

BANES Cabinet meeting February 1st 2017

Riverside petition brought by Kathleen Hovland with 231 signatures, including staff in 3 Keynsham surgeries

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Between 2014 and 2016 there were many discussions, between councillors, pool staff and coaches, around proposed planning that existed, for an 8 lane pool with gallery extension, and was likely to materialise. £15m in funding was proposed. At the consultation in 2016 in the Space and the Leisure Centre there was no detail, were no drawings, on the main swimming pool plans, nor any documentation provided: changes to the main pool and its environment were not disclosed, e.g. deepening and levelling and the introduction of poolside showers and unisex changing facilities. Had they been disclosed there would have been a significant response from a number of people. I sent a Freedom of Information request for information on documents and detail provided. I have never received any drawings with measurements or detail. It was erroneously assumed by pool users attending the consultation who were aware of these developments, that - in the absence of all information and detail, - this was a 'given' and would happen. Accordingly, the number of responses to the plans, - as there were no plans shown to be consulted on, were smaller than might have been expected but there would have been a larger number of responses than you stated by BANES. Leaflets providing BANES Leisure Team address to write to and GLL forms were definitely handed to pool users and taken by them for feedback: e.g. a large number of lane swimmers in the morning, including a member of BANES staff who signed this petition.

*level of funding
has reduced
to £7m*

The consultation process was flawed; there is need for an 8 lane width pool and an enlarged gallery for community and competitive use. The swimming pool was overlooked as the consultation focused on studios, halls and the proposed residential complex. There is public concern that the pool's status as a competitive venue, despite the excellent legacy of training swimmers for local nation and international success would be lost. I contacted ASA Facility Officers: Mr Freeman Wright and Richard Lambourn. Mr Lambourn met with BANES council and GLL. He emailed confirmation that BANES would pay for a certificate of length and provide electronic timing for the pool. Please ensure that funding is guaranteed.

*our aspect
of
swimming
club*

The public concern remained that the pool would not be widened and that welfare concerns would not be a priority. This petition was drafted in the summer with input in particular from Mr Paul Sims and for the following reasons:

- Contrary to statements from a BANES officer we have not campaigned for a 50m pool. Swimming club parents request a 25m pool. Schools and swimming club require the existing gallery space to be maintained the required size agreed with Mr Lambourn to meet ASA requirements, without a recess that was proposed apparently after his visit. There should be funding to meet this need. Schools are also hard pushed for space at galas.
- There are signatures from 3 surgeries over concerns about current well-being needs. Currently they are not being considered; 50% reduction vouchers are

offered for halls or studio activities e.g. badminton but I understand from a councillor who requested vouchers that they were refused for swimming; reflecting perhaps a climate that is not sufficiently supportive.

Concern is expressed that the population is growing and that the pool and gallery are cramped. The population of Keynsham will increase by 30% by 2020. There is strong support among parents and pool users for a widened 8 lane pool and an enlarged gallery, compliant to updated ASA standards, that will have to hold 250 people for competitions above level 2. There is already a squash for Keynsham school and Keynsham Swimming club galas that only involve local children or pool events like Sports Relief. Please provide funding to meet future need.

The area behind the pool is the home of goldfinches, rarer winter visitors such as teal and widgeon in addition to the duck population. Elvers and small trout are fished by children, It should be conserved as a nature area and should not be landscaped. Please vire funding allocated to landscaping for the swimming pool provision.

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KTC

At the September 2015 consultation alternative sites for the Leisure Centre were proposed. £15m was allocated.

This level of funding should be provided for the Leisure Centre Riverside Location. £7 million is allocated. Keynsham residents are short changed.

Earlier proposals were in place to move the courts to the Wellsway area; to flood part of the leisure centre to create a larger pool. As recently as August 2015, the Olympic deputy coach who, then, worked in the centre, said that there would be an enlarged gallery and pool.

No explanation has been offered as to why these plans have been abandoned.

The proposed plan shows an increase in studios, racket sport courts and a learner pool. Excellent. But it need not be at the expense of and to the detriment of the main pool.

Information about detail is often impossible to obtain. The detail on changes come by the grapevine; unisex changing rooms, pool side showers? Withdrawn when the information was known. Deepening the main pool to one level? Detail is not available.

The Leisure Centre Team and management are not considering separately the pool user letter campaign and are not providing information.

If the gallery is non ASA compliant for galas it will mean the end of Keynsham pool being used competitively. At Swimming Club and school galas, marathon and sports relief events spectators are crammed against the walls.

It is necessary to enlarge the swimming pool to 8 lane width to facilitate simultaneous use by swimmers of varying abilities. Today's approach to health has increased the take up on exercise. In plain English, the lanes are too cramped for the future, growing population: inadequate for members, health, casual and lane swimmers when Aqua Swim, Swim for 50+. Adult Better Swim School and health classes are held. It is stressful for staff.

Planners in B&NES should protect the local, national and international interests of Keynsham pool users and support, in particular the Keynsham Swimming Club that trained youngsters like Siobhan O'Connor, Tom Sinclair, Amelie Maughan. Jess Podger and Ben Lawton are members of Keynsham Swimming Pool who gain national and international success.

Given the richness of the local talent and need; if the swimming pool space is capacious enough, the pool is 8 lane width it will be well-placed within the community to meet a modern, expanding population.

Pam Sims

Keynsham Leisure Centre Pool: Petition for community and competitive pool with 8 lane width and gallery extension

The Leisure Centre refurbishment is a once in 40 year's opportunity for Keynsham to review its swimming pool and pool facilities ensuring that local people get the best for now and for the future, remembering that Keynsham's population is expected to increase by one third by 2020.

A full and frank consultation is needed to ensure that all those interested in the Leisure Centre services are contacted and invited to join the discussions along with members of the public at open, minuted public meetings.

The minimum target for the refurbishment should be to continue to provide all the services that Keynsham has enjoyed through the Centre to date. They will need to be upgraded to keep abreast of ongoing (Amateur Swimming Association) compliance standards, standards required by legislation and sports bodies, and to maintain the best possible standards for Centre users whether they are potential world class athletes or health or casual users.

Services that have fallen away, such as the provision of competition standard swimming facilities should be restored to match the standards that have historically been offered in Keynsham; creating a starting point for the many national and international athletes who started here. The opportunity they had must never be lost for the people of Keynsham.

The leisure facilities in Keynsham need to be exemplary as they have always been in the past, promoting health and opportunity for all. Please don't lose this opportunity to revive the already weakening service levels.

The population needs services of which Keynsham can rightly be proud.

