

Feasibility Study - Thames Sub-Regional Aquatic Centre

TO	Thames-Coromandel District Council
FROM	Greg Hampton - Area Manager Thames & Coromandel
DATE	2 February 2017
SUBJECT	Feasibility Study - Thames Sub-Regional Aquatic Centre

1 Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to request Council approval to bring forward the funding for the feasibility study of the Thames Sub-Regional Aquatic Centre concept into the 2016-17 financial year.

2 Background

The Thames Swimming Pool is located on Taipari Park, Thames and was built in the 1960s.

The Thames Community Board runs a very successful and varied activity programme at the Thames Swimming Pool including water safety, health and fitness, recreational and competitive sport activities. The programme attracts patrons from well outside the Thames ward including out of district usage in the case of the competitive programme. Utilisation of the pool is at capacity and therefore is currently unable to respond to any potential future growth or increase in demand.

Asset condition

Whilst the pool tank is in a reasonable condition for its age the surrounding concrete aprons have substantial cracking and lifting according to the 2014 condition assessment report. Scheduled renewals are estimated to be \$146,714 in 2020/21. The lifespan of the pool tank is unable to be accurately determined but 7-10 years has been an accepted estimate.

Iwi consultation

Ngati Maru has notified Council of its objection to the siting of the pool on Taipari Park due to it being the site of an historic Urupa. In response Council has previously indicated that the replacement facility would be on an alternate site to Taipari Park .

Sports and Recreation Review 2013

In 2013 the Thames Community Board commissioned SGL Group Ltd to undertake a review of sports and recreation facility needs for the Thames Ward. The resulting report "Thames Ward Sport and Recreation Facilities Review and Future Directions" proposed a programme of new recreation facilities including a new indoor court facility, replacement of the Rhodes Park grandstand and clubrooms, a new skatepark and aquatic centre.

The report notes in relation an aquatic centre proposal:

"The Aquatic Centre has a major capital and operating cost implication and the consultant team recommends the final scope of the Aquatic Centre needs to be a District-wide decision, if not a sub-Regional decision.

The greater Thames-Coromandel and Hauraki Districts justify one quality indoor aquatic facility with multiple water spaces to cater for all markets (leisure, fitness/competitive, Learn-

to-Swim, health and therapy). This is an issue which needs to be fully debated and resolved by the total catchment community, and in turn will dictate whether Thames is the venue for this sub-Regional indoor Aquatic Centre, or continues to provide aquatic facilities at the current level of service provision (possibly with an additional indoor Learn-to-Swim pool).

Due to plant failure and/or political will, there may be a desire to at least replace the existing facility at a new location earlier. Consequently, the consultant team has prepared aquatic capital cost estimates on a phased basis, allowing a core facility to be developed and later expanded as required. However, the level of facility specification shown as Stage 1 would realistically still be too large a capital (and net operating) cost for the Thames Ward alone, i.e., if the Thames Ward was responsible for providing an aquatic facility for its Ward community only, then a replacement of its current level of service may only be possible. However, this replacement level of service will not cater effectively for the largest market, the leisure swimmer, nor provide the warmer water suitable and needed for the other 2 key markets, the older adult and also the Learn-to-Swim market..."

2015-20125 Long Term Plan considerations

As part of the 2015-2015 Long Term Plan (LTP) workshop discussions, the Thames Community Board noted the following in relation to the issue:

Current levels of service: The pools are clean, safe and enjoyable places to visit

Activity drivers:

- Promote health and wellbeing of the community through provision of adequate aquatic facilities and activity programmes
- Promote water safety through learn to swim programmes

Activity considerations:

- Potential to utilise the Pool Manager position for programming across proposed new Thames indoor sports courts facility
- Potential for new events and training camps to further optimise activity and revenue
- The existing Thames outdoor pool continues to be fit for purpose until replaced with the planned sub regional aquatic centre
- There needs to be better utilisation of all pool facilities
- Explore opportunities to save operational costs at the Thames pool
- The current Thames Pool facility has limited capacity and limited expected life (estimated at 7 to 10 years)

Community Board's preference:

- A new aquatic centre is needed for Thames as the existing pool is nearing its capacity
- Thames is well placed to provide a sub-regional facility servicing the district and greater Thames Valley
- The new aquatic centre will help to achieve a positive outcome for Iwi by relocating the facility off the historical Urupa
- Planning and business case needs to be confirmed prior to the 2018/19 year
- Continue with good asset management of the existing Thames outdoor pool until the new aquatic centre is operational in the medium term
- Focus on increasing utilisation at all pool facilities (district wide)
- Examine operational cost saving opportunities in relation to water treatment and energy for the Thames pool

2015-20125 Long Term Plan determination

Council determined to fund a feasibility study for the Thames Sub-regional Aquatic Centre concept allocating an amount of \$53,226 in the 2017/2018 financial year of the LTP.

