

**Corporate & Scrutiny Management & Policy Scrutiny
Committee**

13 July 2015

Report from the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

**Yearsley Pool Update Report on the Work of the former Ad Hoc Scrutiny
Committee**

Summary

1. This report provides Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny (CSMPC) with details of the work carried out by the former Yearsley Pool Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee as requested at its meeting on 15 June 2015.

Background

2. Yearsley Pool is part of York's heritage and remains the only Edwardian 50 yard pool in the north of England. The current Yearsley Swimming Pool was built in 1908 by Rowntree and Company Ltd and gifted by deed to the citizens of the city of York on 4th May 1909. Some Edwardian features remain to this day.
3. In June 2007, the Council's Executive agreed a £890,000 refurbishment scheme to prolong the pool's life and in July the work started on site. In October 2007 the Executive agreed to add an additional £200,000 to the refurbishment scheme due to a number of difficulties that could not have been foreseen before the work commenced.
4. In September 2014 Cabinet considered an update report on the Community Stadium and Leisure Complex and agreed that the Council should review the future of Yearsley Pool, to be completed by January 2016 (six months prior to the opening of the New Stadium Leisure Centre - NSLC).
5. At the same meeting Cabinet confirmed Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) as preferred bidder to operate the new Community Stadium, NSLC and Energise for the next 18 years. As part of their bid GLL agreed that they would operate Yearsley Pool until the NSLC opens.

6. The Cabinet paper noted that during the procurement process options for investment into Yearsley Pool were considered by bidders. However, bidders concluded that it would require considerable investment and better car parking facilities, which to date have not been secured, making it too expensive with a limited leisure offer compared with other options.
7. The cost to the Council of operating Yearsley has been consistently more than £250k per annum over the last five years and this made it a commercially unattractive option as part of the future leisure management contract for the City. The Ad Hoc Sub Committee received details of current financial arrangements and usage figures.
8. The report to Cabinet also noted that the future operation of Yearsley would need to be considered six months prior to the opening of the NSLC, providing the option for the operator to continue with the management if it can be operated without the Council subsidy, or exploring other operational structures with the community and stakeholders if the operator decides not to take up that option. This will be linked to decisions and options that may arise regarding potential investment into the wider Yearsley site. (A detailed planning application for the Community Stadium and sports complex was approved by the City of York's Planning Committee at a meeting on 27 March 2015.)
9. Since the September Cabinet meeting campaigners against the plan have claimed that the loss of funding could put the pool under threat. A petition to safeguard the pool, co-ordinated by the Yearsley Pool Action Group (YPAG), has been signed by more than 6,600 people. A total of 4,631 signed a paper petition while 2,045 signed an online petition and comments can be viewed at:
<https://www.change.org/p/city-of-york-council-save-yearsley-pool>
10. As a result of the public interest in the loss of the Council subsidy and concern over the future of Yearsley Pool, Cllr Aspden submitted a scrutiny topic with the aim of safeguarding the pool's long-term future.
11. Cllr Aspden's proposal for a scrutiny review was initially put to the Learning & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee but because of their busy workload Learning & Culture OSC Members agreed that the topic submission should be presented to Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) for their consideration.
12. At a meeting in January 2015 CSMC received a feasibility report on the proposed scrutiny review of Yearsley Swimming Pool which noted that

the proposed scrutiny review would differ from the Council review because of a number of factors, including:

- The aim of the scrutiny review is to keep Yearsley Pool open while finding ways to reduce the subsidy. It will do more than “explore all options”, one of which is closure. The wording and scope of the review is explicitly about keeping the pool open.
- The proposed scrutiny review will work on a shorter timetable to ensure that recommendations are in place - ideally by autumn 2015 and certainly before January 2016. This will allow the pool a longer period of adjustment before the council subsidy is withdrawn in 2016.
- The review meetings will take place in public allowing a more open and transparent process with greater user/resident engagement. The Community Stadium Project Board is not a public meeting and opposition councillors are unable to scrutinise its reports.
- The proposed scrutiny topic has the support of and will involve the Yearsley Pool Action Group (YPAG) as the key ‘community/user representative’.

13. CSMC decided to proceed with the review and agreed the review aim: “To investigate ways to reduce the subsidy given to Yearsley Swimming Pool while securing its long-term future.”

14. They also agreed to appoint an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee consisting of five members (two Labour, one Conservative, one Liberal Democrat and one Independent) to undertake the scrutiny review on their behalf and tasked them with agreeing the review objectives. Following the meeting the agreed nominations for membership of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee were Cllrs Boyce, McIlveen, Richardson, Aspden and Watson.

15. The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee met for the first time on 24 February when Cllr Aspden was appointed Chair and the Committee agreed a timetable and the following objectives for the review:

Objectives

- i. Examine alternative funding models from elsewhere and identify any community led schemes;

- ii. Understand the current funding arrangements for Yearsley Pool;
- iii. Understand the value added by Yearsley Pool to both the local community and the city;
- iv. Identify a suitable funding / operating model for Yearsley Pool beyond 2016.

Budget Consideration

- 16. At the Council Budget meeting on 27 February 2015 the Council carried a Green Party amendment to the Revenue Budget to “Earmark unallocated future New Homes Bonus up to £300,000 per year for up to five years, from 2016/17 onwards, to maintain the Yearsley Pool.”
- 17. However, Cllr Aspden took the view that any measures taken to reduce the subsidy to Yearsley Pool can only be a good thing for the city and the original premise of the Scrutiny Review is still sound. There are no guarantees that the New Homes Bonus will continue beyond 2016/2017.
- 18. Following the local government elections in May 2015 the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats formed a coalition to run City of York Council and a new Executive was appointed. One of the priorities of the new Executive is that Yearsley Pool remains open. However, how this is to be funded is still not clear.

