

Report for Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park Consultation

On Behalf of Woking Borough Council

CONTENTS

Background	2
Summary of Key Findings	3
Profile of Service Users.....	4
Service Activities/Facilities and Improvements.....	4
The Cafe	6
Changing Pattern of Usage in Last Year and the Reasons Why.....	7
Overall Perceptions about Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park	8
Awareness of New Investment	10
Impact of New Investment on Likelihood to Visit	11
Appendix One: Other Suggestions	12

Note: *The quotes used throughout the report may not be the views of all the respondents but are the comments supplied in the freeform part of the questionnaire.*

BACKGROUND

This report details the main findings from a residents' consultation with users and non-users of Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park. The purpose of the consultation was to discover what the local perceptions of these facilities were, whether there were any barriers to people using the services and identify what would encourage people to use these more in the future.

The consultation took place using face to face interviews with local residents in Woking Town Centre. The first survey question ensured that only residents of Woking Borough were interviewed. Five interviewer shifts took place on weekdays between Thursday 29th August and Tuesday 3rd September. Originally, the target set was to reach a minimum of one hundred interviews however in total a figure of **one hundred and twenty eight interviews** was achieved. No specific interview quotas were specified or used for this consultation.

For the purposes of this report, a service non-user was defined as someone who hadn't visited either the Leisure Centre and/or Pool in the Park in the last year. 79 people or 62% of the total interviews were completed with service-users and 38% with non-users.

In terms of the interviewee demographics:

	Number of Interviews	% of Total Interviews
Males	60	47%
Females	68	53%
Household with pre- school children	6	5%
Household with school age children	32	25%
Adults only of working age	62	48%
Adults only of retirement age	28	22%

Seventeen people or 13% of those interviewed were in a household where someone had a long standing illness or disability. Of these, ten people or 59% said that this condition had an impact on how often they could use either the Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park. In most of these cases, the residents described their condition as being a physical disability.

In most cases and unless otherwise stated, results have been given as a percentage of the total overall number of valid responses (all answering). Where percentages do not add up to 100% or in some cases exceed 100% this is likely to be due to rounding up/down.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

General Usage

- Around a quarter of those interviewed have never used either Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park. 62% of respondents are for the purposes of this report classified as current service-users; these are residents who have used either facility within the last year.
- Only a very few people who currently don't use either facility in Woking go elsewhere. Those that do, tend to visit private clubs/gyms either within Woking Borough or elsewhere.

Overall Perceptions

- Local residents are very pleased to have Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park. They associate both with having a good time and they are also very positive about the people who work there. Some however, have heard there have been service issues in the last year.
- Over half of those interviewed believe that they can either get better value for money elsewhere than at Woking Borough Council's leisure facilities and/or that these existing facilities are outdated and tired compared with similar facilities provided elsewhere.

Service Improvements

- The three areas that current service users would most like to see being improved were the changing areas (50%), showers (48%) and Leisure Lagoon (39%). Plans to enhance/improve some of these areas are already in place, which is encouraging.

The Café

- The customer service and suitability for children score very high amongst those people that use the café. The key priorities for improvement according to service users are the range of food options (50% said this needs improving) and cleanliness (40% needs improving).

Frequency of Visit

- The number of current service users who are visiting these facilities less in the last year is higher than the numbers using them more often. The comparative figures are 14% v 22%, a difference of 8%. The main reasons given as to why people were using them less were; it had become too expensive or they were now using other facilities more often elsewhere.

Awareness of Refurbishment Investment

- The level of awareness of the refurbishments that have already take place or are due to take place is low even amongst those people that currently use these facilities. Only 37% of existing service users had any degree of awareness that these changes were taking place.

Impact on Investment on Future Usage

- Overall, 59% of residents said they were more likely to visit either leisure facility more often as a result of knowing that further investment had or was due to be made. Amongst those people who already currently use these facilities the corresponding figure was 68%.

PROFILE OF SERVICE USERS

The survey asked when was the last time they or another member of their household had used either Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park. The table below highlights the overall results.

	Woking Leisure Centre	Pool in the Park
Within the last month	26%	24%
Within the last six months	11%	11%
Within the last year	14%	10%
Longer ago	27%	28%
Never used	23%	27%

For the purposes of this survey, 51% of respondents were classified as current services users of Woking Leisure Centre and 45% current service users of the Pool in the Park. Around a quarter of those interviewed said they have never used either the Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park. In both cases these were more likely to be from households where retired adults were living. The more recent users of both facilities were households of families with school age children.

