

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

Westbury Area Board

Thursday 22 April 2010

Westbury Pool and the Wiltshire Council Leisure Review 2010/11

Purpose of the Report

At the Westbury community area board meeting on 11 February, the board unanimously agreed a report about Westbury pool should be brought to the 22 April area board meeting. The report should contain relevant facts and information so that a case for keeping the pool open could be made.

Please be aware this is **not** the formal Wiltshire Council leisure review report. This is a report compiled to assist the area board in informing its views in the meantime.

Background to the leisure review

Wiltshire Council is in the process of undertaking a review of all indoor sports facilities in Wiltshire. The findings will be used to develop a set of options which will include short and long term plans in relation to policy, funding and provision of leisure facilities.

No decision has been made regarding the future of any of the existing 23 leisure facilities, including swimming pools that the council either owns, manages or supports. When the review is complete the council will be consulting widely throughout the county before it makes any decisions.

The draft strategy is likely to be considered by Cabinet in early summer 2010. This strategy will provide members with an evidence based set of options for the council to consider in terms of broad policy, commissioning arrangements, future provision and assets deployment. A period of at least three months consultation will follow with a report to Cabinet early in 2011.

Although no decision has been made about the future of Westbury pool, the local community is concerned to safeguard its future. A popular awareness campaign and petition has been launched in the community, led by unitary councillor Mike Cuthbert Murray.

On 8 April the Cabinet member for leisure, Councillor Stuart Wheeler attended a packed public meeting at the Laverton called by the Save Westbury Pool campaign group at which he said it was "highly unlikely" the pool would close.

Background to Westbury Pool

History

Westbury swimming pool is one of the country's oldest public swimming pools still in working existence. The swimming baths were built by Westbury mill owner W H Laverton to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Queen Victoria's portrait in bas relief sits above the date of her jubilee on the front of the building in Church Street. The foundation stone was laid in 1887 with the opening on May 24 1888. The construction of the building, which catered for public baths as well as swimming, cost £5000 which included gas lighting and unlimited hot and cold water. Corridors and waiting rooms were heated and electric bells were fitted throughout. The architect was a Mr Anderson.*

Opening and the setting up of the charitable trust

Mr and Mrs Laverton were escorted from Westbury House to the baths by the Westbury 1st battalion of the Dragoons. Houses were decorated with bunting, the church bells rang and the afternoon was a public holiday. Mrs Laverton was presented with a silver gilt key to unlock the doors and declared the baths open. An exhibition of swimming then took place and in the evening there was a banquet at the Laverton Institute. Mr Laverton conveyed the pool to a charitable trust whose aims were:

"The provision and maintenance of a swimming pool for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of Westbury without distinction of political, religious or other opinions with the object of improving the conditions for the said inhabitants".

The address at the baths' opening was signed by 300 people and said:

*"We believe that these baths will be conducive not only to the health and enjoyment of the people of Westbury but also to their moral elevation".**

Activity

The pool was supplied by water from local Bitham Springs. In the winter the pool was drained and covered and used for athletics and dancing. When first opened it cost upwards from 1d for a dip. There were slate partitions forming changing cubicles and separate entrances for males and females (now sealed off and replaced with a DDA compliant entrance on the side of the building.)

First swimming lessons are noted in school log books of 19 May 1905 but between the wars the water was so impure the schools were not permitted to use it. It was said that swimming underwater at the pool one could hear the regular thud of Angel Mill's steam driven beam engine next door.

Take over by council

October 1901 it was reported in the local paper that unless the Urban District Council took over the baths they would be closed as there was a failure to balance income and expenditure resulting in a £240 deficit. They were taken over by the council and have since been administered by it.

In the first world war they were used as barracks for troops – in the second world war they were closed to the public and used for the air raid wardens.

* *Great Lengths – the historic indoor swimming pools of Britain: Dr Ian Gordon and Simon Inglis (English Heritage publication 2009)*

Improvements

Extensive renovations by West Wiltshire District Council took place in 1984 retaining the five original cast iron roof girders displaying the Laverton family crests and the coats of arms of the ancient borough of Westbury.

