

Rossendale Leisure Trust

– past, present, future

Presented by Vanessa Hamlet
Resources Manager



How did it all start

- 2002 – The audit commission condemned Rossendale Borough Council as providing “unacceptably poor services at a high cost” and described them as the worst Council in the country.

Time for change

What happened next

- Autumn 2002 – interim management to assess the benefits of Rossendale becoming a leisure trust.
- Consultation with staff, customers, residents.
- September 2003 – the Council agreed to establish Rossendale Leisure Trust.
- 1st June 2004 – Rossendale Leisure Trust created as an Independent Provident Society.
- Grant funding = £329,000 to provide service.



Reasons why RBC set up the Trust

- Cost savings - £700k to £329k
- Not-for-profit organisation – profits go back into the service.
- Savings on NNDR - £68K in 2004, £96k in 2010.
- VAT savings – income becomes exempt.
- Potential to apply for capital grant funding to improve facilities.
- A community led approach to leisure.

What was transferred

- Sports Development
- Arts Development
- Healthy Lifestyles
- 5 facilities

Haslingden Sports Centre built in 1975



Haslingden Swimming Pool – built in 1936



Marl Pits Swimming Pool – built in 1974



Ski Rossendale built in 1973



Bacup Leisure Hall built in 1973



Key priorities

- To improve service efficiency .
- Create growth.
- Work within an agreed performance framework.
- Seek grant funding in particular for capital funding.

Buildings – in a poor condition (A condition survey in 2003 identified £1.8m of work needed to be carried out to buildings)

- 25 year lease on buildings
- Council responsible for the main fabric of the buildings and major plant.
- Trust responsible for all other aspects of maintenance and service delivery.

Has the Trust succeeded

- Turnover has increased from an original budget of £1.5m in 2004 to £2m in 2010 despite a decline at Ski Rossendale from £700k in 2004 to £450k in 2010.
- Head counts and community participation have doubled at all sites.
- More activities to choose from – gymnastics, trampoline, tubing, wider variety of aerobic classes.
- Performance frameworks – member of APSE and Haslingden Sports Centre was nominated as a most improved performer at 2010 APSE Awards.

- Quality standards have been achieved – Quest at Haslingden Sports Centre and Aquamark at both pools.
- Events in Rossendale have increased eg: Annual football tournament and Rossendale Triathlon.
- Clubs have increased and been assisted to gain funding.
- Grants awarded = £1.3m mainly on equipment, coaching, PCT funding and holiday courses.
- £1.3m investment in extension at Haslingden Sports Centre.

Relationship with Council

- 4 different CEO's in 6 years.
- Underfunded from the beginning.
- Little investment in buildings.
- Lack of assistance where the Trust had no expertise eg: IT.
- Lack of urgency to invest in buildings – initial plans for Sports Centre extension were completed in Nov 2004 but not passed until 2007.

Trust deficit

- Underfunding from Council grant has led to annual losses culminating in a current balance sheet deficit of £440k.
- 2004 budget = £329k. Uncertainty as to how this figure was determined. Costs underestimated eg insurance budget was £40k but actual £80k.
- Utilities have had a major impact – increase of £150K+ from original budget.
- Dec 2008 –. asked for an increase in grant & reassurances on investment.

What did the Trust want

- Major investment in Bacup Leisure Hall – roof leaking & heating system regularly broke. Otherwise it would not be financially viable to keep open.
- Major investment in Ski Rossendale to offset current deficits due to decline in the slope matting & competition from Chill Factor. Otherwise it would not be financially viable to keep open.
- Haslingden Swimming Pool – demolish & build replacement pool at Haslingden Sports Centre.
- Marl Pits Swimming Pool – required refurbishment.
- Increase funding from £519k to £700k to help pull back deficit.

What did the Council do?

- Threatened to close Marl Pits Swimming Pool.
- Threatened to make the Trust bankrupt to get the 25 year lease on Marl Pits back.
- Then all the trouble started.