Consultation

- 19. Residents and pool users were invited to send their comments and concerns to the Sub-Committee via email and these are included in Annex B. All names and contact details have been logged and saved.
- 20. In addition to comments from individual pool users, the Sub-Committee Members also received emails from York City Baths Club Yorkshire Regional Canoe Polo Club; Overland Underwater SCUBA; Aqua fit; Team Jorvik, York Octopush (underwater hockey) and York Triathlon Club.
- 21. Subsequently a public consultation meeting was held on 16 March 2015 at the 68 Youth and Community Centre in Monkton Road, York, to gather information to support Objective iii): “To understand the value added by Yearsley Pool to both the local community and the city over and above those being made available at the new leisure complex.”

Information Gathered

22. Many of the emails stress the importance of retaining Yearsley Pool because of its 50 yard pool length and extended lane width which allow swimmers long-course training opportunities that are not available at any other pool in the city. Others note the pool's proximity to the city centre and the health benefits the facility offers.
23. Before the consultation meeting, Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee Members were given a guided tour of Yearsley by the centre manager and were shown work which had been undertaken to reduce running costs and the limitations of the site which currently prevent expansion and the addition of other leisure facilities. Members also considered site plans of Yearsley Pool, requested by Cllr Richardson.
24. The consultation meeting began with a series of round table discussions at which people could air their concerns with individual Committee Members. The comments were noted and again many stressed that Yearsley was a unique facility for the city because of its length. It was also noted by many that Yearsley was the only pool within comfortable walking distance of the city centre.
25. Suggestions of how to reduce the council subsidy to the pool included examining extra revenue streams by installing a gym on the flat roof of the changing rooms, increasing the marketing of the pool, attracting more users, increasing admission charges but including a membership scheme for regular users and enhancing links to schools. Savings could be made by a review of staffing and by swimming clubs and private users providing their own lifeguards. There were also suggestions that volunteers take over the functions of some paid staff.
26. Bite-sized summaries of the comments and suggestions made at the round table discussions included:
 - Need car parking to attract more users.
 - Review staffing and number of lifeguard, manager roles.
 - More marketing including data captured on each visit.
 - Swim clubs and private users to supply their own lifeguards.
 - Put a gym on the flat roof of the changing rooms.
 - Emphasise it is low cost exercise.
 - It is near wards with socioeconomic needs.
 - The last pool within easy walking distance of the city centre.

- It is a community hub with friendly staff and welcomes new users.
- Design of space makes it secure and friendly.
- There are medical benefits to a large pool.
- Used by many clubs, canoe, SCUBA, YCBC, Aqua fit etc.
- Use volunteers that are not under council control.
- Swimming lessons. Does Yearsley advertise the fact that when lessons are booked you get a card with 10 free swims? We didn't know this until we booked lessons. It makes it even better value and would attract more business.
- Yearsley Pool needs marketing manager. Poppleton Community Centre was low capacity now it is close to 100%.
- Can staffing levels be reduced – too many lifeguards etc.
- Rationalise the use of the pool. Learner v experienced swimmers, e.g. an adjustable boom.
- There are so many 25 metre pools in York. This is the only 50 yard pool in York. More swimmers (and triathletes) want longer pools to train in. York is poorly served for larger pools. Yearsley is a great 50 yard pool which is poorly marketed to long distance swimmers.
- Increase admission fees. Introduce a membership scheme for regular users with added benefits. Partner with schools. Try to attract long distance swim training organisations to generate revenue.
- Youth participation major non-monetary benefit. Only long-course pool.
- Establish a swimmers' trustee group to lobby for grants.
- A 50 yard pool is essential for triathlon and distance swim training. There are only three long course pools in Yorkshire and to close one would mean driving to Sheffield or Leeds for distance swim training.
- Increase some charges e.g. students, pensioners.
- Get some volunteer staffing from York St John, linking with their sports science courses but keep the professional staff.
- Car parking charges (could be refunded/ discounted if they swim).
- Social / fund raising, regular meetings – have sale, coffee mornings at set times (social as well as fund raising).
- Business sponsorship – Nestle, St John, NHS (fitness facility), chocolate firms, Quakers.

- Solar panels, wind turbines to provide power.
- Car parking charges.
- Sponsorship from firms.
- Solar panels on the roof.
- Volunteer window cleaners and painters etc.
- Extra car parking would attract more people to the pool.
- If swimming has gone back into the school curriculum there is now a greater potential to pull kids back into water sports as general users by enhancing the links with schools.
- Pools are a service facility to council tax payers. Proposed pool is on fringe of city. Yearsley serves all and it close to city centre.
- Extra income sources – gym, cafe.
- Is there an argument to change the pool to a specialist use pool only with limited opening times? This would lower running costs by making it more cost effective with less operating costs.
- There should be formal links with York Triathlon Club.
- Have a decent cafe.
- Turn the temperature down. How much would this save?
- Extend the viewing gallery to increase revenue for galas.
- Put a cafe on the changing room roof.

27. The attendees also received a presentation by the Yearsley Pool Action Group (YPAG) which was launched in 1999 when there was an earlier threat to the facility. YPAG stress that the pool tank was designed and built to a high standard without steel reinforcements so there is no corrosion, and a structural survey concluded there is no evidence of concrete failure.
28. The group pointed out that generations of children had learned to swim at the pool, which has produced Olympians and nurtured world class talent in a variety of water sports. However, the group felt the pool's greatest contribution was to the health and fitness of the people of York and the wider community.
29. YPAG also pointed out that Yearsley is York's only long-length pool so is the best pool in the region for clubs, endurance and fitness swimming without continual turning. The width of the lanes allows swimmers to overtake and swim at their own pace.

