

TOOTING BEC LIDO

Par.4. Refurbishment Proposals. We have considered a report by the Director of Leisure and Amenity Services on proposals by the South London Swimming Club to refurbish and develop the Tooting Bec Lido, SW16 (Bedford).

The Club have indicated that they wish to refurbish the Tooting Bec Lido and to bid for Lottery Funds in partnership with the Council for the works. The Lido is the oldest facility of this type in the country and the second largest straight-sided pool in Europe. It was built by unemployed labour in 1906 and this year is the 90th anniversary of the its construction.

The Club, who operate the pool during the non-summer months through a management agreement with the Council, consider that the pool has historical significance and a clear community involvement and believe its future should be ensured into the next Millennium. They are aware that major repair and renewal works to the pool are necessary despite the efforts of the Council in maintaining routine repairs and maintenance work over a number of years. The Club have therefore prepared proposals to revitalise the Lido and provide modern accommodation designed to encourage more diverse usage whilst preserving the character of the facility.

It is understood that Sub-Aqua Divers, Tri-Athletes and Canoeists are very keen to relocate their activities to the Lido which will increase the overall usage that the pool currently accommodates. The Club have sought the support of users and the local community at a public meeting which was held on 6th February 1996. The meeting was attended by over 120 people. Their proposals were very well received and positive comments were made by those groups present, including representatives of sports, local residents, the Tooting Common Management Advisory Committee and the Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce. The view of the meeting was that the support of the Council should be sought in proceeding with a joint lottery application.

The proposals by the Club are estimated to cost between £1.5 and £2.5 million depending on the extent of the structural repairs to the pool. Surveys carried out by the Leisure and Amenity Services Department have indicated that the fabric of the pool and its surrounds need substantial investment and routine repair and renewal expenditure over the next decade amounting to £500,000.

Preliminary discussions with the Sports Council have indicated that the proposals - particularly with the partnership with the Club and involvement of organisations such as the Tri-Athlete Association - are likely to generate 95% funding. The Council has allocated £30,000 in the capital programme and a further £30,000 grant from the Marathon Charity Trust to provide children's play facilities at the Lido. The provision of these facilities would be an integral part of the Club's proposals. Their contribution would be between £45,000 and £95,000 and the Club believe that they can meet this commitment.

LEISURE AND AMENITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

We consider that the proposals by the Club are appropriate and timely and the Council's involvement as a partner in a bid for lottery funding would be consistent and financially prudent. It would also provide a positive response to the Club and the views and endorsements of the public meeting and the other consultation. Civic Leisure, who have the overall management responsibility for the Lido through the leisure centres management contract, also support the proposals.

The Director of Leisure and Amenity Services has indicated that the proposed Tooting Bec Lido scheme is likely to have no additional financial effects on the Council. There will be no overall increase in the net cost to Council funds as expectations are that lottery funding and other external funding will match the capital cost. A detailed report is to be made to our April 1996 meeting. This report will include a detailed estimate of the costs of the project, together with a statement of the proposed funding arrangements. This information will enable the Director of Finance to carry out and include in that report a full financial appraisal.

We have approved, in principle, the submission of a lottery bid in partnership with the South London Swimming Club and we have requested a report back to our meeting in April 1996 on the details of the proposals.