



## **Possible responses to the Wellbeing and Leisure consultation currently underway which is seriously considering the closure of BOTH Nye Bevan and Park Pools.**

The consultation is webpage based and can be accessed at <https://letstalkwestlancashire.uk.engagementhq.com/wellbeing-leisure-consultation/surveys/wellbeing-leisure-consultation> If you have completed consultations with the Borough Council in the past you can simply login. If this is the first time you will need to register. If registering, do not be put off by various diversity questions. You are not compelled to provide answers to those if you do not wish to do so. You can still register and participate.

You can dip in and out of your response because at the base of each page there is an option to “save and continue”. After completing a page and pressing that button anything you have entered up until then will be saved. You can return again by following the link and logging in again.

Below are the questions along with some pointers and information that you might wish to consider to supplement your own answers. On some questions we have not included any comments.

### **Question 1 Do you consent for the Council to collate and process your feedback?**

This is the consent question which the council requires to process your response. No personal information which could identify any person will be reported to councillors or publicised but a summary of the consultation including number of responses; answers to questions and comments made will be reported to councillors, so please take part in this consultation because the strongest possible response will have the greatest impact.

### **Question 2 What best describes you?**

**Question 3 What is your interest in this survey?** Please tick as many boxes as are relevant to yourself. Consultation responses are individual. If there are other members of your household who are concerned ask them to register and then complete a separate consultation responses. We are especially encouraging responses from children who will be impacted by the loss of swimming at the two pools. We also encourage you to tick the “Another Interest” box and expand at length in the comment box that then appears on why you are taking time to complete the consultation response.

### **Points you might wish to make in this box are:**

#### ***The impact of pool closures on the health and wellbeing of the local population.***

- 25% of children in West Lancashire are overweight when they start school which is a figure above the national average.. This rises to 37% at age 11
- 20% of the local population report having a limited long term illness or disability, well above the national average
- Life expectancy is below the national average and deaths from circulatory diseases are 10% above the national average and deaths from heart disease 13% above the national average

[Source: Department of Health and Social Care Public Health Profiles]

### ***The impact on the delivery of the key skill of learning to swim***

Key facts: 2816 children learn to swim at the two pools each week. Park Pool has 1,261 children on swim lessons per week. In addition 9 schools use the pool for National Curriculum totalling 235 children. Nye Bevan has 675 children on swimming lessons per week. In addition 22 schools use the pool for National Curriculum totalling 645 children. [Source: West Lancashire Borough Council]

There is no alternative capacity in West Lancashire capable of taking these numbers. Edge Hill are refusing to discuss any use of their pool.

The Life Saving Society report that there have been 48 accidental drowning deaths in Lancashire in the past 5 years. 2023 saw Lancashire report the second-highest number of fatalities in England. [Source: <https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/24401034.charity-concerned-accidental-drownings-lancs-revealed/> ]

### ***The lack of affordable alternative activities for young people and families located in West Lancashire and accessible to without use of a car***

**Questions 4-10 Questions on** usage and travel – Answer as appropriate to your circumstances and usage of the centres. N.B. The council already have detailed usage figures at the council leisure centres

**Question 11 If the two centres (Nye Bevan & Park Pool) were closed, what would be the biggest loss for you?** – You can select up to 3 options. We suggest you use all three.

**Question 12 If the two centres (Nye Bevan & Park Pool) were closed, what steps (if any) would you take to access alternative leisure provision?** Answering Other is our recommended answer because it allows you to choose any of the options listed but to also state clearly the impact any closure will have on you.

**Question 13 If you were to use a non-Council leisure facility either within or outside the borough, what venue would you chose and why?** Note: responses have been limited to 255 characters by the council. Don't waste this question. If there is an alternative then also stress the disadvantages but if there is no suitable alternative facility say this loudly in this answer.

You might want to comment that Edge Hill are currently refusing to accept enquiries from user groups from Park Pool and Nye Bevan.

How financially pressed primary schools could afford the additional transport costs to alternative provision outside West Lancashire could also be mentioned.

**Question 14 What would be the biggest impacts on you, having to use an alternative site?** Please list all the impacts any closure will have, not simply the biggest. You can tick as many boxes as you wish. Also we recommend you answer Other because it allows you to expand and describe the impacts of any closure on other people you know.

**Points you may wish to include are:**

Inability to access an alternative site through the lack of transport options

The impact on the health and wellbeing of people you know - learning to swim; aerobic exercise; hydrotherapy; GP referral etc. They may simply be unable to access an alternative site

**Question 15 - If you chose "Increase in travel time" above, please state how much longer in minutes it would take you to travel to your preferred alternative choice.**

**Question 16 – Would you use another Council leisure centre or utilise our other health and wellbeing opportunities?** We suggest you choose Other as this allows you to expand on your comments.

**Points you may wish to include are:**

There would be no council-operated swimming pools in West Lancashire if this proposal goes ahead. Burscough Sports Centre is a "dry" centre. Key facts: Every single one of our neighbouring councils all operate between 2 and 5 council-run swimming pools. (Chorley 2; Knowsley 4; Sefton 3; South Ribble 3; St Helens 2; Wigan 5).