30. The action group hopes that rather than follow a voluntary community model there is still the option to run the pool professionally with a leaner budget and with some income-generating add-ons, principally a gym.
31. A retired GP at the meeting noted that the health benefits of swimming were fairly obvious in a city with two rivers where swim safety is of paramount importance. The length of Yearsley pool meant people were able to build up stamina and improve cardiac functions.
32. He stated his view that the council has already closed one pool (Waterworld) and the potential closure of Yearsley Swimming Pool, with only one (short) pool replacement, represents a significant sum reduction in swim facilities in York for those learning to swim, as well as those trying to keep healthy.
33. The major benefits of a 50 yard pool are for those people with musculoskeletal problems as it minimises the risks of bumping encountered in smaller pools, in addition the greater length means less stress for those with lower limb problems as it reduces the amount of turns/pushing off the pool side.
34. The closure of the only pool near to central York, and in an area with some of the wards containing greatest socioeconomic need, will have a disproportionate detrimental effect upon a section of the population who need the benefits of swimming most of all.
35. A former pool manager pointed out that when he managed the facility pre-refurbishment, the facility was the cheapest of the council's pools to run. After refurbishment with new energy efficient boilers, insulation and a new plant room amongst other things, it should be even more cost effective to operate, rather than more expensive to run. He questioned the current model of operation, and offered to share his expertise to look at how costs could be reduced.
36. Representatives from York Canoe Polo Club, York Triathlon Club, York City Baths Club and York Canoe Club all maintained that the length of the pool is essential for their various sports. The loss of the facility would have a massive impact on their clubs.
37. York Canoe Polo Club, which hires the pool every Saturday, accepted that canoe polo was not a big sport but pointed out that the Yorkshire region provides half the members of the Great Britain squad. People taking part in the sport were unable to use smaller pools and leagues would fold if Yearsley is closed.

38. York Triathlon Club stressed that the 50-yard length of Yearsley was essential for training. Members need the distance to develop the skills required in open water swimming. There has been a massive growth in triathlon and outdoor swimming and participants need a pool the length and width of Yearsley to train over the longer distance and to swim in a pack.
39. York City Baths Club (YCBC) agreed that the length of the pool is fundamental to building strength and stamina for competitive swimmers as most competitions are run as long-course events. The pool is well used from a competitive point of view and is a positive asset for York. YCBC stage sessions at Yearsley 11 hours a week. The YCBC representative made the point that the review should not just look at the closure of the pool but that such a move would undermine competitive swimming in the city and the surrounding area.
40. York Canoe Club train at the pool every week. If Yearsley was to close they would struggle to find another venue to meet their needs. Canoe sessions are not competitive so they cater for people from a range of ages. If the pool closes the club would struggle to find an alternative and would have to use the river, which is not safe for beginners. For them safety is the key, making sure that people are safe on the water.
41. General comments from the floor included:
 - The need to look at possible additional income streams e.g. arranging triathlons and charging users to enter.
 - Put in place an extension to make a viewing gallery with spectators being charged to watch galas etc.
 - How does the possible closure of Yearsley Pool link with the Council's Transport Policy? There would be an increase in car usage. Yearsley is well-served by buses. It is also close to hospital and Nestle who are major employers.
 - Clarification was sought as to whether the contract for the new facility had been signed – it was suggested that it should not be signed prior to the outcome of the scrutiny review. Officers stated the proposed timescale is May.
 - Clarification sought as to whether the contract included an anti-competition clause. Officers stated that at the moment an anti-competition clause had not been included.
 - Chair stated that the decision had been made by Cabinet and hence the contract could not be stopped.

- Clarification was sought as to whether a new Cabinet in May could stop the contract.
- Officers explained that the Council was at the bidding stage in the procurement process and had sought to include all leisure facilities, but had to set an affordability target. Without the Council subsidy Yearsley Pool would require a car park and additional income streams.
- Consideration could be given to see if Yearsley Pool could be run by a community group.
- Concerns were expressed that if staff were to be transferred this would be done on less favourable employment conditions.
- Clarification was sought as to whether Nestle had been asked to give land to make room for a gym/car park. Officers confirmed that the Council had spoken to Nestle but that it had not been possible to make such provision within the required timescale. A representative from Nestle was present at the meeting and stated that the feedback from the meeting had been interesting and that he was hoping to meet with Committee Members in April.
- Views were put forward that the future of Yearsley Pool is assured before a new pool is built and that the money for the new pool could have been used to save Yearsley Pool.
- Members were asked what more the community could do. The Chair suggested that the community continued to show its support through attendance at meetings and by writing to Members. The Yearsley Pool Action Group stated that it would continue to keep people informed of meetings, including via Facebook.
- Officers suggested that consideration also be given to options for community-led solutions.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the accuracy of the data provided by Sport England in respect of provision at Yearsley.

42. To further support Objective iii) Members of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee visited the pool again on 23 March 2015 to watch a York City Baths Club training session and speak with club officials and the parents of some of the young swimmers.

43. York City Baths Club is governed by an organising committee and is basically a members' club. There is a charge to join and members then pay monthly subscriptions. It is the only club in the city which takes

people as young as four years old and some 90% of members are residents of York.

