

BRIGHTLINGSEA LIDO



Outline Proposal for Brightlingsea Lido (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

January 2018 to December 2023

1933-2018

85

YEARS



BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Brightlingsea outdoor swimming pool or Lido was built in 1933 and is 85 years old; it is the only outdoor Lido in Essex. It is an established part of the fabric of the town and has a heritage timeline that is cherished by residents and visitors alike. When conducting research and assessing community opinion¹ it is evident that there is strong support for maintaining the Lido as a community asset.

The Lido has suffered from a lack of investment in recent years but the Town Council has been committed to maintaining it as a facility and resource for leisure and tourism. The Lido is an integral part of the Western Promenade area along with a boating lake, paddling pool, playground area, beach huts, gardens and skate park. The Lido has been threatened with closure by the District Council for many years, and in the last two financial years has been open for limited periods due to maintenance issues and financial constraints.

Brightlingsea Town Council (BTC) has been engaged in discussions and negotiations with Tendring District Council (TDC) over the last eighteen months to determine its viability. The outcome is an agreement to initiate a Community Asset Transfer of the Lido through a leasehold agreement. As part of this agreement BTC intends to establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to run and manage the Lido.

The Asset Transfer should be seen within a wider context of improvements to the whole of the Western Promenade. Essex County Council has published plans for a coastal pathway and there are a number of initiatives at the planning stage, which will enhance the facilities and attractiveness of the area.

Tendring in general is an area which has varying levels of deprivation and above average indicators of need in respect of physical and mental health and overall wellbeing.²

BTC is keen to contribute to these area wide developments and work with stakeholders to enhance provision for leisure and commercial users. Improving and modernising the Lido and developing additional facilities are key elements in current BTC plans. In the overall scheme of things, the priorities for BTC are to focus on the provision of healthy and sustainable facilities for lifestyle improvement – delivered through an improved Lido and surrounding area. The Lido is currently inaccessible by people with disabilities and there is a need to improve access across the board and provide high class facilities for this user group. Local schools, with over 1500 students in total have no town based swimming training facility; there is a resurgence of interest in lidos nationally as healthy community assets. Promoting the heritage timeline of the Lido would be vital to engaging with the local community, and the overall project development would bring full time and seasonal employment opportunities, and potential year-round usage by many community interest groups.

In a broader context the Lido development will seek to address issues of flood damage prevention caused by climate change, and acknowledge conservation and environmental imperatives to embrace renewable energy sources and modern engineering and design techniques.



1 (Wellbeing Open Day Feb 2017, Public Meeting April 2017, Carnival Stall June 2017)

2 (Govt sources – General statistical office – Tendring)

INTRODUCTION

Brightlingsea Lido is a unique asset on the sea front and closure threats have created strong local opposition. Whilst it has a cherished heritage the fact that it has become neglected and unreliable has led to some loss of the goodwill of the Brightlingsea community.

In year 2017 the pool was open to the public for only 43 days out of a potential 110.

Brightlingsea Lido (BL) is being created, and will be managed through the structure of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to keep the pool open and progressively upgrade it to a first class facility. BTC, in conjunction with the CIO, will take over the running of the facility from Tendring District Council, and in so doing help reduce or eliminate its financial liabilities.

This plan outlines BL's business case for taking over the management of the facility. It is anticipated that Tendring District Council will grant a progressive and long lease for the site, with the prospect of an eventual freehold transfer. BTC will act as an intermediary within this process.

BL's plans are in keeping with the review of community management and ownership of public assets, which identifies two points of relevance to the future of Brightlingsea's open air pool namely:

- a) Local groups should be encouraged to take over owning or managing community assets.
- b) Local government needs to be more than simply a deliverer of public services, and needs to focus more on the overall welfare of its communities; their cohesion and harmony and the capacity for self-management.

