

For General Release

REPORT TO:	Cabinet 17 February 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	8
SUBJECT:	Purley Leisure Centre
LEAD OFFICER:	Jo Negrini Executive Director - Place (Acting)
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr Tony Newman Leader
WARDS:	All wards

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:

The decision to keep Purley swimming pool open, to allow discussions with Purley residents and users of the pool in the community, which will allow more consideration be given to the range of issues raised by them links to the objective within the Corporate Plan to strengthen the Borough's leisure and cultural offer in response to local needs, enhancing the lives of people who live work and play in Croydon and improving the economic wellbeing of the borough.

AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON & WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:

The administration positively promotes sport, health and well-being activities in the borough and will review options for the Council to invest in high quality leisure facilities in the future.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no direct financial impact arising from this report.

FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: this is not a key executive decision

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the draft recommendations below.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are request to note:

- 1.1 The decision to keep Purley swimming pool open, to allow discussions with Purley residents and users of the pool, to allow more consideration be given to the range of issues raised by them and strengthen the Borough's leisure and cultural offer in response to local needs.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the response to concerns raised by residents and users of Purley pool, following a consideration of the closure of the pool at the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee meeting of 17 December 2014. The Council spent time actively listening to the various concerns raised and will no longer be considering the closure of the pool at this time.
- 2.2 The context of the consideration of this and other tough choices for the council is the continued significant reduction in funding to local government. Funding and grant reductions are expected from national government over the medium term with a funding gap of over £100m projected over the period 2015/19 (a quarter of the base budget). At the same time as our grant is reducing from government we are also facing significant pressures from the increase in population and also changing demographics in the borough. Therefore we will be demanding the government take immediate action to deliver a Fair Funding Share for the People of Croydon.
- 2.3 It was also requested by the Scrutiny and Strategic Overview Committee meeting of 17 December 2014 (reference A62/14 refers), that Cabinet consider a report on the proposed closure of the Purley Pool before a final decision was taken and that this report should seek to address the concerns of pool users and take into account the practicalities of the effective use of Waddon pool as an alternative (including access by public transport, parking and capacity) and any health implications arising from the closure.
- 2.4 It has been decided that, using the new administration's earmarked reserve, proposals for closure of the swimming pool at Purley Leisure Centre be removed from the budget options for 2015/16 whilst more consideration is given to the range of issues raised by users and the community. As part of that a full equality impact analysis and health impact analysis will be conducted and feed into any future discussion of the regeneration options for Purley District Centre.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 Purley Leisure Centre opened in 1982 and comprises a six-lane, 25m pool; 12m x 7m learner pool and a 70-station fitness suite. The main swimming facilities are located on the first floor of the facility with the fitness suite, a later 1990s addition, situated around the pool tank on the ground floor.
- 3.2 Croydon's current Leisure Centre Strategy (2007) sets out that Purley Pool would close in 2010 when Waddon Leisure Centre was scheduled to open. In March 2007, a paper on Croydon's Leisure Centre Provision was reported to Cabinet (minute reference A48/07) and included a number of resolutions including to agree that Purley Pool should remain open until November 2008 and to approve the commissioning

of the next stage feasibility study and business case for a new centre in the south of the Borough.

- 3.3 Purley Leisure Centre was scheduled to close for the redevelopment of 50-52 High Street; however, following discussions with Purley residents and users of the pool in the community by members of the administration, the administration have listened those stakeholders, in response to their concerns and agreed not to close the pool whilst more consideration is given to the range of issues raised by them. The Council is committed to working with residents and pool users to find the best solution for the site including any future leisure provision in the south of the borough.
- 3.4 Having reviewed how the Council communicated the ongoing maintenance and financial difficulties at Purley pool over a number of years it is clear we could have had a better dialogue with the community and sports and leisure users. The abolition of Croydon's Sports Link and the lack of a Croydon sports strategy meant the opportunity to consult with relevant users clearly did not help. The current administration therefore intends to explore methods in which we can improve our dialogue with the sports and leisure user's community.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As part of the recent public engagement on proposals to close the swimming pools, the Council has addressed a series of public and Councillor questions that have been submitted in relation to both the pool closure and the future redevelopment of the site. The Council is also in receipt of a petition of 6,000 signatures opposing a proposed closure. This led to the matter being debated at full Council on 26 January 2015. In addition, the Leader of the Council has met with stakeholders including representatives from the Save Purley Pool Campaign to discuss the proposals.
- 4.2 Any future redevelopment of 50-52 High Street will be subject to informal consultation in respect of any planning application in respect of the site to enable stakeholders to meaningfully engage in the design development process. This is likely to involve meeting and engaging with local groups, Leisure Centre users and hosting public exhibitions. The planning application will also be subject of formal consultation in line with the Statement of Community Involvement and be subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment Analysis.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No decision is being made in this report and therefore there are no financial implications to report.

Approved by: Richard Simpson, Director of Finance and Assets

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The Council Solicitor comments that there are no direct legal issues in respect of the matters being noted in this report.

(Approved by: Gabriel MacGregor on behalf of the Council Solicitor & Director of Democratic & Legal Services)

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no direct human resources issues arising from the report.

Approved by Adrian Prescod, HR Business Partner, for and on behalf of Director of Human Resources, Chief Executive department.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 A draft equality impact assessment had been undertaken on the potential closure of the swimming pools at Purley Leisure Centre. At the point when a decision is to be taken about the future of the pool the analysis will need to be updated.

- 8.2 The draft assessment has indicated that if the swimming pools were to close without investment in alternative leisure facilities in the south of the borough this could give rise to a negative impact on all protected groups and in particular the protected characteristics young and old people and those people with disabilities. Opportunities to minimise the impact of any potential closure of the swimming pools and realise potential opportunities would need to be considered at the time a decision is taken.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There are no direct environmental impacts arising from the report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder impacts arising directly from the report.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 11.1 This paper is to note; there are no recommendations or decisions required.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 As part of the Council's aspiration to develop a facility for the south of the borough, as set out in the Leisure Centre Strategy, in 2011, the

Council instructed Lambert Smith Hampton to undertake a site search for alternative locations for a new wet and dry leisure facility in the event of closure of the Purley Leisure Centre. The report identified a number of potential sites, however, all of these were or have subsequently been discounted.

CONTACT OFFICER: Tony Brooks Director Environment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None