
REPORT 3
(1215/52/IM)

FUTURE AQUATIC NEEDS RESEARCH

1. Purpose of Report

This report presents the results of the future aquatic needs of the city research undertaken by Simply Great Leisure Ltd (SGL) as requested by Council in the 2010/11 financial year. It also makes recommendations for consideration and in an effort to enhance our existing aquatic facilities and services across the city's network for the future

2. Executive Summary

Council agreed at its meeting on 25 June 2010 that planning and feasibility work be undertaken in respect of the future aquatic needs of the city, including a 25m, 10 lane, deep water pool at the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre (WRAC).

Following a tender process the SGL Group New Zealand Limited were engaged to undertake the research required to ascertain the future aquatic needs of the city.

Their report which is attached as Appendix 1 supports Council's current strategies of improving access to learn to swim, meeting the demands of aquatic sport and offers suggestions further investigation to get the most of existing facilities.

The report identifies WRAC as the preferred venue for the development of additional facilities for aquatic sport and puts forward a proposition for Council to consider two options:

- A short course (35m x 25m x 2.1m) water sports activity pool
- A long course (53m x 25m x 2.1m) water sports activity pool

In addition, the report also identifies opportunities to improve the current facilities with the aim of minimising the current operational costs such as: improvements to and development of further health & fitness facilities;

development of hydroslides; expanded food, beverage and merchandising services, and introduction of a loyalty membership scheme.

If adopted these recommendations will be used by officers to inform the future aquatic development plans within the city and, if approved after public consultation on the 2011/12 Annual Plan, a detailed report will be submitted to the Council on the feasibility of a new deep water facility at WRAC, for consideration within the 2012/22 Long Term Plan deliberations.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note that the initiatives for future development of aquatic facilities contained in this report be used by officers to inform and develop options for Council to consider in future planning activities.*
- 3. Note that, subject to adoption of the Draft Annual Plan 2011/12, Officers will present a detailed report to Council on the feasibility work for a new deep water facility for consideration within 2012/22 LTP deliberations.*

4. Background

4.1 Pressure on Pool Space

Wellington City Council swimming pools have been under growing pressure as a result of increasing demand particularly in respect of learn to swim and the needs of particular aquatic sports codes. The pressure has been exacerbated through the ongoing closure of school pools during the last decade and the closure of the pool at the Boys and Girls Institute that was located in Tasman Street.

In response to this growing pressure Council identified, through a discussion paper and workshop in June 2008, three aquatic priorities: making the most of existing pool space available; improving opportunities for aquatic education and learn to swim; and providing facilities to meet demand and growth in aquatic sports. Consideration of these priorities were constrained within the existing funding provided in the LTCCP for Aquatic Facility Upgrades

4.2 Community Facilities Policy

As part of the Community Facilities Policy, the Council, at its meeting of 11 December 2009 agreed in principle to respond to the three aquatic priorities identified. This included the reallocation of existing funding within the LTCCP for: the stage 1 upgrade of Keith Spry Pool, which included the provision of teaching/hydrotherapy pool and leisure water; installation of a teaching pool at

Karori Pool; construction of a dedicated hydrotherapy pool at WRAC; installation of a retractable roof at Thorndon Pool; renewal of the Tawa Pool roof; and a school pools partnership investment grant scheme.

In adopting the 2010/11 Annual Plan on 25 June 2010, Council approved the reallocation of existing funding for the above actions and included opex funding for planning and feasibility work to be undertaken in respect of the future aquatic needs of the city, including a 25m, 10 lane, deep water pool at WRAC.

Officers, through a tender process, awarded the planning and feasibility work to SGL Group New Zealand (Report attached as Appendix 1).

5. Discussion

5.1 Wellington Aquatic Facilities Plan

SGL undertook its development of an Aquatic Facilities Plan in four stages: Background Review; Research and Consultation; Redevelopment and New Development Opportunities and Options; and a Future Aquatic Facilities and Services Plan.

5.2 Background Review

This included a review of the project area population trends and took specific note of the place based planning projects currently being undertaken by WCC, the growth in population in central city apartments, and Council's urban development strategy.

The current aquatic facilities were also reviewed, looking at usage trends, financial performance along with the already planned facility improvements including the school pools partnership grants fund.

5.3 Research and Consultation

SGL reviewed all of the research undertaken previously by Council in its development of the LTCCP 2009-2019, the WCC Swimming Pools Discussion Paper of 2008, the recently adopted Community Facilities Policy and School Pool Partnerships.

In addition to this SGL also undertook a Resident Household Swimming Pool Survey in January 2011 where respondents were asked to provide information about current and future aquatic facilities and services, along with future priority facility components and activities.

