

Royton District Executive

Royton Pool Stonework Petition meeting report

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr B Brownridge, Cabinet Member for Cooperatives & Neighbourhoods

Officer Contact: Helen Lockwood, Executive Director, Cooperatives & Neighbourhoods

Officer Contact: Liz Fryman, District Coordinator
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18 January 2016

Decision required:

- 1. For the District Executive to note the report.**

1 Current Position

- 1.1 A petition was received by Oldham Council on 10th December 2015 which sought “*to save the front of the Old Royton Swimming Baths*”.
- 1.2 The Council Constitution requires that the Chair of the District Executive convenes a meeting within 21 days inviting the ward members, relevant officer and Executive Director.
- 1.3 This meeting took place on Monday 14th December 2016.

2 Background:

- 2.1 Member of the District Executive have spearheaded negotiations to ensure that as much of the historical stonework at the front of the pool be preserved as an item of important historical interest and would like to note that agreements to keep parts of the frontage are already in place with the applicant and their contractors, and the District Executive has initiated this.
- 2.2 This plan was first shared in the public domain as far back as January 2014 when local Cllrs published an article on ‘I Love Royton’ regarding the new pool. The article states very clearly that ‘The stone work over the entrance to the old baths will be preserved and incorporated into the new scheme”.
- 2.3 The members of the District Executive have met several times between 13 January 2015 and the present day with the project delivery team at Wilmot Dixon and have discussed options to salvage and re-use the stonework. Options looked at were to retain the frontage as is but this was rejected due to high costs involved.
- 2.4 Regeneration had a conversation with Willmott Dixon about the implications for retaining the pool façade during the early design stages. It became clear that to do this would result in a loss of car parking and involve a significant cost (more than £50k if the façade is supported by a steel frame). There was also a discussion about including elements of the stone in the new build but again for cost and logistical reasons (new building completed before old building is demolished) this was not taken any further.
- 2.5 However, it was also noted that planning application (PA/335177/14) for the demolition of the existing pool, police station and other commercial buildings; the erection of a Leisure Centre; and, setting out of a car park and landscaping works, clearly allowed the demolition of the baths in their entirety, including the frontage in question.
- 2.6 Specifically, none of the CGIs submitted with the application showed the façade being retained. The application clearly stated that all buildings would be demolished in documents and forms. No representations on the

application raised objection to the scheme on demolition grounds. Subsequently, the application was dealt with at planning committee on this basis on 16th April 2014 where it was approved.

- 2.7** Nevertheless, following a call from the lead petitioner on 25th November 2015, it was noticed that there were two annotations which referred to the retention of the façade on the originally approved site plan. It is apparent that this was an error on the drawing which the architect should have removed.
- 2.8** To deal with this error, an application for a non-material amendment was submitted to the Council (reference: PA/335177/14). This application was made valid on 10th December 2015 and the application was determined on 7th January 2016. The amendment was granted and is for the removal of a plan annotation and reference in the Design and Access Statement for the retention of the Royton Sports Centre facade to enable the demolition of all existing buildings.
- 2.9** Since there is already a legal planning process to deal with this non-material amendment, it was considered that the process should continue.
- 2.10** Successful retrieval of the stonework without damage cannot of course be guaranteed but plans are in place for detailed photographs and filming of the work to salvage the stones for the historical record. Once the stonework has been taken down, a design will be developed to re-use the stonework at a site in Royton.

3 Recommendation of the District Executive Petition meeting:

- 3.1** That the excellent work continues to secure a permanent location for the historical stonework from the front of the pool.
- 3.2** That the petition be considered in the assessment of the application and appropriate weight will be given to it.