12/12/08

Council could pull plug

by Simon Coyle

CABINET members could not rule out the possibility that swimming pools in Rossendale may have to close as part of proposed leisure funding cuts.

The announcement came at a meeting of the council's Cabinet last Wednesday when it was announced that investment in wet leisure provision for Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) was set to be cut.

Councillor Bill Challinor, Cabinet portfolio holder for regeneration and leisure, said that action had to be taken as the council could no longer afford to keep increasing funding year on year.

Speaking at the meeting, Councillor Challinor said: 'We cannot keep increasing the amount of funding we are giving it. The trust have done a good job so far but we have got to do something about the cost.'

'It means that we are going to have to make some decisions over the next few months.'

At the end of last year the RLT had a balance sheet deficit of £301,000. Despite the grant for 2008, it is estimated that the accumulated negative reserves will increase in excess of £400,000 by the end of the year.

The council has grant funded RLT since its inception in 2004. The original aim was that funding each year would reduce; this has not been achieved.

Last year the council provided £440,000 in funding and a further £593,000 this year.

Council leader Tony Swain said:



'We need to take a good hard look at it. We have covered the leisure trust with regards to funding, but it has just got to a point where we have had to step in.'

When quizzed by Councillor Alyson Barnes if it meant that pools may have to close, Councillor Swain said he could not rule it in or out.

He added: 'Nothing has been set. I certainly hope that they are to remain open but we are looking at options.'

It was also announced at the meeting that Councillor Jason Gledhill will be joining the Cabinet as portfolio for Leisure.

Speaking after the meeting, Councillor Swain added: 'Leisure is one of those services in Rossendale that we are not going to expect a return on. But we can't just keep throwing money on something that costs so much. It is not prudent finance.'

Councillor Swain said: 'We are aware that the Leisure Trust are

experiencing financial pressures and are keen to work with them through this review to identify a long term and sustainable solution.'

'As a council we want to ensure that high quality leisure opportunities are delivered. With the Leisure Trust continuing to experience financial pressures and the current economic downturn, the time is right to consider a range of options for the future.'

Council officers will now draw up cost cutting options with regards to wet leisure provision which will be presented to members at the next Cabinet meeting in January.

Also speaking after the meeting, Gary Hood, chief executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust, said: 'The Trust focuses very heavily on its financial processes as well as how we can improve leisure provision across the Valley. We have a number of income streams, including money we take at the counter, grants we receive for projects and financial contract

sums we receive for services we provide.

'While the Leisure Trust controls its costs very closely we have seen huge increases in costs particularly around utilities and insurance, we have invested in the council's facilities and we have encountered significant added competition to Ski Rossendale.

While we have increased the range of our activities and our prices, there is a limit to what local people can pay for their leisure and although we have increased admissions by over 100,000 per year since coming into existence in 2004 there remains a shortfall in our budgetary requirements. Thus we have stated to the council that in order to maintain the services at their current level we will need to negotiate an increased contract fee.

'We are working hard with many partners on major projects to alleviate this problem including Haslingden Lifestyles Centre, Marl Pits Sports Village and the Adrenaline Gateway. Haslingden Sports Centre is a good example of where investment in the creation of modern facilities is strongly supported by the local community.

'It is my belief that Rossendale Council is very committed to leisure in this Valley. Their actions to add a Cabinet position for leisure and health speaks volumes for their priorities for the borough. The Trust along with senior council officers will develop a number of options over the next four weeks which will be presented to the council for member decisions.'

LEISURE REVIEW ... LEISURE REVIEW ... LEISURE REVIEW ... LEISURE REVIEW ...

Number 10 petition

A SWIMMING club is taking its petition to save facilities to the top.

Bacup Swimming Club's meeting on Monday at under-threat Marl Pits, saw parents handed a letter and copy of a petition to try to keep the Rawtenstall pool open.

It says: 'We have a petition online with 10 Downing Street but we are waiting for it to be ratified.'

