
Plymouth Aquatics Strategy 2010 – 2020

Final Draft

March 2010



Forward

Welcome to our Aquatics Strategy. The Plymouth Aquatic's Strategy sets out the strategic direction we want the Council and its partners to take over the next ten years with regards to the sports of; swimming, diving, octopush, synchronised swimming, water polo, learn to swim, life saving and a range of other water based activities which require access to managed water space for training and active participation.

The city is entering into a new exciting era of aquatic sports with significant investment in key indoor pool facilities, such as the Life Centre and the refurbishment of the pool at the University College Plymouth St Mark and St John.

The Plymouth Aquatics Strategy provides a framework for future aquatic programmes across the city and the sub-region. It focuses on the activities taking place in existing swimming pools and sets out recommendations for how these activities can be improved and developed. The Strategy is seen as a crucial document in seeking to ensure that the new pool facilities maximise community engagement in active participation, but also reinforce Plymouth's status as a city which can support and develop Plymouth's long and successful history of elite athletes; such as Tom Daley and Sharon Davies.

The Plymouth Aquatics strategy reflects the Council's aspirations for increasing participation in physical activity and for addressing health inequalities as set out in the City's Corporate Plan 2009. The Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Plymouth Facility Strategy which aims to ensure that there is the right number of swimming pools, in the right place and of the right quality.

We would like to extend our thanks to the Amateur Swimming Association, and Strategic Leisure for helping us develop the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy and to those who took the time to formally respond to the consultation process.

Plymouth City Council recognises that it cannot fully implement the recommendations alone, and it therefore plans to work with a range of partners to ensure that Plymouth becomes a centre for aquatics excellence, within the resources available.



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Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure

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Glossary of Terms

ABBREVIATION	EXPLANATION
AAP	Area Action Plan
APS	Active People Survey
ASA	Amateur Swimming Association
BS	British Swimming
CCPR	Central Council Physical Recreation
DA	Director of Aquatics
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
DfES	Department for Education and Schools (now changed to Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS))
EIS	English Institute of Sport
FT	Full time
FSI	Free Swimming Initiative
IoS	Institute of Swimming
NCTP	National Curriculum Training Programme
NGB	National Governing Body
NTP	National Training Programme
PCC	Plymouth City Council
PESSYP	PE and Sports Strategy for Young People
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PT	Part time
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

Plymouth City Council
Aquatics Strategy 2010 – 2020

ABREVIATION	EXPLANATION
SE	Sport England
SDO	Sport Development Officer
SOA	Super Output Area
SW	South West
UCP Marjon	University College Plymouth St Mark and St John



Section 1

Executive Summary

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Plymouth has a long and successful history of aquatic sports, a tradition that remains very much alive today with the recent international and Olympic swimming and diving achievements of individuals such as Tom Daley (diver), Cassie Patten (swimmer), Brooke Graddon (diver), Sharron Davies (swimmer) and Tonya Couch (diver). The city is home to three swimming clubs, a diving academy, a water polo club, several octopush clubs, and University water polo and octopush teams. This is, however, despite the relatively poor quality of existing aquatic facilities and an overall lack of high quality water space across the city.
- 1.2 The development of the Life Centre, refurbishment of the pool at UCP Marjon in the north of the city, and a planned pool for the east of the city represent a significant opportunity to put in place new aquatic programmes from learn to swim to elite performance and highlight the need for a strong vision and unified approach to the promotion and delivery of aquatics activities across the city.
- 1.3 In particular the development of the Life Centre offers a high quality facility which, for the first time in the city and the sub-region, will provide opportunities for world class athletes, aspiring performance athletes and the community to participate simultaneously across the range of aquatic activities.

Development of Key Pool facilities

- 1.4 The scale and mix of sports facility provision in the city is about to be transformed through the building of the Life Centre and the refurbishment of the pool at the University College Plymouth St Mark and St John. The Life Centre will replace the outdated Mayflower Leisure Centre (comprising two halls with 10 and 5 badminton courts respectively, a small gym, one squash court and a four rink indoor bowls hall) and Central Park Leisure Pools (33.3m x 6 lane, plus diving pool, learner pool) and the leisure water at Plymouth Pavilions, the site of which links to the development of a new Central Boulevard (Millbay AAP).
- 1.5 The Life Centre is one of the key priorities in Plymouth City Council's capital programme, as it underpins a firm commitment to improve the leisure and cultural facilities across the city (Corporate Improvement Priority 6) and to help tackle issues around physical activity levels and health inequalities (Corporate Improvement Priority 4). Once the Life Centre opens in 2011 and the refurbishment of the pool at UCP Marjon is complete, the Council will be able to provide a balanced and accessible aquatics programme and offer recreational swimming at all times in the city.

