

SAVE PURLEY POOL & CAR PARK

UPDATE REPORT FOR RESIDENTS

MAY 2009

0.1 INTRODUCTION

This Update Information Sheet has been prepared by the "Save the Purley Pool Campaign" to give Purley residents, and others from South of the Borough who use the pool, current information on plans for the pool in Purley.

0.2 BACKGROUND HISTORY

Purley Pool was built in 1982 when the Council, who own the freehold of the site, arranged a 99-year lease with Sainsbury's who then built the multi-storey car park and swimming pool as part of the arrangement.

When Sainsbury's closed the store in 1994 they sold the remainder of the lease to Polaska (a Company registered in Jersey and owned by a resident of the Middle East)

The Council currently lease the swimming pool and multi-storey car park from Polaska. The previous Council administration (Labour) announced in 2000 that Polaska were to rebuild the complete site. Nothing happened.

After the Current administration (Conservative) took over in 2006 It announced that the site was going to be demolished and rebuilt containing:

286 Flats;

New multi-storey car park with 213 spaces (current car park has 437 Spaces) Library;

Cinema; Cafe; 4 craft shops

The swimming pool would not be replaced and be closed in October 2008.

No details regarding any financing arrangement for the scheme or timing have been announced. No detailed plans have been disclosed.

NEW POOLS PLANNED

The Council also announced that two new swimming pools were to be built by developers undertaking major housing/retail developments in Waddon and Coulsdon, but no new pool would be built in Purley.

0.3 CURRENT POSITION

WADDON DEVELOPMENT CANCELLED; COULSDON NOTHING VISIBLY HAPPENING

- As the current credit squeeze commenced the Housing Association planning the development in Waddon announced it would not be going forward.
- Waitrose, who were rumoured to be developing the Lion Green Car Park site in Coulsdon to incorporate a swimming pool, have announced they have no plans to do so. Council officials are understood to be currently discussing possibilities with a number of other retailers.

COUNCIL REACTION

- In the Conservative candidate's manifesto for the Waddon by-election earlier this year it was announced that the Council would pay for the construction of a new £7+-million swimming pool and allocate funds in its 2009/10 and 2010/11 budgets.
- The Council also announced that rather than closing in October 2008, the Purley Pool would remain open for a further three years.

0.4 THE LONGER-TERM REQUIREMENT

Whilst welcoming the extension of the pool opening for three years the S.P.P.C. feel that the current and future Council administrations should actively take appropriate actions to retain a pool in Purley on a long-term basis.

SEE OVERLEAF FOR THE "SAVE THE PURLEY POOL CAMPAIGN" SUGGESTIONS FOR WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TO RETAIN A POOL IN PURLEY

0.5 THE CURRENT CONDITION OF THE POOL

Croydon Council members have consistently argued that the Purley Pool should be demolished because it

is too expensive to maintain.

However, Consulting engineers were commissioned by Croydon Council to prepare a full technical report on the condition of the pool. The first report of January 2008 primarily covered Health and Safety requirements.

Whilst highly critical of the previous maintenance of the pool building and equipment, the Consultants final conclusion was that the pool could be brought up to a modern standard.

The final conclusion (below) of a further Consulting engineer's report in March 2008 shows the cost of bringing Purley Pool up to a high standard would be £764,765. This would be 10% of the cost of building a new pool at Waddon.

CONCLUSION

To bring Purley Pool up to a high standard will cost an additional E764765, exclusive of VAT but inclusive of project management costs.

0.6 A PRAGMATIC PLAN TO RE-USE AND REGENERATE THE EXISTING POOL

The S.P.P.C feel that a pragmatic scheme should be examined to re-use and regenerate much of the existing building structure of the swimming pool and multi-storey car park.

Discussions have taken place with a number of professionals resident in Purley who have shown concern over the town's potential loss of one of its prime assets and feel the scheme outlined (Section 0.7 below) should be examined and considered in more detail.

0.7 AN OUTLINE SCHEME SUGGESTION

1. A Housing Association developer should be sought to develop flats on the area of the old Sainsbury shop and forecourt area.
2. The Council would agree a development contract with the current leaseholder or move to a Compulsory Purchase Order if necessary.
3. The freeholder would obtain the freehold of the flat development to fund a complete re-use and regeneration of the swimming pool and multi-storey car park (retaining all current spaces and possibly adding another floor for cars of flat owners).
4. A separate funding arrangement should be sought to redevelop the retail units at nos 44, 42 & 40 High Street and utilising the air space above for a cinema complex.
5. The whole site should be harmoniously developed using modern Facade Engineering techniques to make it a landmark site..

0.8 A FEW KEY POINTS

- A petition urging its retention of the swimming pool has been signed by over 4,000 people and the Purley & Woodcote Residents Association have made a financial donation to the S.P.P.C.
- Thirteen local schools use the swimming pool for lessons and galas.
- The multi-storey car park being alongside the swimming pool and Purley's excellent public transport facilities make it an ideal location for a swimming pool in the south of the Borough.
- The Purley Pool can accommodate 200 spectators and is used to capacity for school galas and events such as the Purley Charity Swimathon. (The pool that had been proposed by the developer at Waddon only had 20 spectator spaces and little car parking).
- Local traders feel maintaining the current spaces available in the multi-storey car park is essential to help maintain the fragile retail viability of the town and assist attracting inward investment.

The SAVE THE PURLEY POOL CAMPAIGN website is www.savepurleypool.com