

Joint Use Funding 2024/25

Report to the Schools Forum 16 November 2023

Background

- 1.1 For many years, Telford & Wrekin (along with a number of other councils) has received funding for joint use leisure facilities via 'exceptional funding factors'. These exceptional factors result in additional DSG being allocated, over and above the amounts allocated by the DfE's Schools Block funding formula. The amounts allocated in 2023/24 were as follows:

Telford Priory	£350,737
Telford Park	£207,031
Shortwood Primary	£90,000
Total	£647,768

- 1.2 These funds are used for the provision of swimming and other sports activities to schools and the wider community, at Oakengates leisure centre (via Telford Priory), Stirchley leisure centre (Telford Park) and Shortwood, Newport and Abraham Darby pools .
- 1.3 The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA – a DfE agency) are reviewing all exceptional factor funding as part of the move to a national funding formula at school level. In particular they have said that they don't consider swimming to be an 'exceptional' activity and so are proposing to withdraw funding for this. Swimming makes up all of the Shortwood allocation and an estimated £155,000 of the Telford Priory allocation.
- 1.4 We have made representations to the ESFA concerning the impact of reducing/removing joint use funding and in particular that given the extreme financial pressure that T&W council (in common with other councils) is under, the council does not have the financial resources to replace any lost funding.
- 1.5 We are currently awaiting the ESFA decision. In the meantime we are developing contingency plans in the event that funding is reduced/withdrawn.

Initial proposals for 2024/25

- 1.6 As outlined above, the outcome of the ESFA review on the amount of funding we are allocated for joint use facilities is at present unknown. However, it seems likely that we will lose at least some, and possibly all joint use funding for swimming in 2024/25.
- 1.7 As a result of being in receipt of joint use funding, T&W schools have had free access to pools in the borough, unlike most other areas of the country in which schools pay for using these facilities. Unfortunately, the threatened withdrawal of funding has meant that we now have to plan to charge schools for using swimming pools from 1 April 2024 (i.e. the summer term).
- 1.8 Our initial modelling is based on a minimum of one 10 week block per annum, assuming that all schools with KS2 pupils provide at least this. Proposed hourly rates are shown below, together with the potential income generated.

Pool	School Lesson Capacity	Proposed Hourly Rate*	Number of primary school hours booked	Potential income
Abraham Darby	60	£100	427	£42,700
Newport	40	£65	220	£14,300
Oakengates	40	£65	325	£21,125
Shortwood	40	£65	740	£48,100
			1,712	£126,225

- 1.9 The income generated, as modelled above, would represent just over half the income currently received for swimming (i.e. £155,000 + £90,000 = £245,000). The council would therefore still be in a position of having to consider its swimming pool offer to schools and the community.
- 1.10 As we have emphasised to the ESFA, the prospect of a withdrawal of funding to the local area at a time of financial pressure for schools, the council and the local community is extremely disappointing.
- 1.11 Once we have a decision from the ESFA, we will update the Forum and schools generally and be able to offer firmer proposals for 2024/25.

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November 2023