

## 7. SUBURBAN SWIMMING POOLS REVIEW

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager Community Services
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Recreation Facilities Manager
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek adoption by the Council of the recommendations of the Suburban Swimming Pools Review, May 2005.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Officers have reviewed the provision and operation of the Council's five small outdoor suburban swimming pools, Woolston, Edgeware, Papanui, Belfast and Templeton. This has resulted in a strong justification for change that is detailed in the review document (attached) and summarised in this report. If the changes detailed in the review are adopted by the Council there would be significant increases in levels of service at Edgeware, Belfast and Templeton Pools. Woolston Pool would alter its focus to become a dedicated school pool. Papanui Pool would be decommissioned.

### FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. None. All proposed changes are within existing budgets. Any savings from reducing services at Papanui or Woolston will be used to increase services at Templeton, Belfast and Edgeware.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Decommissions the Papanui Pool.
- (b) Opens the Woolston Pool to structured school or club swimming groups only.
- (c) Grants the Council's Recreation Facilities Manager delegated power to decide when to collect pool entry fees at the Edgeware, Belfast and Templeton outdoor swimming pools.
- (d) Supports the swimming pool management initiatives summarised in Table 1 of this report.

## BACKGROUND ON THE SUBURBAN SWIMMING POOLS REVIEW

4. The review covers the Woolston, Edgware, Papanui, Belfast and Templeton outdoor pools only. The purpose of the review is to:
- identify whether there is sufficient reason to change the level of service at the suburban pools;
  - to identify options and recommend changes necessary to best fulfil the Council's goal/s in respect of suburban pools.

The review concentrates on what the Council is trying to achieve from its suburban pools rather than what particular set of "bricks and mortar" it chooses to maintain. The Council's goals in respect of pools are participation, accessibility, healthy lifestyles, education, active recreation and fun; not building maintenance. The pool is only the means to achieving the goal.

The rationale for change is summarised below and detailed in section five of the attached review document:

- Suburban pool public operating seasons are now 50 days (seven weeks) and shrinking, owing to resource constraints.
- Pools are not accessible to schools or open to the public in February, the warmest month.
- Attendance is dropping owing to user preference and climatic change.
- Non controllable costs are rising, such as energy and maintenance.
- Some pools are in a very poor physical condition and will fail e.g. Papanui.
- Cost of providing a swim is growing, (30 times higher than some other Council pools).
- Almost all user groups and two community boards have called for change.

If change is not planned it will be imposed at short notice, again, by pool failure or lack of resources.

## OPTIONS

5. Four options are summarised below and detailed in section six of the attached review. They are:
- 5.1 Retain current length of season
  - 5.2 Increase the financial resource
  - 5.3 Change levels of service between pools according to need
  - 5.4 Retain the status quo

Options 5.1 to 5.3 require changes to the way the Council manages its suburban pools and these are summarised in Table 1 below.

Change	Justification	Drawback
Suburban pools will not be open some or all public holidays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save on expensive holiday pay costs</li> <li>• Best time for family visits to other pools, easy to advertise</li> <li>• Families do not tend to use suburban pools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand on facilities on fine days</li> <li>• Pools not open on holidays</li> </ul>
Schools will be given the option of not hiring a lifeguard for schools-only sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are well equipped to supervise children</li> <li>• Schools have option to hire lifeguard</li> <li>• Schools can manage risk</li> <li>• Saves schools \$\$\$</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional risk for schools (not for the Council to manage)</li> </ul>
One lifeguard on duty on some low use public sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better use of resources</li> <li>• Improved supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal safety risk to staff</li> <li>• Risks of unpredicted increase in use</li> </ul>

