

FILE NOTE

CONTRACT: YORK HIGH SWIMMING POOL
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NAME: ANDREW LASLETT - CYC

THE HYDROTHERAPY POOL

Work to commission the design of the hydrotherapy pool has been undertaken collaboratively by staff from:

- o The Learning Disability Service - The Manager and Deputy Manager of Yearsley Bridge centre and the LD Service Physiotherapist
- o The Senior Physiotherapist from the hospital
- o Learning Culture and Children's Service

Dimensions

The dimensions of the pool are slightly smaller than the current Yearsley Bridge pool (7m x 3.5m compared to 7m x 4m) but the size is perfectly appropriate for the size of activities that are required. In comparison to other local facilities, Hobmoor hydrotherapy pool is 5m x 5m, so very similar in water space capacity.

The layout of the pool, toileting and changing facilities are much more conducive to the needs of service users than existing facilities. The space has been designed to allow for tracking hoists to go directly into the pool area, an improvement on what is currently available and an essential feature allowing supported access to the pool itself.

The depth of the pool is the same as that in the existing facility and has a sloping floor to accommodate different exercise regimes requiring differing water depth.

The pool could support a session of a maximum of 8 people using it at any one time, staff and customers. The maximum number in Yearsley Bridge is 9 although sessions involving this number are very rare. The facility will mainly be used for 1:1 sessions or 2:1 sessions to ensure that the therapeutic benefits of using the pool are achieved.

Expectations of Service Users

The new pool will provide an improvement in specification and quality compared to the current facilities at Yearsley Bridge and will also create an inclusive environment (rather than being situated in a segregated day centre). In this way it will meet both the practical requirements of the customers and support staff and the social inclusion agenda of people with a learning disability being treated as equal citizens.

In addition, as the general pool opening hours will be greater than the Yearsley Bridge facility, there will be greater opportunity for people to access the facility. Customers with sports injuries for example will be able to benefit by accessing this pool for rehabilitation.

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Consultation

We were aware of those customers who currently use the existing facility and their need to continue to access hydrotherapy as a therapeutic need / benefit. Consultation with families identified this as one of the key re-provision issues relating to the centre. Furthermore, person-centred reviews for each customer have clarified which customers need to access the therapeutic benefits of structured hydrotherapy sessions (as opposed to general swimming).

Staff have also been consulted about and involved in pool design and operating procedures.

Operation of the pool

The management of the hydrotherapy pool will be performed by the same people who will manage the overall pool facility.

The first access to this hydrotherapy facility will be for those customers who are City of York Council Housing and Adult Social Services customers. These customers already have a specific treatment / therapeutic plan to be followed. They are customers of Yearsley Bridge and some from other learning disability services who currently access Yearsley Bridge pool. For this customer group the facility will be staffed by City of York Council staff who are specifically trained to undertake hydrotherapy sessions, and this staffing will be paid for and managed by HASS. Staff members do not work alone with customers due to procedural and health and safety guidelines, so customers accessing this facility will always be accompanied by another supporter, whose role is to assist the pool worker. This is the same as the current operating procedures. These customer specific workers helping the customer to access the facility will be scheduled by the HASS staff member.

The use of the pool for this cohort of customers will initially be Monday - Friday during normal office hours. However, discussions are taking place regarding extended use for some other groups of customers who may benefit from this facility.

There are of course, a myriad of operating procedures relating to safe and healthy use of the facility which are currently employed by staff at the Yearsley bridge facility and these will still be appropriate to operating the new facility.

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THE SWIMMING POOL

The design of the pool is fully consistent with Active York's long term strategy for swimming pool provision. Their document entitled "Excellent Facilities" identifies the need for a publicly accessible competition pool in the South or East of the city to cater for competition and gala uses as well as community demand; and the need for the other pools in the city to focus on casual community swimming. This pool on the York High site is designed specifically to cater for the local community, casual users, school groups and swimming lessons. The main pool's length (25m), width (13m - 6 lanes), and depth (1m at the shallow end increasing to 2m at the deep end) are able to accommodate this mix of activities.

In comparison to Edmund Wilson Pool the length is equal at 25m with the width of the proposed new pool being slighter larger by 0.5m which allows more space in the two outside lanes. The depth at Edmund Wilson Pool starts at 1m at the shallow end increasing to 3.7m at the deep end. There is no negative impact in this reduction of depth, for example diving courses and skills can be taught in water over 1.8m deep. The positives include safer pool floor gradients, so there is no sudden drop off for non-swimmers getting out of their depth, less water to treat and heat which will reduce the pools operating costs.

The learner pool is 7m x 13m, which is 0.5m wider than Edmund Wilson Pool and the depth starts at 0.8m to 1m. This depth was selected in consultation with swimming teachers and the Amateur Swimming Association to be a suitable teaching depth. This compares to 0.75m to 1.35m at Edmund Wilson Pool.

The facilities have been designed to complement the existing sports centre facilities and where possible share facilities e.g. reception and social space. Due to Department of Children Families and Schools (formerly DfES) requirements for school playing fields it is important to note that the pool has been designed to have a limited land take and to minimise the impact on the grass area. The design makes good use of the space behind the sports centre while also being fully in accordance with Sport England's Handbook of Swimming Pool Building Design.

The changing village design removes a significant number of barriers to participation for families and disabled customers. It also improves access for cleaning and security in the changing areas. The extensive provision for disabled bathers both in the hydrotherapy pool and in the main pool complements the existing provision for disabled users in the gym. This facility will increase the opportunity for disabled residents to participate in sport (a group who are known to have a low participation rate in the city at present).

The spectator area will accommodate 40 customers in 2 rows of 20 seats with further standing space behind. The busiest times for spectators are during swimming lessons. The pool will accommodate 5 groups of 8 individuals in lessons so 40 seats will provide for an average of one parent spectator per child with further room to stand and observe change-overs, etc. There are also other areas in the building suitable for non-participants to wait, notably the café.

The spectator area has views into the pool hall and the gym and will allow both disabled gym users and swimmers to be supported by non users.

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Edmund Wilson Pool currently provides spectator seating for 150 people, however this is used only at swimming gala events (no more than 5 days a year) and is not to be provided in this community pool facility. The “Leisure facility strategy” (see Executive report 23 October 07) identifies the need for one competition pool in the city which will provide spectator seating for 250 spectators minimum. This will be at York University where the section106 agreement for the new campus obligates the University to provide a competition standard pool with community access.

There will be seating on benches down the pool side though this will be for swimmers, teachers, and other participants. It will not be available to general spectators or anyone wearing outdoor shoes.

In summary, the design, layout and mix of facilities will offer increased opportunity for sports participation and will contribute to raising the standard of facilities available, in line with the aspirations of Active York.