The objectives of BL are to:

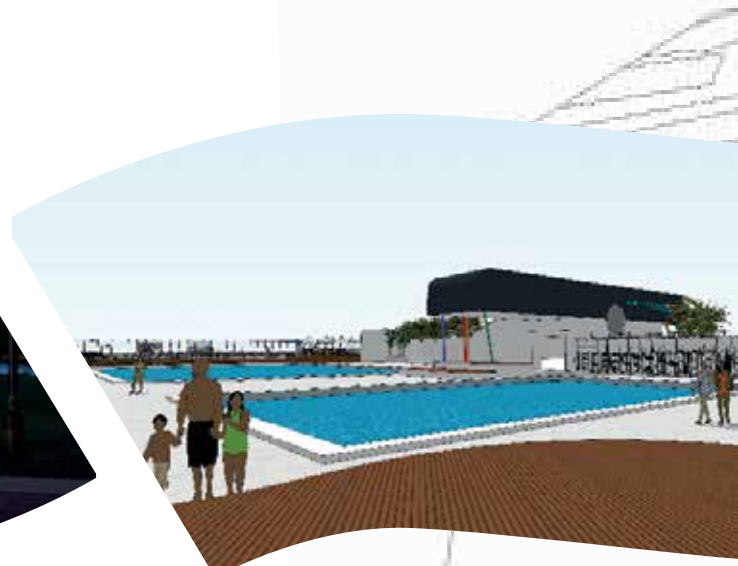
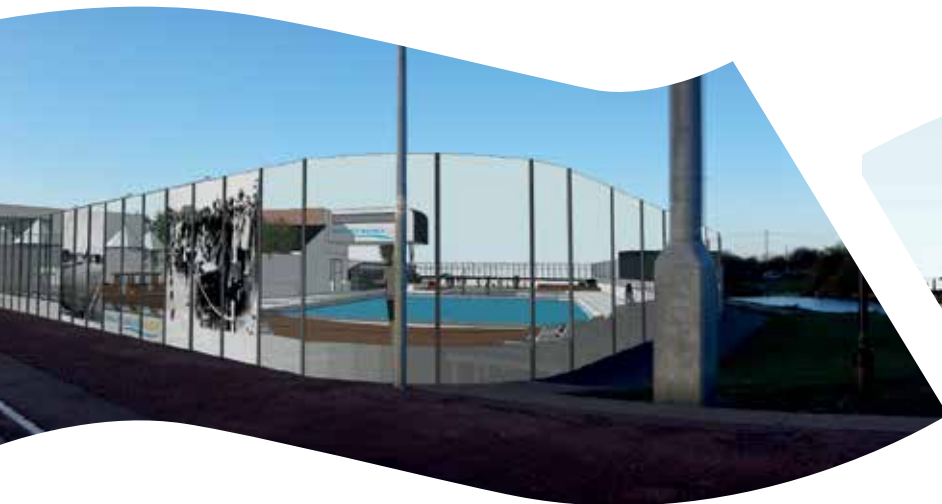
1. Keep the pool open for the local community and surrounding areas for future generations.
2. Manage, maintain and enhance the pool as a strong, vibrant facility.

3. Work in partnership with Tendring District Council, BTC and other relevant and sympathetic organisations.
4. Achieve near financial independence within five years of taking over the running of the Lido.
5. Work towards a fully sustainable and accessible resource for all.

The aim is to re-open the pool in May 2018, and in that first year BL management will:

- a) Change the opening hours to increase flexibility for its customers and enable access by local clubs.
- b) Undertake a full accessibility assessment.
- c) Improve the visual aspects of the facility including sea views.
- d) Ensure trouble free and continuous operation throughout the summer period.
- e) Finalise the long term development plan, subject to possible EU and/or other funding.
- f) Review the potential food and beverage marketing opportunity and other leisure based income streams.
- g) Promote BL's vision of the Lido to the Brightlingsea community.
- h) Design an effective pool water heating system largely based upon renewable or recoverable energy sources

Budgets for the first five years from 2018 – 2023, has been prepared with associated cash flow forecasts and tested for sensitivity. Two scenarios have been considered, part funded and fully funded, each of which is sustainable.