Change	Justification	Drawback
RFU will have the delegated authority to decide not to collect the entry fee where doing so will compromise supervision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue is minimal</li> <li>• Costs more to collect than its worth</li> <li>• May increase patronage</li> <li>• Target lower socio economic groups</li> <li>• Less risk of robbery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devalue service</li> <li>• Precedent for others</li> </ul>
The pools will be closed on bad weather days when under 15 people would visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A system would be managed through the Customer Call Centre to advise closures</li> <li>• Cost savings</li> <li>• Why open when no users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs careful management</li> <li>• Inconvenient for bad weather swimmers.</li> </ul>
Reaffirm that maintenance levels are managed to focus on keeping pools operational rather than preserved into the long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is current practice</li> <li>• Limits the resource needed</li> <li>• Keeps pools open</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban pools will not exist in their current format in the long term.</li> </ul>

### 5.1 Retain current length of season

This involves providing 2004/05 length of season (50 days) at each suburban pool with existing resources and using changed management practices to offset increased energy, HR and some maintenance costs.

#### **Advantages:**

This option keeps present systems going in the face of increased costs:

- No reduction to 2004/05 length of season.
- No increase in the cost of service.
- Increased costs managed within current budget.
- All five suburban pools operating for the public.

#### **Disadvantages:**

This option does not address many of the major concerns detailed in section four of this report. It is more of the same, perpetuating inefficiencies and a departure from industry best practice.

- Sustainability of all suburban pools is put at risk as they will not increase their operating season or address pressing maintenance issues.
- The pools will not be open to schools in February unless they hire the pool at considerable cost.<sup>10</sup>
- Pools will still be competing with each other for business.

### 5.2 Increase financial resource

Extend the season at all suburban pools from 50 to 75 days (open February) using \$44,000 of additional funding and changed management practices.

#### **Advantages:**

- Increased level of service.
- All five suburban pools open to the public.
- Pools accessible to schools and the public in February.

<sup>10</sup> For example a one month programme by Templeton School cost \$5,700 in 2005.

**Disadvantages:**

This scenario was rejected by the Council and the Community and Leisure Committee in February/March 2004.<sup>11</sup> It is seen as throwing more money at a problem without fixing it.

- Sustainability of some suburban pools is put at risk as pressing maintenance issues will not be addressed.
- Pools will still be competing with each other for business.
- Will require increased resources with no budgetary provision.
- Council may be seen as choosing to spend more money rather than confronting and managing fundamental issues.

**5.3 Change levels of service between pools according to need**

Provide different levels of service at each facility, according to need, to maximise the fulfilment of community outcomes. This will be done from a city-wide perspective without increasing the financial cost to the community. Changes involve significant increases to levels of service at Edgware, Belfast and Templeton Pools. Woolston Pool would alter its focus to become a dedicated school pool. Papanui Pool would be decommissioned. Changes are summarised in Table 2, below.

This option also involves changes to management practices outlined in Table 1 of this report.

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<sup>11</sup> The decision included the suburban pools into the scope of the Aquatic Facilities Strategy and an accompanying proposal to increase funding by \$35,000 to maintain season duration did not proceed.

