

Responses from Headteachers, collated by Mr Moynihan, Headteacher of St Mary's C of E Primary School, Credenhill

School	Comments
Broadlands Primary School	As always I support what you are doing John and if I can help in any way do contact me
Brockhampton Primary School	I don't use the LEA pool as we swim at Tenbury. However, I felt I ought to just reply to your email and support what you are doing. It would be interesting to see how many schools are considering canceling swimming altogether as this could be a powerful part of the persuasion process.
Dilwyn CE Primary School	<p>This doesn't affect me or our school directly as we go to Leominster for our swimming. and will continue to because it's relatively local.</p> <p>In case it's of any use, I'll give you my general views.</p> <p>If we were closer to Hereford I would certainly choose the LEA pool rather than Leominster, as it is more suitable for school purposes in terms of design of both the changing facilities and the pool itself.</p>
Holmer CE Primary School	<p>The Leisure Pool is not suitable or satisfactory.</p> <p>Do the Directorate understand that?</p> <p>We need a solution but it has to be affordable.</p> <p>We cannot afford to pay an excessive hire charge because the cost of travel and tuition go on top of that.</p> <p>There should be a universal provision for the County and the charge should be the same for all schools.</p> <p>We need to find out what the DCSF expects of councils in the way of their duties to provide suitable pools.</p> <p>What happens elsewhere?</p> <p>I also think my idea of capital expenditure to take over the pool's repairs is a possibility.</p>
Kings Caple Primary School	<p>I am very concerned that the situation re; swimming in Herefordshire is becoming extremely difficult. If we have to pay additional costs it will be a problem for some of our parents and we cannot subsidise swimming more than we already do out of the school budget.</p> <p>The Leisure pool has been a reasonable interim measure but cannot be used on a long term basis as the splash pool is unsuitable for swimming lessons. We recently had a very worrying incident where one of our younger children nearly drowned after getting out of her depth and the shape and size of the pool make it difficult to teach any skills to the children. The teaching pool is too shallow and the main pool is too deep for the younger children. We have always prided ourselves on being able to offer swimming for the whole school, all year round. This is now in jeopardy.</p> <p>We moved to the LEA pool after an incident at the Ross Pool when a member of the public took his clothes off in the shower in full view of the boys changing in the changing rooms. The staff did not seem to feel that this was a serious incident! And considered that the changing rooms should be available to the public while the children were using them...</p> <p>I sincerely hope that we can use the LEA pool in the future and that the costs will not be prohibitive. I believe there is a Government agenda that all children should be able to swim for free!</p>

Kingstone and Thruxton Primary School	Thank you for your recent reminder email regarding the swimming pool. I would just like to add our name to the list of concerned schools. We have been involved in discussions with John Moynihan before and I am sure there is nothing I can say as regards reasons / concerns about continued use of the HALO pool that has not already been said. But I would like to endorse those concerns. We feel very strongly that the quality of swimming teaching and progress has slowed significantly since we have been using HALO and that a return to the LA pool at St. Martins is the only reasonable solution.
Ledbury Primary School	Regarding the swimming we are still having ongoing problems at Ledbury with Halo. Members of the public still undress in front of our children and Halo are a nightmare to work with. We have no choice but to use these facilities in Ledbury but I would highly recommend having the LA pool back in action in Hereford.
Little Dewchurch CE Primary School	<p>As I understand it, we presently pay £32.80 for half an hour's tuition each week. Under the first option, this would rise to £53 per week. If this is the only way to retain the LA pool, then I would vote for that option. I really am not happy with the situation at the Leisure pool, despite their attempts at reassuring us that the service would improve. Would we be guaranteed in writing that the main pool and diving pool would be available every week? At present we have only the splash pool, which is really unsuitable for swimming lessons. There is no point in spending money on sub-standard provision.</p> <p>Is there any date for when the LA pool might be open? I presume the present unsatisfactory situation will continue in September. If I am only offered the splash pool, I am considering discontinuing swimming lessons until we have proper provision again.</p>
Longtown Primary School	Longtown would dearly love to see the LEA pool remain open – even if the cost went up to £106 per hour. We would find some way initially of funding the increased cost of £21 per week. I spent many hours years ago trying to optimise our swimming provision – I wouldn't like to lose it now. However, we would not cancel our swimming lessons at the Leisure pool, albeit a second class option, but may reduce our take up.
Marden Primary School	<p>I apologise for not communicating my thoughts with regards to the LEA pool sooner.</p> <p>As you are aware we made a decision here at Marden Primary School to not swim at the Leisure Pool after Easter due to Health and Safety reasons and the poor provision that the children were receiving. We still stand by that decision. We wish for the LEA pool to be re-opened and swimming lessons to recommence there.</p>
Michaelchurch Escley Primary School	We would happily pay the higher rate to go back to the LEA pool, otherwise we shall be looking to cross the border into WALES and take our swimmers to Hay or Abergavenny and the council will lose our custom altogether.
Much Birch Primary School	<p>Like my colleagues am wholly dissatisfied with the current provision provided at the city pool following the closure of the LEA Pool. I have contacted the cabinet and other councillors who have failed to even reply to any of my e-mails perhaps unlike me they do not find it sufficiently of importance for Headteachers to be entered into dialogue with regarding this matter. I have had good support from my own councillor Richard Smith who has tried to support a dialogue in order to keep the pool open. How many other councillors will be even aware of what is about to happen!!</p> <p>We have had little hard factual costings on which to base any decision.</p>