It is hoped the petition will become live soon. Visit <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk>

Rawtenstall Swimming Club secretary Helen Thompson said: 'We will lobby our members to sign the petitions, write to the councillors and attend public meetings as far as possible. People from all over the Rossendale swim at all the Valley's pools; it is not localised.'

Haslingden Swimming Club also supports retaining Haslingden and Marl Pits pools.

Speculation dismissed

SPECULATION that negotiations may already be underway to sell off Marl Pits pool in Rawtenstall has been dismissed by Rossendale Council.

The Free Press was contacted by a number of concerned residents who understood a private buyer may have already been identified.

But the council's deputy chief executive Helen Lockwood said: 'We have not undertaken any commercial negotiations with any private provider in relation to Marl Pits, as no decision has been taken by the council.'

She added: 'If the council does decide to market the Marl Pits pool site it would have to be an open, competitive and transparent process. Our aim would have to be to secure the best value for that site.'

Residents urged to unite to keep facilities

RESIDENTS are being encouraged to get together and form their own trust to run the Valley's under-threat leisure facilities.

Retaining the front-line staff currently employed by the trust, businessman Doug Spencer believes there is a very real possibility that residents could set up their own individual trusts, similar to the Community Leisure Association of Whitworth

(CLAW), so no facility has to shut.

'If Whitworth can do it, then why can't the rest of Rossendale?' He said. 'We could be talking about one trust for all of the pools and halls, or individual groups for each. The aim is to take over the facilities, retaining the front-line staff and to improve sport and leisure provisions throughout the borough.'

A group has been launched on social networking site Facebook

entitled Save Rossendale Leisure Facilities.

Doug, from Stacksteads, said: 'Ask all your friends if they can commit time to help provide sport and leisure facilities not just for ourselves but also for our children and grandchildren.'

'We need people who are prepared to give a long-term commitment of three hours per month, to act as board members.'

Doug said he had circulated a

letter and questionnaire to all primary schools in the Bacup area.

The letter explains that the council is making a decision on leisure facilities and advises people to review the options online; it asks for details of how they use leisure in Rossendale and whether they would be willing to get involved with a group looking to set up a trust.

Doug can be contacted on 07815 455042.



Vow to fight for leisure hall

RESIDENTS and councillors have vowed to fight to help keep Bacup Leisure Hall open.

The issue was raised at a well-attended meeting of Bacup Neighbourhood Forum following last week's announcement that the facility is under threat; it may have to shut its doors by the end of the year unless a lottery application receives approval in the summer or a community-led group agrees to take over the facility.

Residents at Monday's meeting were unanimous in their support for the leisure hall; none wanted to see it close.

Bryan Lamb, who helps run mental health social care group Rossendale Rubicon, said: 'If you keep taking away the facilities

that improve people's health, how are you going to work towards a healthier Valley?'

Councillor Jimmy Eaton, who last week told Cabinet members they should not recommend any of the options put forward for the borough's leisure facilities, said: 'I use the leisure hall for quite a few events each year, including the annual pensioners' parties, which attract between 600 and 800 people.'

'I can assure you that at no time will I be supporting to close the leisure hall and I can assure you also that every councillor here at the meeting feels the same.'

'As far as I am concerned that facility is for Bacup and if they close it we will not get it back.'

Public consultations next week

A SERIES of public consultations will take place next week so residents can have their say on the proposed leisure shake-up.

The public will be able to examine the seven current options (A-G) for the future of leisure centres in the bor-

questions people may have.

The meetings are at the Maden Centre, Rochdale Road, Bacup, next Tuesday between 6.30pm and 8.30pm; Haslingden Community Link, Bury Road, Haslingden, next Wednesday between 6.30pm and 8.30pm; and Kav

Councillor Jason Gledhill, portfolio holder for leisure, said: 'These meetings will give people the opportunity to give us their views.'

'We haven't made a decision yet but we do have to set a budget next month and we have to come up with a plan

If people can't attend they can email their comments or questions to: leisure@rossendalebc.gov.uk or write to: The chief executive, Rossendale Borough Council, PO BOX 74, Bacup, OL13 0WU.