A Vision for Plymouth

- 1.6 Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan identifies that Plymouth will be recognised as one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of

life is enjoyed by everyone. The Council developed 14 improvement priorities as a means to achieve the vision for Plymouth. These priorities, as detailed in the Corporate Plan include:

- **Improving customer service;**
- **Informing and involving residents;**
- **Reducing inequalities between communities;**
- **Providing more and better culture and leisure activities;**
- **Improving skills and educational achievement;**
- **Improving access across the city;**
- **Providing better value for money;**
- **Developing high quality places to learn in.**

1.7 The current quality of aquatics facilities contrasts sharply with the aspirations for the city to be a 'top' coastal city. The city has now committed to improving aquatics facilities in a way that will ensure high quality, regional standard facilities that will contribute to putting Plymouth on the map. The main focus of the Life Centre will be on increasing levels of sport and physical activity and encouraging people of all ages to lead healthy, active lifestyles. It will also contribute towards the overall vision for Plymouth by enhancing the vibrancy and attraction of the city as a place to visit.

Purpose of the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy

- 1.8 The purpose of the Aquatics Strategy is to provide a review and assessment of existing aquatics provision in the city (facilities, recreational swimming, clubs, programmes) – put simply, who is doing what, where and how, and who is currently accessing this provision, and at what level. The Aquatics Strategy focuses on what currently takes place in the existing swimming pools, and how this can be improved and developed in the new high quality and extended water space that will be provided in Plymouth in the future. Although linked to facility provision, the role of the Aquatics Strategy is to focus on activity; it is the role of the Plymouth's Sports Facility Strategy to assess the need for specific types of provision, and where these should be located.
- 1.9 The development of the Aquatics Strategy is based on addressing identified issues and challenges. It establishes a framework for the way forward, which will support and enable the pathway for active participation. Linked to the development of the Life Centre (as a focal aquatic facility), the Aquatics Strategy is a citywide strategic plan, and looks at each aquatic activity from this perspective.
- 1.10 Consultation on the draft Aquatics Strategy was undertaken during a 12 week period,

to meet the requirements of Plymouth City Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Compact 'How we Consult with You' (See Appendix 7). Consultation was promoted using leaflets and posters, plus local media. It was undertaken using a combination of road shows, face to face meetings, opportunities for verbal and written feedback, including emails, and use of the Limehouse consultation resources.

- 1.11 The main themes of the consultation feedback related to pool programming, facilities and provision, and some general observations about existing swimming pools, and accessibility of the city's facilities and programmes by all citizens. These have been reflected as appropriate in the final Aquatics Strategy.

Aquatics – a Definition

- 1.12 For the purposes of this strategy 'aquatics' covers the sports of swimming, diving, octopush, synchronised swimming, and water polo, plus swimming teaching, life saving, triathlon, and a range of water-based activities which may require access to supervised pool space for training and active participation, but not for specialist medical or treatment conditions/requirements.

Strategic Priorities

- 1.13 Clear strategic priorities for the ASA at national and regional level are:

- **Learn to Swim;**
- **Health and Lifelong Participation;**
- **Athlete Development;**
- **Workforce Development;**
- **Facilities;**
- **Governance and Commercial.**

- 1.14 Devon is the largest county in the sub region with 38 active swimming clubs. The region currently lacks a regional and sub-regional level facility for overall aquatic activity, and specifically a publicly accessible 50m pool.

- 1.15 The pools at Bath University and at Millfield (Somerset) have predominantly a high performance focus, and are not readily available for club and casual use.

- 1.16 In its South West Strategy for Swimming, 'Building the Future', the ASA South West Region identifies the need for a regional facility in Plymouth, which would provide for swimming and diving, as well as other aquatic disciplines.

- 1.17 The ASA South West Region has confirmed that the development of the Life Centre will make Plymouth the major centre for swimming and diving development in Devon and the South West. The Life Centre will also become the major talent development centre for Devon and Cornwall.
- 1.18 The current lack of a regional and sub-regional hub, which could facilitate improved coordination of performance swimming (training and development), coaching and coach education, is a key need, that will be addressed by the Life Centre.
- 1.19 The ASA's 'A Vision for Swimming' 2009-2013, the ASA confirms commitment to this scale of facility development, with support for the development of a 50m pool in Plymouth.
- 1.20 The ASA also highlights Plymouth as being one of the nine Beacon Delivery sites in England, the next nearest being Portsmouth and Coventry.
- 1.21 To ensure the investment in aquatics realises benefits in terms of the above strategic priorities, the ASA has proposed to fund a Director of Aquatics and a Development Officer as part of the Beacon Programme.

