

Gold medal winner Goodhew condemns closure of Seaton facility



POLITICALLY MOTIVATED: Olympic gold medallist Duncan Goodhew says Seaton Pool's closure is a political decision

OLYMPIC STAR WANTS ACTION TO SAVE POOL

OLYMPIC swimming champion Duncan Goodhew has backed calls for the council to reverse its decision to close Seaton Pool in April.

Mr Goodhew accused the council, which decided to shut the loss-making facility in November, of restricting the chances of children learning to swim.

Eight hundred children from 18 schools use the pool every week. Hundreds of other children receive lessons with their families.

Echoing calls from city swimming clubs, Mr Goodhew said the council should not close the pool until an alternative is built.

by **WILLIAM TELFORD**
Herald Reporter

Plymouth City Council said it was working on a 'schedule' that will see children accommodated at other pools.

But Mr Goodhew criticised the council for the 'shameful act of depriving children of fun'.

He said: "If you believe in our children you have to get them to swim, and need the right facilities.

"If you close that pool a generation of kids will not learn how to swim. To a modern society that should be unacceptable."

Seaton Pool, on the Plymouth International Business Park at

Derriford, is used by more than 100,000 swimmers annually.

But it has been losing £160,000 a year.

The site is owned by the South West of England Regional Development Agency. A lease expired in November 2003. The RDA allowed the council to continue to use the site, but it now has plans for the land.

He called Plymouth City Council's decision 'political' and said: "They are not economic arguments, they are political arguments - it's 'where do I spend the money'."

Mr Goodhew said it was not too late to campaign and wants people to bombard 'outrageous' councillors with complaints.

"Democracy is about telling the politicians what you want - not accepting what they serve up to you," he said.

Cllr Peter Smith, cabinet member for Creative Plymouth, said Mr Goodhew's thoughts were correct - in an 'ideal world'.

He stressed that if it had been in our hands' a new Central Park development would have been completed before Seaton Pool shut.

But he said the run-down pool needed at least £1 million spent on it and stressed the RDA had not renewed its lease and said: "The RDA has already got plans for building on the site."