

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **AQUASPLASH SWIMMING POOL COMPLEX, WATERFRONT, ST. HELIER: PUBLIC USE AT WEEKENDS (P.59/2006) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 15th June 2006  
by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The Constable of St. Helier is proposing that the Minister of Education, Sport and Culture be asked to ensure that the main pool of the leisure pool complex on the Waterfront is available for use by the general public on Saturday and Sunday afternoons all year round from 1st July 2006.

At present the flumes and leisure pool remain open to the public at all times when the 25 metre pool is closed for parties.

Should the States agree to the Proposition, I believe there will be significant impact as follows.

- The increased cost to the Public of Jersey will be £11,000 for the remainder of 2006 and, at least, £20,000 per annum in future years. This figure is based on the budgeted income figure for parties. To date in 2006 party income is above target.
- There are 16.5 years left on the contract and if these figures are projected forward this will mean a potential extra cost to the Jersey Public over that period of £333,000. This does not take account of increase in charges over the period.
- The operator has confirmed that there is little or no effect on income when parties are held since the rest of the pool remains open and members of the public can still swim.

Importantly, if the parties were to cease, many young people, members of the Jersey public, would be denied the opportunity to swim. Since July 2003 when the pool opened, parties have been organised. The Manager has provided figures based on the number of parties held. He has assumed that each party has had a minimum of 10 children. In reality this is the minimum number and in real terms the number is greater. However, it does give an indication of the children who benefit from the positive experience of attending swimming parties and it should be noted that the numbers are increasing year on year.

•	2003	(July to December)	1,340
•	2004	(January to December)	2,460
•	2005	(January to December)	2,670
•	2006	(January to April)	1,170

Based on the figures to date in 2006, this many mean at least 3,500 children attending in the full year.

Far from increasing access to the pool it is likely that fewer numbers of the public will attend if the Proposition is successful.

It should be stated that since the opening of the pool there have been 6 recorded complaints about parties being held in the 25 metre pool. Two of these have come from Connétable Crowcroft himself.

The report accompanying the Proposition claims that there is less public access to the swimming pool on the Waterfront than when it was sited at Fort Regent. This is not the case and parties were held in much the same way as is the practice at the Waterfront. In addition, Les Quennevais is also now open and provides more opportunities for the public to access swimming facilities in the Island.

Serco are a reputable and experienced operator of many pools in England. They programme their pools in very similar ways and in each they hold parties in order to maximise use and income. The business plan that Serco developed when negotiating to take on the management of the pool included sample pool plans which had children's parties.

In my opinion it would be wrong to interfere in this freely negotiated contract and the operators must be allowed to programme the pool so that a range of user groups can gain access. It is in their interests and also the public interest for this range to be provided. If the Proposition is successful, far from increasing access, it will deny

young people opportunities and it will have a cost to the public.

If the Proposition is successful, as suggested by the Manager, it is probable that the number of complaints about the pool being available for children's parties on Saturday and Sunday afternoons would far exceed the 6 made over the past 3 years concerning its closure to open public swimming.