Details of the seven

Trust may face axe in leisure plan review

by Catherine Smyth

COUNCIL chiefs have admitted they are considering whether Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) has a future, while the trust board has defended its position.

Following last Wednesday's stormy Rossendale Council Cabinet meeting, trust bosses were keen to set the record straight. Adamant that no pools should be closed, RLT blamed its financial difficulties on underfunding by Rossendale Council.

But a statement released by the council on Wednesday revealed the current review of leisure facilities may be widened to include the trust's future.

Council chief executive Carolyn Wilkins said: 'We have worked with the trust over the past four years to support them and their plans - but these haven't succeeded.'

'The economic environment has worsened and we

have had to bring the matter to a head.

'We asked the trust to identify ways of working within the grant, which they have refused to do.

'In fact, the trust's only response was a request for a 40 per cent increase in grant, which is what triggered the review of leisure provision.'

Board chairman Norman Hauserman and executive director Gary Hood told the Free Press the financial position of the trust had been documented each month to the council, on behalf of which it runs Valley leisure facilities.

They also stressed that both a Conservative and a Labour councillor sit on the board, so the trust's financial position should have been well-known to both parties before the leisure shake-up plans were revealed last week.

Mr Hauserman said the



GARY HOOD

£400,000 deficit on the trust's balance sheet, which has mounted up since it took over management of the facilities in 2004, was 'the product of lack of core revenue funding'.

He said the trust had also suffered financially due to

much higher than estimated insurance premiums, the withdrawal of a £75,000 investment in the ski slope, and increased IT and utility costs of more than £100,000 over four years.

He added that year-on-year the council had been asked for additional money and each time the trust had been given an increased grant, but not at the level requested.

Defending the head office forecast costs for 2009/10 of £410,000, they explained £200,583 covered salaries with a further £36,356 employer NIC and pension contributions.

Mr Hauserman said: 'Recent surveys show that trust employees are paid below the average public sector levels for equivalent posts and responsibilities.'

And he praised all trust staff and management for their commitment during the period of uncertainty.

catherine.smyth@menwn.co.uk

Swimming is crucial

HASLINGDEN Baths was opened in the year of my birth; my father, being unemployed at the time, taught himself to swim in the following few months.

When my brother and I were old enough, together with my cousin, he joined Haslingden Swimming Club with us, so that we would all be able to swim and never be afraid of water.

When I went to Haslingden Grammar School after the Second World War we had a swimming lesson at the baths every week.

Our tutor was Mrs Doris Redmond:

Haslingden had a very progressive swimming club, which met on Thursday evenings, and had a very high attendance of local children, together with some children from Rawtenstall, where there was no swimming pool.

Whatever night of the week you went to the baths, especially in the summer months, there were always lots of children there.

Most of my friends could swim and liked going to the baths.

If I remember rightly it was 2d for a child and 4d for an adult at this time. If you won a race at the annual club gala, you won a free contract for the next six months.

My own family were all taken to Haslingden Baths and joined the swimming club when they were children, as there was still no pool in Rawtenstall, but later my grandchildren did learn to swim at Marl Pits pool.

Surely every child has a right to be taught to swim and not be afraid of water, both for his or her own safety and the safety of others.

I think that every child should be taught to swim

Outrage over pool closure plan

I AM writing on behalf of the members of the Rossendale Swimming Development Forum (RSDF) who use the Marl Pits and Haslingden pools, to voice their outrage at the proposal by Rossendale Council to close one of the Valley's swimming pools.

The fact that before last week's Cabinet meeting none of our forum members were consulted by Rossendale Council with regard to any closures is a slap in the face to our collective membership and shows a complete disregard to the due process.

The RSDF members provide a quality service that contributes so much to the Valley's health and well-being agenda in addition to supporting our young people to excel.

The forum members include Haslingden ASC, Rawtenstall ASC, Bacup ASC, Rossendale Rays Multi-Ability Swimming Club and Whitworth Swimming Club.

All the clubs involved are run by volunteers and all with the exception of one are self-financing.