The survey questionnaire then asked any service non-users, those who said they hadn't used Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park in the last year, whether they go somewhere else. Of these forty nine people, just ten or 20% said they did. Five people use a privately run health club/gym within Woking Borough, whilst another two use a private club/gym outside Woking.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES/FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Of the list of facilities/activities listed in the questionnaire, the top six most used either by the respondent themselves or by other members of their household were:

	Activity/Facility	% Who Do/Use This
1	Swimming on own or with other family members	56%
2	Café	38%
3	Gym	28%
4	Swimming Classes	20%
5	Fitness Classes	16%
6	Football	14%

The swimming activities were very popular amongst households with children either of school age or younger and some retirees. Activities such as the gym and fitness classes were more popular for households with adults only of working age. As only three people said they use the crèche and two the sports hall, these have not been included in the next section of the reporting focusing on service improvements.

The survey then asked service users, which of the activities/facilities they were happy with, which ones they would like to see improved and then in a final question, which one of these, if it were improved, would make them most likely to use Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park more often.

Some of these facilities/activities are used by a variety of service users e.g. changing areas and are not specific to any individual sport/activity so the respondent base for these will vary.

The following table shows which services/activities service users were already happy with and which of these they would like to see being improved. A number of the highest and lowest scoring attributes have been highlighted in green/red. The two activities that people are happiest with are the gym and range of activities/classes being offered. In both of these, around 90% of those answering said they were satisfied with what was already being offered.

	Base	% Already happy with	% Would like to see improved
Gym	22	91	9
Range of Activities/Classes	43	88	12
Fitness Classes	13	77	23
Value for Money	70	76	24
Main Pool	50	74	26
Pool Temperature	53	70	30
Leisure Lagoon	41	61	39
Showers	59	53	48
Changing Areas	64	50	50

The areas that people said they would like to see improved the most were the changing areas, the showers, in both cases almost half those interviewed said they would like to see these being improved, whilst 39% wanted to see the Leisure Lagoon improved.

This question featured at the start of the survey questionnaire so many of those answering may not have been aware that plans were already in place to refurbish some of these areas in the future. These results suggest that the new investment is being spent in the right areas.

In the final question, seventeen respondents or 22% said that the one change that would make them most likely to use the facility more often was improvements to the changing areas. Second on this list of changes was improving 'value for money'.

THE CAFE

One section of the questionnaire focused on the customer experience visitors have when using the café. Those residents that said they had used the café in the last year (thirty people) were asked what they were happy with and what they would like to see improved. Eighteen of these thirty respondents were women. Sixteen were with pre-school or school age children.

The following table highlights these results. A number of the highest and lowest scoring attributes have been highlighted in green/red.

	% Already happy with	% Would like to see improved
Customer Service	93%	7%
Suitability for children	87%	13%
Atmosphere	80%	20%
Seating comfort	77%	23%
Value for money	67%	33%
Cleanliness	60%	40%
Range of food options	50%	50%

The priority service improvements in the café are firstly to enhance the range of available food options and secondly to improve the cleanliness of the café area. Although not specifically mentioned, this could include speeding up the time that tables are cleared and cleaned after previous visitors have left. A third of residents also wanted to see better value for money.

The customer service though is considered to be excellent already with only 7% mentioning this as something that needs improving. The café also scored highly for its suitability for children and for the overall atmosphere. Almost a quarter thought the seating comfort could be better.

CHANGING PATTERN OF USAGE IN LAST YEAR AND THE REASONS WHY

The following table highlights of the residents who said they have used Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park in the last year how their frequency of usage has changed in the last year. The base for this question was seventy nine residents.

	All Service Users
Using more often	14%
About the same	65%
Using less often	22%

Overall, there were 8% more residents who said they have used one of these facilities less often in the last year than were using them more often. How do these numbers correlate with the numbers the Council is reporting? The trend is clearly going in the wrong direction. Although the sample sizes are small, women were far more likely to say they are now visiting less often in the last year than men (27% v 16%). The change in usage pattern over the last year was broadly similar for Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park.