44. The club has four sections to support a comprehensive programme from learning to swim, through development and into competitive swimming.
 - i. Learn to Swim. This section takes children aged four to 11 and they are taught to swim on an eight stage development plan. The children wear different coloured hats according to their ability and to make it easier for coaches to identify them. There are 280 children on the Learn to Swim programme.
 - ii. Training Programme. This is for children nine years and over who are training to compete at various galas. It is sub-divided into five training squads and has 140 swimmers:
 - a) Development Squad – for children starting to take swim training seriously.
 - b) County Squad – for children aiming to achieve county (Yorkshire) qualifying times.
 - c) Regional Squad – for children aiming to achieve regional (North East) qualifying times.
 - d) National Squad – for children aiming to achieve national qualifying times or competing at national level.
 - e) Club Squad – competitive but for children for whom swimming is not their primary sport.
 - iii. Swim fit. Enables swimming for fitness or to complement training for other sporting activities.
 - iv. Masters. An adult competitive and fitness squad for the over 18s. It has 35 swimmers including British champions.
45. The club is involved in the Amateur Swimming Association's Pathway programme so takes swimmers from other parts of the region to enable them to access long-course training.
46. York City Baths Club is the largest swimming club in the city and it is also one of York's larger youth organisations. YCBC uses Yearsley 11 hours a week and they would book more hours if they could. The club also uses shorter pools at St Peter's, Energise, New Earswick, York Sport and The Mount but Yearsley is the key hub as it both supports long course training and allow for multi-squad training because of its length (50 yards) and lane width (2.5 metres).
47. On the night of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee visit, approximately 50 youngsters from two squads were in the water at the same time for much

of the duration of the two hour session. Long course is considered a fundamental requirement for a balanced training programme.

48. The club has a service agreement with Yearsley Pool and among other things has bought anti-wave lane ropes and starting blocks which are stored at and also used by the pool.
49. It costs more than £200,000 a year to run the club with the greatest amount of its income – £160,000 – being spent on pool hire.
50. To support Objective ii) the Committee discussed the framework for an all options appraisal and considered confidential information around the GLL contract. The Committee was reassured that there was no anti-competition clause in the contract with GLL as it stands and were told that the contract would not be signed until after May's election.
51. In connection with this objective, as referred to in paragraph 7 above, the Yearsley Pool centre manager provided information on the current funding arrangements and usage figures for Yearsley Pool, providing details of the pool's income and expenditure as well as user figures for 2013/2014
52. Committee Members were told during public participation that in the past Yearsley had been the cheapest Council pool to operate. YPAG stated that, in 1999/2000 the pool had cost £95,000 compared to Edmund Wilson Pool costs of £170,000. After refurbishment, with a more energy efficient building and plant, Yearsley Pool should have been more cost effective. However the operational management approach had changed.
53. It was suggested the financial information provided for the Committee was not sufficiently detailed and that it was essential to have full information as to how money was being spent to identify where savings could be made.
54. The centre manager's Yearsley Pool outturn figures covered the years 2009/10 to 2013/14 and show the income and expenditure for the pool and the Council's contribution
55. The pool costs approximately £121 per hour to operate and currently generates approximately £75 per hour based on the pool opening 15 hours per day, 355 days of the year.
56. The Committee wanted to know what steps had been taken to increase revenue streams and which had been successful. Members accepted that Yearsley takes a long-term view to attract more users in the face of competition from other pools and other sports. For safety reasons

Yearsley sets a limit of 120 pool users at any one time and for activities such as inflatable sessions often have to turn people away.

57. The Committee Chair asked for figures on the pool operation before 2009 when it appeared the pool operated cheaper. Officers told the Committee that the problem with looking at past costs was that the pool was operated within a compulsory competitive tendering regime by the direct labour organisation. Figures were lost in the way accounting was done. There was no transparency of cost in that previous regime. There was no way to see transparency of how much things cost when it was wrapped up in such a contracting regime.
58. The Chair asked for more details on a number of issues, including:
 - A breakdown of “other costs” included in the centre manager’s financial summary;
 - A comparison of running costs particularly with Energise;
 - Capacity limits for other pools in York;
 - Details of club use and what other pools they use;
 - Financial figures before 2009;
 - An explanation of figures prior to 2005;
 - Examples of how the pool is marketed, the costs involved and the effectiveness.
59. As a consequence figures were provided to the Sub-Committee detailing Yearsley Pool accounts over the past 10 years showing income and expenditure, net costs and total pool users.
60. Going back to 2003/04, Yearsley was run by Total Leisure Management (TLM) so there would be a need to access to Commercial Services’ separate accounting system, and this no longer exists.
61. For information, the Assistant Director for Communities, Culture & Public Realm reported to the Council’s Executive on 2 December 2003 that: The current cost to the Council of providing the leisure facilities: Barbican, Edmund Wilson, Yearsley, and Oaklands is made up as follows:

| | £,000s |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Total Leisure budgets | 875 |
| TLM existing operating loss | 125 |
| Total current cost to CYC | 1,000 |

This can notionally be split as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| | £,000s |
| Barbican Auditorium | 235 |
| Swimming and sports provision | 765 |
| Total current cost to CYC | 1,000 |

62. However, the Yearsley Pool Action Group has saved a document considered by the former Leisure Services Committee at a meeting on 8 May 2000 which gave a comparison of the running costs of facilities at the Barbican, Edmund Wilson, Yearsley, Oaklands Sports Centre and Waterworld.

