

'We fight on to save our baths'

It would cost more than £1 million to save Stirchley's 77-year-old swimming baths — and a campaign to re-open them looks set for failure.

Leisure Services chief Bryan Bird told campaigners at a meeting on Tuesday that Birmingham City Council could not afford the £1,079,000 needed to make the pool buildings safe.

Campaigners have described the decision — taken before the matter goes before Selly Oak area sub-committee for public consultation — as "undemocratic".

And they have pledged to fight to the bitter end by going to the sub-committee today (Friday), and taking a petition to the full council meeting.

The formal decision will be taken by the Leisure Services Committee in November.

A council spokesperson said: "The committee ultimately makes the decision and on that basis a decision has not yet been made."

Rubber

stamp

A spokesperson for Stirchley Action Group, set up when the baths were shut earlier this year, said: "We thought Birmingham ran on democratic lines but it seems that the committee will just rubber-stamp this decision."

The group intends to widen its brief to cover other local issues.

"We're not folding up. Stirchley is going to the dogs and there isn't any argument about that. We're going to try and stop it happening," he said.

Coun Alan Blumenthal (Con, Bournville) said: "The Leisure Ser-

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vices people are great ones for having a public consultation meeting but it was after the decision had been taken.

"We are going to fight to the bitter end. This is the major pool in the area, and it's disgusting that children are missing out on learning to swim because of its closure."