3 Issue

With the feasibility study currently only scheduled to take place in 2017-18, this creates a timing issue for the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan discussions in that the intended study data and recommendations will not be available in time to inform those long term plan discussions.

4 Discussion

The Waikato Regional Sports Facility Plan (WRSFP) - September 2014 (Attachment A) defines a sub-regional sports facility as:

"A facility with the ability to draw significant numbers of teams/competitors from across adjacent territorial authority boundaries for either competition or training purposes."

The WRSFP also recognises the concept of a sub-regional aquatic facility being located in the Thames Valley area potentially involving partnerships between either TCDC and Hauraki District Council or; Hauraki and Matamata- Piako District Councils. The feasibility study would test that concept and propose the recommended location and partnership proposal.

The WRSFP has initiated a "Cross Boundary Funding Framework and Investment Guideline" which is currently being drafted by Sports Waikato in conjunction with a local authority advisory group to assist with the assessment and prioritisation of regional facility investment decisions. Once finalised, the guidelines will be presented to the Waikato Mayoral Forum for endorsement. The guidelines will provide a useful approach and recommended process for facilitating cross-boundary funding discussions and decisions.

Feasibility study scope

It is proposed that the feasibility study be undertaken in alignment with the facility development lifecycle outlined in the best practice document - "Sport NZ Community Sport and Recreation Facility Guide".

The Guide proposes undertaking six stages in considering a facilities investment development:

STAGE ONE - CONCEPT – *identifying the need for a facility and developing the strategic case for doing so, including assessing the specific need and demand in the wider context of the desired facility network.*

STAGE TWO - PLAN – *ensuring the facility will be fit for purpose, sustainable and future-proof while also determining its financial feasibility based on an appropriate facility mix.*

STAGE THREE - DESIGN – *developing the detailed functional and spatial requirements of the facility based on the agreed facility mix. Designs are confirmed and estimates finalised.*

STAGE FOUR - BUILD – *constructing the facility.*

STAGE FIVE - OPERATE – *managing and maintaining the facility. Ensuring it delivers a quality experience and has an effective and efficient operating model and programme of activity that meets community needs.*

STAGE SIX - IMPROVE – *evaluating the success of the facility, how it has delivered on the identified outcomes and objectives, what improvements can be made and whether there is any experience or learnings that can be shared.*

The proposed scope for the feasibility study would include the first two stages being: Concept and Plan (noted above), and deliver a Business Case as a first milestone in the investment decision process. The business case will require Council's approval before progressing to the stage 3 Design phase.

The "Concept Stage" includes three steps critical to providing the ability to review and make key decisions before proceeding to the next stage:

1. **Project scoping** - to provide the information needed to prepare a project brief.
2. **Needs assessment** - to identify any lack or over-supply of existing facilities (the demand) and to justify needs not wants.
3. **Feasibility** - to assess the social, economic and environmental viability of the proposal. Part of the feasibility work is to prepare a business case.

Procurement of services

It is proposed that a request for proposals (RFP) is issued to suitable recreation professionals to undertake the feasibility study including informing the scope, deliverables and timing of the study in liaison with TCDC's Parks Manager Derek Thompson.

5 Suggested resolution(s)

That the Thames-Coromandel District Council:

1. Receives the 'Feasibility Study - Thames Sub-Regional Aquatic Centre' report, dated 2 February 2017.
2. Approves bringing forward the 2017/18 funding (\$53,226) for the Thames Sub-Regional Aquatic Centre into the current financial year.
3. Approves the scope and procurement proposal for the feasibility study contained in the report.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *The Waikato Regional Sports Facility Plan (WRSFP) - September 2014*

Attachment A

[Attachment B - Waikato Facility Plan Final Public Consultation Summary...](#)