
OUTCOMES OF THE SCHOOL POOL PARTNERSHIP FUNDING PROGRAMME

Purpose

1. To report back to the Committee on the outcomes of the school pool partnership programme funding and to advise the Committee on future investment in the programme.

Summary

2. In 2010 Council responded to the loss of school pool space across the city by reprioritising its investments to focus on learn to swim outcomes. Included in this was the establishment of a contestable fund for School Pool Partnerships with a value of \$2m to be allocated over 4 years.
3. The intention of this fund was to assist with the development of strategically located, sustainable school pool operations that would serve the wider community.
4. Seven school projects have been funded through this partnership arrangement across the city while council has also developed further learn to swim opportunities at three of its own pools. Three school projects and one Council pool project are yet to be completed.
5. Significant capacity exists within the Council pool network to deliver curriculum learn to swim and after school lessons, while further capacity will be available when these projects are completed.
6. The paper recommends that no further funding be allocated to the school pool partnership programme until the outcomes of the current investment have been measured over the next three years.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Community, Sport and Recreation Committee:

1. Receive the information.
2. Instruct officers to monitor the outcomes of the projects funded through the School Pool Partnership Fund over the next three years and report back on the need for future funding.

Background

7. A discussion paper on swimming pools was presented to Council in June 2008 which identified three priority areas:
 - Optimising the existing pool space available

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- Improving opportunities and access to learn to swim
 - Considering ways to meet the demand for more pool space for aquatic sports.
8. The Community Facilities Policy was approved in 2009 with Council agreeing on an implementation plan. For aquatic facilities this implementation plan included the reallocation of capital upgrade funding from Council swimming pools (in the 2009 to 2019 Long Term Plan) to fund the School Pools Partnership Programme.
 9. Initiatives included improving access for learn to swim through the Council pool network and the establishment of a School Pools Partnership Programme to support the existing school pools network throughout the city.
 10. Of concern at the time was the closure of the Girls & Boys Institute in Mount Cook and the continued loss of school pools across the city. Of the 83 schools in Wellington City only 22 still had a pool, with only 12 operational. This compared with 48 schools which had an operational pool prior to the introduction of the Tomorrows' Schools funding model in the early 1980's.
 11. These pool closures had placed increased pressure on the Councils pools to provide space, with the barriers to participation for schools including rising costs associated with transport to and from public facilities and importantly the amount of time spent out of the classroom. A 30 minute swimming lesson could take up to two hours when travel time is included.
 12. Council agreed that the retention of key school pools was important and that it had a role to play. Under the School Pool Partnership Fund applications for capital contributions would be considered. Schools would need to develop sustainable models and agree with programme deliverers to provide both school and public learn to swim programmes.
 13. A review of the current network of pools identified existing and potential gaps in pools for aquatic education. BECA Engineers also completed a condition assessment of all remaining school pools. It was estimated that costs to complete a comprehensive school pool network over a 10 year period was in the vicinity of \$6m. This level of funding was deemed not to be affordable within the re-allocation of existing LTP capital funding so subsequently, \$2.0m was re-allocated from existing Aquatic Facility Upgrades.
 14. Initially the fund was to operate over three years with \$0.5m in year 1, \$1m in year 2, and \$0.5m in year 3, however a further amendment spread the funding across 4 years at \$0.5m each year, with the 2013/14 year representing the final year of the partnership funding.

Discussion

15. The funding granted in the four rounds is shown in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows those applications for each round which were unsuccessful. Some of these were successful in subsequent rounds following revised applications.
16. The completed projects at Khandallah School and Berhampore School have been very successful with approximately 45,000 and 20,000 learn to swim lessons per year

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- respectively (approximately 1700 children) along with opportunities for other community use.
17. Those projects awarded funding, but yet to come on line, including the redevelopment of Keith Spry Pool (opening in February 2015) will have further significant impact on the availability and access for learn to swim across the city.
 18. The original intention of the fund was not that every school pool should receive funding for upgrading their facilities, but that any investment should be strategically located across the city to provide the best learn to swim opportunities. In addition Council decided that each project receiving funding should be able to be self-sustaining to protect the investment made by Council. This would also ensure schools would not return to Council for additional funding for renewal or upgrades to their facilities, and ensure the sustainable delivery of learn to swim opportunities.
 19. Given the size and nature of the projects yet to be completed the full impact of this funding has yet to be realised or measured. The map in Appendix 3 shows the facilities invested in through the school pools partnership fund, the Council pool upgrades and those other school pools which also serve the wider community. The map also shows the 20 minute walk time and 5km drive distance to them.
 20. The census data for Wellington City from 2013 indicates there are 33,000 children aged under 15 years and 22,500 under 10 years of age. The key ages for learn to swim are from 0 to 12 years so the total market for children's learn to swim will be somewhere between these two figures.
 21. Although the total market is significant the actual demand for learn to swim outside of the school programme is likely to be significantly lower. Actual demand is of critical importance for the long term ability of those school pools already invested in to be self-sustaining and for the continued utilisation levels of Council's own swimming pool investments.
 22. Other investments that Council has made in its pool network over the last 4 years have included: the construction of the Hydrotherapy Pool at the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre, which has created further capacity for dedicated learn to swim in the programmes pool there; and a new teaching pool at Karori. In addition to this significant capacity for learn to swim still exists at Tawa Pool following its' 12 month closure for earthquake strengthening.
 23. Based on the current provision of operating pools across the city an estimate of the numbers of individual children learning to swim outside of school swimming lessons would be between 8,000 – 10,000. In addition to this the Council pool network has capacity for a further 500 – 1000 participants (equivalent to 20,000 to 40,000 lessons per year) of learn to swim without impacting on pool space currently allocated to other activities. More work is required to develop a consistent approach to measuring and reporting across the city.
 24. Swimming pool projects generally have long development timelines, which in the case of this fund have been further lengthened as projects have often needed to secure additional funding from other sources.

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25. As a result of these longer timelines, officers are of the view that a full assessment of the outcomes of the funding granted so far, and the impact following completion of the new programmes pool at Keith Spry Pool will only be possible in 18 to 36 months' time.
26. To further assist in that assessment, officers will need to work with those schools which have received funding and the teams at Council's own facilities to ensure that an improved standard measurement of learn to swim outcomes is agreed to.

Attachments

- Attachment 1. Funding Granted Through School Pools Partnership
Attachment 2. Funding Applications Declined Through School Pools Partnership
Attachment 3. Pool Network Analysis

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultation and Engagement

No consultation has occurred on this issue.

Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no implications.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Policy and legislative implications

Consistent with the Community Facilities Policy.

Risks / legal

No legal implications.

Climate Change impact and considerations

None.

Communications Plan

None required.