Risk club could cease to exist

I WRITE on behalf of Rossendale Rays Multi-Ability Swim Group.

We have read, with complete dismay, the news of the possible closure of the pool at Marl Pits.

We have been using the pool on a weekly basis for over two years to provide swimming facilities for members with various special needs.

We have had charitable status for a couple of years now and, at the risk of blowing our own trumpet, we are a beacon for this kind of swimming club across the North West.

The simple fact is that most of our members would not be able to enjoy water-based activities if we weren't around, and if the pool is closed without a suitable alternative, there is a real risk that our club would cease to exist.

There is talk of a new pool at

The total membership of the collective clubs is over 500 and covers all areas and abilities within the local community.

It is thanks to this dedicated army of volunteers who turn up week in week out to provide support to their club members that we have a thriving swimming community within the Valley, and one that I am proud to be part of.

The closure of Haslingden will impact on the wider swimming community and overwhelm it.

Should Marl Pits close then it would see the end of water-based leisure as we know it in the Valley.

We cannot wait two to three years until another resource comes on track.

The present facilities must remain open until an up-to-date replacement resource is up and running.

I appeal to the council on behalf of our members to reconsider these ill-judged proposals before Cabinet and keep our present resources in tact until a replacement is found.

John Wilson
Acting Chairman
RSDF

Haslingden but, with all due respect to the council, we all need to see a firm commitment to that project and at the moment they don't have even planning permission or a detailed costing for a new pool.

There are no parallels between the current situation and the earlier closure of Bacup Baths; admissions at Bacup had been allowed to slide into decline, but Marl Pits is fantastically well used by our club, many other swim groups and many members of the public.

Our club has never had the pleasure of entertaining a serving councillor, and we extend an open invitation to all serving councillors to visit one of our Sunday afternoon sessions before voting in favour of the closure of our club.

In our view, none of the current facilities should be allowed to close their



ONE of many protesters at last Wednesday's packed Cabinet meeting.

doors until a replacement facility is ready for action, and we urge the council to defer any decision on these ill-judged proposals until they have properly consulted with stakeholders.

Paul Mulderrig
Rossendale Rays

ing the new chief executive.

Last Wednesday's Cabinet meeting was attended by more members of the public than I have ever seen at a meeting (and being a political anorak I have attended my fair share).

I was galled to see the officers of both the council and the leisure trust sitting there while councillors, who at the end of the day are only volunteers, were bombarded by the public regarding the shambles known as the leisure trust.

The whole fiasco is like a building burning down and the fire brigade arguing about how to put it out and giving no consideration as to measures to prevent it happening again.

I would again urge the council to advertise the post of chief executive locally and nationally and not just in the specialist press or usual channels. We want a muck and netles person.

When they have shortlisted, how about a public meeting to meet the candidates and allow the people who are going to pay the massive salary a chance to have a say?

Turning back to myself and my political aspirations, were the people of Rossendale to decide to have a directly elected mayor - a scaled down Ken or Boris-type leader - I would be the first to chuck my hat in the ring, to be elected by the people for the people and have some fun along the way.

Come to think of it, Clive for Rossendale does have a ring to it.

Clive Balchin
Newchurch Road
Rawtenstall

Simply not enough cash

I WRITE in response to Alyson Barnes' suggestion (page 7, 23 January) that private health clubs are not likely to come to places like

VOICE AT WESTMINSTER

We must work together to save pools



by Rossendale MP Janet Anderson

RUMBLINGS continue about increases in water rates for land drainage for sports clubs, faith buildings and Scout and Guide associations across the North West by United Utilities.

After I, and several colleagues, raised this in Parliament, the company announced a one-year moratorium, though it is unclear whether this will apply to those bills already issued.

I met Secretary of State Andy Burnham MP and Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe MP and they have undertaken to seek clarification and work with us to have the increases stopped.

Leisure

It seems that sport and leisure is being hit all round the Valley.

We must work together to save our pools.

I agree with the leisure trust that

their Option G is the best solution.

