

Market Rasen pool plan on hold

Plans to build a multi-million pound swimming pool in Market Rasen look set to put on hold for two years.

Leader of West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Burt Keimach, is to ask the full council meeting on January 24 to agree a recommendation to stop work on the project with the option to review it in two year's time if the public still wants the scheme to go ahead.

Cllr Keimach said: "I have always been in favour of building a pool in the town I represent, but I have to accept that circumstances have changed dramatically in recent times and the Council cannot be certain it would get value for money from the project at this time."

The changed circumstances referred to by Cllr Keimach include:

- The opening of a £12 million state of the art pool at nearby Louth which is already used by 10% of people who have a Market Rasen post code.
- Plans have been announced to build another pool at Welton only a few miles away
- And the economic climate has meant that the Council has been unable to sell its former headquarters in Gainsborough valued at £2 million and has received less than expected for other assets.

He added that the concept of a pool in Market Rasen had been supported by both political parties on the Council and recent work had reduced the predicted running costs by £150,000 a year.

Cllr Keimach added: "Despite this, like all Councils, we are under pressure to make significant savings following the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and I have to recognise that now is not the right time to go ahead. Putting the plan on hold has got to be the right decision," said Cllr Keimach.

He went on to stress that West Lindsey was reviewing its financial position in the light of needing to generate income to offset the reduction in government funding.

“The finance awarded to West Lindsey District Council by central government has been cut dramatically and we have to bridge a spending gap of £1.8 million over two years.

“We are committed to achieving this without increasing council tax because we know that many of our residents are already hard pressed.”

With this in mind the Council is considering regeneration and growth infrastructure projects that would support business start up and meet the needs of the local community and – over a number of years – generate income.

Commenting on the decision to shelve the pool plan for two years, Chief Executive Manjeet Gill said: “We must always make sure we are getting value for money and there have been so many significant changes in the circumstances surrounding this project that it will be prudent to review the plan again in two year’s time if we are asked to. By then we will be able to assess the impact of the new facility nearby and another one that is proposed only a few miles away. By 2013 the Council’s financial position will also be much clearer.”

But although the pool project seems destined to be shelved, not all the news is bad. The Council has money to build the facility and it is now planning to spend some of it on projects throughout the district.

Cllr Keimach said: “We have already had preliminary talks with Market Rasen Town Council about schemes they would like to see brought forward and we are also inviting other groups and organisations throughout the district to give us their ideas.

“Ideas should be costed – not only in monetary terms but in what the group suggesting the project is prepared to contribute to it which could be things like community involvement or staffing.”

- Have you got a suggestion for a project that could benefit your community?

Please send details to communicationsteam@west-lindsey.gov.uk or telephone (01427) 676512

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For more information contact Geoff O’Neill on (01427) 676512