Stakeholder interviews were also undertaken with active aquatic sports groups where all water sport codes were represented. These were held with specific reference to their own needs and desires for the development of their represented sports.

5.4 Redevelopment and New Development Opportunities and Options

The findings from SGL's study support Council's current strategy in respect of pools by prioritising improved opportunities for learn to swim, providing opportunities to meet the demands of aquatic sport, and making the most of the existing facilities and pool space.

In addition SGL recommends that this planning and implementation process be continued for recommending improvements and priorities in future planning activities. With particular reference to the needs of aquatic sport SGL have identified WRAC as the preferred site for any future development and recommend that two options be considered: a short course water sports activity/training pool or; a long course water sports activity training pool.

The case they make for such a development is based on the identified needs of local and regional aquatic sport, the current draft national swimming facilities strategy being developed by Swimming New Zealand, the lack of a fully FINA compliant pool in New Zealand, the need for a high performance development unit in the lower North Island; and the loss of QEII as a facility following the most recent Christchurch earthquake.

Their report also recognises that the development of such a facility would require more than WCC funding and therefore proposes that Council adopts a redevelopment strategy that could receive other levels of funding.

In making this recommendation SGL, in conjunction with Architecture HDT, have proved that either concept could be accommodated on the site, including the additional car parking that would likely be required through the resource consent process.

5.5 Future Aquatic Facilities and Services Plan

In addition to the recommended redevelopment of WRAC, SGL have also identified further opportunities to make the most of existing facilities.

These include:

- The further development of health and fitness facilities with extensions to those already in existence at WRAC and Freyberg and for further feasibility to be undertaken on the development of facilities at Karori and review of existing development proposals for the Keith Spray Pool.
- Youth Adventure Facilities (e.g. hydrosides) targeted specifically at the 15-29 years age group.
- Opportunities for expanded food, beverage and merchandising services to be reviewed.

- A Wellington Aquatic Leisure Card be developed to generate new revenue streams.
- Review opportunities to develop Khandallah Summer Pool into a modern family orientated water play area.
- Development of the upstairs club room at Tawa Pool to offer dry programmes such as gentle exercise for adults, yoga, tai-chi etc.
- Development/modernisation of the popular children's pool area at Tawa Pool.

These opportunities will be investigated further and presented to Council as part of future planning work.

5.3 Consultation and Engagement

In the completion of this report previous consultation undertaken through previous Annual Plan processes were considered with additional consultation and engagement being undertaken by way of telephone survey and aquatic stakeholder interviews within SGL's project.

It is anticipated that further community consultation and engagement will be undertaken as part of the next LTP programme.

5.4 Financial Considerations

Subject to Councils approval of 2011/12 Annual Plan, \$650,000 will be invested in the feasibility study for a new deep water facility.

5.5 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

There are no climate change impacts or considerations in respect of this report

5.6 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

This report recommends that the information contained within it be used to inform a potential deep water development at WRAC as part of 2012/22 LTP deliberations.

6. Conclusion

The report produced by SGL confirms and supports those priorities that Council has set for its aquatic facilities, namely: to improve access to learn to swim; meet the demands of aquatic sport; and to make the most of existing facilities. In addition it recommends that this strategy be continued when considering the future aquatic needs of the city.

SGL have identified WRAC as the best location for the development of a deep water pool to meet the needs of aquatic sport and that this should be considered to be a project of both regional and national significance to the various aquatic codes that use the facility.

Their report also identifies other opportunities that Council may wish to consider as part of its future planning to ensure that the aquatic needs of the city are met in the future and that the cost of delivering those facilities is off-set where possible.

Contact Officer: *Julian Todd, Manager Recreation Wellington*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The opportunities identified in this paper support the Council's policy of delivering recreation opportunities, facilities and programmes for residents and ratepayers of the city.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The swimming pools project is contained in the Council Plan # C034, CX055, CX056. The adoption of any of the opportunities identified in this paper is likely to lead to an increase in capital expenditure and changes to operational expenditure in future years.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are currently no Treaty of Waitangi considerations in respect of this paper.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The report sets out a number of options and reflects the views and preferences of those with an interest in this matter who have been consulted with.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Parties with a current interest in aquatic sport have been identified and consulted with as part of this work. Any of the opportunities identified in this paper, if acted upon, would form part of Council's Annual Planning process and so would be subject to full community consultation.

b) Consultation with Maori

Mana whenua have not been included in the development of this paper, but as (a) above would be consulted with as part of any decision to act on the opportunities identified.

6) Legal Implications

There are not known to be any legal implications in respect of this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report identifies certain opportunities which would be consistent with existing WCC policy.