There has been recent considerable investment in new equipment including starter blocks and water polo equipment.

Usage and costs

The pool is currently managed by Direct Leisure on behalf of Wiltshire Council. Costs are:

	WP
Management Fee apportionment 09/10	£64,497.65
Management Fee apportionment 08/09	£85,724.04
Management Fee apportionment 07/08	£79,294.08
Management Fee apportionment 06/07	£72,934.72
Management Fee apportionment 05/06	£71,052.32

Usage figures demonstrate a steady rise in swimmers using the pool over the last three years:

	Westbury Pool	Comments
Usage 2009	60792	These are swim figures only
Usage 2008	59747	These are swim figures only
Usage 2007	52543	These are swim figures only

Westbury Amateur Swimming Club

Westbury Swimming Club was formed in 1897 and has been in existence ever since. The club provides around 120 local people, who are all paying members of the club, with swimming tuition and training four nights a week throughout the year. Swimmers range in age from four years to 40 years plus. The club provides a safe, structured environment for mainly young people to increase and maintain their levels of fitness and wellbeing and engenders a local team spirit creating friendships among members and their families. In 2009 member numbers were raised by nearly 50% and it gained a grant from the National Lottery to buy new starting blocks, turning boards and lane ropes. One of the most popular sessions provided by the club is water polo and In February 2010, the Westbury Area Board agreed a grant of £961 to purchase

new goals and associated equipment. The WASC are supporting the campaign to keep the pool open.

Westbury Pool SWOT analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the oldest public swimming pool in the country • Strong community affiliation • Small (20m) so ideal for children/ learners/older bathers • Patients referred by GPs for rehabilitative exercise • Used by local schools as part of the National Curriculum • Thriving swimming club • Family pool (parents and children coming to spend an hour together in the pool are one of the strongest user groups) • Swim academy and variety of uses including pool hire and aquafit • Several public car parks within short walking distance 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the smallest geographical catchment areas in the county • No on site car parking • Design of building (high ceilings) not cost effective in terms of running costs • Costs of replacements/repairs likely to exceed that of pools of more conventional construction • No room for expansion on current site so can only offer swimming rather than any additional dry sports facilities and/or income generating facilities such as café/refreshments
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well supported and growing campaign underway to maintain pool (Facebook/petition in shops/local MP backing/Victorian Society/No.10 Downing Street website petition) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of pool may be adversely affected in the future if new facilities are built at Warminster (joint development of multi sports/wet and dry facilities with MoD mentioned in leisure review) and/or Trowbridge/Melksham. • Listing in progress – this potentially a threat because it is more difficult to adapt the inside of a listed building

Westbury Pool and the leisure review methodology

Wiltshire Council Cabinet received the following leisure review methodology matrix (columns one and two) at a meeting on 24 November 2009. The chart below endeavours to measure Westbury pool against this where relevant (column three).

Research area	Finding	Westbury relevance
Review of Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Area Agreement – aims to enable people to take action to improve their health if they determine that regular exercise is a positive health choice • Ageing population • Things to do and Places to go for Young People • Rising levels of obesity and diabetes • Rural communities less likely to exercise • Disabled people 50% less likely to participate in sport • Key areas of population growth Chippenham, Trowbridge Salisbury • Effect of 2012 Olympics on participation • Government funding for services in Wiltshire is likely to be constrained • Reducing the risks of young people offending for the first time or deterring them from repeat offending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In latest Place survey only 12% thought leisure facilities needed improving – ie they are happy with them although they did highlight the need for more facilities for young people. <p style="color: red;">Westbury swimming pool offers a variety of activities for young people including pool parties. Potential for consulting with young people via CAYPIG (Community Area Young Persons Issue Group) and Matravers School Council to ascertain what activities might be on offer to encourage more to use pool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) report presented at Westbury area board on 11 February 2010 showed Westbury area has one of the highest childhood obesity rates in Wiltshire with one in three children considered obese. It also highlighted high levels of stroke and smoking. <p style="color: red;">Swimming can be</p>