You may also want to comment on why the council proposes to continue to employ a Health and Wellbeing Team of desk officers at a cost of over £140,000 when there will be such a poor health and wellbeing offer remaining at the council if the pools close. You might say that this follows the closure of Beacon Park Golf Course last year.

**Question 17 - Are you aware of the other health and wellbeing opportunities the Council has to offer? (Walk this weigh initiative, Bike Ability, etc)**

**Question 18 – If you would not use another Council leisure facility, why not?**

The only significant leisure centre remaining if the council proceeds to close Nye Bevan and Park Pools is Burscough Sports Centre [North Meols leisure centre in Banks is now run by the parish council there]. **Burscough Sports Centre has no swimming pool; sauna; or jacuzzi.**

There is also extremely limited parking at Burscough Sports Centre while Tesco are considering restricting parking in their adjacent car park.

**Therefore we suggest that you consider ticking if relevant to you**

- **Not convenient/close**
- **Doesn't provide the facilities I need**
- **Cost**
- **Parking issues**

Also click Other and expand on these points – for example if you enjoy swimming make it clear that Burscough Sports Centre cannot provide this.

**Question 19** If you would choose not to attend an alternative venue either inside or outside the borough what would be the reason for your choice? We encourage you to tick as many as are applicable so that the council are fully aware of the impact any closures will have on you.

**Question 20** If you are not able to attend your usual leisure centre, what impact would this have on you, your family and your ability to access leisure centre facilities? This is the question in which to lay out clearly the impact that the proposed closures would have on you – but not only you but your family or others in your care e.g. if you operate a club at one of the centres; or are a teacher using the pools for school swimming lessons.

**Points you might wish to add to your own are:**

Use any of the points we suggested under Question 3 and 14 above

**Question 21** Do you agree/disagree with taking the necessary steps to close the existing facilities now in order to provide sustainable, economically viable state-of-the-art leisure facilities in the future?

We recommend that you select **Strongly Disagree**. The day to day finance of the current centres does not affect whether project monies are available for new pools. The two are quite separate. In fact, the closure of the existing centres now, before opening the new centres, jeopardises the business case for the new centres as some customers will find alternatives and not return.

**Other points you might wish to make are:**

- As costs for the new centres continue to escalate, there can be no certainty that they will be delivered
- Time delay from early closure to opening of new facilities could be a minimum of 3 to 4 years
- The savings from closure of the pools actually makes the finances for the new centres more difficult to justify as the council propose spending the £700,000 pool subsidy on other areas of the council. This means the £700,000 won't be available to cover the interest costs and debt repayments on the borrowings needed for new leisure centres

**Question 22** Why do you agree/disagree with the closure of the centres? If you chose strongly disagree in the previous question. Reiterate that. You should expand listing all your reasons as to why you disagree with the pool closure.

**Points you might wish to consider are:**

- Any of the points discussed above
- The 2022 Building condition report for Park Pool stated that “*Structurally the building appears in good condition*” A professional structural engineer has provided a second opinion in October 2024 for OWL which confirms that finding. [Source: Arcus Consulting Report for West Lancashire Borough Council August 2022]
- Our West Lancashire asked for the condition reports on the Mechanical and Electrical elements in the two pools. We were told by council officers there had been no reports produced, so how can the council say the two centres are at the end of their operational life?.

- At the council meeting on 17 October 2024 it was reported to councillors that the usage of leisure facilities in 2022/23 was 564,000 and in 2023/24 560,000. The facilities remain popular generating more than 10,000 visits per week.

**Question 23 Do you have any alternative financially viable suggestions on how to ensure that we are able to continue to provide leisure services at the existing Nye Bevan and Park Pool centres in the future?** Please make some suggestions here. The council does need to make savings and alternatives are needed.

**Our West Lancashire have identified these among areas for possible savings:**

- Improve council tax collection rate
- Reduce use of agency staff
- Review the £800,000 plus cost of senior management
- Review of the £470,000 cost of the Communications and Engagement team

**Our West Lancashire have identified these among areas for additional income at the pools:**

- Adjust for inflation since 2022 in child swimming lesson prices
- Remove less popular sessions in favour of greater number of family swimming slots
- Adjust hours when sauna operates to reduce energy costs
- Reduce air temperature on the wet sides at both pools

**Questions 24-30 Relate to Equalities and Demographics.** You do not have to answer these if you do not want to.

Make sure after Question 30 that you click submit to ensure your response is registered.

**Take the time and make your voice heard. The results will be reported to councillors before any decisions are made.**

Please contact the Our West Lancashire office at [office@ourwestlancashire.com](mailto:office@ourwestlancashire.com) or 01695 351361 for any further assistance.

**After you've submitted a consultation response:**

1. Write to Labour councillors listed here  
<https://democracy.westlancs.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>
2. Help to double the number of responses by sharing this document with at least one family member, friend or neighbour living locally.

Our West Lancashire – Putting Residents First and Foremost  
[www.ourwestlancashire.com/get-involved](http://www.ourwestlancashire.com/get-involved)