

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2017

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1

Roger Lightfoot to ask the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services:

Arthur Hill Pool

At the 31 October Policy Committee meeting I asked the Council to write to users of Arthur Hill Pool to tell them about the pool closure and was told that the Council would be doing this.

I understand that Reading Sport and Leisure Active members who pay their subscription by Direct Debit and who joined at Palmer Park but swim at Arthur Hill Pool have not been contacted by Reading Sport and Leisure with information about alternative swimming arrangements or been given the option of cancelling their Direct Debit.

Can you explain the reason for this and assure me that the Council will now contact this group of RSL members to advise them of their options now that Arthur Hill is shut?

REPLY by Councillor Gittings (Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services):

When people join the Council's membership scheme we record where they join and ask people to identify a "home site" so we can make people aware of any developments that may affect them.

All Members who pay a monthly fee who either took out their Active Membership with swimming at Arthur Hill or have Arthur Hill as their chosen home site have been offered access to Academy Sport Leisure Centre swimming pool as part of their existing membership. This offer was sent by way of letter to the home address of all these members.

Where we have received requests from other members who use Arthur Hill for swimming as part of their membership, we have extended their membership to include use of Academy Sports' swimming pool and we will of course continue to do so.

We have been mindful so as not to undermine or negatively affect the membership offer at Academy Sport Leisure Centre through this process. Academy Sport has a different and more expensive pricing structure for their membership packages.

We are of course grateful to Academy Sport for the ongoing cooperation allowing us to make facilities available to members who used Arthur Hill Swimming Pool.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2017

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2

Tina Kislingbury to ask the Lead Councillor for Health:

Mental Health Services

With an increased need for mental health support, the proposal to cease the funding for Reading Your Way would severely reduce the local support available and have a significant impact; as such, and to increase understanding of the important service we provide, we would like to ask Councillors if they can come and visit and meet with us at the Reading Your Way service?

REPLY by Councillor Hoskin (Lead Councillor for Health):

Thank you for your invitation. Whilst I cannot speak on behalf of my councillor colleagues I will be very happy to visit and meet the the Reading Your Way service. I have already stated publicly we, as a council, value the Reading Your Way service and the positive contribution it makes to many people's lives.

I would like to see an increase in investment in mental health services in Reading. Unfortunately, since 2010 the Conservative-led coalition government and now the Conservatives governing alone have cut Reading Borough Council's funding on an unprecedent scale. As a result we have had no choice but to make £65 million of savings since 2011 and face a funding gap of £42million by 2020.

Despite the challenge of massive cuts to council budgets, we are committed to protecting services available so that adults affected by mental health needs can access timely help and enjoy healthy and fulfilling lives.

People told us in July last year they were in support of a Recovery College style of service combined with access to support in a more informal way. The Compass Recovery College was launched on 1st September, and we are continuing to review how we can best complement that with other provision in a financially sustainable way.

We are running a 12 week consultation on proposed changes to Council funding for Reading Your Way. We are using this time to gather in views from those affected and explore how we could work with people who use services and other local partners differently in future to support people to develop personal resilience and strengthen their community connections.

As part of this consultation, the Council has visited Your Way twice so far to meet with people using this service and their families as well as staff and volunteers. The consultation remains open until 28 February and we will be reviewing the response level at the end of this month to ensure we've had sufficient engagement to make an informed decision about future funding.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2017

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services:

Arthur Hill Pool

Will the Lead Councillor join me in congratulating the Save Arthur Hill campaign on their progress so far including fundraising over £10,000 in just a few months towards reopening this much-loved swimming pool?

REPLY by Councillor Gittings (Lead Councillor for Culture, Sport and Consumer Services):

Thank you for your question Councillor White.

It would be churlish of me not to congratulate the activists and their supporters on their efforts to raise a significant amount of money and I commend anyone who takes such an active interest in their local community. I also fully understand why an old facility that has been in existence for over a hundred years generates such affection.

But....

My honest view is that this fundraising activity is misdirected in view of the Council's clear intent to provide a modern, fit for purpose replacement swimming facility in the near future at Palmer Park and the enormity of the task of raising the huge amount of money that would need to be invested to enable Arthur Hill Pool to be re-opened.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2017

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor White to ask the Leader of the Council:

Interim Managers and Consultants

Please can the Leader of the Council tell me the job titles of the top 10 highest-paid interim managers or consultants currently working for the Council, how much each currently earns and how long each has been working for the Council?

