

# The City of Edinburgh Council

10am, Thursday, 1 June 2023

## Family Swim Sessions in Braidburn Pool

Item number  
Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Council are asked to note the update on special needs swimming lessons at Braidburn Pool, following the emergency motion by the Administration on the 4 May at full council asking;

*To agree for a report in one cycle to identify suitable funding sources to allow these sessions to continue beyond September 2023 and requests officers investigate actions, including additional funding, to secure the immediate resumption of Additional Support Needs swimming sessions at Braidburn.*

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## Family Swim Sessions in Braidburn Pool

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report sets out the current position with extra-curricular swimming lessons for learners with Additional Support Needs, and their families, in response to the Emergency motion by the Administration at full council on the 4 May 2023.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Learners with Additional Support needs have hydrotherapy or swimming lessons in their hydrotherapy pools in school during the school day. This is reliant on qualified staff, including physiotherapists, being in post. At Braidburn School the pool, which was not timetabled on Fridays, was made available some years ago for families to join in. Uptake was low due to the time of day.

Family Swim sessions then took place on a Saturday morning. Disability services funded the Braidburn Family Swim Sessions using the Holiday Hub budget, however as the provision is term-time, it does not qualify for further funding from this budget.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The arrangement to fund this has been extended by the Council until September 2023. Edinburgh Leisure (EL) advised that they would look at how else this could be continued after September e.g. alternative funding sources, the introduction of charges for the sessions.
- 4.2 The sessions stopped at Braidburn in November 2022 due to health and safety concerns and re-located (initially on a temporary basis) to Gracemount Leisure Centre. The decision was made to retain the sessions at Gracemount in response to the health and safety issues. The change in venue, whilst disruptive, was actioned in response to the staffing challenges EL were experiencing and the availability of funds (from the Council) for the sessions and to safeguard the provision of the ASN family swim sessions. Information on the rationale for the decision is detailed below:

- 4.2.1 Securing the appropriately qualified and experienced staff to deliver the sessions has been challenging (like many other organisations and business sectors) EL are experiencing staffing challenges and the hours at Braidburn were proving particularly challenge to staff and it was especially problematic securing the staff to carry out the required training with these staff members.
- 4.2.2 EL have identified the need for further staffing and supervisory support for these sessions to operate safely. There is no additional funding available to cover this. EL did not explore the option of introducing charges to cover these additional costs as the over-riding issue relates to staffing / resourcing.
- 4.2.3 Delivering the ASN family swim session within an Edinburgh Leisure venue ensures the appropriate staffing and supervisory support is in place. The sessions at Gracemount offer exclusive use of the pool for the sessions with the staffing arrangements in place to service the venue's standard opening hours. The lifeguards supporting the ASN sessions at Gracemount receive the required regular and ongoing training as part of their working week.
- 4.3 EL were also mindful that the current funding from the City of Edinburgh Council is coming to an end in September 2023 with no future funding identified and wanted to make sure that the swim sessions are sustainable long term and take away uncertainty over whether they will run. EL felt that offering them at Gracemount was the best way to do that, notwithstanding the need to introduce a charge for the sessions.
- 4.4 EL is aware of the concerns that have been raised about the change of venue:
  - 4.4.1 The pool at Gracemount is not a hydrotherapy pool and whilst the pool temperature is raised to 30 degrees for the sessions acknowledge that this will not be sufficient for all the children to enjoy their swim session.
  - 4.4.2 EL have considered the importance of a 'quiet' environment for the children - families attending the session have sole use of the pool area and it is at a time when the venue is much quieter compared to other 'out of school' hours.
- 4.5 The Council are looking at a number of external funding streams, however even if funding is secured still might not be possible to continue at Braidburn due to the health and safety issues EL have identified.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Council Officers will continue to work with Edinburgh Leisure together on how to support access to specialist family swim sessions.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The cost of funding this for a year is in the region of £12,000. There should be no financial impact if a third sector funder is sourced.
- 6.2 As part of the community mental health contracts we commission Edinburgh Leisure to deliver *Physical activity to support young people aged 12-18 in Edinburgh, experiencing mild to moderate mental health conditions*. This could be looked into further to see if there is the possibility to expand this to include the swim sessions.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 Engagement with Edinburgh Leisure.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 n/a

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 n/a