

APPX 2 - Ringmer Pool: Summary of Equality Impacts

The council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Section 149) to pay ‘due regard’ to the impact of proposals where these may disproportionately affect people because of their legally protected characteristics¹. In order to identify any such impacts and to assess whether negative impacts can be avoided or reduced, an initial assessment of equality impacts was undertaken and as a result two specific questions were asked in the consultation to invite perspectives on this to further inform the assessment². In making a final decision on the options proposed, Members are required to pay rigorous and proportionate attention to the duties set out in of the Equality Act and this equality information, and to consider it alongside all the other factors and information related to these proposals.

The following equality impacts were identified in the council assessment and by respondents:

- Problems with transport to other facilities:
 - Buses too expensive or infrequent service, potentially disproportionately impacting on younger and older people, disabled people and carers.
 - Lewes Leisure Centre (as an alternate venue) was identified as not being close to a public transport route.
 - Barriers for non-drivers, with potential disproportionate impacts as above, on younger and older people and disabled people.
- Impacts of closure on physical and emotional well-being, with specific potential impacts on disabled people (both in relation to physical and mental health), older people and younger people (especially those with SEN and/or who are neurodivergent).
- Negative impacts of increasing loneliness and isolation (specifically older and disabled people, but potentially for people sharing all characteristics, especially after the increased pressures of Covid-19). The pool was described as a place where people from a range of backgrounds could socialise.
- Specific impacts were noted as possible for women who may have more caring responsibilities and limited time and/or income to access alternate venues.
- The benefits of swimming were highlighted, especially for older and disabled people with limited mobility and/or joint pain, and during pregnancy. People with these characteristics were highlighted as potentially being more likely to have problems with transport to other venues.

¹ The legally protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.

² The two questions were: “Please describe ways in which permanent closure of the Pool, or the two other options identified above, would or might particularly affect persons with any of the following ‘protected characteristics’ [they were then listed]” and “If your answer to the question above identifies any adverse impact in relation to persons with a particular protected characteristic, what steps do you consider could or should be taken to mitigate such impact?”

- The national curriculum requirement to provide swimming instruction in Key Stage 1 or 2 was noted, particularly impacting younger people. swimming was identified as an invaluable life skill as well as good for exercise.
- The smaller Ringmer pool was identified as being better for young people with SEND and/or who are neurodivergent than larger alternative facilities, as it is a quieter pool.
- Sessions at the pool had been specifically aimed at older and younger people and removal of those was seen as a specific loss, especially where alternate activities are limited locally.

Impacts are identified in relation to a number of the legally protected characteristics: age (older and young people), disability (mental, physical, sensory and neurodiversity), pregnancy/maternity, and sex (women).

Mitigations identified if the pool is closed include the following:

- The national curriculum requirement to provide swimming instruction in Key Stage 1 or 2 remains a duty on schools. This can be delivered at other local facilities.
- Engagement with the alternate venues to identify sessions aimed at older, younger and disabled people or to encourage development of these.
- Better advertising of other events, activities and groups in each area that can help address isolation and loneliness.

Respondents also proposed better provision/council subsidy of bus routes or a shuttle bus to alternate venues, replicating classes in another venue, better advertising of the Centre and its offer, reducing fuel costs, paying disabled people more as leisure activity costs increase, improving cycle lanes, or simply re-opening the pool (most responses proposed this).

In terms of consultation responses, more women responded to the consultation than men: 66.4% women, 27.9% men; no one identifying as transgender responded. Most responses came from people aged 40-44 years (21%), then the 45-49 and 50-54 age ranges (13% each). 11% of people said they were over 65 years, and under 5% were under 30 years. Of those who answered the question, 9.2% said they were disabled, which is lower than the wider population statistics (of approx. 20%). 3.5% of respondents identified as being lesbian, gay or bisexual: approximately in line with the estimate for the county of 4%. In relation to ethnicity, under 2% identified as being from an ethnic group other than White British.