

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**SPORT, LEISURE & CULTURE and
CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CABINET MEMBERS**

HUNTCLIFF POOL

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the replacement of Huntcliff School Pool as part of the Free Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme.
- 1.2 The key points of the report are as follows.
- The council has committed to providing free swimming to those aged 16 and under and 60 and over.
 - We need to decide whether to accept an initial offer of financial assistance towards the cost of replacing Huntcliff Pool.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Significant development of the sporting infrastructure of North Lincolnshire has occurred in recent years. Investment across our sports facilities includes new fitness suites at several leisure centres, refurbishment of dilapidated changing facilities, a new leisure centre in Barton upon Humber and the ongoing Pods development. BSF monies will also transform sports facilities in schools, although in the foreseeable future, this is limited to the Scunthorpe urban area. These developments are enabling increased participation in sport and active recreation and positive activities by young people, securing associated health, well being, crime and anti-social behaviour outcomes, measured via a range of national performance indicators. A number of these are local priorities for the area agreed by the local strategic partnership and contained in the current local area agreement.
- 2.2 The council introduced free public swimming sessions for those aged 60 (or over) and those aged 16 (or under) starting from 1 April 2009 running until 31 March 2011.
- 2.3 The Government's "Free Swimming Programme" is a £140 million package offered to all local authorities in a series of funding programmes. The programme is divided into four distinct elements:
- (i) **Pot 1** – A fund to local authorities to allow them to introduce free swimming for those aged 60 (or over). Government is making available £15 million per annum in 2009-10 and 2010-11.
 - (ii) **Pot 2** – A further fund available to those local authorities who opted to provide free swimming for those aged 60 (or over) and wish to provide an additional offer for

those aged 16 (or under). Government is making available £25 million per annum in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

(iii) **Pot 3** -To support local authorities in making swimming free for those aged 60 (or over) and those aged 16 (or under), Government is also making available £10 million of Capital funding in 2008/09 to modernise swimming pool provision. All local authorities that sign up to participate in Pot 1 and Pot 2 will be entitled to a one-off capital grant in 2008-09.

(iv) **Pot 4** - Government is also making available £25 million capital per annum in 2009/10 and 2010/11 to modernise swimming pool provision and support more ambitious plans for free swimming. Local authorities that have signed up to participate in Pots 1 and 2 can bid for the modernisation and enhancement of their pools (Minimum Grant £50,000, no upper limit set).

- 2.4 A condition survey of the pool at Huntcliff School shows that the existing swimming pool plant is approaching the end of its useful life and much of the structure needs major refurbishment and improvement.
- 2.5 A new pool is considered the most cost-effective solution to the issues presented. This provides the opportunity to introduce a new facility, which is fit for purpose and capable of delivering the curriculum and wider community needs of this rural area.
- 2.6 Currently, there is no council provided community swimming programme offered from Huntcliff Pool. Council service provision is based upon our four community swimming pools located in Scunthorpe (including Riddings Pool), Brigg and Barton upon Humber. A community pool in Epworth operated by the South Axholme Community Swimming Pool Association supplements this provision in the Isle of Axholme. A strategic review of the need for public swimming facilities undertaken by PMP consultants commissioned by the council and completed in April 2004 concluded that the existing facilities (including The Pods) were adequate to meet demand across the North Lincolnshire area. This has informed development of the council's sports facilities and related service provision since.
- 2.7 Private swimming clubs (Swimstars and Dolphins Swim School and Splish Splosh Babies) operate at Huntcliff Pool offering swimming lessons from baby and toddler to advanced swimmer sessions. These are outside of existing school hours (Monday to Friday up to around 7pm and Saturday mornings up to 11.30am). The pool does not provide for meeting the statutory swimming curriculum needs of primary schools within its vicinity. These are met via our existing network of community pools.
- 2.8 The council has been successful in securing a stage 1 approval for a contribution of £1,222,632 towards the £1,272,632 anticipated cost of replacing the existing pool from pot 4 (see above). A second stage bid was submitted that Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association are currently evaluating. A decision on this matter is expected shortly. We propose to make up the £50,000 balance in funding required from Huntcliff School's approved budgets (devolved formula capital). The funding available would have to provide for building a new facility as well as demolishing the existing along with any associated making good/reinstatement. Due to playing pitch constraints, any new development would need delivering without detriment to the current sports pitch provision at the school.
- 2.9 A condition of the funding is that the school make the pool available for extended community use, including the offer of free swimming for those under 16 and over 60. As a result, it is likely that running costs for the facility could increase, mainly associated with staffing the pool outside of normal school hours.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The suggested options for the Cabinet Members to consider are as follows.

