

REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JUNE 2017

MEMBER'S ITEM - SPLASHES LEISURE POOL

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Regeneration, Culture Environment and Transformation

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Summary

This report provides a further response to the issues relating to Splashes leisure pool which were raised as a Member's item by Councillor Stamp.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Under Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Stamp has requested that an item on this matter is included on the agenda for this meeting.

2. The Issue

2.1. Following on from the previous report on this issue, the report from Public Health England has now been received, which enables a response to the outstanding query from Councillor Stamp, namely:

- Were the chlorine doses reduced for the purposes of dyeing the pool red on 28 October? Was this appropriate? Was the dose sufficient to protect the public using the pool?

3 Director's comments

3.1 The normal operating procedure for Medway Council-run swimming pools includes a high, but safe amount of chlorine (twice the national minimum guidance amount). However, during special themed pool parties dye is added to the water and the chlorine level is knowingly lowered, but remains within National Pool Water Advisory Guidelines, to allow for the dye to take effect.

- 3.2 Staff have good experience in using the colouring dye and manufacturer's guidance is always followed. The product has been used at over 10 special pool events since 2015.
- 3.3 Following the outbreak and subsequent report, Public Health England has suggested that a review of scientific evidence may be needed to determine how much chlorine is necessary to prevent the spread of norovirus in water. Public Health England is taking this up with the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG), which publishes national guidance on pool water safety.
- 3.4 Public Health England has concluded it was not possible to identify how or where norovirus was introduced or spread during the affected period.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The service has taken on board the learning arising from the incident and the subsequent findings within the Public Health England report.
- 4.2 Included in the report is a Public Health England review of scientific evidence which shows that chlorine levels of 1ppm or above might be necessary, to prevent transmission of norovirus in water. Therefore, as a precaution, the council will no longer use dye in its pools.
- 4.3 The Council is also pleased that Public Health England recognised that prompt and robust actions undertaken by Leisure management and the Environmental Team in response to the reported outbreak mitigated further risks to pool users.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 Through strict adherence to the normal operating procedure and taking the precautionary measure of not dyeing pools in future, together with adherence to the recommendations in the Public Health England report, the service believes it will minimise the risk of any repeat outbreak.

6. Financial and Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council has at all times followed (and exceeded) the national guidance in relation to the amount of chlorine in the pool water, although it is noted that Public Health England is now looking at the scientific information which influences that guidance. Should guidance change in the future the Service will adapt its procedures accordingly, in light of this there are not felt to be any legal implications at this time.
- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is requested to note the report.

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

Public Health England Report - Outbreak of norovirus associated with Splashes
Leisure Centre, Rainham, October 2016