

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
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**CABINET**

**15 FEBRUARY 2018**

**REFERENCE REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE**

**A.2 FREE SWIMMING LESSONS FOR CHILDREN**

(Report prepared by Karen Neath and Mike Carran)

**BACKGROUND**

At Council on 27 November 2018, Council considered an item from Councillor Andrew Pemberton in relation to free swimming lessons for children. It was resolved that:-

Council does not support the motion in its original format and that instead the following amended motion be approved:-

“ That this Council takes the following steps in order to see that every child in the District of Tendring can be taught to swim before they leave school education:

- (a) The Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee invite the Director of Education from Essex County Council to attend a future meeting of the Committee in order to discuss how all schools can meet their statutory duty and move towards 100% of the District’s children learning to swim before they leave primary education; and
- (b) That Officers continue work with partners to develop a cohesive plan to further improve safety measures across the District’s coastline and report back with findings and any recommendations to Cabinet in February 2019, for implementation prior to the 2019 season.”

Consequently, Clare Kershaw (Director of Education, Essex County Council) and Dawn Emberson (Relationship Manager, Active Essex) attended the meeting of the Community Leadership Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> January. They set out for the Committee the statutory requirement under the National Curriculum for swimming which is as follows:-

*All schools must provide swimming instruction either in key stage 1 or key stage 2.*

*In particular, pupils should be taught to:*

- *swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres*
- *use a range of strokes effectively [for example, front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke]*

- *perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.*

Following discussion a number of actions were agreed.

Essex County Council / Active Essex to lead on the following actions:-

- A review to determine how many pupils do not reach the required level of proficiency by the end of year 6. A piece of work will then be undertaken to work with schools to target those children that are not reaching the required proficiency;
- to investigate how it was decided that the swim safe programme (see below) is centred on Clacton, Walton and Dovercourt and whether there would be any funding available to extend the programme more widely across Tendring;
- to look at whether the swimming pools available at local caravan parks could be used to provide swimming lessons to school children;
- to investigate whether local bus providers could assist with taking pupils from schools to pools as the cost of transport is cited as one of the biggest barriers for schools in providing swimming lessons;
- to review the affordability of providing swimming lessons for schools and the capacity to provide enough lessons. Although it was commented that the latter point is not thought to be an issue;

Tendring District Council to lead on the following actions:-

- To look into whether Tendring District Council's beach patrol staff could provide swimming lessons in the sea for young people as swimming in the sea is different from swimming in a pool;
- to consider whether the ONE card or something similar could be re-introduced for use at local Leisure Centres;
- to look at extending the promotion of water safety advice around the coastline during the summer including liaising with partners such as Clacton Pier and voluntary and community groups such as the scouts.

In relation to part (b) of Council's resolution the Council has set up a Water Safety Forum. This comprises of the foremost local experts from around the District. It includes Tendring District Council, Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Coastguard, Royal Lifesaving Society (RLSS), Police, Fire Service, East of England Ambulance Service, Brightlingsea Harbourmaster, Harwich Haven Authority and others.

In a short space of time, the group have secured funding for a nationally recognised outdoor water safety programme to be held in Clacton, Walton and Dovercourt in 2019. Working with Swim England, the scheme will provide free sessions to around 2,000 youngsters aged between 7-14. Young people will spend time learning about the differences between swimming in a pool and in the sea, what the safety flags mean and how to get help if it is needed, before heading into the water to practise safety skills. There will be specific school sessions, followed by spaces offered to the general public.

The group are also working with Clacton Coastal Academy (CCA) who will be producing a water safety film to be complete in time for Easter 2019. The school

have agreed to write and produce the film, with specialist advice being provided by members of the group – in particular the RNLI. It is especially pertinent that CCA have taken on this project, as Ben Quartermaine, who tragically died off the coast of Clacton last summer was a pupil at the school.

Furthermore, a signage audit has been undertaken in Clacton by a specialist from the RNLI and all recommendations will be implemented in time for the 2019 season. The group are also working on a number of other measures including a programme of education and updates will be provided as soon as they are available.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET**

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

(a) The actions identified in the body of the report be endorsed, with Essex County Council / Active Essex to lead on:-

- i. A review of pupils not reaching the required level of proficiency and actions to target the gap;
- ii. how it was decided where the swim safe programme is run and if it could be extended;
- iii. whether the swimming pools available at local caravan parks could be used to provide swimming lessons to school children;
- iv. investigate whether local bus providers could assist with taking pupils from school to pools
- v. review the affordability of and capacity to provide school swimming lessons; and

Tendring District Council to lead on:

- vi. considering whether Tendring District Council's beach patrol staff could provide swimming lessons in the sea
- vii. whether the ONE card or something similar could be re-introduced for use at local Leisure Centres;
- viii. investigate extending the promotion of water safety advice around the coastline during the summer.

#### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- a) That the actions identified above be agreed, recognising that Essex County Council retains the responsibility for schools and school provision and that Active Essex has a lead role in promoting physical activity.
- b) Tendring District Council provides support across all actions where appropriate having regard to available capacity and resources;
- c) It be noted that, in relation to action viii), the promotion of water safety information and advice is a key part of the work of the Water Safety Forum which TDC has set up and that a signage audit has been undertaken by the RNLI.