This would keep Haslingden Baths open until a new pool is provided at Haslingden Sports Centre; Marl Pits would continue while options for future use are properly explored with a realistic public consultation, as would Bacup Leisure Hall; and a strategic plan would be produced for leisure throughout the Valley.

It would be a shame if the exciting proposals for a sports village at Marl Pits were to be abandoned, despite the fact that this would be at no cost to the council.

Rossendale Council spends £1 per head less than the Lancashire average on sport and leisure and has failed to take advantage of the government's scheme for free swim-

ming for over-60s and under-16s.

This is not about the future of the leisure trust, especially as external assessments have concluded the trust performs strongly in financial management and community delivery, it is about ensuring that everyone in Rossendale has affordable access to decent sport and leisure facilities.

If the council does not work with the trust to deliver that, its status as a 'good performing council' may be in jeopardy.

Ball

The Mayor of Rossendale's annual ball at the Riverside in Whitworth was a great success – testament to the magnificent job Councillor Christine Gill and her family have done during her mayoral year. Well done Christine – Peter would have been so proud, as are we all.

Outcome

- Council shocked by outcry over pool closure – May elections 2009.
- Public consultations took place.
- Consultants, KKP brought in to review leisure provision in Rossendale.

KKP Findings

- Presented findings in Dec 2009.

Recommended: -

- Sell Ski Rossendale.
- Close Bacup Leisure Hall.
- Upgrade Marl Pits.
- Build a new pool at Haslingden Sports Centre to replace Haslingden Swimming Pool.
- Rossendale Leisure Trust to manage leisure sites as it is the most cost effective option.

What did the Trust request – Dec 2008

- Major investment in Bacup Leisure Hall – roof leaking & heating system regularly broke. Otherwise it would not be financially viable to keep open.
- Major investment in Ski Rossendale to offset current deficits due to decline in the slope matting & competition from Chill Factor. Otherwise it would not be financially viable to keep open.
- Haslingden Swimming Pool – demolish & build replacement pool at Haslingden Sports Centre.
- Marl Pits Swimming Pool – required refurbishment.
- Increase funding from £519k to £700k to help pull back deficit.

What happened next

Council Cabinet agreed in February 2010 to: -

1. Close Bacup Leisure Hall – it was sold to a private investor in October 2010.
2. Ski Rossendale – find a private investor to run it although estimated investment to improve the site is between £5-£10m. To date Council are still looking at options.