ANNEX 2

BUDGETS, USAGE AND SUBSIDY DATA

Table 1 Expenditure by site 1999/00

| 1999/2000 | Barbican | Edmund Wilson | Yearsley | Oaklands Sports Centre | Waterworld Huntington Stadium |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| EXPENDITURE | £'000's | £'000's | £'000's | £'000's | £'000's |
| Operational Costs | 333 | 128 | 77 | 142 | (160) |
| Business Rates | 342 | 42 | 18 | 0 | 203 |
| Total | 675 | 170 | 95 | 142 | 43 |

63. Figures published in December 2014¹ compares Yearsley Pool financials and usage with those of other pools in the city for the past two years.

Pool Users

| Pool | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | Total |
|----------------|------------------------|---------|---------|
| Yearsley | 122,985 | 118,611 | 241,596 |
| Energise | 193,890 | 183,605 | 377,495 |
| Sports Village | 58,833 - Opened in Aug | 110,218 | 169,051 |

¹ Freedom of Information CCF4615 December 2014

Financials

| Pool | Subsidy 2012/13 | Subsidy 2013/14 | Total Subsidy |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Yearsley | £252,000 | £240,000 | £492,000 |
| Energise | £271,000 | £131,000 | £402,000 |
| Sports Village | - | - | - |

- Energise - £100,000 reduction in council contribution in 2013/14 and £54,000 repayment of £234,000 capital borrowing.

Promotions

64. The centre manager subsequently provided information about Yearsley Pool's recent promotional activity
65. Programming:
Annual programme planning and programme development considering under used the pool space and possible new opportunities and trends, reviewed throughout the year as necessary.
66. Leaflets:
Annual production of timetable leaflet distributed on site, at Energise, at Visit York, to York NHS Hospital, Sport and Active Leisure Team and some libraries.
67. On site:
 - Banners and promotional advertisements around the site.
 - Activity promotional banner placed outside Yearsley Pool, facing the road on Haley's Terrace.
 - Discounted Loyalty card promoting more regular use of the pool
68. Online
 - Website current and up to date.
 - Yearsley Pool close to the top of most swimming searches on Google only beaten by paid adverts.
 - Yearsley Pool Face book page
 - Promotions run on Groupon offering reduced price aquafit and reduced price loyalty cards.

- Promotions run on Living Social offering reduced price loyalty card.

69. Door to Door house hold distribution

- 39,207 promotional leaflets distributed July 2014
- 39,207 promotional leaflets distributed January 2015

70. Events held at the pool

- Swimathon
- Easter Egg dive.

71. Corporate

- Advertisement in the military family magazine, targeted at military families coming to York
- Advertisement in the NHS staff benefits booklet
- Advertisement through the Nestle staff corporate network
- Web banner on St John University web site for staff and students.
- Advisement in the CYC staff benefits booklet

72. Schools

- All holiday information promoted through Shine
- Yearsley Pool branded drinks bottles given to schools along with free swims for raffle and children's prizes.
- All primary school Head Teachers contacted via email promoting Yearsley Pool as a venue for their school swimming.

73. Clubs

Indirect and direct contact is made with clubs prior to annual programme planning to develop and improve club use.

74. Press and Magazine advertising

- Local link Quarter Page April 2014
- Families Magazine Half Page May 2014
- Local Link Quarter Page June 2014
- Grand Depart Supplement (Tour the France) Quarter Page June 2014
- Families Magazine Half Page July 2014
- Local Link Quarter Page August 2014
- Support advert for York against Cancer Local Link August 2014
- Local Link Quarter Page October 2014
- Local Link Quarter Page November 2014
- York Press Health Promotion Nov 2014

- Local Link Quarter Page January 2015
- York Press Shape Promotion January 2015
- What's on Families magazine Feb 2015
- Local Link Quarter Page January 2015
- Local Link Quarter Page March 2015

75. Community Advertisements

- Ongoing Promotion promoting Yearsley Swimming Pool running within Creepy Crawlies
- Notice boards at Clifton Moor Tesco promoting Yearsley Pool and Swim York Swimming Lessons at Energise and Yearsley Pool.
- Yearsley Pool leaflets, drinks bottles and swim vouchers offered out by Sports and Active Leisure staff at community events.
- Yearsley Pool promotion within the Energise leaflet.
- Health walks operated from the pool

76. Local Radio

- Minster Radio promotion, Joint swimming promotion with Energise
- Minster Radio Promotion, Host of Double your Money completion.
- Minster FM live broadcast from Yearsley Pool. June 2015.

77. The centre manager also provided updated information to the Sub-Committee on Yearsley Pool usage from 2005-06 to 2014-15 a 2015 pool programme showing pool usage per hour and samples of promotional leaflets distributed by the pool, including Military Families Guide, Time To Swim promotion, Swim for Life holiday promotion and Swim Aquafit voucher.

Stakeholder Groups

78. To support Objective iv), to identify a suitable funding / operating model for Yearsley Pool beyond 2016, the Committee agreed to consult with Yearsley Pool Shareholders.

79. On 1 May the Committee had a positive meeting with the Head of Properties and Facilities Management and the Group Human Resources Director at Nestle. The Committee was pleased to note that the company is keen to improve its health and wellness facilities and intends to provide a gym for employees as part of wider plans to develop the York site.

