

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 11 SEPTEMBER 2012  
title: SWIMMING POOL/SWIMMING DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: COLIN WINTERBOTTOM

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To request Members to consider the priorities and business objectives relating to the operation of Ribblesdale Pool.

1.2 To approve the implementation of an Action Plan for delivery over the next 12 months.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – People: Health improvement for all Ribble Valley residents.
- Corporate Priorities – To make peoples' lives safer and healthier.
- Other Considerations – To improve the health of people living and working in our area.

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The results of the national Active People Survey has revealed some key messages with regards to participation in swimming. The Active People Survey is the largest ever survey of sport and active recreation to be undertaken in Europe and there have been 6 annual surveys since being introduced. The survey measures the proportion of the population that take part in sport and physical activity and the frequency of participation, the proportion of adults that volunteer on a weekly basis, involvement in sports clubs, receive tuition or coaching, and the overall satisfaction with the levels of sports provision within the local community.

It is possible that there may be an increase in swimming and sport generally after the Olympics and Paralympics but the current messages are;

- Once a week participation in adult swimming has fallen below 3 million.
- Female adult participation continues to show a strong downwards trend.
- Male adult participation is also starting to show a downwards trend over the past year.
- Participation has fallen across the board with the exception of people with a long term limiting illness, disability or infirmity.
- Swimming is currently missing its Sport England growth target.
- Outdoor swimming has also fallen.
- Organised swimming has remained fairly stable.

- 2.2 The figures in Ribble Valley also reveal a downward trend and over the period of the Active People Surveys from APS 1 to the most recent APS 6 (2011/12), there has been a fall from 8.04% to 6.56% with regards to the number of people participating once a week in swimming of moderate intensity.
- 2.3 The Governing Body of Swimming; the Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A.) is naturally concerned about the national indicators and are looking to work closely with Local Authorities to address the situation.

Sport England now awards funding directly to the governing bodies on satisfactory achievement of their delivery plan and the A.S.A. are challenged with improving participation levels. A consultation exercise has recently been launched ahead of their next strategy (2013-17).

The ASA Regional Development Officer has offered support to Ribble Valley in terms of;

- Gaining an insight into why participation levels are falling
- Identifying what is working well and sharing examples of good practice
- The availability of specific support including revenue support and products/programmes that are aimed at reviving participation levels.

- 2.4 Despite the overall decline in swimming levels identified in the Active People Surveys, this has not had a detrimental impact upon the operation at the Ribblesdale Pool. Over the past 3 years the adult attendances have increased very slightly and there has been an increase in income from contract based swimming; (12 sessions for the price of 10). Since the conclusion of the government funded free swimming initiative, junior attendances have not changed over the past two years.
- 2.5 The reduction in the level of net revenue expenditure at the Pool has been achieved through a range of cost reduction measures including changes to staffing hours, and also due to maximising income/ usage through an increase in the provision of swimming lessons for juniors and the availability of swimming contracts offering incentivised rates for swimmers to attend more frequently. If the Pool is to continue to maximise usage and improve upon cost effectiveness, then an Action Plan as summarised in the Appendix; produced in conjunction with the A.S.A, will help specifically with regards to programming of water space.

### 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 In order to achieve the objectives identified in the Plan, members should be aware of potential changes to the current practice for allocating use of the Main and Teaching Pools.
- 3.2 The Clitheroe Dolphins Swimming Club has requested on various occasions that more time be made allocated for their training purposes. There has already been an increase in the amount of time hired by the club over recent years and this has been accommodated without disruption or reduction to general public swimming time. However, the club have now requested a further hour be made available between 4-5pm on Sundays on a weekly basis. This has historically been time allocated to general public swimming and if approved would mean that instead of both Pools being available for public swimming up to 5pm it would be restricted to 4pm on Sundays. From an

income generating perspective it would be advantageous to allocate the time to the Dolphins based on current usage levels but Committee should be aware that there may members of the public who may object to the erosion of public swimming time.

- 3.3 In order to increase general public swimming then it is proposed to work closely with the ASA in delivery of the 'SwimFit' campaign. Also the Swimming Offers campaign being spearheaded by the ASA. The inspirational approach encourages people to adopt a more health and fitness driven attitude to their swimming which compliments the increased popularity of lane swimming. This will reduce the availability of water space for leisure and fun based activity but it is proposed to introduce these instructed supported sessions during later evening times which are already favoured by the more formal/training orientated swimmer.
- 3.4 The Swimming Offers initiative is an online voucher campaign to get more people swimming more often. Swim North West is effectively coordinating the marketing of specific offers that Pools may wish to introduce to attract more people to their Pools. This could include any form of concession from a free taster session at an Aqua class to reductions in family swim tickets. As the need to introduce the offer may be seasonal or for limited periods it is proposed that the decision to introduce these offers rests with the Pool management in consultation with the Head of Culture and Leisure Services.
- 3.5 The Action Plan may recognise the need to upgrade certain areas and there is an opportunity presented by the Sport England Improvement Fund, which is targeting Swimming Pool changing room modernisation schemes and Artificial Pitch improvement schemes. Both of these are currently relevant and whilst a proportion of match funding is required, the potential to lever funding support now may provide an attractive alternative to the Council having to fund the total cost of improvements in time. The current capital programme does not include any scheme for such match funding. Should a submission be seen as advantageous then members should be mindful that a bid for inclusion in capital programme would need to be made.

