

QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF PUBLIC

UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.19

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - 2 SEPTEMBER 2008

QUESTION FROM KEVIN MOORE RE: SWIMMING POOL

- 1 Has the aspect of funding from an educational, health and sports point of view been examined if the Council were to build a new pool on Exhibition Field near the Arena Stadium ? For in the locality and in walking distance are many schools that would benefit from such an arrangement.**

Answer

The prospects for attracting external funding were considered when the initial research was being carried out for the pool, as were the advantages of different sites. Although the government has recently announced a very limited capital grant scheme for swimming pools, available to those councils which agree to join the schemes for free swimming for the over 60's and children, officers believe that it will be heavily over-subscribed and that only a small amount will be given to each applying council. Officers are not aware of any other schemes in the educational, health or sports sectors which would be of any assistance in building a new pool, wherever it was sited.

The Exhibition Fields site is very large, but the car park is used to its capacity on those occasions when the Arena hosts major events. The rest of the space is made up of playing fields, and any development would probably mean serious problems for the other sports users. This emerged when officers were re-checking the options for the report on today's agenda. Although Exhibition Fields is near a number of schools, the Council's original intentions were that a new pool should be as near to the City Centre as possible, because the majority of use is not school related.

- 2 Would there also be savings in closing the Northbrook Swimming Pool and The Pyramids if this were to happen ?**

Answer

Savings from closing the Pyramids have already been taken into account in calculating the net costs of a new pool. There would be additional savings of approximately £60,000 (current contract prices and rates) from closure of the Northbrook Swimming Pool, but no opportunity for a capital contribution, since the City Council does not own either the building or the land.