80. The preferred option is to work with CYC and a leisure company to provide these facilities alongside Yearsley Pool, both for the benefit of employees and to support the local community.
81. At present Nestle has car parking facilities around the Yearsley Pool site and Committee Members were told that this is an issue for the company. It means that 500 employees a day cross the busy Haxby Road to get from the car parks to the factory. This is something the company is concerned about from a safety point of view.
82. As part of the wider plans for the York site, Nestle want to provide car parking facilities on the old Cocoa Works at Nestle South so people can park within the existing perimeter of the site. This in turn would free up land around Yearsley which the company is keen to develop as a gym as part of the health and wellness programme.
83. The Committee was pleased to note that Nestle would very much like to work with Yearsley Pool. The company is open to looking at short-term investment to provide something that would then be subsidised for the benefit of employees while also actively supporting the local community.
84. Members were told that Nestle “absolutely wants to work with the Council” and consider that they have a fundamental role to play.
85. However, they were surprised to note that Nestle had been in contact with senior CYC officers about their plans for the wider York Site but no information on the leisure element of these plans, particularly in regard to Yearsley, has been passed on to the Committee.
86. The Committee agreed that the Chief Executive of CYC and the Interim Director of City & Environmental Services be invited to a future meeting to discuss the options and establish whether these could offer a solution for Yearsley.

Change of Membership

87. In April 2015 Cllr Richardson informed other members of his intention to resign from the Committee in May due to a conflict of interests. The Committee was reduced to just two Members following the local elections in May 2015, and then Cllr Aspden was appointed to the new Executive as Deputy Leader of the Council.

88. As a consequence the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee was unable to proceed with the review and at a meeting on 13 June 2015 CSMC considered a report on the membership of the Ad Hoc Committee and was asked whether it wished to appoint a new committee to carry on the review or to abandon the review in light of the priorities in the new executive policy programme.
89. At the meeting the Yearsley Pool Action Group asked that the scrutiny review be formally closed as the new Executive is committed to keeping the pool open and that there could be duplication of the work of the new Executive. It also stated its belief that the aims of reducing the subsidy, looking at operating options and a partnership approach can now “be facilitated by less formal meetings”.
90. CSMC agreed to abandon the review but asked for an officer report for the next meeting to help members identify whether there are any other issues for scrutiny despite the new Executive’s announced commitment to the pool.
91. YPAG later reiterated that they do not support a community-led option and stated their preferred option was to revert to a pre-refurbishment operating model when, they state, Yearsley Pool was the cheapest Council run facility.

Analysis to Date

92. All the emails received are in favour of safeguarding the long-term future of Yearsley Pool.
93. The consultation meeting was attended by about 50 people and again all were in favour of safeguarding the long-term future of the pool.
94. People in York swim more regularly than anywhere else in Yorkshire and the city is among the top swimming cities nationwide with 10.2% of adults in York swimming at least once a week, the 12th highest in the country.
95. While swimming remains the country’s most popular participation sport figures nationally are in decline. Nationally casual swimming has declined by approximately 12% since 2005.
96. The pool has a wide customer base and loyal following but relies on the Council subsidy to continue its current level of operation.

97. Yearsley is the only 50-yard swimming pool in the region and its length and additional lane width are considered essential by competition swimmers and many of the clubs which use the facility.
98. The current nature of the site means there is no scope to introduce additional income streams, particularly a gym and a cafe, which would help reduce the level of subsidy.
99. The car park adjacent to the pool building is owned by Nestle and is used by Yearsley only by agreement with the company. If Nestle were to withdraw this agreement it could impact on pool customers and put existing income under threat. However, the company appears keen to work with City of York Council and a leisure company to provide leisure facilities alongside Yearsley Pool, for the benefit of both its employees and to support the local community
100. The lack of a suitable galleried viewing area makes the pool unsuitable for larger swimming galas, depriving the facility of additional income. Indeed, the York City Baths Club's own gala is staged at Hull.
101. The Yearsley Pool Action Group does not have the appetite to become involved in a community-led solution to reduce the Council subsidy of the pool.
102. The group's request to close the review cites potential duplication and that the aims of reducing the subsidy can be facilitated by less formal meetings. However, when CSMC first agreed to proceed with the review it was accepted there would be some duplication as the scrutiny review was to be undertaken alongside a separate review of Yearsley Pool and that the scrutiny review meetings will take place in public allowing a more open and transparent process with greater user/resident engagement.

To Progress the work

103. Should CSMC consider there is yet more to be done by scrutiny, the former Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee identified a number of other ways of gathering further evidence to support their objectives.
104. To support Objective iii) The Committee expressed a desire to meet other stakeholders, particularly representatives from York St John University. Several aquatic clubs from the university are among the major users of the pool.

105. The university has also recently opened 57 acres of outdoor sports facilities on Haxby Road so a large number of students pass Yearsley Pool on a daily basis.
106. Members of the former Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee also agreed to take part in site visits to New Earswick Pool, York Sports Village and Tadcaster Pool to help their considerations.

Further Information Gathered

107. To support Objective i) The former Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee was provided with information on alternative funding models from elsewhere which identifies a number of community-led schemes.
108. Examples are listed below on what has been achieved in other parts of the country.
109. Tadcaster Swimming Pool Trust was set up in 1992 by the residents of Tadcaster and with the support of the local council. Tadcaster is home to three major breweries which are main employers in the town and they gave money, land and materials to get the project off the ground.
110. The intention was always for the pool to be operated and managed by volunteers. In the first three years the Trust had a support fund from the local council until the customer base had been established. After the first three years the Trust has received no ongoing support from any grant organisation or the district council. A summary of Tadcaster Pool's operation and finances was also submitted to Members of the Sub-Committee.
111. The Trust operates as a charitable organisation with the use of volunteers and paid employees to help run the facility. The facility has a 25m x 13m main pool and a 12m x 7m teaching along with a 16 station fitness suite.
112. The volunteers work in all areas of the business to support the salaried team. The pool has around 130 volunteers in roles such as lifeguarding, reception, maintenance, swimming teaching and coaching, IT and website design.
113. The Trust receives no ongoing funding from the Local Authority or Sport England and is self sufficient. Any surplus made is put back into the business to improve and maintain the facility.

