

Report to Cabinet
REPLACEMENT SWIMMING POOL - WITHAM

Agenda Item 6c

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Background Papers:- Braintree District Council Cabinet Report, 1st December 2008
Cabinet Minutes, 1st December 2008

Financial Implications:- Capital programme. Will be the subject of future reports.

Equalities Implications:- None

Legal Implications:- Contractual issues will arise with Essex County Council, the Academies Enterprise Trust and leisure service providers

Options: To secure a replacement swimming pool for Witham

Risks:

- 1) Capital and Revenue Costs (yet to be determined).
- 2) Deteriorating condition of current facilities (Bramston Sport Centre) and associated costs of maintenance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a Cabinet meeting held at Causeway House on the 1st December 2008, Council decided to commit to work with the Academies Enterprise Trust and Essex County Council with a view to securing a replacement swimming pool for Witham, to replace the existing pool at Bramston Sports Centre.

Work will now need to proceed very quickly to ensure that full consultation can take place and a planning application submitted in a few months time in order to meet the September 2011 target date.

A Programme Board has recently been established to oversee the work carried out on the Three Towns – One Vision project. It is being suggested that the work of the Board could include the Witham replacement pool project.

DECISION

- a) That Cabinet agrees to include the Witham replacement swimming pool in the work of the Three Towns – One Vision Programme Board.
- b) The Cabinet agree that costs be incurred from the Capital Programme to produce design options and indicative costs.

BACKGROUND

Witham Swimming Provision:

Essential structural works on the existing Bramston Sports Centre swimming pool, which was opened to the public in 1974, were satisfactorily completed in December 2008 after a six week closure period. Consultant engineers have indicated to Council that the main structure of the pool hall should remain secure for at least a further 5 years.

Members will be aware that Maltings Academy (sport specialism) and the New Rickstones Academy (performing arts specialism) are planning to replace their existing educational facilities, located in Spinks Lane and Conrad Road, Witham, by September 2011. We understand this capital investment in new educational facilities in Witham is in the region of £60m.

Braintree District Council Cabinet agreed in December 2008 to hold early discussions with the Academies Enterprise Trust and Essex County Council regarding the re-provision of leisure facilities in Witham.

The new build programme proposed by the Trust did not initially include provision for a swimming pool. Consequently Council has decided, with the support of Essex County Council and the Academies Enterprise Trust, to actively participate in the project with a view to including a swimming pool at one of the sites as part of the overall project. The District Council has since joined the Design User Group, which has responsibility for delivering the new build project, and is represented on that group by the Council's Head of Enterprise, Culture & Leisure.

The Academies Enterprise Trust has appointed design consultants for the project, and we understand that formal planning applications for both sites will be presented in July 2009 for determination by the District Council. A decision has yet to be made on the location of the replacement pool or the detailed design of the new provision.

It is proposed to present a number of indicative cost and design options for a replacement pool for Cabinet consideration and decision as early as possible, to enable the project to progress.

For information purpose, the existing Witham swimming pool at Bramston Sports Centre has 6 lanes, a diving pool and learner pool; the Halstead pool has 5 lanes and a learner pool; and the new Braintree Swimming Centre has 8 lanes and a learner/fun pool.

Three Towns – One Vision Programme Board:

The Council's Corporate Strategy for 2008-2012 has identified the regeneration of parts of Witham, Braintree and Halstead by 2012 as a key priority. Developing regeneration plans for each of the towns is a high priority action in the Council's Corporate Action Plan for 2008/09.

The aim of the Strategy is to act as a catalyst to stimulate new developments: bringing modern community facilities, commercial premises and new homes into the town centres: improving the attractiveness for shoppers, visitors and residents alike. Proposals like these will produce a beneficial ripple effect into neighboring areas, encouraging new investment for a better future.

The Programme Board has specific responsibilities for.....

- Budget Approval
- Approval of Strategy

- Communication.
- Delivery of Benefits & Efficiencies
- Programme Change Approval
- Facilitate widespread visibility and support for the Programme
- Act as resolution point for project/programme critical issues
- Ensures that the rationale behind the project is in line with BDC strategic objectives

It seems appropriate that the Witham replacement swimming pool project be included in the work of the existing Programme Board.