

Cabinet Meeting		Agenda Item: 10
Meeting Date	15 March 2017	
Report Title	Sheerness Paddling Pool - Options	
Cabinet Member	Cllr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs	
SMT Lead	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning and Customer Contact	
Head of Service	Dave Thomas, Head of Commissioning and Customer Contact	
Lead Officer	Martyn Cassell, Leisure and Technical Services Manager	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	Reference number:	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve funding of up to £22,500 for upgrading the plant, water features and surfacing as detailed in section 2.7 (required works) and keep the facility open for residents and visitors. 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report identifies current issues at Sheerness Paddling Pool following the commission of a condition survey and looks at the options to resolve them.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Paddling Pool is located on Swale Borough Council land at Beachfields Park, in between the back of the Sheppey Healthy Living Centre and the sea wall. It was largely refurbished in 2002 at a cost of approximately £100k. Sure Start provided the majority of the funding for the refurbishment on the condition that on-going maintenance responsibility fell to the Council.
- 2.2 The site is very popular with residents given it is free to use and is extremely busy throughout the peak season.
- 2.3 In 2011, agreement was made under an annual memorandum of understanding (MOU) that the site would be 'managed' by Swale Community Leisure (SCL) and their operators Serco Leisure and would run until the end of the leisure centre contract period in 2019.

- 2.4 The MOU covers the main season from Easter bank holiday weekend until 30th September each year. It set out the responsibilities of SCL/Serco which included; start of season preparation and end of season closedown plus day to day maintenance, safety checks, testing and litter clearance. There was no responsibility to permanently supervise the site with a fixed member of staff but to undertake periodic inspections. The MOU was refreshed in 2015 to clear up on-going maintenance responsibilities. Serco would pay the first £500 of any works and anything above this figure would be discussed by both parties.
- 2.5 SCL/Serco have invested in the facility over that period especially in the condition of the pool plant. A large amount of staff time was needed to keep the pool running for the 2016 season, with technical staff needing to visit the plant room multiple times a day in order to keep the chemical dosing at the correct levels and ensure public safety. As a result they have stated it is no longer viable in the current condition for them to continue with the MOU.
- 2.6 A full condition survey of the site (see Appendix I for photos of the site) was commissioned. The report summarises the current condition and possible improvements along with costings. The main points can be seen below;
- Technology has moved on dramatically since its original installation in 2002. The system would not be compliant with today's standards but is not required to be removed at the current time.
 - The heavy usage at peak times puts a strain on the existing equipment. The landscaping of the site, whilst visually appealing, contributes to further issues with the pool filtration system. Grass and mud from the landscaping and the break-up of the flooring all contribute to blocking the chemical filters and putting water quality at risk.
 - The play equipment and street furniture (bins/benches) are old and require repair/replacement.
 - The safety surfacing around the pool is tired and some areas need urgent repairs.
 - The pool lining and suction grills are damaged and pose a risk to children landing on them.
- 2.7 A discussion with Serco maintenance operatives has prioritised the works that would need to be undertaken as a minimum if they were to continue with the operation of the facility and can be seen in table 1 below;

Table 1 – Suggested Works to Paddling Pool

Rectification	Estimated Cost	Priority
Remove natural grass on mounding and cover with suitable surface	£7000-10,000	Required

Add additional filters to the plant equipment	£2000	Required
Repairs to the damaged/unsafe safety surfacing (EDPM)	£2000	Required
Repair suction gratings	£1000	Required
Pool liner repairs	£4000	Required
Repairs to playground equipment	£2000	Required
Replace two pumps in plant room	£1500	Required
	£22,500	
Review ventilation in plant room	TBC – SCL/Serco to investigate	Optional
Removal of inoperable water features	£5000	Optional
Resurface the worst quarter of safety surfacing (EDPM)	£20,000	Optional
Full replacement of pool plant system	£25,000	Optional

- 2.8 Assuming the ‘required’ works were done, SCL/Serco have suggested they would continue with the service. The MOU with SCL and Serco would need renegotiation on an annual basis up until the end of the leisure contract in September 2019.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 To approve funding of up to £22,500 for upgrading the plant, water features and surfacing as detailed in section 2.7 (required works) and keep the facility open for the benefit of residents and visitors.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 That the paddling pool is decommissioned immediately. Considerations would need to be made on how to make the area safe and it is estimated this will incur similar costs to the required repairs. This is not recommended at the current time as it is likely to impact on the Council’s reputation, being unpopular with residents given its regular usage as a free to use community facility.
- 4.2 To leave the facility as it currently is and the Council re-assume operational responsibility. This is not feasible as it may endanger members of the public and there is no obvious staffing structure to draw on to deliver this.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 No consultation with the public has been held.
- 5.2 The Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs, Cabinet Member for Housing and Well-Being and ward members of the area have been informed of the current situation.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>A borough to be proud of – protect and improve the natural and built environments</p> <p>A community to be proud of – encourage active communities and improve health.</p> <p>A Council to be proud of – improve residents’ perceptions.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The site does not incur regular costs for the Council under the arrangement with SCL/Serco.</p> <p>There is currently no budget allocated for replacement or repairs and maintenance relating to the pool. Funding would need to be taken from reserves. The playground equipment could be repaired via the existing playground maintenance budget.</p> <p>Some expenditure will be required to decommission the site and make safe. This is estimated to be in region of £15,000</p>
Legal and Statutory	<p>Provision of leisure facilities is a discretionary service.</p> <p>All swimming/paddling pools need to comply with the standards set out in the HSE document Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools, 2003.</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>As well as the operational/technical issues, SBC receives regular reports of anti-social behaviour exacerbated by the fact the paddling pool is hidden behind the leisure centre building and is unsupervised. This comes from general litter, vandalism of the equipment, shouting and swearing, the drinking of alcohol within the fenced area during the daytime and the misuse of the site after dark. If agreed, regular inspections by SCL/Serco as part of the continued MOU will mitigate some of this.</p>
Sustainability	<p>Old pool plant systems use more energy and are less efficient than current ones. Repair or replacement of the system would improve sustainability.</p>

Health and Wellbeing	The facility is used by local residents and tourists. It contributes to the health and well-being of users by providing children a chance to swim and exercise. It is a community facility which encourages social interaction.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The site is fenced off but at a low level and therefore some risk is associated. The current water treatment system is hard to use and unreliable. The surfacing, play equipment and street furniture is old and therefore is higher risk. An accident was recorded at the site in 2016 with a child falling through a bench slat and hurting an ankle and so repairs/replacement will reduce the likelihood of re-occurrence.
Equality and Diversity	The facility is a free to use service which caters for all residents. Access is suitable for all abilities. Removal of the facility will impact on this.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I – Pictures of current condition of the site

8 Background Papers

8.1 None

Appendix I – Photos of current site condition