	<p>The City Pool has very limited provision for our children at present. They are only be taught in the totally unsatisfactory wave pool and diving pool. This does not give pupils an opportunity to build up stroke stamina, are hard to teach due to the height of the wall in the wave pool and are too tightly packed for proper instruction to take place. My parents are furious that the LEA pool is likely to be closed and they too find the current arrangements unsatisfactory.</p> <p>I feel this closure could be yet another sign of the deterioration in provision for pupils in Herefordshire when they are talking constantly about raising standards. Once gone like school kitchens this pool will be mourned and it will never come back but only in a form where money proves the deciding factors.</p> <p>I hope councillors will support Heads in our desire to keep the pool open why not ask the electorate what they think!</p>
Peterchurch Primary School	<p>I fully support the campaign to re-open the LEA pool and will be willing to pay £106 per hour to retain it. We have our own learner pool here but value the deep water experience our children receive at the LEA pool. We would probably not use Halo next year with the arrangements as they are due too the completely unsuitable facilities for those children who have to go in the Leisure pool which is too shallow in many cases and with that big wall most unsuitable for teaching. I also remain concerned about health and safety issues and therefore have to send a very high number of staff to supervise during the sessions.</p>
St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School	<p>I will be writing to the parents in Key Stage Two to tell them that we will not be going swimming next year as the Leisure Pool is unsuitable. I will also canvass the parents regarding the extra cost of having to pay for the L.E.A. Pool if it is reopened. (approx. £1 a week). The suggestion has also made that we could consider going to Leominster Pool as – time wise – it is a similar journey. I will investigate this.</p> <p>I hope that the heads in the other 36 schools do the same. If everyone refuses to use the Leisure Pool then action might be taken.</p>
St Paul's Primary School	<p>I hope that the Cabinet can find a way to support school swimming. St Paul's CE Primary organises swimming lessons for all eight, nine and ten year old pupils and over the years there have been almost no non swimmers leaving our school. Without a suitable pool this situation will not continue, children unable to swim will be leaving our school. The teachers who are currently accompanying the pupils to the Leisure Pool have told me that the water depth is not suitable for the range of swimmers we have, it is too shallow or too limited for the novice swimmers to build their stamina and the shared public arrangements are not conducive to a lesson environment. I believe that I will have to end our swimming traditions. What a testimony to the vision of our community leaders closing the school pool will be. With a heavy heart I implore them to keep searching. This is a really important matter.</p>
St Mary's CE Primary School (Fownhope)	<p>I can confirm St. Mary's total support for the reopening of the LA pool even if this means at a higher rate.</p> <p>You know my strength of feeling on the matter and like you and others, if the option is Leisure pool or nothing, we'll choose not to swim.</p>

St Thomas Cantilupe Primary School	<p>The children of Herefordshire would be best served by the capital investment being put into essentially rebuilding the St. Martin's Pool. Were this to be properly staffed and run as a business, letting out to swimming / training clubs in the evenings and weekends (possible public opening on Saturday and Sunday) I believe it would be a profitable concern as has been the case in the past. The figures presented showing a huge loss year on year were incomplete, as discussed at the meeting, and give a somewhat biased viewpoint and do not take all factors into account.</p> <p>Despite the increasing restraints on my school budget, I would far rather face an increased hourly charge than lose St. Martin's pool. Currently the facilities that we are paying for at the leisure pool are appalling and certainly not value for money.</p> <p>The case for investment at the public swimming pool is a cause for concern. Even if the investment provides a private entrance, changing facilities, showers and dedicated access to the pools (with non-slip flooring) that works well, Herefordshire adults will still face the loss of swimming facilities from 9-12.00 and 1-3.00 pm every day. What about patrons who have purchased an annual or monthly subscription to be able to use these facilities daily? It seems to me that schools will bear the negative publicity around such a move rather than the decision makers who would close their purpose built facility. Herefordshire is a county which has a paucity of public leisure facilities when compared to many other towns and cities in England and Wales. Surely we need more sport / leisure facilities and not less?</p> <p>Herefordshire people are slow to demonstrate their disapproval, but feelings were made perfectly clear when the proposed school closures became public. This could also be the case were Cabinet decide to close St. Martin's pool and allow Halo the autonomy to determine our children's swimming provision for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Whilst the offer of the use of the main pool and the training pool by Halo to Herefordshire schools promises to be a vast improvement on the inadequate and dirty leisure pool, I just wonder what the knock on effect will be on the general public.</p>
Wellington Primary School	<p>Would wish to see the LEA pool reopened. We agree in principle with your comments, but wish to point out that with the ever increasing cost of transporting our children to the pool, along with the tuition/pool hire fees, we are asking our parents/carers to pay for a school lesson which is approaching the cost of a good 'small group' lesson.</p>
Withington Primary School	<p>As I said yesterday, fully supportive of LA pool and yes a small price (comparatively!) to pay if fees increase. Withington would much prefer LA pool and option of Leisure pool has at best been a 'stop gap'.</p>

