

'Difficult' decision for council over future of baths

BOROUGH bosses face a 'difficult dilemma' over whether to snatch control of the Kings Meadow swimming baths from campaigners attempting to raise money for its restoration and hand it to a private company instead.

Reading Borough Council had given the Kings Meadow Campaign responsibility for raising up to £2.5m to refurbish the Grade II listed

building, but the group has only managed to gather around £10,000.

The Labour cabinet is due to make a decision at its meeting on Monday.

The cabinet has outlined two options; allow the group to continue with its efforts or re-market the swimming pool to see if there is any interest in the site. The council has ruled out funding the work itself. Council

leader Jo Lovelock stressed the decision is still to be made and that the campaigners have been asked for more information ahead of the meeting.

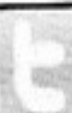
She added: "We have given the campaign a lot of time to try to raise the money but we also have a duty to try and save the building.

"We have got to respect the effort that has gone into it but it has

not raised much money. If we let it drag on for a long time, the building will deteriorate even further.

"It's really a difficult dilemma."

The group, which has run car boots sales and sponsored walks since 2009 as part of its fundraising drive, wants to restore the pool, provide new changing facilities and open a café at the 1903-built baths.



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