114. Portishead Open Air Pool is a charitable Trust, run by trustees and staffed largely by volunteers. It relies on the support of the local community and a handful of volunteers who give their time and expertise to ensure the pool remains in operation.
115. North Somerset Council produced a report in 2008 that determined that the open air pool was a financial liability and that it should be closed. A group of six local people formed a company limited by guarantee (which means that all profits must be put back into the pool) in order to save and run the pool. They managed to convince the Council that the Trust had a feasible business plan to run the pool, and in early 2009 a 99-year lease was agreed with the Council, securing the pool's long-term future.
116. The Trust is run by six directors of the company – the Trustees – who are unpaid volunteers. Trustees are elected by members of the Trust at the annual general meeting. There are currently about 100 members and supporters of the pool are encouraged to become members.
117. The only paid members of staff are the lifeguards, duty managers, and manager, all of whom are appointed by the Trustees. Professionally qualified advisers are appointed to advise on legal, accounting, health and safety, building, surveying, plant issues
118. Swim revenue is the main source of income. However, the pool also gains income from sub-letting cafe premises; sales in the tuck shop; fund-raising activities and events; successful grant applications; membership subscriptions and donations.
119. Chipping Norton Lido - West Oxfordshire District Council took over the running of the pool in 1974 and in July 2002, when a new indoor heated pool was opened in the town, the Council decided to close the open air pool.
120. An organisation, 'KOPO' or 'Keep Our Pool Open', was formed in 2003. The organisation was formed around a 'Use it or Lose It' campaign which collected 3,000 names on a petition. With the support of the town council, the group lobbied West Oxfordshire District Council which agreed to a one year reprieve.
121. In 2004, West Oxfordshire District Council stated that they were no longer willing to subsidise the pool and offered to pass the pool to the KOPO committee. The following year, West Oxfordshire District Council provided a grant for half the money it had previously been providing and Chipping Norton Town Council provided a further £6,000 for two years to keep the pool running.

122. The pool is now run by Chipping Norton Lido Ltd, a company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity. The Board consists of eight trustees. Staff consists around 20 casual and part time staff including a manager, life guards and front of office staff. In order to minimise risk, the Trust does not use volunteer life guards while duty managers are part time paid professionals.
123. Without any public funding other than a small grant from the Town Council each year, the committee of trustees continues to raise funds in order to subsidise the operating costs.
124. The Lenton Centre originally opened in 1931 as a community washhouse to the south west of Nottingham city centre. Since that time it has evolved into a social enterprise. The pool, which is 18 x 7 metres (126 square metres), was opened in 1966 as a training pool for school children and youth organisations. The Community Centre opened in 1979.
125. In 2004, just as the Lenton Community Association was celebrating its 25th anniversary, Nottingham City Council decided to close down Lenton Leisure Centre, which comprised of the swimming pool and gym. They had previously attempted to close them in 1994 and 1999, but had changed their minds on each occasion in the face of local opposition led by members of Lenton Community Association.
126. In 2004, however, they went ahead with closing the leisure centre. The Association, with the support of others in the local community, decided to make a bid to take over the management of the entire building and raised the money to produce a business plan. In 2005, the Association transferred all its assets to The Lenton Centre, which then bought the building, including the swimming pool, from the City Council for £10. The gym was re-opened within weeks, but it took until 2008 to re-open the swimming pool.
127. The Lenton Centre is ultimately owned by the people for the people. It aims to be a hub of activity for the entire local community and offers a variety of health, well-being, educational and social activities and facilities. However none of this would be possible without the involvement of volunteers to help run and improve the centre.
128. Jesmond Swimming Pool. Built in 1938, Jesmond Swimming Pool in Newcastle was closed in 1991. As the third best-performing pool in the area, the local council felt that its users could easily transfer to other pools. In response, the local community got together and formed the Jesmond Swimming Project to campaign to re-open the pool.

129. Jesmond Pool has existed as a community managed building offering a range of sporting and physical activities since re-opening and operating as a charity since 1992.
130. Despite its value as a social enterprise and community facility, Jesmond Pool faced many challenges during its start up phase, the main challenge being proving to the Council that the facility was needed and wanted by the local community and that the enterprise could prosper and was initially allowed only a month-by-month lease by the Council. However, the enterprise proved its worth as a community facility and gained the support of local councillors who saw its benefit in the community.
131. A major milestone for Jesmond Pool since its incarnation as a social enterprise came with the approval of a Big Lottery grant to develop the building in 2002. The grant allowed Jesmond Pool to make major improvements to its entrance and changing rooms, re-tile its pool hall and add sauna and steam room facilities, convert its basement space into a gym, and construct an entirely new floor level which houses an activity room.
132. Over its years as a social enterprise, Jesmond Pool has learnt that two areas have been instrumental to its continued development – a focus on earned income and meeting the needs of customers. Although the enterprise has been the recipient of some grants when needed, as with its refurbishment in 2002, Jesmond Pool has always endeavoured to earn enough through trading to be sustainable rather than rely on grants.
133. Fenham Swimming Pool – was originally run by Newcastle City Council but in 2003 the local authority decided it could no longer afford to subsidise the facility.
134. Local residents formed a committee and registered themselves as a company and charity with the sole aim of reopening the pool. Commissioned surveys demonstrated a demand from the community as a whole and a number of partners became dedicated to the project. These included local schools, residents and health providers.
135. Fenham Pool was reopened in 2005 as a community run pool by the Fenham Swimming Project. Pool users and supporters of the project are invited to become Friends of Fenham Pool and asked make regular donations towards ongoing costs.
136. Bramley Baths is a community-led, not-for-profit fitness centre, which houses a public gym, swimming pool, steam room and space for community events, meetings and fitness classes.