Strategic Context for Swimming in the Plymouth

- 1.22 The strategic context for future provision of swimming pools in the city is provided by a number of key documents detailed in the main report. These underpin the case for the development of new and improved facilities and for a step change in the way that aquatic activities are delivered in Plymouth. Both the Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy and the Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy aim to provide Plymouth with the right number of sports facilities, of the right quality, in the right place, as well as details of future pool needs.
- 1.23 There are also a number of other critical factors to consider in relation to current aquatics activity in the city:
- **Participation**
 - There is an overall shortage of pool water for the city's current population when assessed using SE planning tools.
 - Swimming is the largest participation sport in the city; given the low level of participation recorded in the 2006/07 Active People Survey (APS) (18.6 per cent) there is an obvious need to increase levels of participation and swimming provides a key opportunity as it is already the highest participation sport in the city. The APS results 2008/09 show an increase in participation to 23.5 per cent.
 - Existing facilities are not fully accessible with regards to meeting DDA standards.

- There are times most days when there is no ‘public swim’ offer available in the city; fewer than 50 per cent of the opening hours at Plympton Pool and 65 per cent of Central Park Leisure Pools time is available for public swimming.
- Given the limited access to water space it is impossible to deliver a swimming programme that meets the needs of the city: particularly public swimming/ school swimming/ learn to swim/ and other aquatic disciplines such as Water polo/ synchro / club swimming.
- As a result of above, the city is currently a net exporter of swimmers to South Hams/ Cornwall and West Devon.
- **Current Facility Provision**
 - The existing swimming pool and diving facilities at Central Park Leisure Pools are out dated and in need of major refurbishment/ rebuild.
 - The diving pool in Plymouth (Central Park Leisure Pools) does not offer 10m and 7.5m Synchro diving; divers have to travel to Southampton to train and compete in their specific disciplines.
 - There are identified public pool requirements in the north and east of the city.
- **Performance**
 - The most successful age group swimming club in the country, Plymouth Leander (Swim 21 accredited), is based in the city, at Plymouth College.
 - Plymouth is one of four High Performance Diving Centres – the others being Southampton, Leeds, and Sheffield.
 - Plymouth is home to some of the most successful and talented divers in the world: Tom Daley, Tonia Couch and Brooke Graddon.
- **School Swimming**
 - The city has higher levels of Key Stage 2 students who are unable to attain the Government target of being able to swim a minimum of 25m than the national average, despite being one of the largest UK coastal cities.
 - The city cannot meet the needs of TOP UP school swimming.

1.24 Given the above, the need for additional and replacement high quality, fit for purpose water space is clear; this need is the driver behind the development of the Life Centre, and refurbishment of the UCP pool, which will transform provision for and delivery of, aquatic activities at all levels, in Plymouth.

Assessing Future Facility Need

1.25 Given the condition of Central Park Leisure Pools there is a need to close and replace this facility; in replacing Central Park Leisure Pools, there is an opportunity to re-

develop a central focus for aquatic activity, providing for both participation and performance.

- 1.26 The future vision for the provision of swimming pools in the city combines the development of new and replacement facilities, to meet the identified needs for delivery of aquatic activity, and importantly, to address the range of issues highlighted in terms of participation and activity. The ASA South West Region supports the review of swimming provision undertaken in the city and the need for a 50m pool, such as the one that will be provided in the Life Centre. The vision comprises:
- **The development of the Life Centre – a sub-regional 50m facility, reflecting local and regional need for performance and participation, and linked inextricably to the City Council’s 2020 Vision for Plymouth. It will be one of four ASA regional pools and will be the only public 50m pool in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset.**
 - **Refurbishment of the existing pool at UCP Marjon.**
 - **Proposed development of a new pool in the east of the city at Sherford / Plymstock, located within the city boundary (linked to future residential development), subject to external funding and partner contributions.**
- 1.27 In developing this vision for the future provision of swimming pools in the city, the Council has developed a partnership with the University of Plymouth (20,000 on site students) to make a financial contribution to the Life Centre. The Life Centre will be the central hub at the heart of swimming facilities in the city, providing opportunities for recreational swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation), learn to swim, school swimming, club use (also linked to student participation as appropriate), University curriculum delivery, and high performance training for diving and swimming.