REPLY by Councillor Lovelock (Leader of the Council):

The information requested is in the table below. Plans are in place to commence permanent recruitment to the senior level posts of Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Care and Health Services. The Personnel Committee has met to appoint a specialist recruitment company to assist with the process. Steps are also being taken to address the use of interim workers and, where possible, convert these into permanent appointments.

Job Title	Directorate	Bill Rate	Start Date	Tenure as at 11/1/17
Interim Director of Finance	CSS	£960	03/10/2016	0 years, 3 months, 8 days
Transformation Manager	DACHS	£758	10/10/2016	0 years, 3 months, 1 days
Head of Adult Social Care	DACHS	£752	03/05/2016	0 years, 8 months, 8 days
Education Consultant	DCEEHS	£750	01/09/2016	0 years, 4 months, 10 days
Managing Director	CSS	£735	04/07/2016	0 years, 6 months, 7 days
Schools Partnership Advisor	DCEEHS	£730	04/11/2015	1 years, 2 months, 7 days
Head of Commissioning	DACHS	£730	04/01/2017	0 years, 0 months, 7 days
Service Manager SEN	DCEEHS	£633	16/05/2016	0 years, 7 months, 26 days
Service Manager YOS	DCEEHS	£632	04/01/2016	1 years, 0 months, 7 days
Service Manager CSC	DCEEHS	£625	04/08/2015	1 years, 5 months, 7 days

The rate quoted is the daily rate paid by the Council.

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 3

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Children's Services:

Children's Centres

With the Council currently consulting on devastating cuts to 9 out of the 13 children's centres in Reading, will the Lead Councillor commit to holding an extra consultation meeting at the Hamilton Road children's centre which is one of the buildings identified for total closure? This is because the next closest meeting is at Katesgrove Children's Centre, which many people will struggle to get to.

REPLY by Councillor Gavin (Lead Councillor for Children's Services):

Thank you, Councillor White, for your question.

The consultation on re-modelling our Children Centre offer was launched on January 4 2017 and will run for 12 weeks until March 29 2017. We are asking for the views of local families, centre staff, advisory boards, service providers and members of the public, on the proposed remodelling of Children's Centres, including considering alternative options that consultees may wish to suggest to meet the saving target of £400k.

The consultation documents are available on the Council's website, and in hard copy format at key locations (e.g. Children's Centres, Libraries) and at the Civic Offices. Leaflets and posters directing the public to the children's centre consultation information and the RBC webpage are being displayed in children's centres and venues and community centres across the Borough. We are also using social media to encourage participation in the consultation.

Reading currently has 13 Children's Centres organised into 5 clusters. These are North, East, South, West and West Central clusters. Each Cluster has an Advisory Board. We have organised five two-hour open public meetings, one in each of the current cluster hubs to provide a geographical spread across the town to maximise access. The dates of these are spread over the 12-week consultation period in order to maximise opportunities for participation. To remind colleagues the details are as follows:

West Central Hub:	Southcote Children's Centre 24 January 10am - 12pm
West Hub:	Ranikhet Children's Centre 10 February 11.30am - 1.30pm
South Hub:	Surestart Whitley Children's Centre 16 February 10am-12pm
North Hub:	Caversham Children's Centre 20 February 10am - 12pm
East Hub:	Katesgrove Children's Centre 1 March 10am - 12pm

We have asked each Cluster's Advisory Board to consider how best for them to feed the views of current users of our Children's Centres into the consultation feedback and to organise opportunities to gather the views of families using the current children's Centres, including Hamilton Road. I have committed to attending as many additional meetings organised by each Advisory Board as my diary permits.

We are working with RCVYS to organise and coordinate a discussion with voluntary sector partners, we are planning a specific statutory partner focus group and are also planning to offer a cluster by cluster focus group to schools and settings. We are also organising a number of targeted focus groups to ensure that the Council has considered impacts on, and sought input from families that may be particularly affected by the proposals. The aim of each of these will be to get feedback on our proposal and to discuss all alternatives to continue to deliver as full a programme as possible within the reduced budget available.

I hope Councillor White will agree that we are offering a wide range of opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute to this consultation and I re-iterate that if users of Hamilton Road Children's Centre, who are unable to attend any of the other meetings already advertised wish to organise an additional meeting with me at the Centre I will, of course meet with them.