		<p>enjoyed by all and its health benefits are considerable. It is regularly recommended as an ideal exercise for people who are overweight, maintaining weight and fitness, or recovering from illness.</p>
Demographic Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected 8% increase in population over 10 years • 54% increase in those aged 75 years • Increase in one person households by 55% • 15 – 24 year group will reduce from 13.1% to 11.3% of population • 16% of households in Wiltshire do not have access to a car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one fifth (21.1%) of the Westbury area population consists of 0-15 years – one of Wiltshire’s highest percentages. <p>Westbury pool is already well used but does it have potential to cater more for this audience – ie swimming lessons and parent and baby sessions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost a fifth of the local population (19.8%) is over 65. <p>Could pool be focussed more towards people with age/disabilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stats show 16.5% of people in area DO NOT have car. <p>The availability of local facilities that can be reached on foot or by public transport is therefore even more important</p>
Audit of Sports and leisure facilities in Wiltshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant under provision of teaching pools. All facilities meet basic fit for purpose assessment • Some facilities require 	<p>Westbury has well used teaching facilities</p>

	<p>refurbishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing facilities not meeting customer expectations 	
Postcode Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People do not travel far to use facilities • Larger facilities have greater catchment area • People travel significantly further to access swimming lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury pool has the smallest catchment area in county with many people not travelling far to access their facilities. <p>Many people walk to the facility – this should be encouraged. Wiltshire Council has committed itself to reducing the county’s carbon footprint with and has set up a climate change team with a remit to work with partners, communities and businesses to reduce Wiltshire’s carbon footprint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury has one of Wiltshire’s highest areas of deprivation – (7th in Wiltshire after city and large towns)
Geographical (GIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some communities in the west of the county have several swimming pools serving them • Some rural communities in and around Tisbury have little provision • Location of Swindon has a significant impact on leisure usage patterns in nearby towns • Opportunities to co-locate nearby facilities such as libraries, youth centres and sports facilities 	

<p>Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Mapping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities in the long term to work with schools through the Building Schools for the Future programme (funding permitting), particularly where schools and leisure facilities are currently co-located • Significant opportunities in the short term to work with the Education Department to encourage schools to make their sports and recreation facilities more available to the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury pool is currently used by local junior and infant schools. <p>If the pool was not available, schools would have to fund transport to travel to other sites – some children may thus miss out on the opportunity to learn to swim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matravers School is an arts rather than sports college. It is currently lodged on an overcrowded site with no space for expansion.
<p>GIS Mapping of deprivation indices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of negative correlation between usage and deprivation e.g. areas where child or health deprivation is evident then participate in sport is less 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury Ham ward is area of high deprivation and the recent JSNA findings demonstrated prevalence in the Westbury community area of child obesity and low purchase of fresh fruit. <p>Free swimming and promotion has boosted use of Westbury pool. A marketing/publicity awareness campaign could help target non users and encourage the pool facilities to help address these community issues.</p>
<p>Facility Planning Model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 sports halls operating above comfortable 80% capacity • 1 swimming pool operating above 70% • Unmet swimming demand 	

	spread thinly across the county stemming from people without cars who do not live within walking distance of a pool	
Business Case Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the weaker facilities in terms of their contribution to participation and cost of operation • Identified options in terms of a 'No Change' benchmark and a series of change proposals • Over provision of 25m swimming pools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury is of significant community importance and has a special historical significance as one of the oldest working public swimming pools in the country. <p>These special reasons should merit No Change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westbury is 20m – ideal for older people, disabled, learners and children.
Customer Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified gap between current demand and provision. For example women view current changing and family accommodation as poor. • Young people consider that there is not enough in leisure centres targeted at them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent Place survey indicated most people felt there should be more facilities for young people. <p>Consultation with CAYPIG and schools could help tailor current facilities to the needs of this audience.</p>
Non User Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has identified the current non users and barriers that exist to participation 	
Financial Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue & Capital No Change & Proposals models 	

Recommendation

To note the contents of the report and decide how the Westbury Area Board use it to take this forward

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