

**To the Rt. Hon. Richard Caborn MP, Minister of State, Department for Culture,  
Media and Sport**

Dear Minister,

I understand from the Department for Communities and Local Government that a new and welcome policy is being introduced to avoid demolition of public sports facilities unless planning permission to do so has been sought and obtained. Here in Plymouth we very much agree with Baroness Andrews' recent statement that "local authorities should have the power to prevent their demolition in certain cases to conserve these important assets".

Locally we have been fighting a long campaign to save Seaton Swimming Pool, which is on land owned by the South West Regional Development Agency, and which sadly is due to be demolished in a matter of days, principally for the convenience of SWRDA. Plymouth has a population of a quarter of a million people but has very few public swimming facilities, and this pool is in the north of the city, an area with over 40,000 people who have access to little else in the way of leisure opportunities. Plymouth has just lost out on a large lottery bid for a new 50 metre pool and there seems to be every prospect of losing Seaton Pool too.

We were encouraged when in mid-January during Prime Minister's Question Time Mr. Blair expressed criticism of a Council in Derbyshire which was demolishing a swimming pool. Indeed, my colleague Cllr. Dr. David Salter immediately wrote to the Prime Minister asking for his support for Seaton Pool, but despite the request being referred to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, no further reply has been received.

Time is now extremely short. We would therefore very much appreciate it if you could please write urgently to encourage SWRDA to abide by Government policy and not demolish Seaton Pool until planning permission to do so has been sought, and representations from concerned organisations including the Sports Council have been properly considered.

Thanking you in anticipation of your help,

**Yours sincerely**

**Vivien Pengelly**

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