Table 2: Changes to levels of Service at Suburban Pools								
Pool	Public users 04/05	\$ / user 04/05	Asset condition	<sup>12</sup> User experience	Distance to O/D pool <sup>13</sup>	Current level of service	Proposed level of service	Justification
<b>Edgware</b>	3,070	\$16.49	3	8	4 km	50 Days Mid Dec & Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>91 Days</li> <li>Dec, Jan &amp; Feb</li> <li>Hot showers</li> <li>Later closing (6.30 pm)</li> <li>Enhanced programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most popular suburban pool, close to town, committed user groups</li> <li>Better facilities, deep water</li> <li>Potential to grow</li> <li>Edgware asset condition can be managed if Papanui is decommissioned</li> </ul>
<b>Belfast</b>	1,234	\$25.04	6	5	4 km	50 Days Mid Dec & Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>77 Days</li> <li>Mid Dec, Jan &amp; Feb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant distance to other facilities</li> <li>Asset in reasonable condition</li> </ul>
<b>Templeton</b>	1,490	\$20.17	6	6	7 km	50 Days Mid Dec & Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>63 Days</li> <li>Jan &amp; Feb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong support from school</li> <li>Asset in reasonable condition</li> <li>Large distance to other pools</li> <li>Pleasant semi rural environment</li> </ul>
<b>Woolston</b>	985	\$37.57	8	1	1.7 km	50 Days Mid Dec & Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Feb to mid Mar</li> <li>Schools use only</li> <li>CCC maintain asset and water</li> <li>School open &amp; clean</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 1.7 km to Waltham outdoor pool</li> <li>Pool has no heating, not used by public</li> <li>Asset condition is good and close proximity to school lends itself to school pool use</li> <li>Very low cost to operate as school pool</li> <li>User charge reflects schools contribution</li> </ul>
<b>Papanui</b>	1,221	\$25.46	1	2	4 km	50 Days Mid Dec & Jan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pool decommissioned</li> <li>School assisted to find other pool time.</li> <li>Swim club moves to Edgware or Belfast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very low public use</li> <li>Asset in a poor condition in all areas</li> <li>Close proximity to Edgware and Belfast pools</li> <li>High heating and maintenance costs and an unpredictable plant so not suitable as a school pool</li> <li>Only one major user, Papanui School</li> <li>Poor facilities, main pool too shallow</li> </ul>
			<b>NOTE:</b> Scores out of 10, lower scores indicate a least favourable scenario					

**Advantages:**

<sup>12</sup> Customer service potential based on facilities offered and condition of asset.

<sup>13</sup> Distance as at 1 May 2005 ie before any of the review recommendations are actioned.

This is a genuine attempt to think outside the square, to address the issues in a sustainable manner. There is a hard decision in respect of Papanui Pool but the logic behind it is sound. This option is the best in getting maximum value from the suburban pools in the medium term.

- Overall increase of 30 operational days on 2004/2005 levels of service.
- Three pools have substantial increases in service at no additional cost to the Council.
- No increase in the cost of service.
- Increased costs managed within current budget.
- Substantial flexibility in season length.
- Four pools open to schools in February; three pools open over the school holidays.
- Keeps a suite of outdoor pools open as equally spaced as possible throughout the city.
- Allows for additional investment and programming at the pools that can best justify it.
- Identifies and manages additional risk.
- Uses finite maintenance resources in a sustainable fashion, i.e. funds previously allocated to Papanui will be used to preserve Edgeware.
- This option proactively manages a pool decommission rather than waits for an unscheduled asset failure.

***Disadvantages:***

The principal disadvantage is that the general public will not be able to access an outdoor pool at Papanui, as they have in the past.

- Reduced levels of service at Papanui and Woolston Pools.
- Papanui School and Swim Club will need to be relocated.

**5.4 Retain the status quo**

This involves maintaining the current philosophy of providing similar levels of service at each facility. Owing to increased costs beyond Council's control the season will probably shrink.

***Advantages:***

- No changes.

***Disadvantages:***

- The rationale for change outlined in section 4 of this report is ignored.
- Instead of managing change there is a probability that change will be imposed without warning by asset failure or increase costs.
- Owing to increased costs the pool season will shrink further.
- Ineffective use of Council resources.

**PREFERRED OPTION**

6. The preferred option is option 5.3, **change levels of service between pools according to need** and the changed management practices outlined in Table 1. This was supported by the Creating Stronger Communities Portfolio Group and the Council seminar subject to consultation with affected parties. The subsequent consultation process run through April 2005 has supported option 5.3. This is detailed in section eight of the attached review.

## ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

7. Table 3 evaluates each option presented in this report in terms of:

- the extent of fulfilment of Council's goal for suburban pools,
- the extent to which the principles driving the review are satisfied,
- the degree to which the rationale for change is met, and
- any publicity considerations.

