

Report from the Assistant Director Governance and ICT

Yearsley Pool Scrutiny Review Scoping Report

Summary to Review

1. This report provides information on how the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee appointed to look into ways to reduce the subsidy given to Yearsley Swimming Pool while securing its long-term future can complete this scrutiny review.

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 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).
4. 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.
5. 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.

6. The cost to the Council of operating Yearsley has been consistently over £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.
7. 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.
8. Since then 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 4,500 people.
9. 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 – see topic submission format at Annex A.
10. 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.
11. At a meeting in January 2015 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."
12. 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 (with Cllr King as first substitute).

Scoping the Review

13. The initial stage of this review requires the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee to identify a number of review objectives in support of the agreed review aim, and agree a method of progressing their work on the review. With this in mind the following draft objectives have been provided for Members' consideration:
- 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.
14. In order to support the proposed objectives the following methodology is suggested:

Meeting	Review Objective	Method
24 February 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Examine alternative operational models from elsewhere and identify any community led schemes. ii. Understand the current funding arrangements for Yearsley Pool. 	<p>Agree objectives for the review and a timeframe for review completion</p> <p>Consider other national schemes where similar swimming facilities are funded (or part funded) and operated by community groups to see what methods they use and what lessons can be learnt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse the pool's income and expenditure to fully understand the impact the loss of the £250,000 subsidy will have.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine usage data to establish how much interest the pool is generating at present, as well as capital expenditure.
<p>Consultation Meeting tba</p>	<p>iii. Understand the value added by Yearsley Pool to both the local community and the city.</p>	<p>Consult with Council officers, pool staff and other interested parties and user groups, including the Yearsley Pool Action Group, and health professionals to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explore the benefits of using Yearsley Pool over and above the facilities being made available at the new leisure complex; b) Explore opportunities for additional income generation and potential savings.
<p>Meeting 3 tba</p>	<p>iv. Identify a suitable alternative funding / operating model for Yearsley Pool beyond 2016.</p>	<p>Explore how the subsidy can be reduced to make the pool more self sustaining by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining whether the pool could be used for other things, i.e. whether additional income could be generated; • Establishing if there are any gaps in the timetable; • Looking at how GLL could work with community groups; • Examining the possibility of using volunteers at Yearsley Pool
<p>Meeting 4 tba</p>		<p>Consider the Interim Report detailing information gathered and either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify any additional

		information required to progress the work on the review or: ii. Identify draft conclusions and recommendations.
Meeting 5 tba		If no further information is required consider draft final report.

Information Gathered

15. Objective i) Examine alternative funding models from elsewhere and identify any community led schemes.
16. Tadcaster Swimming pool Trust (Annex B) 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.
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.

22. 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.
23. 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.
24. 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
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.

30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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, who 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.
34. 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 help of volunteers to help run and improve the centre.
35. 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.

36. 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.
37. 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.
38. 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.
39. 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 endeavored to earn enough through trading to be sustainable rather than rely on grants.
40. 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.
41. 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.
42. 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.
43. 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.

44. Built on the site of a foundry, Bramley Baths first opened as a pool and public bath-house 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.
45. 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.
46. 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.
47. 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.
48. 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 two years the community group have operated the facility they have turned the finances around and the pool is now making a modest surplus. The number using the pool has doubled to 1,600 people visiting the pool every week.
49. 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.
50. 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>
51. To support objective ii) Current funding arrangements. City of York Council finance has provided information on Yearsley Pool accounts 2009-10 to 2013-14 at Annex C.

52. The centre manager has produced a summary of the current income / expenditure at Yearsley Pool together with a comparison of user data and capital expenditure at the pool at Annex D.
53. The summary notes that people in York swim more regularly than anywhere else in Yorkshire, and the city is among the top swimming cities nationwide with 10.2 per cent of adults in York swimming once a week, the 12th highest in the country.
54. Yearsley Pool has followed a national trend in that casual swimming is in decline. Nationally this decline has been approximately 12% since 2005. In response to this decrease in casual swimming Yearsley Pool has increased lessons and club hire to help balance income / expenditure.
55. However, the summary notes that Yearsley Pool costs approximately £121 per hour to operate while it currently generates approximately £75 per hour, based on the pool opening 15 hours per day over 355 days of the year.

Consultation to Date

56. Consultation has involved the City of York Council's strategic services manager and the facility manager at Tadcaster Swimming Pool Trust while initial contact has been made with representatives of Jesmond and Fenham Pools and the Amateur Swimming Association.

Further Consultation

57. To understand the value added by Yearsley Pool to both the local community and the City the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee will need to consult with interested parties and user groups, including Yearsley Pool Action Group, as well as health professionals.
58. The Committee will also need to consult with council officers, pool staff, YPAG and other interested parties to explore opportunities for additional income and potential savings.

Options

59. There are no options at this stage.

Analysis

60. There is no analysis at this stage.

Council Plan

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

Implications

62. There are no financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, IT or Property implications associated with this report. Any implications arising from the recommendations made in the draft final report will be identified.

Risk Management

63. There are no risks associated with this report. Again, any risks arising from the recommendations in the draft final report will be identified

Recommendations

64. The Ad Hoc Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- i. agree the draft objectives (paragraph 13);
 - ii. agree the methodology and timetable to progress the review (paragraph 14);
 - iii. note the information gathered on other community-led schemes (paragraphs 16 – 49 and Annex B);
 - iv. note the income / expenditure in Annex C and the usage summary in Annex D;
 - v. identify future meeting dates and agree a timeframe for the completion of the review.

Reason: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures and protocols

Contact Details

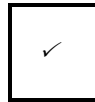
Author:

Steve Entwistle
Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01904 554279
steven.entwistle@york.gov.uk

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director Governance and ICT
Tel: 01904 551004

**Report
Approved**



Date 16/02/2015

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Yearsley Pool Topic Submission

Annex B – Tadcaster Pool Overview and Accounts

Annex C – Yearsley Pool Accounts 2009 to 2014

Annex D – Yearsley Pool Finance and Usage Summary

Abbreviations

ASA – Amateur Swimming Association

CSMC – Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee

GLL – Greenwich Leisure Limited

NSLC – New Stadium Leisure Centre

YPAG – Yearsley Pool Action Group