

# Item 7

## **REPORT TO CABINET 20 January 2005**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES**

#### **Portfolio: Culture and Recreation**

#### **OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL POOLS AT FISHBURN AND THORNHILL GARDENS SHILDON**

##### **SUMMARY**

Cabinet agreed at their meeting in September 2002 to the transfer of the School Swimming Pools at Fishburn and Shildon to Sedgefield Borough Council following Durham County Council's Pool Closure programme in 2002.

If the Council continues to operate the school pools with the current activity programme for the financial year 2004/2005 there will be collective projected expenditure of £23,620 against a budget of £10,590.

It is anticipated that the operating cost to the Council for both pools in the financial year 2005/6 will be £27,670.

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with options that could reduce the overspend, but short of closure, both swimming pools will cost the Council more to operate than is budgeted for in the financial year 2004/5 and considerably more in 2005/6.

Problems with water leakage from the pool at Shildon has been discovered which led to the pool being closed and drained on 11 January. It is hoped that an engineer's report detailing the extent of the problem and cost implications will be available for consideration by Cabinet at the meeting.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That the future of the school pools at Shildon and Fishburn be considered

##### **DETAIL**

At their meeting in September 2002 Cabinet agreed the transfer of Shildon and Fishburn School pools from Durham County Council to Sedgefield Borough Council on the understanding that the running costs would be reasonable. It had been anticipated that income from the pools would at least cover direct staffing costs. Table 1 shows recent swimming pool usage levels and financial projections.

## **Table 1**

### Fishburn

		April 2004 – November 2004			
2004/05 Income Target	2004/05 Projected Income	Numbers Attending Programmed Sessions	Numbers Attending Casual Sessions	% Usage for Programmed Sessions	% Usage for Casual Sessions
£19,450	£23,650	19,300	1,100	90%	10%
Employee Costs	£21,875				

### Shildon

		April 2004 – November 2004			
2004/05 Income Target	2004/05 Projected Income	Numbers Attending Programmed Sessions	Numbers Attending Casual Sessions	% Usage for Programmed Sessions	% Usage for Casual Sessions
£12,000	£10,756	14,802	792	85%	15%
Employee Costs	£13,000				

N.B. Shildon Pool was closed for 6 weeks during July and August for building repairs.

Given recent health and safety assessments and having now had some experience of pool operation, premises costs and supplies and services costs are greater than have been budgeted for in the financial year 2004/5 and these are expected to rise still further in 2005/6.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, it came to the attention of officers that the pool at Shildon was losing water. Tests have found that approx. 15 gallons of water are escaping from the pool each day. On 11 January, the pool was closed to the public and drained. Engineers were commissioned to produce a report locating the source of the leak and assessing the costs to repair. This report should be available for Cabinet's consideration at the meeting.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

When Cabinet agreed to take over the responsibility for operating Fishburn and Shildon pools, it set financial targets in 2004/05 of £6,000 and £4,590 respectively. Cabinet also considered that direct staffing costs should be met by income.

Fishburn pool is operating reasonably within the staffing costs to income framework whereas Shildon is not achieving this standard.

Cabinet also expressed its desire not to spend a significant amount of money on the fabric of the pool hall and buildings. Clearly with a leak to the Shildon pool, Cabinet will need to give due consideration to the future of the pool.

Within the 2004/05 revenue estimates, there is a total budget provision for both pools of £10,590. The anticipated overspend of some £13,000 was taken into account in assessing the Council's overall financial position in a recent budgetary control report considered by Cabinet.

## CONSULTATION

Once Cabinet has considered the Borough Council's future involvement in both pools, existing user groups will be consulted on alternative provision.

## OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since September 2002, the Borough Council has operated the school pools under licence from the County Council.

The terms of the agreement allow the Borough Council to return the pools to the County Council having drained and made them secure.

There is no financial penalty placed on the Borough Council for returning either or both of the pools.

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**Ward(s)** All

## Key Decision Validation

## Background Papers

## Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

