

## **Statement re need for provision of Warm Water Pool in BANES Leisure Centres for benefit of elderly**

For the elderly population, a warm water pool is essential to help them maintain health and wellbeing, and, one of the stated aims of the BANES Health & Wellbeing Strategy is to help the elderly to keep active and remain independent.

Currently one in 6 of the population is over 65 and this is set to increase by 50% over the next 20 years and nearly double over the next 35 years<sup>(1)</sup>. According to the B&NES Health & Wellbeing Strategy, it is expected that there will be over 2.5 times as many people in B&NES aged over 80 by 2026 compared with 1981. Furthermore, at least one in 4 of the population currently has a long term health condition - in B&NES this amounts to 73,000 people - and 30% of people with a physical health conditions have a mental health condition. Care of people with long term conditions accounts for 70% of the money spent on health and social care in England<sup>(2)</sup>

According to information in your Fit for Life Strategy, people over 65 should aim to be active daily for a total of at least 150 mins of moderate or 75 mins of vigorous activity per week. Bearing in mind many of us have long term conditions which limit our choice of exercise, being in water means we are able to exercise more and this also helps our mental wellbeing as well as being a very sociable activity. However, cold water causes pain and makes our muscles seize up. The water needs to be over 30°C to help ease our aching joints and muscles. Many people attend the Bath Sports Centre on a Thursday when the water is 30° but there are a considerable number of elderly people who used to exercise on a Thursday at the Sports Centre have given up because, for them, they find the water at 30°C is too cold. They need it warmer than that.

In common with others, high blood pressure and other disabilities prevent me going to the gym but exercising in warm water relieves the pressure on our bodies enabling us to exercise more.

Currently, even if we can tolerate 30°C, we can only swim once a week but if there was a pool that was warmer, we could certainly use it more regularly and there would be many, many more who would benefit too.

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1 – “Key Issues for the New Parliament 2010” briefing paper – The Aging Population by Richard Cracknell

2 – “Improving quality of life for people with long term conditions” Dept of Health Policy document 25<sup>th</sup> March 2013