suspect there will be a amongst some councillors for permanent closure, bearing in mind the current severe financial constraints facing all local authorities, the relative proximity of other swimming facilities outside Rutland, and the view that public swimming pools tend to make financial losses. The negatives must be balanced against the enormous importance of swimming for people's health and well being – whatever the age – at a time when this country is facing a huge health crisis due to exploding levels of obesity. They also need to be set against the leisure demands of a population in our county that is set to increase considerably over the next 10 to 15 years";

- xxiv) That under Option 2 support beams would be put in place to resist movement ;
- xxv) That a structural design to stabilise the structure had been drawn up by a structural engineer;
- xxvi) That if a new build was going to be required in the near future it would be better to build now rather than repair and consider option for a new pool;
- xxvii) That contractors had indicated the timeframe for, remedial work which has established it could be completed by the end of January 2014. For a new roof the estimated timescale was 6-12 months;

---oOo---

8.04 pm Mr Pocock left the meeting and did not return.

---oOo---

---oOo---

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In view of the need to discuss exempt information it was:

APPROVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and in accordance with the Access to Information provisions of Procedure Rule 239, as the following item of business is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

---oOo---

AGREED:

- i) That further information would be sent to Members before the meeting of Full Council on Monday 14 October 2013.

---oOo---

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

---oOo---