

**CABINET
5 SEPTEMBER 2023**

DOLPHIN CENTRE REPAIRS

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Matthew Roche
Health and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider including further works to repair the toddler pool area and a retaining wall as part of the current Dolphin Centre Pool repairs project.

Summary

2. A Special Cabinet meeting was convened on 11 August 2023 to consider extending the Dolphin Centre Pool project to undertake additional works. Approval was received to progress areas of work in the vicinity of the changing area to secure the benefits identified in the report.
3. In securing the urgent approval from Cabinet the benefits to be secured from continuity of the current project are being progressed and the acceleration is advantageous from a financial, operational and customer perspective.
4. The report to the special cabinet meeting identified that further areas would also need to be considered on a similar basis, once the outcome of investigations had been completed and a further report would be brought to Cabinet and Council for consideration of further works in the current extended project.
5. The toddler pool area and the retaining wall investigations have been completed and the works proposed to these areas are outlined in the main report. These areas were highlighted to Members in the special cabinet report as needing work in a revised time frame of two years.

6. The benefits of undertaking these works as part of the current project outlined in the special cabinet meeting are relevant to these works. The main benefits are outlined in the main report, but essentially undertaking the works as part of the current project will allow works to be undertaken in parallel, secure benefits from the continuity of the project and be advantageous from a financial, operational perspective. The approval of these further works would ensure as much of the works can be undertaken in parallel in as shorter period as possible to minimise the impact on customers and provide certainty going forward.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - (a) Approve the additional work identified in this report.
 - (b) Agree a report be progressed to Council to vary the Capital Budget for 2023/24 by £400K and release the capital to accelerate the repairs and undertake them as an extension to the current project.

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
 - (a) To enable all the essential works are carried, meaning the toddler pool will not have to be closed for repairs in 18 months and that the toddler pool can be reopened at the earliest opportunity.
 - (b) To address structural issues within the base of the retaining wall in the plant room.
 - (c) Undertaking all the works that have been identified as needing repair within 2 years as part of the current project could save cost increases arising from construction inflation and lost income of up to £200K when compared to re-starting a project in 18 months' time.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

Cabinet report 11 August 2023

S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report will not impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The Dolphin Centre is the Council's key facility in providing opportunities for residents to participate in an active and healthy lifestyle.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are ongoing M&E programmes in parallel to this project that seek to have a positive impact on carbon reduction as a result of installing modern and efficient mechanical and electrical plant and equipment.
Diversity	No individual is adversely affected as a result of this report.
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	No group will be adversely affected as a result of this report.
Budget and Policy Framework	Further funding requires both Cabinet and Council approval. There is no impact on the Council's policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The Dolphin Centre contributes to a number of the priorities in the Council Plan.
Efficiency	This report seeks to accelerate works to avoid increased costs and risk of undertaking the works at a later date.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Background

9. As outlined to Special Cabinet on 11 August 2023, the Dolphin Centre provides an excellent range of health and wellbeing activities as well as a key leisure and social venue in the town centre. The Dolphin Centre's popular swimming pool is currently undergoing structural repairs. This is part of an ongoing programme of work to ensure the building, which is more than 40 years old, continues to be fit for the 21st Century.
10. As the role of town centres continue to change with greater emphasis on leisure and social activities, the contribution the Dolphin Centre makes to the town centre will continue to increase. Its town centre location contributes significantly to the town centre footfall and vice versa. There are strong links to the Council Plan objectives and all the Council's portfolios, particularly Health and Economy.
11. Members approved additional works at a special Cabinet meeting on 11 August 2023. The area of the works is shown as Phase 2a on the plan at **Appendix 1**.
12. At the time of the special Cabinet meeting the investigations and options on the toddler pool area and the retaining wall in the plant room had not been completed. Members

were advised a further report to Cabinet and Council would be forthcoming to consider the repairs for Phase 2b shown on the plan at Appendix 1.

13. The investigation and feasibility works are now complete. The work to the toddler pool will require removal of tiles, exposure of concrete structure and the joints to make repairs to ensure the integrity of the structure. It is proposed to return the area to a similar format, with some updating of play features, removal of some of the original fixed features and steps that will improve overall safety of the facility. The pool has been a great asset over the years, with children enjoying playing and gaining water confidence and on balance it is considered this should be retained over the option of removing the pool mentioned in the special cabinet report. Where possible existing features will be retained alongside new additions to improve the facility.
14. The investigations into the retaining wall deterioration looked at the drainage outside the Dolphin Centre to establish whether there were any leaks in the system impacting on the structure, findings suggest the drainage is not a cause, but further localised investigations are planned, therefore the deterioration of the retaining wall within the plant room is likely to be associated with the conditions in the plant room and age of the structure. A localised repair within the plant room is required to prevent further deterioration and to ensure the integrity of the structure.
15. The above repairs were identified in the special cabinet report as needing work in a revised time frame of two years, which would mean starting a new project within 18 months. Therefore, the benefits of undertaking these works as part of the current project that were outlined in the special cabinet meeting are also relevant to these works. The main benefits being:
 - (a) Extend current contracts, skills and arrangements as a continuation of the current project will save on preliminary work and re-mobilisation work and costs.
 - (b) Avoidance of further deterioration and risk.
 - (c) Avoidance of further construction inflation.
 - (d) Continue the arrangement with existing pool closure that are familiar to customers.
 - (e) Communications will be clearer than having to close again in a short period of time and provide certainty for customers.
 - (f) Saving of structural engineering monitoring costs in Area A over the 18-month period.
16. It is recommended that further funding is approved to undertake works on the toddler pool and the retaining wall as part of the current extended project. However, there will be a delay on starting the toddler pool area if Cabinet approve the recommendation as Council must also consider the report. Work would progress in parallel with the original works and the works approved at the special cabinet as soon as practicably possible if approved by Council.
17. Options will be explored to open the main pool and changing as soon as practicably possible, once the main pool works and changing area frontage are completed, even if this

means the toddler pool is completed behind hoardings to allow work to be completed. The key challenge will be to have the demolition work completed prior to retiling phase 1 area.

Finance and Governance

18. Cabinet have delegated approval to vary the capital budget by £500k per a year, of which £490k was agreed at the Special Cabinet meeting on 11 August 2023. As Cabinets delegated approval to vary the capital budget will be exceeded by the proposed works within this report, if Cabinet approve, a further report would be progressed to Council to vary the Capital Budget for 2023/24 by £400K, to accelerate the repairs and undertake them as an extension to the current project.

19. The £400k of works will be funded through prudential borrowing with estimated annual borrowing cost of £26.4k over 30 years to cover the works identified in this report. This borrowing will be funded from the ongoing efficiency programme and development of further business opportunities. The Mechanical and Electrical upgrade programme previously approved will drive efficiency, with new building management systems and replacement of old equipment with more reliable and efficient equipment meaning less expensive reactive repairs. Feasibility work is also progressing on energy saving initiatives as part of the Council's Climate action plan.