## 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – A detailed action plan will be produced allocating the staffing resource and any costs associated with the Plan, which would be met from within the existing Pool revenue budget. Any grant funded capital works would require matched funding from the Council which is currently not identified within the capital programme.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implications identified.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – The implementation of the Pool Action Plan and the re-allocation of use is unlikely to be well received by certain members of the general public.
- Equality & Diversity – A varied programme will continue to be provided at the Pool, which is accessible to everyone.

**5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Approve in principle the objectives contained within the Swimming Action Plan and agree to a fully detailed plan being produced with the support of the A.S.A.
- 5.2 Endorse the general principles outlined in section 3 in accepting the Clitheroe Dolphins request for more Pool time and supporting the Swim Fit and Swimming Offers campaigns.
- 5.3 Ask officers to further explore the external funding opportunity in order to identify any financial implications to the Council.

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For further information please ask for Colin Winterbottom, extension 4588.

REF: CW/110912

### RIBBLE VALLEY- SWIMMING ACTION / DEVELOPMENT PLAN

#### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Action Plan focuses on key activities to be delivered in the next 12 months commencing January 2012.

The following business objectives have been identified;

1. Increase usage and revenue at Ribblesdale Pool
2. Increase participation of casual swimming
3. Maximise opportunities for providing swimming instruction and training
4. Improve the physical environment to maintain customer satisfaction levels.

According to the Active People Survey 5 data- (ONS Annual Population Survey 2011); Swimming has the highest participation level in Ribble Valley in terms of once per month participation. The figure of 13% is higher than the averages for the North West (11.7%) and England (11.6%).

Swimming participation in a national context is declining as supported by the this Active People survey data. The key trends are that;-

Once a week participation in swimming has fallen below 3 million.

Female participation continues to show a downward trend.

Male participation is now also starting to show a downward trend.

Participation has fallen across the board with the exception of people with long term limiting illness, disability or infirmity, which has seen a steady increase.

Swimming is currently missing it's Sport England growth target.

Outdoor swimming has also fallen.

There have been some notable developments at Ribblesdale Pool; which will impact upon the future business plan;

- A reduction in the demand for school swimming lessons
- A reduction in Adult casual swimming attendances
- A reduction in Junior casual swimming attendances
- An increase in the demand for Pool space from the Swimming Club
- An increase in the attendances on the Pool's internal junior swimming lesson programme.

#### ACTION PLAN TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES

##### Summary of Action Plan

The Action Plan focuses on key activities to be delivered in the next 12 months in order to drive up adult and junior participation in swimming a minimum of 1X30 minutes per week.

Swimming has shown a national decrease when comparing the period

The objective is to get more adults (16+) participating in swimming for a minimum of 1X30 minutes session per week. This is about encouraging people to swim lengths and improve their fitness.

This will be achieved through the implementation of the following;

1. Introduction of the new 'Swim Fit' campaign, which is being launched in September this year. This programme will set up instructor led swimming sessions aimed at motivating people to take up swimming in the form of personalised training programmes.
2. Improved marketing and promotional offers aimed at incentivising people to swim more often including contracts of annual, monthly and 12 sessions for the price of 10. Increased awareness of the availability of the 'Swim and Gym' package in partnership with Roefield L.C.
3. Introduction of Triathlon sessions from the Edisford site. This will comprise of swimming, cycling and running all coordinated from the Pool to support individuals wishing to train for and participate in Triathlon events.
4. Introduction of instructor led sessions for those clients referred to the Pool for health improvement purposes and include G.P. referrals. This is to be promoted as a Swim for Life session and will cater for those with health problems.

The objective to improve opportunities for people to access swimming instruction will be achieved through;

1. Introduction of swimming lessons for adults
2. Introduction of additional junior lessons as holiday 'crash courses'
3. Establish swimming instruction for those aged 1-4 years of age as an extension of the existing 5+ Learn to Swim Programme.
4. The creation of additional water space to accommodate junior swimming development within the Clitheroe Dolphins Swimming Club as the programme allows.

The objective to improve the physical environment is to be achieved through;

1. Identification of the improvements necessary to the ensuring that the Pool offers a welcoming environment and this includes maintenance and modernisation work to the Reception, changing rooms and Pool Hall. The changing rooms were last modernised over 12 years ago and are in need of an extensive update to meet customer expectations. There is a funding opportunity presented by the Sport England Improvement fund, which has specifically identified Swimming Pool changing room improvement schemes as a priority for the first round of funding.