FOI 202400401180 – Q2

Document 1

From: Heather Brannan-McVey - Councillor <brannan-mcveyh@northlan.gov.uk>
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance <DFMCSF@gov.scot>
Cc: Jean Jones – Councillor <JonesJ@northlan.gov.uk>
Subject: Swimming Pool Fund clarity required

Dear Cabinet Secretary

We write to you today to seek clarity on the Barnett Consequentials for the £63million fund established by the UK Government to aid swimming pools in England. Confirmation of receipt of funds was given on 7th June in response to a question to Scottish Ministers by Foysol Choudhury MSP. Will this be used in a swimming pool fund? If so, when will local councils have access to it? There has been no announcement to date.

North Lanarkshire Council has endured terrible cuts over the last 16 years resulting in a £300 million reduction in budget. Due to reduction in resources NLC have highlighted that Kilsyth Pool is on a list of long facilities including swimming pools, leisure, cultural and community centres in scope for closure. This financial situation as been compounded by growing energy costs with bills more than doubling in recent years.

Pools are expensive to open but children and adults learn essential lifesaving skills within the pool. Health and well being of all ages is improved through swimming. There is no greater cost than the loss of a life. Our community is land locked but surrounded by water. Learning to swim is an essential life saving skill. Kilsyth Pool and facilities like it across the country should stay open. The best way for us as a community to demonstrate the value we all place on the Pool is to use it. Pool user numbers are up 22% from last year to this demonstrating the value that our community has for the pool.

We have also written to the NLC Chief Executive to highlight the importance of Kilsyth Pool and should resources be made available to NLC from the Scottish Government that Kilsyth Pool should receive the investment required not only to keep it open but to invest in it to be a sustainable resource for our community for years to come.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey
Councillor Jean Jones
Ward 1 Kilsyth and Villages
North Lanarkshire Council
[Redacted}

Dundee City Council
www.dundeecity.gov.uk
CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE

Gregory Colgan– Chief Executive

Chief Executive's Department
Floor 2
21 City Square
DUNDEE
DD1 3BY

Tel: 01382 434000
Email: gregory.colgan@dundeecity.gov.uk

Shona Robison MSP
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

(by email dfmcsf@gov.scot)

Our Ref: GC/KAS
Your Ref:

Date: 28 December 2023

Dear Deputy First Minister

CONSEQUENTIALS TO SUPPORT SWIMMING POOLS

At its meeting on Monday 20 November 2023, Dundee City Council's Fair Work, Economic Growth and Infrastructure Committee a question was raised by one of our elected members regarding whether any funding had been received from the Scottish Government following the announcement that funding had been made available by the UK Government to support cost pressures in relation to the running swimming pools.

I would be grateful if you can confirm whether the Scottish Government has received any Barnett consequential funding in 2023/24 in relation to the UK Governments allocation of £63m to leisure centres with swimming pools in England and if so will funding be distributed to local authorities.

I look forward to hearing your response which I will share with the Council's elected members.

Yours sincerely

GREGORY COLGAN
Chief Executive

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West Lothian Council

Chief Executive Office

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6FF

Our Ref: CEO/MH CE090523
Your Ref:

Contact: Graham Hope
Tel: [redacted]
email: redacted@westlothian.gov.uk

Private and Confidential
Maree Todd MSP
Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport
ministerscmws@gov.scot
(letter sent electronically only)

9 May 2023

Dear Minister

West Lothian Leisure Request for Council Consent to Proposed Change

A meeting of Council Executive took place on Tuesday 9 May 2023 at which the above was discussed. I have attached a copy of the report and agreed Motion.

In light of the recent request from West Lothian Leisure to seek consent from West Lothian Council to close four venues, namely Xcite Livingston, Xcite Broxburn Swimming Pool, Xcite Armadale and Howden Park Centre, it was agreed that I write to you to request funding to swimming pool operators to support the retention of swimming pools and leisure venues in local communities, and in particular, West Lothian.

In view of the gravity of the situation, with the needs of the community and jobs at stake, as well as the need for West Lothian Council to respond to the request from the Board of West Lothian Leisure in the near future, I look forward to receiving your response as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Hope
Chief Executive

Encl

Councillor Iain McMillan
Ward 08 (Johnstone South and Elderslie)

Tel: 0300 300 [redacted]
Mob: [redacted]
E-Mail: cllr.iain.mcmillan@renfrewshire.gov.uk
Ref: IMM/NMQ/RE34488
Date: 10th August 2023

Renfrewshire Council

Minister Maree Todd
Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,

I have been speaking to One Ren who, manage Renfrewshire's leisure centres, recently about the restricted hours of leisure centres and in particular swimming pools.

In a recent press article that I was involved in a Scottish Government spokesperson said they were looking into how they could support local swimming pools in terms of keeping them open.

This was in response to my point that the Scottish Government benefited through the Barnett formula when the UK gave money to English councils as they recognised the pressure on keeping pools open, mainly due to increasing energy costs.

Could I ask what plans the Scottish Government have to help keep the countries pools open?

Thanks very much.

