

# **Cost of repairing school swimming pool rises by £22,000**

**Concerns over the rising cost of fixing-up an Edinburgh school's swimming pool have been raised by a councillor after it emerged another £22,000 will be spent – just to inspect the ceiling.**

Currie Community High School's pool has been shut since last April as repairs have been carried out, costing the council £60,000 so far.

A councillor called for an update on the works, however officials were unable to say when the facility would reopen to pupils – and revealed more money is needed to finish the job.

Graeme Bruce, Conservatives, said he was worried about the impact of the continued closure on youngsters' swimming abilities as some have had to travel nearly 15 miles to Queensferry for lessons.

He also highlighted that the council's budget is "tight" with school upgrades set to be scaled-back as a result of funding pressures.

Edinburgh City Council said the pool has been out of service for almost a year due to issues with fibre board tiles in the ceiling.

"An inspection of the ceiling is required to determine what further works are required," education convener Joan Griffiths said.

She said: "The inspection will cost £22,000. Only after the inspection will an estimate of the cost for the works be able to be prepared.

"It is not possible to provide a timescale to reopen the swimming pool until the inspection of the ceiling is complete and an understanding of the scale of the works required is determined."

She added: "Full repairs will be carried out to make the swimming pool operational again."

Work to repair the pool commenced despite the school approaching the end of its operational life. Plans for a new £50m Currie High School, which will also include a swimming pool, were approved by the council last year.

Cllr Bruce said: "I get the impression from the council that they've spent this money so far and they're going to have to keep going and finish it off because at the end of the day, there's still at least two years before the new school is built.

"They finish one bit of work and find something else that's wrong, and then something else that's wrong and it goes on like that. Now they've looked at the roof."

He commented that an extra £22,000 to inspect the ceiling "does seem like a lot".

"I'm slightly concerned about the cost of that inspection," he added. "Swimming pools are a really expensive item within a school to run, they're not cheap.

"My other concern is young pupils and children potentially

missing out on swimming lessons, they could be held back a couple of years on their swimming.

“Other pools in different parts of the city will be chock-a-block if other pools shut down there’s pressure put on those pools to accommodate other children coming along.

“It’s a difficult one. I think you have to wait and weigh up the options.”

It comes as the council confirmed it is inspecting 15 of its buildings amid concerns about Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), a dangerous material linked with cases of school roofs suddenly collapsing. However, it said the problems at Currie High are unrelated to this.

Councillor Griffiths said: “Due to the location of the area that requires inspection being inaccessible without scaffolding, it is impossible to tell the level and cost of repair that will be required in advance of the inspection results.

“However, the inspection itself comes at a considerable cost and it is therefore the intention that full repairs will be carried out to make the swimming pool operational again, otherwise the inspection would not be proceeding.

“It is the potential scale of the works rather than the current economic inflation issues which pose the greatest risk to the repairs being able to be delivered within acceptable timescale and cost parameters.”

*by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.*

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Cllr Graeme Bruce at Currie Community High School