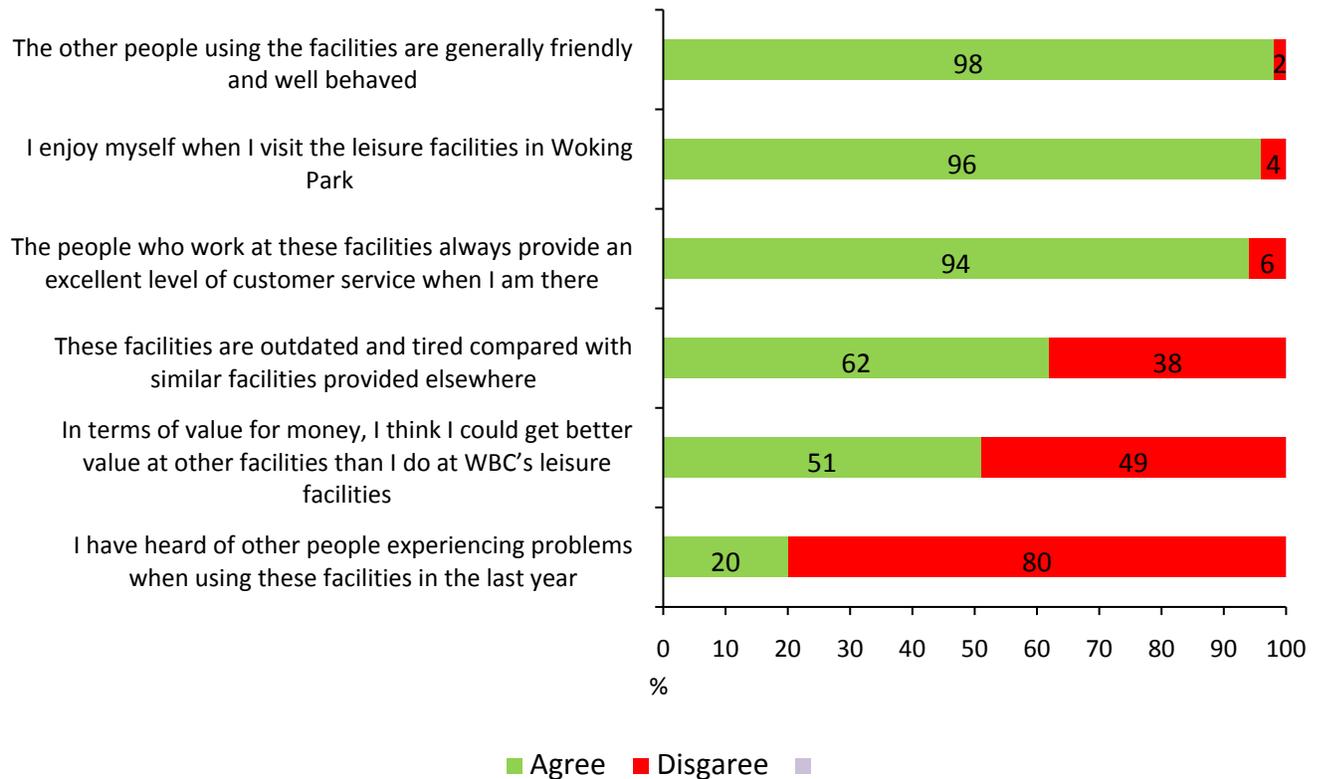
The follow up question then asked those residents who said they were using these facilities less often during the last year (seventeen) the reasons why? A list of some of the possible reasons was included in the survey questionnaire. The most mentioned responses were:

Too expensive	3 mentions
Now use a different Leisure Centre/Pool facility elsewhere	3 mentions
Poor cleanliness related	2 mentions
Lack of time	2 mentions
Temperature poolside/showers	2 mentions
My leisure interests have changed	2 mentions

A small number of people also said that their life stage had changed and they were no longer taking their children or grandchildren to the leisure facility so their usage had declined.

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WOKING LEISURE CENTRE AND POOL IN THE PARK

The questionnaire asked residents whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park. The full results based on all respondents were as follows. The base excludes anyone responding don't know/no view.



Overall, residents really enjoy being able to use these facilities, having a great time and sharing them with other local people. 96% said they enjoy themselves when they visit the leisure facilities in Woking Park. Residents are also very positive about the people who work there and the customer service they deliver. 94% agreed with this statement.