Yours sincerely,

Iain McMillan

Councillor Iain McMillan
Ward 08 (Johnstone South and Elderslie)

Our Ref: FM/MT/2109
Contact: Councillor Frank McNally
Tel: Office: [redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]@northlan.gov.
Date: uk 21 September 2023

Councillor Frank McNally
Ward 16, Mossend and Holytown
Civic Centre
Windmillhill Street
Motherwell ML1 1AB
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Maree Todd MSP
Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport
The Scottish Government

Via Email

Dear Minister

Swimming Pool Provision in North Lanarkshire

As you may be aware, North Lanarkshire Council has recently announced plans to reduce the number of leisure and community facilities in our towns and villages.

North Lanarkshire Council has had to endure savage cuts over the last 16 years, with more than £300 million cut from its budget. As you will know, the Scottish Government provides approximately 80 per cent of local government funding and it has been well documented by CoSLA and by the local authority chief financial officers that further cuts to this core grant are to be expected.

As has been evident in other local authorities, due to diminishing resources, North Lanarkshire is being forced to reduce the number of facilities within its Active and Creative Communities (ACC) portfolio. This includes the Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex in Bellshill, which includes a 25-metre pool, fitness centre, indoor court provision and other community space. The closure of this facility would be deeply detrimental to people in Bellshill, Mossend, Holytown, Thorniewood, and other towns and villages in the area, who make use of the facility on a daily basis. Figures show that footfall last year was over 350,000, making it one of the busiest in the authority. Sir Matt Busby is also home to the Bellshill Sharks ASC, which has been a steadfast local swimming club for generations of young people and the closure would leave the club's future uncertain. The removal of this centre will deprive thousands of local people, particularly children, of a much loved and well-used facility.

Swimming is an essential life skill, supports healthy lifestyles and can help to keep people safe when around water. Our swimming pools are also so often at the heart of our communities. You will be aware that Scottish Swimming's Save Our Pools campaign has highlighted the clear and present danger to pools across Scotland, due to reducing local government budgets and the energy costs associated with keeping pools functioning and leisure centres operating. They estimate that energy costs have increased from £500 million in 2019 to £1.2 billion in 2022.

As you will know, the UK Government has allocated £63 million for leisure centres and pools in England, which has resulted in additional Barnett Consequentials being passed to the

Scottish Government. In response to a question from my colleague, Foysol Choudhury MSP on 7 June, Scottish Ministers have made clear that the Scottish Government has received these Consequentials. To date, Ministers have not taken steps to allocate these funds to councils.

The Scottish Government has stated that it will work with local government, sportscotland and Scottish Swimming to consider additional support but, again, there remains little clarity on this. There is an urgent need for action on this matter. The loss of a facility like Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex will have a lasting, detrimental, impact on the community. It will be especially challenging for those who use the swimming pool and fitness suite on a regular basis, including Bellshill Sharks ASC.

I would be grateful if you can advise if the Scottish Government will allocate these additional Consequentials to Scotland's 32 local authorities, including North Lanarkshire, what additional financial supports are being considered, and when the government will be in a position to announce this.

Yours sincerely

Frank McNally
Scottish Labour Councillor for Mossend and Holytown
North Lanarkshire Council

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL LABOUR GROUP

Notice of Motion from Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan for the Council Executive on 9th May 2023

Item 11 – West Lothian Leisure Request for Council Consent to Proposed Change

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Council Executive notes that in the Spring budget on 15th March 2023, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced funding of £63 million to support swimming pools remaining open in England.

Council Executive further notes that as a result of the Chancellor's announcement, around £70 million of Barnett consequentials in total will go to the Scottish Government and that to date, no funding has been provided by the Scottish Government to specifically support swimming pools.

In light of the recent request from West Lothian Leisure to seek consent from West Lothian Council to close 4 venues, namely Xcite Livingston, Xcite Broxburn Swimming Pool, Xcite Armadale and Howden Park Centre, Council Executive agrees to instruct the Chief Executive to write to Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport to request funding to swimming pool operators to support the retention of swimming pools and leisure venues in local communities, and in particular, West Lothian.

Council Executive further agrees that in view of the gravity of the situation, with the needs of the community and jobs at stake, as well as the need for West Lothian Council to respond to the request from the Board of West Lothian Leisure in the near future, the Minister is requested to respond as a matter of urgency.

Furthermore, Council Executive instructs the following:

- Council officers to bring back a report to the meeting of the Council Executive on 23rd May 2023 to address members' questions and concerns.

- Council officers to engage with West Lothian Leisure to explore whether alternative options exist for the retention of facilities to include in the report to Council Executive on 23rd May 2023.

- In parallel, West Lothian Leisure and Council officers to explore alternative commercial and community options for continued provision of services with other interested parties including key community user groups, with an update to be included in the report to the Council Executive on 23rd May 2023.

- The Chief Executive to write to Angela Constance MSP, Fiona Hyslop MSP, Martyn Day MP and Hannah Bardell MP to request they write to their SNP party colleague Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport to demand funding via the Barnett consequentials and any other available funding to enable the retention of local swimming pools and leisure facilities in West Lothian.

Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan
Executive Councillor for Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building
West Lothian Council Labour Group