
SUBJECT: OAKLANDS SWIMMING POOL
DATE: 11 JULY 2013
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

Following the closure of Oaklands swimming pool, there has been significant support for the pool to be reopened. In order to provide a medium term life span for the building capital investment is required. Work is ongoing with a community group to establish a viable operator, but other options will be explored if this is not a feasible way forward.

Reports to Cabinet on 16th July, and Council on 17th July will recommend expenditure of £18,000 in 2013/14 to undertake a detailed feasibility study, and to add a sum of £1,258,000 to the Economic Development and Leisure Capital programme for refurbishment works at Oaklands swimming pool. Initially this will be phased £200,000 in 2013/14, £848,000 in 2014/15 and £210,000 in 2015/16, although this will be subject to change on completion of the detailed feasibility study.

BACKGROUND AND BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. Oaklands Swimming Pool closed in May 2012, following ongoing leaks in the pool. Subsequently significant local community support for reopening the pool has been voiced.
2. An approach has been received from a local community group to operate the pool. The group includes individuals with some experience in the operation of swimming pools and links to the local community. The initial business plan submitted needs further work to provide the necessary assurances that the operation would be robust and viable in the long term. Officers and consultants will continue to work with the community group to refine the business plan.
3. Working with the community group is the preferred mechanism to delivering the service, and could be achieved by the award of a service concession through a Cabinet report. Should the initial business planning work fail to deliver sufficient reassurances, the opportunity to operate the pool will be widened. The appointment of the community group as an operator, or alternative operator, will be the subject of a separate cabinet report once the business plan and feasibility work has been completed.
4. It is proposed to ensure the pool is in good state of repair and fit for purpose for the medium to long term to afford any new operator the best opportunity to deliver a high quality service and a viable operation. Capita has assessed the costs of providing a 15 year life expectancy for the pool and building. Whilst it will not result in a pool that will look wholly new internally, it will be efficient and functional for the period. The works would include a full mechanical and electrical upgrade (especially to the elderly plant room) and roof repair. The provision of shared car park provision with other community uses anticipated on the old school site is also included.

5. Capita has proposed a programme which delivers the building ready for occupation in a period of some 23 months from instruction. This timescale allows for detailed feasibility work in advance of final design and procurement of the works. This detailed feasibility is required to finalise costs and is anticipated to take 3 months, the tender and design works a further 8 months, with works in site estimated at 12 months.
6. The conclusion of the feasibility works will provide greater clarity on capital costs and programme and together with the outcome of the business plan review will enable a detailed decision to be made by Cabinet later this year.

RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial - Capital

7. A detailed feasibility study will be commissioned to finalise the capital cost and phasing of the refurbishment works to enable the re-opening of the pool. It is proposed that funding for the project will be from Council resources. A capital receipt will be generated from the sale of the Oakland's School site and whilst we do not earmark specific receipts to ensure flexible funding of the capital programme, this receipt will contribute to the overall resources available to fund the Capital Programme.

Financial - Revenue

8. The ongoing revenue costs associated with maintaining the site are currently being covered within existing property management budgets. However, these costs will continue to create a pressure on these budgets in 2013/14 and future years until the capital works commence and the pool is able to re-open. Approval to add the scheme and then progress work is therefore critical to minimise the impact of these costs during the transition period.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

None

**Further Information Available
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