137. Built on the site of a foundry, Bramley Baths first opened as a pool and public bathhouse in 1904. On 1 January 2013, the doors opened to a new era, with a new management team in place running the baths as a social enterprise, having delivered an asset transfer of the building from Leeds City Council. The facility has been championed by local residents and supporters determined to provide an affordable space for health and fitness.
138. Bramley Baths is managed as an IPS (Industrial Provident Society), a not-for-profit organisation with social aims run for the benefit of the community. The building is owned by Leeds City Council, and managed by Bramley Baths & Community Ltd on a 25 year lease. The baths are managed by a professional team led by a Chief Executive, reporting to a Board of Trustees, made up of individuals from West Leeds. The Friends Group (Friends of Bramley Baths) supports the baths through volunteering and fundraising.
139. The Pelican Centre, Tyldesley, Wigan has charitable status and the facilities are managed by full time staff as well as a large number of volunteers.
140. In 2010 it became apparent that Tyldesley Swimming Pool was likely to be closed as it was the oldest and most expensive to maintain pool in the borough and it had the fewest number of people using it.
141. The Pelican Centre community group took over the running of the pool in April 2012 at a time when the pool was losing money and in the first two years of operation the community group turned the finances around resulting in the pool making a modest surplus. The number using the pool doubled to 1,600 people visiting the pool every week.
142. The centre is now being showcased by Sports England as a model of good practice as to how a community should run a swimming pool.
143. The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has a guide on how to protect pools threatened with closure which suggests how to source evidence and analyse people's needs to demonstrate that a pool is not only wanted by the community but can also be financially viable:
<http://www.pool-watch.co.uk/index.html>

Further Analysis

144. The Amateur Swimming Association recognises that the nature of pools and their operators are changing more rapidly than at any time over the last 200 years. Pool ownership and operations can be delivered by a

range of providers and community enterprises have a full part to play in delivering this agenda.

145. In recent times many swimming pools nationally have been seen as untenable and unprofitable, which is why local councils all over the UK have been closing them down. However, it is apparent that local pools can not only survive but thrive, with robust business plans, enthusiastic staff, community support and innovative ideas, through a community-run scheme.
146. The fact that the Yearsley Pool Action Group does not support any community-led option would make any further consideration of these schemes redundant unless other user groups prepared to become involved in this work are identified.

Options

147. CSMC are asked to consider the information above and identify any further options for scrutiny work in relation to this topic, if any.

Conclusions

148. The review to date has proved a valuable exercise with a high level of public engagement and a positive response from the consultation meetings.
149. Yearsley Pool has a wide customer base and loyal following but relies on the Council subsidy to continue its current level of activity. Should a new Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee be formed then any recommendations from the reconvened review that lead to a reduction in subsidy for Yearsley Pool will be beneficial to the city.
150. The discussions with Nestle were encouraging. The company intends to provide leisure facilities for its employees and the preferred option is to work with City of York Council and a leisure company to provide these facilities alongside Yearsley Pool as part of their wider plans for the York site. The facility would benefit both Nestle employees and the local community.
151. The decision to continue with the review after guarantees were given at the Council Budget meeting in February 2015 was because any measures that can be taken to reduce to subsidy Yearsley Pool can only be a good thing for the city and this premise is still sound.
152. The original intention was to conclude this scrutiny review by autumn 2015 and had not the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee lost so many members

because of events in May 2015 the committee would have continued its work without the need for CSMC to consider its reformation.

153. The possibility of duplication should not be seen as a barrier to the committee's considerations as it was known by CSMC from the outset that there was always going to be an overlap with work being done by others. The difference when CSMC first agreed to an Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee was the review timetable and that scrutiny review meetings will take place in public, allowing for a more open and transparent process.
154. Finally, ways to reduce the subsidy given to Yearsley Pool still need to be identified and implemented or the facility will continue to be a drain on Council finances.

Council Plan

155. The review will support the Build Strong Communities and Protect Vulnerable People elements of the Council Plan 2011-15.

Implications

156. No implications are specifically identified within this report relating to the findings of the former Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee since this report is not presenting a full scrutiny report.

It simply presents the factual information gathered by the former Ad Hoc Committee and the consultation processes it underwent, as requested by this Committee.

157. Members of this Committee will, however, wish to consider whether there are implications arising from the decision made at the last meeting of this Committee (June 2015) not to continue with the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee and from the information contained in this report.

Risk Management

158. Whilst there are no risks associated with the recommendation before this Committee in this report, Members may well want to consider if there is any reputational risk associated with not bringing the work started by the former Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee to a conclusion.

Recommendation

159. The Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the position to date in relation to this review and consider the next step in light of discussions at the last CSMC meeting.

Reason: To inform the next step in the issues raised as part of this review.

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Report Approved Date 25/6/15

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report
Annexes - None

Abbreviations

CSMC – Corporate & Scrutiny Management Policy & Scrutiny Committee
CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
GLL – Greenwich Leisure Limited
NPLQ – National Pool Lifeguard Qualification
NSLC – New Stadium Leisure Centre
TLM – Total Leisure Management
YCBC – York City Baths Club
YPAG – Yearsley Pool Action Group