<b>Table 3: Evaluation of Options</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Options</b>			
	<b>Retain Current Length of Season</b>	<b>Increase the Financial Resource</b>	<b>Change Levels of Service Between Pools</b>	<b>Retain the Status Quo</b>
<b>Councils Goal for Suburban Pools</b>				
Maximising fulfilment of community outcomes through the sustainability of the facility and level of participation.	3	2	7	2
<b>Principles Driving the Review and Rationale for Change</b>				
No additional cost of service.	7	0	7	7
Sustainability, condition of the asset.	3	2	6	2
Another pool in appropriately close proximity.	7	7	4	7
Pool services are available to schools in February.	2	7	7	2
Any risks are identified, accepted and appropriately managed.	5	2	8	2
Suburban pools compliment not compete with other pool provision.	4	4	8	4
<b>Other Rationale for Change</b>				
Adverse publicity reaction for the changes.	6	2	6	7
Adverse publicity reaction for not changing.	2	5	7	2
<b>Totals<sup>14</sup></b>	<b>39/90</b>	<b>31/90</b>	<b>60/90</b>	<b>33/90</b>

Note: Additional assessment processes are detailed in the attached review in section seven.

<sup>14</sup> Each marked out of 10, 1 being least favourable

<b>Significance:</b>		<b>High/ Medium/ Low</b>
<b>Impact on social, economic, environmental or cultural wellbeing.</b>	Positive impact as service levels grow overall	Low
<b>Impact on Council's capacity</b>	Positive as existing resources are better used to cater for more activity	Low
<b>Alignment with the LTCCP or Annual Plan</b>	Aligned	Low
<b>Expenditure Required and magnitude of the decision in terms of its net cost to the Council.</b>	No additional cost to Council, potential long term saving in maintenance costs	Low
<b>Potential Effects radically different</b>	Totally quantifiable effects in a tight framework	Low
<b>Degree of controversy</b>	Low outside the limited user groups and possibly the local community, higher for those affected  User groups and the respective pool communities have supported the review findings  Strong community support  In the Shirley Papanui area two out of three pools have a substantial increase in service.	Low
<b>Reversibility of the decision.</b>	Decommissioned pool can be recommissioned, i.e. no demolition, schools only pool can be opened to public	Low
<b>Certainty of information.</b>	Purely factual information where necessary verified by an independent engineer	Low
<b>Impact on Strategic Assets</b>	None	Low
<b>Change to mode of delivery of a Group of Activities.</b>	Very small, affects 0.062% of users to Council funded pools	Low
<b>Change to level of service of a Group of Activities.</b>	Positive change to levels of service overall at suburban pools	Low
<b>If this is a <u>significant decision in relation to land or a body of water</u>, how does it take account of the relationship of Māori to ancestral land, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga?</b>	No	N/A
<b>Any other relevant matters</b>	Needs of specific pool user groups will be addressed	Low
<b>Should the proposal be decided through LTCCP (or amendment)?</b>	No	N/A



#### IEWS OF AFFECTED AND INTERESTED PARTIES

<b>What research, communication or consultation has been undertaken? (including considering information already held by the Council)</b>	Extensive research and consultation as prescribed by Council seminar 23 March Consultation with all pool user groups of the past two years
<b>What was done to encourage interested or affected persons to present their views?</b>	All affected parties identified and individually consulted and invited to meetings
<b>What consideration has been given to community views on this matter?</b>	As directed priority was given to the affected communities
<b>What opportunities were Maori given to contribute to the proposed decision?</b>	N/A
<b>Is there a legal requirement to consult? What?</b>	No
<b>Is a Special Consultative Procedure Required Prior to Decision? Why</b>	No
<b>Must the decision be made through an LTCCP? Why?</b>	No

#### UNIT CONSULTATION

<b>Units Consulted</b>	<b>Comments on Proposal</b>
Research and Policy	Support, consistent with Council's Aquatic Facility Strategy process
Facility Assets	None
Community and Recreation	Supportive, advised to consult with affected communities, this was done