BRIGHTLINGSEA LIDO (BL)

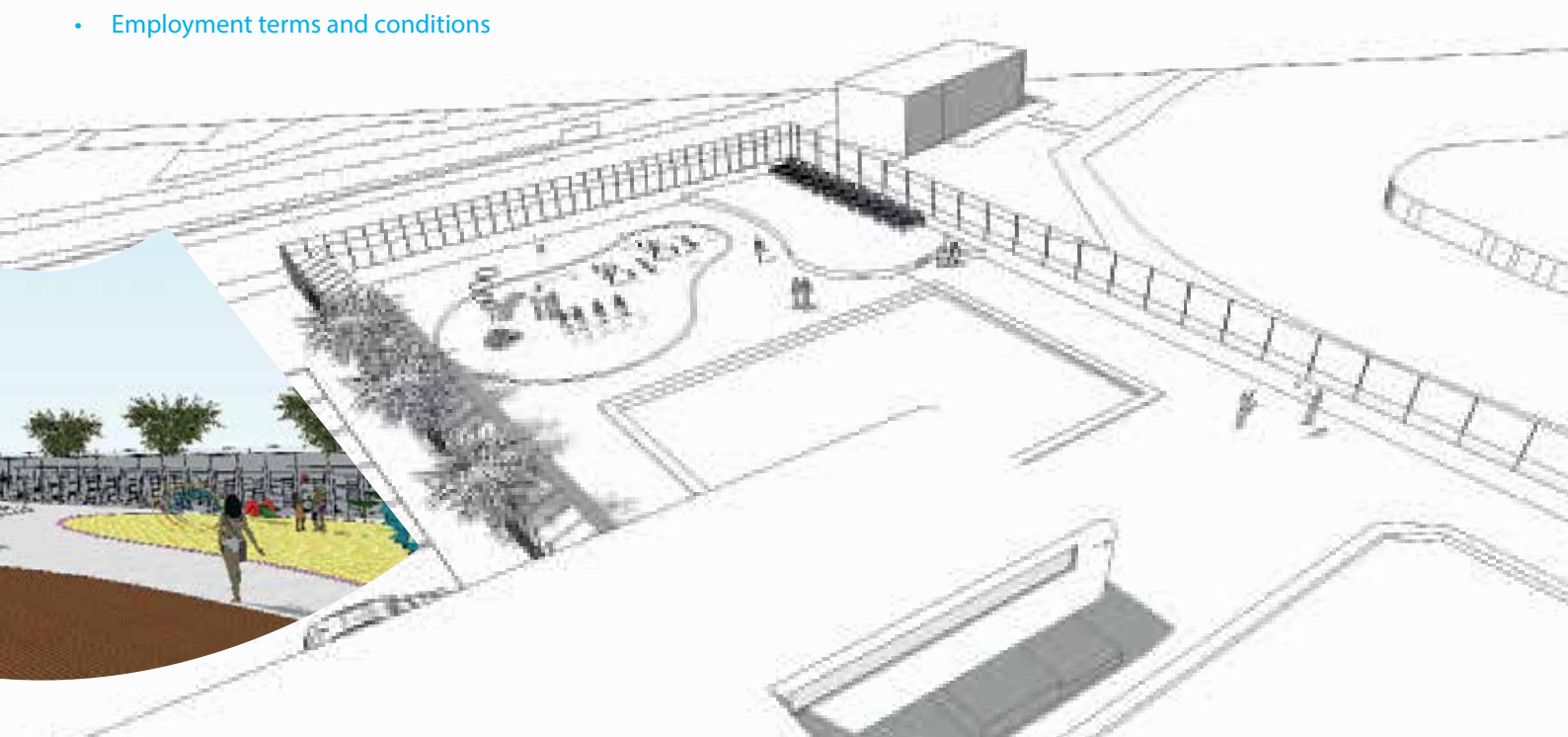
BL will be a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). It will be not for profit, have limited liability and enjoy charitable status.

