

Evening Herald
THE VOICE OF PLYMOUTH

Why answers are needed

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THE decision to close Plymouth's Seaton Pool was always going to cause more than a few ripples. Certainly among the dedicated band of swimmers who regularly make use of the aging, yet still popular, facility. And definitely among the growing numbers of Plymouth people who are concerned at the lack of leisure opportunities which are available here. From a health viewpoint alone, our city needs every facility it can get if we are to turn the tide of obesity and lack of exercise which is threatening to engulf healthcare provision in the next few years. And in a sporting context, we can ill-afford to lose such a precious pool in a city starved of quality

resources. Proposals for the new 'super pool' at Central Park are fine in themselves – but there is no guarantee that we will get it, and even if we do it will take a substantial time for the Life Centre project to become available for public use. Last night's public meeting at Eggbuckland Community College demonstrated that feelings are still running high over the closure decision. But what is adding to the anguish and anger of protesters is the matter of who is to blame. The South West Regional Development Agency was initially held accountable by many. But it has since said it is still willing to negotiate over the plans. Meanwhile, Plymouth City Council's Labour Cabinet members agreed to close the

pool after being told it was costing the authority £160,000 to keep open. Surprisingly, RDA officials and Labour councillors did not attend last night's meeting, despite being invited. All of which has fuelled an atmosphere of confusion. If there was any doubt about the strength of feeling over this issue, last night underlined how important it is. The most worrying aspect for many people is the lack of clarity surrounding the closure decision. Who was behind the move to close the pool, and what are the exact reasons? Given the muddied waters, it is hardly surprising that some city councillors are to complain. What they – and we – need now more than anything are some answers.