Whilst a relatively small number of people were aware that some visitors may have experienced some problems when using the facilities in the last year, this was by no means a common occurrence and the majority of local people were unaware of any issues. However, the figure is not insignificant and amongst those who have recently used the facilities, twice as many people commented that they had heard of others having experienced some issues than amongst non-users (24% v 11%). Bad news travels fast as they say, and it may take time for any historical service issues to be completely forgotten and replaced with positive experiences.

The biggest concerns surrounded whether the facilities offered value for money compared with facilities elsewhere, respondents were split equally on this point whilst almost two thirds of residents (62%) agreed that the facilities are now regarded as being tired and outdated.

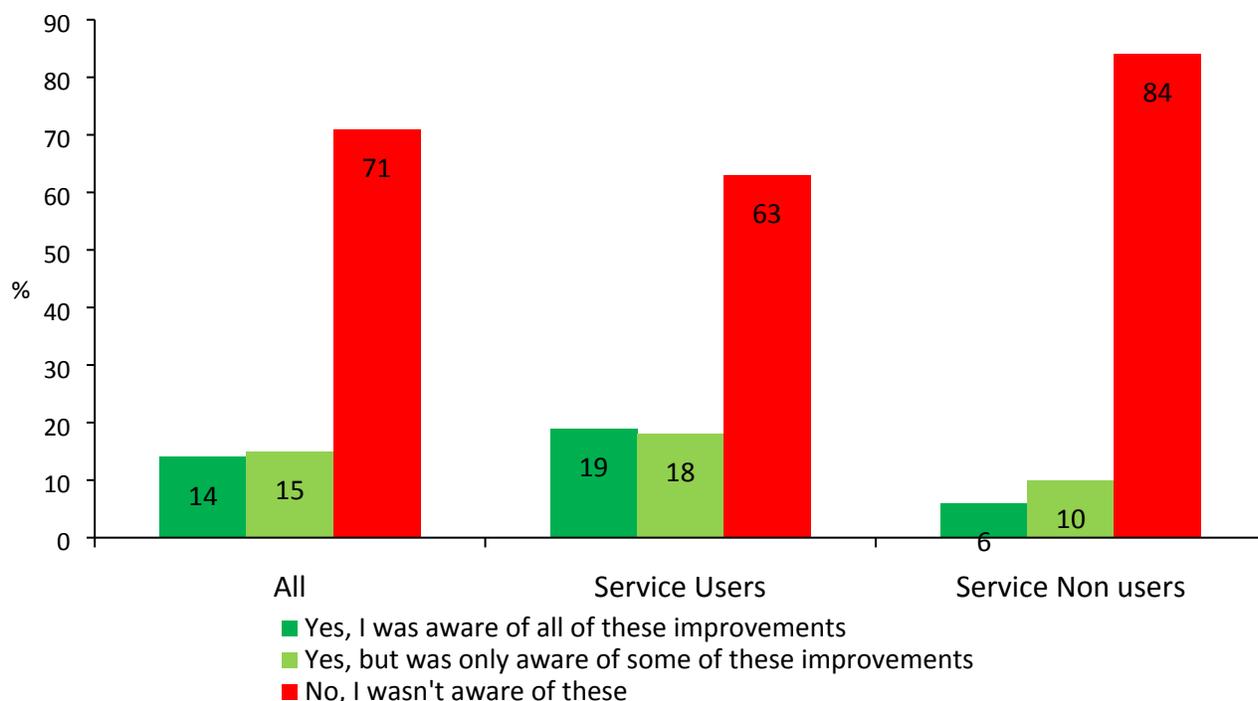
If we look at these final two statements in further detail, the views for both service users and service non-users were broadly similar. The results suggest that these views appear to be commonly held perceptions across the borough whether people were service users or not.

	% Agree All Service Users	% Agree Non Users
These facilities are outdated and tired compared with similar facilities provided elsewhere	60%	67%
In terms of value for money, I think I could get better value at other facilities than I do at WBC's leisure facilities	52%	50%

The table above shows the corresponding number of service users or non-users that agreed with both of these statements. Overall, 71% of women described the facilities as tired and outdated, compared with 50% of men whilst 58% of men agreed that they could get better value for money elsewhere compared with 45% of women.