The management team will consist of eight trustees (directors), the pool manager, and community representatives. Each will have defined roles and responsibilities.

BL will produce detailed policies prior to opening on the following:

- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Volunteers
- Vulnerable staff, volunteers and visitors
- DBS checks
- Employment terms and conditions

ACCESSIBLE
INCLUSIVE
SUSTAINABLE





VIABILITY

A key element of the financial viability of the pool will be the success in increasing annual visitor numbers from the current figure of around 5,000 in 2016 to the more representative figure of 11,500 achieved in 2014. With plans to increase accessibility for all user groups, and open for longer hours over an extended time frame, the target figure is conservative at this point. Although the figures are obviously seasonal, and to some extent weather dependant, the expectation is that a revamp and rebranding of the Lido will attract considerable community and visitor interest and increase footfall significantly above the target figure. Promotional and sensitive pricing structures will also attract users and families to access the facility more regularly and routinely than at present.

It should be noted that even the 2014 attendance only equated to a revenue of £28,000. Pell's Pool, a comparable unheated facility in Lewes, reported a corresponding income of £93,000 (2017).

Other income streams need to be identified and developed, and it is anticipated that the catering provision will transfer to an in-house ownership at some future point. Most similar facilities rely upon a successful in-house arrangement.

BL will be reliant upon fund raising initiatives and charitable donations of around £6,000 in year 1 and future years.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The expectation is that the Lido will require a revenue subsidy from BTC of £20,000 for each of the first three years, reducing in years four and five.

In addition to revenue support, there is need for an initial capital contribution of £50,500. This is primarily needed to overcome the neglect experienced over recent years, and the irrecoverable damage to key elements of the plant and equipment.

Tendring District Council have been asked for £20,000 in this regard. This however is understood to be significantly less than the cost to that authority should they either decommission or continue to operate the pool.

This request is in line with the Department for Communities and Local Government recommendations for the transfer of assets to community management (Managing Risks in Asset Transfer: June 2008).

It is hoped that BTC will contribute £30,000 at the set-up stage, some of which may be sourced from Section 106 monies.

A further £10,000 will be required via heritage and other grant funding bodies.

EXISTING FACILITY

The outdoor Lido consists of two pools. The main pool has principal dimensions of 50m x 20m which includes an offset within its shape. It is 1.8m at its deepest and 0.9m at the shallow end. There is also a paddling pool, 20m x 20m and of depth 0.3m.

It was originally a sea water pool but now operates as a fresh water facility.

The area around the pool is crudely landscaped with artificial grass and paving slabs at the pool's edges.

The total area of the main pool equates to 910 sq.m, and volume 1,170 cu.m

The plant and equipment are aged and of limited life. The main circulating pump has been condemned, and assumed scrapped because of the protective filter not being properly maintained. The underground distribution pipework has apparently collapsed.

The pool is painted each year by leisure operatives, and takes weeks to fill, prior to opening. Skilled operators are retained throughout the period, to oversee the chemical dosing of pool water. This is a costly exercise.

Brightlingsea
Swimming
Pool, 1970s



Brightlingsea
Swimming
Pool, 1960s

Brightlingsea
Swimming Pool, Navy/
Army Swim Gala



DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION

The development of the Lido has been separated into three elements. "Works" are essential and necessary in the first year. "Additional" and "Further Works" in later years are desirable, but totally reliant upon future funding.

YEAR 1, WORKS

It is proposed that the Lido will be operational from Summer 2018 in its basic form and developed thereafter.

The defective pool pipework and condemned pump will be replaced. Existing filtration equipment will continue to be operated. The reported crack at the deep end of the pool will be remedied.

A wind protection glazed area will provide a view across the Colne estuary which will appreciably lift the Lido experience, and visibly indicate future intent.

The changing areas will be improved cosmetically, and the showers returned to service.