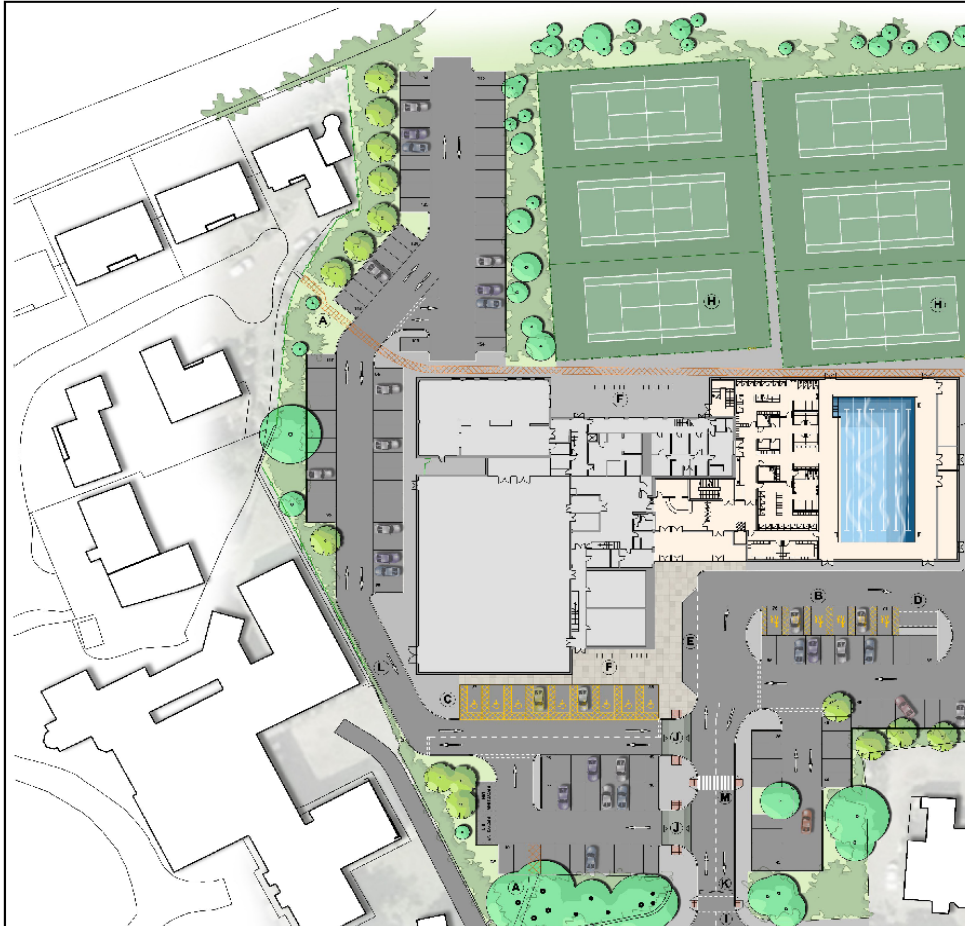
Invest £5.6m to: -

1. Build a new 6-lane pool at Haslingden Sports Centre and demolish Haslingden Swimming Pool .
2. Build a fitness suite, studio & 5-a-side football pitches at Marl Pits Swimming Pool.

The future

- Currently awaiting planning approval.
- May 2011 – building works to commence at both sites.
- April 2012 – new sites due to open.
- The Trust will manage 2 wet and dry sports centres.

Haslingden Sports Centre – new development



Marl Pits Swimming Pool – New development

KEY

- A. PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY (ACCESS FOOTWAY)
- B. PARENT / CHILD PARKING BAYS - 7 SPACES
- C. DISABLED PARKING BAYS - 8 SPACES
- D. MOTORCYCLE PARKING BAYS - 7 SPACES
- E. ENTRANCE DROP-OFF
- F. LAYBY/ LOADING & UNLOADING AREA WITH DROP KERB ACCESS
- G. BICYCLE STANDS/ SHELTER
- H. MULTI SURFACE SPORTS AREA
- I. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING/ DROP KERBS & TACTILES
- J. RAISED TRAFFIC TABLE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING & TACTILES
- K. ZEBRA CROSSING

DISABLED PARKING SPACES = 8
PARENT/ CHILD PARKING SPACES = 7

TOTAL NUMBER OF CAR PARKING SPACES = 127
TOTAL NUMBER OF MOTORCYCLE PARKING SPACES = 7
TOTAL NUMBER OF CYCLE STANDS = 16



EXISTING TREES



PROPOSED NEW TREES

This map is reproduced from (on based upon) Ordnance Survey
data with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright.
Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to
prosecution or civil proceedings. Rossendale Borough Council.
10/02/14/16



Notes
Centre to put in place a Travel Plan to deal
with coach management.

Client	Rossendale Borough Council
Project	Rossendale Leisure Project
Drawing Title	Site Plan – Marl Pits Swimming Baths
RD	16-11-10
RLG/DM	17-11-10
RLG	17-11-10
Author	
Checked	
Approved	

	Scale	1:500 @ A2	
	Project No	1030155/MP/E/003	
Office	RoCHDALE	Version	A
Ref No	01706 647474	Drawing No	

If any local authorities are looking to becoming a Trust then the following day-long event is being held by Sporta to promote the trust model.

- Sporta - a membership association that represents cultural and leisure trusts and social enterprises throughout the UK.
- **Time to Trust Seminar - 16th February 2011 @ Aeonian Venues, Capper St, London, WC1E 6JA. www.sporta.org**
- Real life examples of what to do and what not to do.