

Tory councillor seizes on PM's remark in Commons

BLAIR ASKED FOR £4M TO SAVE POOL

A CONSERVATIVE city councillor has made a direct appeal to Prime Minister Tony Blair for the £4million needed to replace Seaton Pool.

Dr David Salter, the Tories' shadow cabinet member for health, has written to the Prime Minister in the hope that money for another swimming pool can be found.

Last November, Labour Cabinet members agreed to close Seaton Pool after hearing that the facility was costing the council £160,000 a year.

The pool is set to close in April, and the council has no plans to build another one in the north of the city.

In his letter, Cllr Salter asks Mr Blair: "To replace the existing facility will cost some £4million, which has not been

by **ROB PREECE**

Herald Reporter

found. Could Plymouth please have the £4million required?"

Seaton Pool is located on the Plymouth International Business Park at Derriford, and was inherited from the armed forces when Seaton Barracks closed.

The council says it would cost more than £1million to bring the building, which is now showing its age, up to scratch.

The pool site is owned by the South West of England Regional Development Agency, which has told the city council it wants the site back.

The council plans to move schools and clubs which currently use Seaton for swimming to other pools elsewhere in the city, including those at Central Park and Marjon. The authority has also made an

There doesn't seem to be much effort to find money, so I thought 'If the council won't, then I will'

ambitious lottery bid to help pay for a £50million 'life centre' to be located in Central Park - previously mooted as the site for a new Olympic-sized pool.

The proposed centre is expected to include a 53-metre swimming pool - which could be subdivided into three 25-metre pools - and diving boards with

another 25-metre pool. Other planned facilities include an ice rink with 1,000 seats and a seated hall which could stage basketball or hold 12 badminton courts.

Cllr Salter said he was inspired to act after Mr Blair criticised plans to close a swimming pool in Derbyshire during a debate in Parliament last week.

Mr Blair told MPs that the Government had committed "major sums" to invest in community facilities.

Cllr Salter told the Evening Herald yesterday: "If you don't ask, then you don't get.

"There doesn't seem to be much effort being put in to find money, so I thought, 'If the council won't, I will.'"