The pre-opening painting and commissioning of the pool will be reduced to three weeks

YEAR 2 – 5, ADDITIONAL WORKS

The priority of year 2 will be the introduction of leading edge disabled facilities, with associated emphasis upon the development of a matching culture. BL is currently engaged in discussions with national specialists. (See Appendix A)

Another important part of the project with a wide range of benefits is the re-configuration of the pool form. The maximum length of the main pool is currently 50m. Because it is a diagonal it has no significant value, and does not lend the pool suitable for competition. It is therefore intended that the offset "dogleg" is removed by the construction of a retaining wall, which will create a rectangular structure. The nominal dimensions will be 33m x 20m, still a sizeable pool and considerably greater than traditional municipal facilities (over two times). Its area will be 660sq.m and volume 800cu.m. The reduction in size will also reduce maintenance and other operational costs, while still supporting a safe occupancy of 250 persons.

This development will release 250sq.m of space for spectators and relaxation, which will be particularly beneficial in what is a slightly limited area. In addition, it will facilitate the construction of a stepped terrace which will allow unobstructed views over the Colne estuary, and engagement with the beach and boating lake. It will also allow straightforward and economic replacement of further suspect underground pipework.

The small paddling pool will also be reduced in area, to create further space for spectators and parental supervision. The remaining paddling area will be converted into a wet play area with geysers and hydrants.

It is proposed to provide a semi-automatic main pool cover which will immediately increase the temperature of the water by reducing overnight losses. It is also the pre-cursor to the installation of a primary heating system.

Changing facilities will be significantly redeveloped, with the attractive possibility of adopting a beach hut theme.

FURTHER WORKS

While timing is indeterminate, BL is determined to heat the pool in future years. The target temperature would be 28 deg C, which is a compromise between comfort and the avoidance of algae growth.

BL is equally resolved to use recoverable sources. While the energy industry rapidly advances, the likely system would almost certainly consist of a combination of solar and other technologies. Heat pumps would also be featured, and where possible utilise upgraded energy from the sea.

At some point in the medium term it is envisaged that a total replacement of filtration and pumps will be required.

The achievement of a fully accessible resource, together with a carbon neutral heated facility, are the twin aims of the further works designed to make the Brightlingsea Lido a flagship of its kind in the region and nationally.



BRIGHTLINGSEA LIDO



FINANCIAL ISSUES

BL has prepared draft income and expenditure budgets for the period 2018 –22.

Two scenarios have been considered “Part Funded” and “Fully Funded” - see Income and Expenditure Budgets. The first is based upon the essential work in year one, followed by only general improvements over the rest of the period. This reflects no significant ongoing investment and therefore fundamental change. The second assumes a much higher level of funding, with associated dramatic developments including terraced areas and pool heating.

Each projection includes an estimate of investment “Capex and new facilities” which is the same in year 1 & 2, but reduces thereafter in the Part Funded forecast.

A Capex breakdown is shown in the “Capital Expenditure Summary” which is summarised in three elements, Works, Additional Works and Further Works. It is assumed that all Capex is supported by external funding rather than from cashflow.

Income forecasts for 2018 are fundamentally based upon the attendances and revenues achieved in 2014. This is the last year that reflects a fully operational season, and normal trading circumstances. The figures have been adjusted by RPI.

Revenues and operating expenses rise by the rate of inflation which is assumed to be 3% year throughout the period.

Salary costs are also assumed to rise by the rate of inflation.

“Part funded”

This plan assumes a steady rise in customer numbers over the period, linked to some new works, community

involvement and effective marketing. The growth profile is 10% each year. This has been influenced by the experience of Pell’s Pool which has many historic similarities with Brightlingsea’s situation.

The projected figures represent a conservative assessment of income, and control of expenses. BL is assessing contingencies and strategies should visitor numbers be lower than expected.

The projections show a broadly breakeven situation with the project continuing to require revenue support from Brightlingsea Town Council. It is interesting to note however that Pell’s Pool has thrived in similar circumstances, and now enjoys positive and impressive cash reserves.

It is unfortunate that Brightlingsea Lido does not at the moment have exclusive income stream from sales of food and beverage, but this will be part of further discussions and planning.