- Accept the grant offer and progress the stage 2 application to replace the school pool
- Reject the offer of financial assistance

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The amount offered from Sport England is a significant proportion of the anticipated capital cost of the work required (around 96%), which is needed to ensure the ongoing operation of the facility. The school is able to allocate sufficient monies from funds they control to provide the top up contribution required.

4.2 Rejection of the application would mean that the work could not proceed at the present time. Acceptable levels of customer comfort are proving difficult to achieve and this could discourage residents in Kirton in Lindsey and surrounding areas from participating in the free-swimming initiative as a result of having to travel to an alternative facility to participate. The opportunity of this external funding to resolve the current issues would be lost.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 £50,000 is available from Huntcliff School funds to support the development of this project. It is understood that this is from their devolved formula capital allocations.

5.1.2 Increased annual running costs in the order of £30,000 are anticipated to provide extended public/community use. Reductions resulting from lower maintenance and energy costs for the building might mitigate for this increase. Further work is ongoing to fully quantify these costs. Potential sources of funding for exploration to meet any resulting increase, include; council revenue, Huntcliff School funds, town council support, LSP funding etc.

5.1.3 Additional revenue costs impacting upon Huntcliff School budgets would need formal approval by the school governing body in line with The School Budget Shares Regulations and with their strategic school development plan. The head teacher of the school has however provided written confirmation that the school would look to support the project going forward and meet any additional revenue operating costs that might arise to enable this.

5.2 Property

5.2.1 The opportunity exists to replace a facility reaching the end of its useful life with a new building. This will reduce the maintenance back-log at the school and lead to reduced maintenance and running costs.

5.3 There are no other resource implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Environmental

6.1.1 The existing pool is highly inefficient in energy terms. The pool hall building has poor insulation qualities and the services are antiquated. A replacement will incorporate modern design standards and technologies aimed at reducing energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. This will therefore result in positive environmental impacts and reduced energy costs.

6.2 Diversity

6.2.1 Removing financial barriers to participation by offering a programme of free swimming to the over 60's and under 16's should help increase participation in swimming across the broadest possible range of communities in North Lincolnshire. It should especially help encourage those on low incomes or facing financial hardship resulting from the economic down-turn to take part in swimming.

6.2.2 Extending the availability of public swimming facilities in rural communities will assist those who are unable to attend existing pools to become more physically active.

6.3 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder

6.3.1 One of the benefits of increasing participation in active recreation is the opportunity to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. This is by using active recreation as a diversionary activity.

6.4 Risk

6.4.1 The condition of the existing swimming pool building and plant etc presents a risk to the ongoing operation of the facility. This could lead to inevitable disruption to the school curriculum and community swimming provision. A replacement facility would remove these risks.

6.5 There are no other related implications.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 We have consulted with Sport England on how we can best work together to deliver the free swimming offer in North Lincolnshire. The proposals reflect those discussions.

7.2 Officers from Leisure Services have worked closely with the head teacher and other colleagues from Huntcliff School in exploring options for the future of the swimming facility in question. There is agreement that a replacement pool funded via capital funding available in respect of the Free Swimming initiative represents the best way forward. The school is happy that this course would

provide the opportunity to make facilities at Huntcliff School available for wider use by the community beyond school curriculum hours, including extending the availability of free community swimming for the under 16's and over 60's from this venue. This would complement the current provision from the council's existing network of community swimming pools along with the community pool operated by SACSPA in Epworth.

- 7.3 The council's Executive Management Team (EMT) and Service Director Finance were consulted on this matter. While supporting the initiative in principle they were concerned that the council should bear no additional revenue costs arising from the operation of the new facility. As such, the provision of the new pool must prove cost-neutral to the council, funded in full via school and/or other third party contributions.
- 7.4 The Service Director Finance has made his view clear that any contribution by the council toward any additional revenue cost must come if required from additional income and/or compensatory efficiencies elsewhere in existing cash limited budgets controlled by the Children and Young People or Asset Management and Culture services. This is in line with the principle of cost neutrality set out above.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Members agree to accept in principle any offer of external funding from Sport England towards the cost of replacing the pool and ancillary facilities at Huntcliff School.
- 8.2 That prior to accepting any offer of funding support from Sport England, the issue of any additional revenue cost is fully addressed to prove cost-neutral to the council's revenue funds.

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Date: March 2010

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- ◆ Report to Cabinet of 3 June 2004, titled "Sports Academy"