

34. **NOTICE OF MOTION 14 DECEMBER 2006 - OPENING OF SOCKBURN POOL FOR THE 2007/08 SUMMER SEASON**

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager Human Resources DDI 941-8548
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Unit Manager Recreation and Sports
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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the implications of opening the Sockburn Pool for the 2007/08 summer season following a notice of motion presented on 7 December 2006.

**BACKGROUND**

2. On 30 June 2006 Council adopted the Aquatic Facilities Plan (as amended by LTCCP decisions) as part of the LTCCP. This resulted in a number of outcomes including the refurbishment of Jellie Park, the closure of the Sockburn Pool and the triggering of the Council's process for managing surplus assets in relation to closed facilities. The timelines for closing, redeveloping and opening facilities are clearly defined in the Aquatic Facilities Plan in Table 11 page 41.

3. Since 30 June 2006 officers have been following the Council's process for managing surplus assets. On 9 November a progress report was presented to the Council identifying two registrations of interest in the Sockburn site. The Council resolved that:

- “(b) That the Council endorse the process for addressing the future use of the Sockburn Pool and Recreation Centre site, including an evaluation of the proposals submitted by Mr Douglas Park and Canterbury Squash.*
- “(c) That the Council note that a final options report for the use of the land will be presented to the Council by April 2007, or earlier if possible.”*

4. On 7 December 2006 the Council received a notice of motion from Councillor Helen Broughton asking for a report on the implications of opening the Sockburn Pool for the 2007/08 season, as follows:

*“In view of the closure of Jellie Park Pool for 56 weeks from April 2007, that Sockburn Pool be reopened for the 2007/2008 summer season to provide additional capacity and the opportunity for the outdoor swimming for north west residents. A staff report is requested.”*

**Measures to Provide the Best Customer Service while Jellie Park is Closed**

5. Officers have undertaken to provide the best possible customer service whilst Jellie Park is being refurbished. Customers are very supportive of the refurbishment process and the majority accept the disruption the \$12m refurbishment will bring. They look forward to the opening. Officers will embark on a proactive marketing and promotions plan involving Councillors, demonstrating the commitment the Council has made to the future of Christchurch through the ongoing development of its network of aquatic, leisure and sporting facilities.
6. Officers have worked with consulting engineers and architects Powell Fenwick, Warren & Mahoney and Water Systems Ltd, to minimise the time Jellie Park is closed. Closure will be for one summer season only.
7. The closure of Jellie Park is needed because:
  - Closure will allow contractors to speed up construction, provide best value and minimum disruption to neighbours.
  - The scope of the development will involve relocating plant and construction of new dressing rooms etc, this will prohibit the operation of the outdoor pool.
  - The new indoor pool is so close to the outdoor pool that the health and safety risks of allowing public so close to a major construction site cannot be mitigated.
  - The Jellie Park site is built on a terrace of fill excavated from Memorial Avenue. It is not stable enough to open a summer pool immediately next door.

8. The Council has retained outdoor pools in the north and west at Belfast and Templeton to offer alternatives to Sockburn and cover whilst Jellie Park and Papanui are constructed.
9. Acting on the Council's decision of 30 June, officers have used some of the savings from the closure of Sockburn to improve facilities at the neighbouring Canterbury Christian College indoor pool for the purpose of accommodating schools and the general public. This is 3km from Sockburn. It will provide an alternative to Jellie Park and Sockburn but also strengthen the school's own ability to operate the pool rather than the Council providing the service at greater cost.
10. Officers have negotiated with the Wharenui Swim Club for better access and more programmes at the Wharenui pool and leisure centre. This is 2.5km from Sockburn and 3.5km from Jellie Park. This will strengthen the swim club's ability to operate the pool and provide much needed revenue. This is considered preferential to the Council providing the service. The Council has a duty to support such providers rather than compete.
11. Jellie Park customers have been surveyed to obtain their preferences. As a result services will be offered at Centennial, Pioneer, QEII, Wharenui and Canterbury Christian College. Groups such as schools have been contacted individually and alternative arrangements are being made.
12. Officers will negotiate with local schools to free up access to outdoor school pools during the 2007/08 season. (Not yet complete). This will result in a mini refurbishment of the school pool concerned allowing it to be sustainable into the future and is consistent with the Aquatic Facilities Plan.
13. Admission to Templeton and Belfast pools will be offered at no cost. Free days will be offered at other outdoor pools city wide to promote the outdoor pool experience. The 2007/08 season at Halswell Pool will be extended to accommodate displaced swim clubs, groups, schools and the public.

#### **Implications of Opening the Sockburn Pool for the 2007/08 Season**

##### **Financial and Legal Implications**

14. The opening of Sockburn Pool will be a change to levels of service in the LTCCP, this will require a LTCCP change and the appropriate community consultation. The Council's Aquatic Facilities Plan will need to be changed ahead of the scheduled 5 year review.
15. The Council's decision making process on the Sockburn site will need to be halted. There will be a need to rescind the Council's decision of 9 November and advise Mr Park and Canterbury Squash that the site will not be available for a further 18 months (minimum).
16. There is no funding in the LTCCP to operate, re-commission or maintain Sockburn Pool. The costs involved with repairing a pool the size of Sockburn and re-establishing all the operating processes for a period of 15 weeks in 2007/08 would not be good value for money. There is a distinct risk that the cost per swimmer will fall into the region that has justified Council closing other outdoor pools. The full cost of opening Sockburn Pool will need to be included in the LTCCP or an unbudgeted saving made on another service.

##### **Other Implications**

17. Sockburn Pool has remained dormant since March 5 2006. Following the Council's decision, asset maintenance has ceased. By Summer 2007 the pool will have been dormant for 18 months. If the pool is to be opened either continual maintenance throughout the closure period or a large expenditure before opening will be needed to allow the pool to operate to New Zealand Standard. The cost implications of this are considerable. Owing to the short timeframe required for this report the costs cannot be fully estimated.
18. There is no evidence that sufficient usage of Sockburn Pool will occur to justify opening, surveys indicate Jellie Park customers are generally happy to relocate to alternatives already identified or are happy to await the opening of the new facility.

19. Acting on decisions of the Council, officers are well advanced in the provision of alternatives and mitigating the effects of the closure of Jellie Park. The Council has incurred considerable expense in this process. This will be accompanied by a proactive communications and marketing campaign in the new year. A change in this process may impact adversely on other providers who have agreed to help. It may also cause customers and the wider community to question the integrity of the Council's planning process.
20. Even with Jellie Park closed Christchurch has a network of five outdoor pools unsurpassed in New Zealand. There are also 40 school pools and four indoor pools in the North and West of Christchurch. There are a further eight outdoor park paddling pools in the city. It is believed the aquatic facility network of Christchurch will have the capacity to meet summer outdoor pool needs of the community during the 2007/08 summer.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Note the measures planned and executed to date to provide appropriate facilities and customer service during the planned closure of Jellie Park.
- (b) Continue to implement the 2006-16 LTCCP with respect to the Sockburn Pool.