The four Headteachers representing the other Schools would like to make it known they are in favour of the St Martin's Pool being reopened

- Mr J Moynihan (St Mary's CE Primary School – Credenhill)
- Mr E McGilp (St Martin's Primary School)
- Mr A Thomas (Holme Lacy Primary School)
- Mrs A Taylor (St Mary's CE Primary School – Fownhope)

Responses received directly by the local authority

Mr Pugh, Chair of Primary Heads Forum	As a member of the Education Scrutiny Committee, I received a copy of John Moynihan's letter, dated 27th June, exhorting the cabinet to re-open St Martin's Pool. The letter implies that Mr Moynihan's group has the backing of the Primary Heads' Forum, and is written on behalf of the Forum. This is not the case. Mr Moynihan has addressed the Forum on several occasions, and no doubt has some support amongst colleague heads, but the Forum has not voted on the issue, and has no identified 'corporate' view. Mr Moynihan makes some valid points in his letter, and there are health and safety and child protection issues that need to be considered very carefully before a final decision is taken. Nevertheless, the St Martin's pool issue is essentially one for city schools. Even though my own school uses the pool, as Chair of the Forum I have to take the wider view that other county schools should not subsidise city schools' swimming.
Marlbrook	Whilst the HALO pool isn't perfect, I think the St Martins pool will be a 'white elephant' – George however said the charges would be £60-80, not £106 Could this be clarified, but still think HALO better long term option.

In addition to the above responses, Cabinet has also received the following submissions:

Petition

A 261 signature petition, organised by Otto Putland, supporting the reopening of the LEA Pool. A covering note from Otto, addressed to Members of the Council Cabinet, reads:

"This is just part of a petition I have started to gain support for the re-opening of the LEA Swimming Pool. The remainder will follow. Please reconsider the options available. Please do not make decisions based on financial factors. There should be another pool provided before you agree to the permanent closure."

Portfolio of letters from pupils school pupils

A portfolio entitled "Save the LEA Pool" and consisting of 20 letters from pupils in Year 5 at St Mary's C of E Primary School, Credenhill. All the letters are addressed to Cllr Matthews. The letters express the pupils' wish to see the LEA Pool reopen and their concerns with the alternative provision at the Hereford Leisure Centre. Specifically, the concerns expressed are:

- The safety of children using the Hereford Leisure Centre at the same time as the public. The LEA Pool provides for the exclusive use for schools.
- Leisure Centre pool floors being slippery.
- A child trapped his fingers in a door at the Leisure Centre.
- Economic consideration versus the cost of a child's life through being unable to swim adequately.
- Spend money on opening the pool, not on Council offices.
- Leisure pool is too deep and cramped.
- LEA pool will help address child obesity.
- Leisure centre teaching pool is too shallow.
- Safer for children to use the toilets at the LEA Pool.
- Do not get enough time in Leisure pool because distance to walk to changing rooms eats into swimming time available. Should get 30 minutes tuition time in the pool, but only getting 15 minutes.

School Use of Hereford Leisure Pool Complex (Term time only)				
	Current times to Dec 08 (at the latest)	Proposed times from Jan 2009		
Main Swimming Pool	-			
Mon	-	10.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00	
Tues	-	10.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00	
Wed	-	10.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00	
Thu	-	10.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00	
Fri	-	10.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00	
Teaching Pool				
Mon	1.00 - 3.30	9.00 - 9.30	11.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.30
Tue	1.00 - 2.00	9.00 - 10.00	11.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 2.00
Wed	1.00 - 3.30	9.00 - 9.30	11.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.30
Thu	-	9.00 - 10.00	11.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.00
Fri	2.00 - 3.30	9.00 - 9.30	11.00 - 12.00	1.00 - 3.30
Leisure Pool				
Mon	-			
Tue	-			
Wed	2.00 - 3.00			
Thu	9.30 - 10.00			
Fri			9.30 - 10.00	