AWARENESS OF NEW INVESTMENT

The questionnaire then asked whether residents were aware that Woking Borough Council is in the process of refurbishing the facilities at Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park including better heating, ventilation and air conditioning, new water flumes whilst the changing rooms will be fully refurbished by Spring 2020. The full results are illustrated below.



The level of awareness of the various changes made or due to be made to these facilities is relatively low across all groups of respondents, whether they were current service users or not.

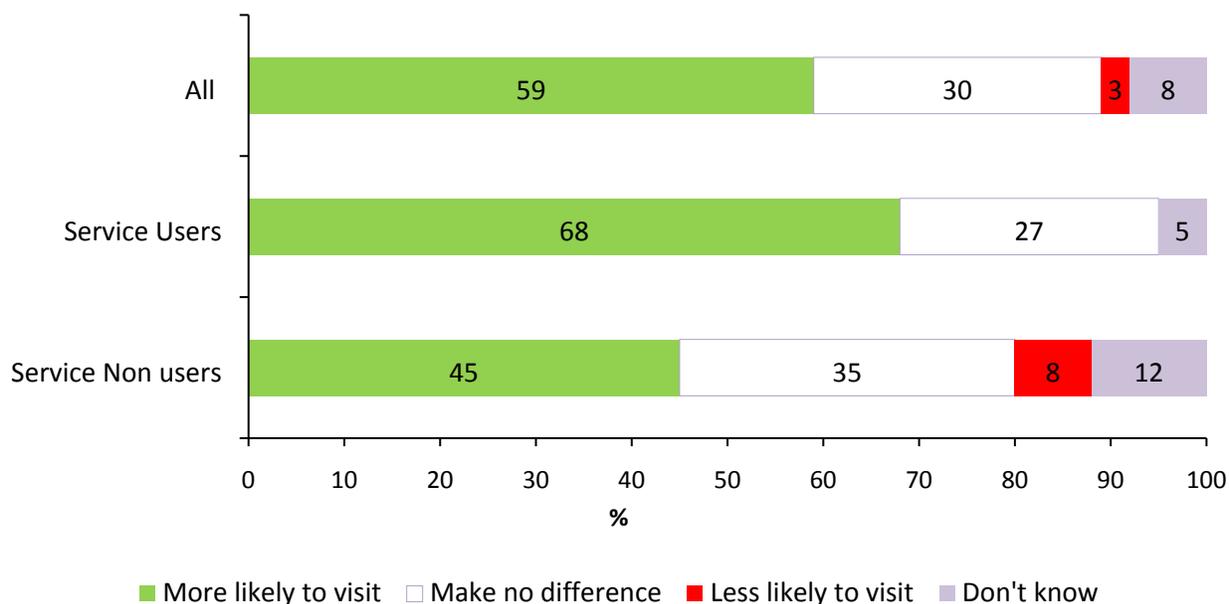
Amongst existing service users, the people you would expect to be the most well-informed, just 37% said they were aware that these improvements had been made. Within non service users, the corresponding figure was significantly lower at 16%.

Overall, 71% were unaware that the refurbishments were taking place suggesting that the messaging around the work that has already taken place or is due to take place in the future isn't getting through. This figure increased to 84% amongst non-service users. It would be worth using every possible communication channel to share this news with local residents.

The pattern of results didn't vary significantly by gender, household type or whether the resident was an existing service user of Woking Leisure Centre or the Pool in the Park.

IMPACT OF NEW INVESTMENT ON LIKELIHOOD TO VISIT

The next question asked whether the news about the investment will make a difference to how often residents might visit in the future. The full results are shown below.



Overall, 59% said they were now more likely to visit these facilities as a result of knowing about the new investment and refurbishments. Amongst existing service users, this figure increased to 68% whilst amongst non-service users, a very encouraging 45% said they were now more likely to visit in the future with a further 12% responding ‘don’t know’. Of course, what people say they are going to do and what they actually do will differ but the idea has now been sown.

Looking at the results in more detail, women were more likely to more positive about visiting in the future than men (68% v 50%), whilst the refurbishments were also more likely to make a difference to how often families with children would visit these in the future. 79% of residents in households with pre-school or school age children said they more likely to visit.

Finally, the table below highlights how these results varied depending whether the resident was already aware that some improvements had been made to these facilities or whether they were previously unaware until taking part in the interview.

