

CULLOMPTON SWIMMING POOL CAMPAIGN

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on Monday 5th October 2015 at the Hayridge, Cullompton

Present: Dave Haslett (Chair)
Lynne Read (Vice Chair/Treasurer)
Jenny Penharris (Secretary)
Mary Christie
Lynn Craddock
Heather Crispin
Roy Gould
Cathy Penharris
Meryle Staddon

Also in Attendance:

Steve Eastland (architect), Steve Eastland Design Ltd
Flic Hart, Steve Eastland Design Ltd.

Objective

To study the Draft Option Appraisal Report for the siting of the proposed Cullompton Community Swimming Pool, to evaluate the pros and cons of the Padbrook Park site and the greenfield site (Bayne Land) in the Cullompton North-West Extension, and to make a final decision on the site with the best potential.

The appraisal report was circulated to committee members ahead of the meeting.

The pool must meet the needs of Sport England, as well as the health and safety requirements specific to swimming pools.

Padbrook Park

Pros

1. Building already in place and ready for use.
2. Already used for sports facilities and has planning for recreation.
3. Parking facilities.
4. On a public transport route.
5. Possibility of a pedestrian footbridge from Swallow Way to improve access (not yet discussed with site owners). DCC Highways have indicated that a proposal would be accepted.

Cons

1. Only available as leasehold property. This could be challenged by funders as Padbrook Park is a commercial concern.
2. The conditions of the lease would limit any profits; we would not be permitted to sell food and drink.
3. The site is in Flood Zone 2/3 which would make us vulnerable due to the chemicals being used. This would result in higher insurance costs, and the planning application for a swimming pool may be refused.
4. There is no room for future expansion if the pool is successful. In order to accommodate a 25 metre pool and learner pool with a 5 metre surround (as required by Sport England) we would need to extend the rear of the building by 6 – 7 meters. We cannot build within 6 metres of the high pressure water main at the rear of the building. We would need to go right up to this limit, and even then it would be a tight fit.
5. A 20 metre pool (with learner pool) would still require the building to be extended. It would not be suitable for training, regional galas, etc, so we would lose out on income there. It would only be a basic community pool and we would be unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to cover the running costs.
6. There is no room for a hydrotherapy pool. Even if the hydrotherapy pool was combined with the learner pool there is no room for separate, private changing facilities for disabled users adjacent to the pool, which has been stated as a requirement by potential users. The hydrotherapy pool will be one of the primary sources of income and will subsidise the cost of running the main pool. Sustainability will be difficult/impossible without it.
7. The existing structure (steel frame) would need to be exposed during construction and protected against the harsh swimming pool environment. There would be high ongoing maintenance costs. The pool would be out of action whenever maintenance work was carried out on the structure. Even with proper maintenance, some steel-framed buildings housing swimming pools have become structurally unsound after 20 years.
8. External maintenance would be outside of our control, and we may be liable for a portion of the costs.
9. There is limited space for public viewing and seating, but potential users have listed this as one of their primary requirements.
10. Padbrook Park is a destination site. There is no passing trade.
11. We would struggle to get funding as there is no financial incentive from development.

Greenfield Site (Bayne Land)

Pros

1. Can easily support the size of pool(s) we would like, complete with all ancillary facilities.
2. Room for future expansion – 1.2 acres is available.
3. We could have a wider main pool – 5 lanes or more (though there is a cost implication).
4. The site is the best location on the land.
5. Adjacent to the new north-western relief road, so there will be passing trade.
6. Good link to local residents, on a public transport route, close to the new primary school, within easy walking distance of the health centre. Plans are in place for footpaths and a cycle path.
7. The building can be constructed to high environmental standards and with a timber frame, which will resist corrosion and would mean lower running/maintenance costs.
8. The land is available (freehold) at no cost.
9. No flood risk – it is well outside the flood zone.
10. S106 and landowner funding when combined with match funding could reach the funding goal.
11. No restrictions on retail. Could incorporate a café, shop and other facilities which would generate extra revenue.
12. The land promoter will work with the architect, landowner and developers to make it happen.

Cons

1. Uncertainty that the development will proceed exactly as indicated. The site will not be ready for 3 years. No slippage time is expected, but we will have to be prepared for it.
2. Would we get support from planners?
3. Unsure whether parking spaces will be provided or we will have to provide them ourselves at extra cost.
4. Building cost will be at least 20% higher than at Padbrook Park, mainly because it is larger.

Comments

Annual running costs would be in the region of £120,000. This includes some employed staff, but we would also need to use volunteers. It also includes an allowance for maintenance. Boilers (if used) would need servicing and eventually replacing.

Whichever site we choose must be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan.

There are no national guidelines for hydrotherapy pools, but this is currently being addressed.

The NHS would be unable to pay to use the hydrotherapy pool, but private organisations and the general public would be charged. Our research indicates that demand is likely to be high.

The hydrotherapy pool can also double as a second learner pool, as school use is likely to be high. It could also be used as a spa and hired out for parties, etc.

At a future date we will need to consider how we want to use the facilities. For example, if the pool was used for galas and regional competitions we would gain extra revenue, but the pool would be closed to the public for that period, which may lead to criticism unless it can be managed. We would also need to provide sufficient spectator areas. Schools have expressed an interest in holding competitions and galas but only during school hours, so there would be less of an impact on public usage.

Conclusion

Steve Eastland and Flic Hart left the meeting.

It was felt that Padbrook Park was not a viable site for the pool as the building was unsuitable in terms of size and structure, there was no room for future expansion, and there were doubts about the flood risk, planning and funding.

In addition, it was felt that that a pool at Padbrook Park would be unlikely to be financially sustainable. There were retail limitations imposed on us (particularly lack of income from the food and drink side), and insufficient opportunities to generate further revenue (particularly from hydrotherapy).

A proposal was made that based on the information provided by the architect, and after considering the pros and cons of each site, we should accept the offer of the greenfield site (Bayne Land) in the north-west extension.

Proposed: Lynne Read

Seconded: Lynn Craddock

Unanimous vote in favour

Actions

A letter to be sent to the owners of Padbrook Park informing them that we no longer wish to pursue the site for the Cullompton Community Swimming Pool, and outlining the reasons as discussed above.

A letter to be sent to the land promoter for the north-west extension informing him that we wish to proceed with the offer of the site at Bayne Land.