

WWISE Network presentation to Communities, Transport & Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – Jan 16th 2017

While we are pleased that GLL & the Officers have put together such a comprehensive report, we are nevertheless disappointed that it is so confusing & inaccurate and furthermore based on a totally incorrect premise from the outset.

We are not denying that providing a facility for teaching children to swim is vital and that maintaining a 25m pool for holding galas is also important but we believe it is perfectly possible to provide a warm water pool suitable for adults in addition to these important facilities.

Let's be clear from the start about who needs this warm water pool. Yes, some are severely disabled people who need carers to be able to access the water, but there are also a multitude of people living with long-term conditions who are less disabled than this. They include the ever increasing older population living with painful conditions such as arthritis and back pain - & let's face it that could be any of us now or in the near future - as well as younger adults with a range of conditions and also those recovering from shorter term illness or injury. These people are independent, but exercising in warm water will help them to regain and then maintain their independence & quality of life without the need to call on the NHS for ongoing treatment.

Let's also be clear about the temperature. We are not talking about 33°C . Such a high temperature is not necessary. How many times have we also stressed that 30°C is too cool – there are a number of pools at this temperature already which are not suitable. The temperature we are talking about is 32°C – exactly the same temperature as the proposed learner/teaching pool.

Furthermore, let's be clear about the depth needed. It is not 1.5m deep. This is too deep as most people are unable to maintain their footing in this depth. However 60 – 90 cm – max waist deep – is too shallow for adults. The depth needed is a max of 1.2 – 1.3m – a mere 30 – 40cm (12 – 15”) deeper than the deepest part of a learner pool.

Numerous examples of alternative facilities are quoted as being readily available but

in reality this is not the case as none satisfy the criteria needed.

Of those in BANES,

- Thermae Spa does not have fully accessible changing facilities and at a cost of £20, even for a BANES resident, can hardly be considered affordable on a regular basis
- Changing facilities at the University Hydro Pool are also not fully accessible and with a minimum 1.4m depth – too deep for the majority. It is also only available for a limited time in the evenings by prior booking.
- Between the school & outside private hire, Three Ways Pool is fully utilised and even if there were availability, you have to hire the whole pool including providing your own poolside staff.
- Likewise Fosseway School which in addition has limited public transport links
- the new hydrotherapy pool at the RUH will replace the pools at the RNHRD and RUH both of which are currently fully utilised with waiting lists of up to 12 months for ongoing self-management. This pool will not provide any additional availability

Of the alternative ways a warm water pool could be included, we were only able to give an indication of the various options that might be possible – we do not have in depth technical knowledge. One further suggestion we did make - raising the area surrounding the proposed learner pool even without building an extension - was discussed with the authors of the report but this has not even been considered. This could provide a pool from 60cm – 1.2 or even 1.3m deep, which would satisfy the need for a learner pool and a warm pool for adults.

A great emphasis is put in the report on the need for moveable floors. These are expensive to install & utilise in practice but, if the pool were the correct depth in the first place, such a floor would be unnecessary.

We ask that you delay making any decision based on this report as we feel it is a grossly inaccurate assessment of the current situation and of the possibilities available in the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre. We cannot afford to overlook this important opportunity to provide such a valuable asset in what is a once in a lifetime major refurbishment project.

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