	Residents already aware of all/some improvements	Residents previously unaware of any improvements
More likely to visit	68%	56%
Make no difference	24%	32%
Less likely to visit	3%	3%
Don't know	2%	9%

The results suggest there is the potential for a significant uplift in the number of residents likely to visit these facilities in the future and the more people get to hear about them, the better.

APPENDIX ONE: OTHER SUGGESTIONS

The final question was open ended and invited residents to suggest anything else Woking Borough could do that would encourage them or other members of their family to use Woking Leisure Centre or Pool in the Park more often. A number of people made suggestions; some focusing on pricing, others commenting that it was about time that the facilities were upgraded whilst others commented on the pool temperature or the lack of swim time in the evenings. This is a list of the verbatim comments to the open-ended question.

- Have flumes for younger children too or let under 8s use current flumes with adult
- Nothing I have osteoarthritis so can no longer use leisure facilities. It takes me so long to even get into the pool nowadays. But I think it's a great facility.
- Have more classes a bigger range of sports classes and more publicity of them
- Better crèche not in a dark gloomy dungeon downstairs with no natural light my son hates going there. Need to buy Speedflex machines and have speedflex classes
- Make gym bigger more equipment and stations
- Slightly cheaper swimming prices
- Nothing I am past the age of using leisure centres haven't swum for 20-30 years
- Different activity classes at weekends for kids of different ages; e.g. dancing movement ball games, could have soft play area.
- Less chlorine in pool while improving hygiene in pool 25% adults wee in pools according to statistics published in the Week
- Cheaper prices for gym membership
- Nothing I don't do sport at all not interested
- Prices for classes could be cheaper for students and those not working
- I have just moved into Woking. Could have little kiddies water splash area with water fountains and cork matting water play with no drowning risk with fencing around
- None we are happy and as a family visit often 2x a week
- Advertise opening hours. With my job working long hours at night I don't get time to go to leisure centres I am in bed when facilities open or go abroad for holiday
- Reduce prices generally
- I'm ok with the prices and CS is good. It's just the changing rooms and showers need upgrade.
- Would love an ice rink in Woking
- Warmer pool temperature especially in main pool. Have more things to do in leisure pool my kids 10 8 & 2 get bored there easily have more different slides and spouts like Guildford
- Cheaper prices for pensioners. More soft play areas for small children where my Grandson can run round and play. Better more frequent bus services to leisure centre and town.
- Would like to have time to take my daughters aged 11 and 13 swimming with me from 7pm evenings. No current session suitable.
- Use for free
- Make it free
- Just update it
- No always good I visit once a year

- Expanding the classes like kendo
- Update the shower and changing facilities
- Bring the prices down
- Lots of activities for kids
- Postal offers to residents
- Having more general fitness activities in general will be good
- The pool in the park needs tidying up
- Nice cafe could be better
- The cost should be reduced
- They should have opening introductory day, bring back outdoor pool, adult swimming classes, more awareness of the activities in the borough by sending emails, coffee areas should be more customer friendly.
- Discount memberships card for the family
- Badminton should be encouraged
- Small Football league would be good
- Less price
- If gym are of more evening time and weekend it would be better and the price should be reduced
- Price has to be reduced, more bigger lounge, outdoor area to socialise
- Offer special deals on prices to encourage people to go there
- More publicity about facilities I feel many people don't know what's there as it's a bit out of the way
- None I am always at work
- Pool needs to have more modern facilities it's all very basic
- Reduce prices of gym and classes other gyms are much cheaper
- Need new upgraded fitness equipment machines
- Need warmer pool temperature especially for babies
- More convenient bus stops for leisure centre. It's so far to walk from the current buses that don't stop near by
- Water pool temperature. Have bicycle secure parking we all cycle and there is nowhere at Leisure centre to leave bicycle securely
- Updating the facilities will encourage me to go back. Make sure slides in leisure lagoon are open they were always closed when I took the kids on several occasions in the last w years
- Make swimming pool more accessible to disabled people and make it a little wider with a ramp going into pool at shallow end. Also would allow spinal board to be inserted in case of injury
- Offer concessions for NHS staff
- Improve facilities without price increases
- More swimming lanes for adults
- Will look forward to the changes well overdue
- The changing rooms certainly need refurbishing as they are sometimes not very clean
- Cleanliness needs to be improved especially in the changing rooms