“Fully funded”

The fully funded plan assumes a higher level of growth of 20%, although, as before, this is still considered conservative and prudent.

The scheme would have considerable impact with added space for relaxation and spectacular sea and beach views. The most noticeable change however would be the introduction of heated pool water, principally generated from recoverable sources.

This option shows rapidly rising prosperity, as the site develops. Financial independence and sustainability will be achieved by the end of the period.

Initial financial support however is required at the outset, as it is for the Part Funded option.



FINANCIAL
INDEPENDENCE &
SUSTAINABILITY
WILL BE ACHIEVED
BY THE END OF
THE PERIOD.

NOTES RE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGETS

1. Admissions

The pool will be open from end-May until the first week in September, exact dates to suit school and bank holidays

The pool will open from 8am – 7pm every weekend and holiday but restricted to an average of 7 hours per day on all other days.

Swim prices will broadly be set the same as 2017, but with some incentives for families and regular users.

It is essential that an intensive pre-opening marketing campaign is launched within the locality. This should be designed to create awareness and confidence in the project, and show that a programme of improvements is planned in the medium term. The financial projections are based upon a pool revenue of £30k, but sensitivity tested with a minimum of £24k

2. Brightlingsea Town Council

It is assumed that BTC will provide an operating grant of £20,000 for the first three years, reviewable.

3. Tendring District Council

It is anticipated that TDC will contribute £20,000 in the first year towards capital costs from the allocated decommissioning budget. Discussions re transitional support and staffing are currently being negotiated.

4. Essex County Council

No contribution included but application intended.

5. Public subscription and membership

A marketing campaign will be launched within the area, to revive the reputation of the pool. This is aimed at direct subscription as well as stimulating fund raising events.

The trust will introduce a membership scheme, the annual subscription will be £10 per annum and the aim will be a minimum of 100 members.

6. Sponsorship

Businesses within the area will targeted to attract likely commercial and sympathetic support. It is anticipated that the Lido will be seen as a positive investment opportunity for businesses and individuals. Community funding from supermarkets and other sources will be approached.

7. Manager

A manager will be recruited for a 6 month period beginning mid-March 2018. This will be a crucial appointment as that person will fulfil a multitude of roles and be trained in pool plant operation and will also be a qualified lifeguard. They will also be active in presenting and marketing the pool – social media will be vital.

The manager will supervise and motivate other staff members and endeavour to recruit volunteers wherever possible to control the payroll budget.

8,9,10. Lifeguards, cleaning and reception staff

There will be an average of three lifeguards on duty always, with the manager in support at peak times. There will also have to be volunteer involvement to provide cover for breaks and sickness, as well as allowing staff circulation.

The key requirement is pool supervision, but lifeguards will be expected to undertake other tasks such as cleaning and maintenance.

At off-peak times the pool occupancy will have to be restricted to maintain the necessary level of supervision but with fewer staff.

The Lido will try and recruit lifeguard trainees and students who are seeking experience in lieu of pay. Those who are involved in community schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh or Scouts/Guides may be interested. Members and trustees of BL may also make themselves available for training.

Volunteers will only be on duty when part of a supervised team.

Organisations such as the RNLI may be able to help.

The lifeguards will be part time, apart from one who will be full time and fulfil a senior and/or assistant manager role

All paid staff will be re-numerated on basis of living wage apart from the supervisor who will earn a modest premium.

11. Electricity

The dominant use of power will be the main circulating pump. Consumption will reduce in year 2 by a combination of smaller pool water volume and the introduction of control technologies.

12. Water services

Water charges comprise initial fill, evaporation and backwash. Metering will be added and closely monitored. It is hoped that the fire service may be persuaded to help fill the pool initially.

13. Non-domestic rates

It has been assumed that the rates charges will be levied upon 80% of normal valuation in line with BL's charitable status. The remaining 20% may be offset at the discretion of Tendring District Council who are the collecting agent.



BRIGHTLINGSEA LIDO

