

Pool decisions fuel health crisis

IN THE light of reports of Plymouth now being in the lower tier of the UK league table when it comes to general health, I found it ironic that as a fitness fanatic who combines cycling and swimming with my main sport of running, I could not even get a swim session in Plymouth one Saturday afternoon.

Central Park does not seem to cater for the general public after a certain time on a Saturday, it seems, while the pool at Plympton was being hired out for a children's birthday party all day long. Having relocated to Plymouth in July of last year, the swimming pool situation has got steadily worse. I used to think my former town of Northampton had a pool crisis on its hands but it's nothing compared to here!

I was one of many who vehemently opposed the closure of Seaton Pool last April by Plymouth City Council and the reasoning behind the decision, resulting in what I regard as its needless and wasteful premature closure, the consequences of which are now coming home to roost. In a large city, it's one vital pool less which hasn't been replaced and is not likely to be for some while: this after the Lottery Fund bid was surprisingly lost in July - essential to help towards building a new pool, possibly at Central Park, to immediately replace Seaton Pool.

Furthermore, what does this do to solve the problem of the general health and fitness of Plymouth people, if their access to public swimming pools is now seriously restricted? While swimming is not everybody's cuppa, judging by how busy the two remaining public pools are now are in the city at any given time, then it's still mighty popular. I'm sure my example of the Saturday afternoon problem was not at all unique.

Generally I'm OK because I have my other ways of keeping fit but not all of us own bikes, want to swim in the sea or join expensive private gyms to use their pools when public ones are not available. Not all of us are able to run either or possess the desire to.

Swimming is a vital part of the keep-fit agenda and Plymouth City Council should look at doing something about it with immediate effect to improve on what few facilities are left in the city.

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EVENING
HERALD
POST BAG
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Another pool lost

SO WE'RE going to have a boulevard from the city centre to Millbay? And so what if we lose a swimming pool - another pool, that is? Seaton hasn't been replaced yet.

I see proposals for the demolition of the Pavilions Pool but no proposals concerning the building of one to replace Seaton, let alone to replace the

Pavilions Pool before it closes. As for Karen Gillard's statement that 'a pool where you can't do lengths is useless', when built the design of the Pavilions was heralded for that feature. We had other pools where swimmers could do lengths. The Pavilions was a place to have fun in the water. The sloping design is ideal for parents with young children and the wave machine and flumes make it interesting: everything required to get young people interested in the sport. It would have been a lot more difficult to get my children started if they had to 'do lengths'.

This proposal is supposed to be part of an action plan outlining Plymouth's growth until 2016, yet what about swimming pools? I have a disabled daughter whose school swimming time has been cut from weekly to fortnightly. Plymouth's action plan seems to include knocking down Seaton, knocking down the Pavilions and knocking down Central Park in the hope that something might be built to replace it.

With no Pavilion Pool I'll have one less reason to visit the city centre because I certainly won't go there to look at a street, whatever they call it.

Looking on the bright side, I'm sure cyclists, rollerbladers and skateboarders will have a rare old time bouncing off this boulevard's street furniture.

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