

Minutes

**Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Finance,
Property and Business Services
Wednesday, 21 June 2017
Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Jonathan Bianco (Chairman)</p> <p>Officers Present: Michael Naughton, Manager, Capital Programme and Planned Works Paul Richards, Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer</p>
1.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
2.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member confirmed that the meeting would take place in public.</p>
3.	<p>FORMER YIEWSLEY POOL SITE - PETITION TO THE COUNCIL</p> <p>Councillors Peter Davis, Janet Duncan, Ian Edwards and Jan Sweeting attended the meeting.</p> <p>In accordance with the Council's constitution, the lead petitioner addressed the meeting in support of the petition and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were 761 signatures from residents in and around Yiewsley supporting the petition to open a new pool on the former Yiewsley Pool site, and 567 signatures on an e-petition submitted for the same cause.• The petitioners argued that a proper consultation had not been carried out with the local residents, and there was no evidence of consultation in the officer's report.• The Council could have placed information on the proposals in Hillingdon People and advertised a consultation through the magazine, including asking residents if they want a new swimming pool on the site.• The site was proposed to become a Health Centre, but this did not materialise and therefore an electoral pledge was broken by the Council.• The petitioner argued that the Council may be in breach of its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010; specifically section 149, which created the public sector equality duty. It was argued that elderly people and disabled people in the local area have most difficulty getting to other swimming pools in the

borough and they are more disadvantaged than the 'average' resident.

- Local residents in Hillingdon need to be persuaded to keep fit, but people lack motivation and a long bus journey to a neighbouring swimming pool will not encourage people in the area to improve their fitness.
- Did the Council consult with local schools? These schools now need to pay for coaches to take pupils to neighbouring pools after the closure of Yiewsley swimming pool.
- There must be proper financial costings to be calculated for a new swimming pool on the site in Yiewsley, and the report does not cite the capital cost of a new pool and projected revenue from running it. These costings should be calculated in the report for residents to view.

Local residents who supported the petition also expressed the following views:

- A gym may address health issues for adults in the borough, but investment was required for children's facilities.
- The importance of learning swimming for both adults and children adds weight to the case for a swimming pool. Would it be possible to have both a gym and a swimming pool at the site?
- Swimming provides a full-body workout and is cheaper than the gym, providing an excellent exercise for residents.
- Money has been allocated to other projects such as the pool in Botwell and Battle of Britain visitors' centre, and could be re-allocated to a pool in Yiewsley. More consultation is required to see what the local residents want, and local public feeling is underestimated.
- Good parking facilities are already in place in Yiewsley, and a replacement pool would be an excellent provision for children and disabled people. A gym doesn't cover everyone's needs.
- Could corporate advertising be used to help support a development that also included a pool in the leisure development?

Councillor Edwards addressed the hearing and confirmed that he understood the residents' request for a new pool and that having a local swimming pool is an advantage of the local community. However, he commented that there were new pools built nearby, and it took under half an hour to reach the pool at Botwell. Councillor Edwards stated that the journey could act as a barrier for some, and understood that St Matthews Primary School uses Uxbridge Leisure Centre's pool at the cost of coaches. There was, however, a desire to improve access to facilities within the Council. Additionally, more local residents use a gym than a swimming pool, and along with a library to improve learning, and the additional supported housing and discounted housing for first-time buyers, it was his belief that there was a greater demand for these facilities than a swimming pool.

Councillor Davis commented that over 700 people signed the petition, and if there was a failure to consult with local residents, then the Council should give credence to this. It was noted that the NHS backed out of the proposed Health Centre, and this has led to the site being empty for seven years. Councillor Davis noted that there

were pros and cons to both sides of the argument, but it was important to put the residents first and keep council tax down with the severe financial restraints the Council were dealing with.

Councillor Sweeting commented that the site has been dormant for seven years and a pool is missed by local children including pupils of St Matthews School and families on limited means. The Yiewsley pool was the only sports facility in the local area, and with an increase in residents and Council Tax income, more infrastructure is required for the rising population. Councillor Sweeting confirmed that the current proposal had worthy elements, but required further consultation.

Councillor Duncan stated that learning to swim is a life skill and very important to saving lives. It was noted that when the land came under public ownership it was to be used for "open walks and pleasure grounds", and while that use is no longer as relevant, the aim was for the site to be used by all and a swimming pool is the best option for that, as many residents can't afford to take their children elsewhere by public transport.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council was working hard to continue spending on facilities while also keen to help residents who need supported housing or wished to get on the housing ladder. Councillor Bianco stated that the previous pool was running at a loss and falling into disrepair, so it was not practical to be improved and required a complete rebuild or a different option.

Councillor Bianco thanked all those present for their contributions and noted that he would consult legal officers for their views on the impact of the Equality Act 2010 on the proposals.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that no decision would be taken at this point, and instead, he would consider the points raised with officers before making a final decision which would then be communicated to the Lead Petitioner in writing.