Summary

- 1.28 As a coastal city the current range and variety of aquatic and water-based activity is hardly surprising; however, the relative lack of citywide coordination over fundamental skills, such as learn to swim and water safety, is. In addition, although the swimming club network is strong in the city, overall developmental pathways are not always well defined, sometimes to the detriment of individual swimmers who for a number of reasons are unable to participate at their appropriate level.
- 1.29 Provision for elite diving and swimming, as well as disability swimming, is heavily reliant on key individuals. Opportunities to develop other aquatic sports, for example water polo and octopush are limited by a lack of access to appropriate water space.
- 1.30 The fact that a high level of success has been achieved by the city’s swimmers and divers is testament to the commitment and investment by a few individuals in aquatic activity. The opportunity presented by the Life Centre and refurbishment of the pool at UCP Marjon to establish clear developmental and appropriately resourced aquatic

programmes is fundamental to both increase participation at community level and develop elite performance, both of which will benefit the city, through improved health, and delivery of the 2020 Vision for Plymouth.

- 1.31 Based on the review and analysis of aquatics in Plymouth and the sub-region, the following table highlights the issues, challenges and opportunities for each discipline and area of activity. It is these issues, challenges and opportunities that need to be reflected in the development of the Aquatics Strategy and addressed through the establishment of a citywide strategic framework, or pathway, for future delivery of participation, performance and competition, teacher and volunteer education programmes.
- 1.32 The successful delivery of recommendations outlined in section 1.33 will depend upon an integrated partnership approach, involving the following key agencies: higher education, the Primary Care Trust, Sport England, Local Clubs, and the Amateur Swimming Association. The City council is a key partner in the integrated partnership approach and will contribute, as applicable, within the resources available. Furthermore, Plymouth City Council will not make any appointments to additional positions highlighted in the Aquatics Strategy without confirmed external funding for the posts. There will be no growth in revenue funding requirements for staffing as a result of this strategy.

Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for Aquatics in Plymouth (see also Table 5 in section 5)

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Swimming Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant differences between the 3 clubs in Plymouth, in terms of resources, access to pool time, coaching expertise, competitive performance and success • Relationships between some clubs appear strained (this may be historic and possibly personality driven, but is in no way unique to Plymouth; the principal issue seems to be about how talented swimmers are attracted and retained) • All clubs also provide swimming lessons – predominantly aimed at identifying potential talent and generating income • All clubs would like to access more pool time • There is a general desire to be able to access long course water space for training • Affordability of water space is a key issue for some clubs • All clubs want to retain their own identify, and specifically for competition purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing talented swimmers to sub-regional and regional level age group and open age, given that many of the squad come from one main club • Developing high performance training sessions on the basis of ability, rather than in relation to a club • Developing more high performance coaches • Supporting more local clubs to become Swim 21 accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve inter-club working and communication • Establish a centralised high performance training programme • Establish a coach education programme targeted at city, sub-regional and regional coaches (link into ASA Beacon Centre designation, and ASA Whole Sport Plan, to optimise co-location of funding opportunities) • Establish the Life Centre as one of the main competitive venues of choice in the UK • Create the opportunity for swimming clubs to deliver around the 2020 Vision for Plymouth, such as enhancing vibrancy and accessibility • Opportunity to deliver the Vision and objectives of the Plymouth City Council Corporate Plan • Ensuring local clubs gain Swim 21 accreditation; the ASA see this as central to supporting the Aquatics Academy and establishing clear roles for swimming clubs

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Disability Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal links between the one club in Plymouth, Pisces, and other Plymouth swimming clubs; • No citywide understanding of the needs of disability swimming; • Lack of access to ‘quality’ pool time, given the practical and logistical issues of running the disability club; • Lack of volunteers • Learn to swim lessons are delivered in isolation, not as part of an overall programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving understanding of the needs of disability swimmers citywide, to improve accessibility in all pools • Increasing the number of volunteers working with disability swimmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing formal links citywide between schools, clubs and the disability swimming club as part of the aquatic pathway • Provide additional support to mainstream clubs who promote integrated policies and swimming activity programmes. • Development of a lesson programme for disability swimmers as part of the Learn to Swim Programme (link into Beacon centre designation, and ASA Whole Sport Plan, to optimise co-location of funding opportunities) • Ensure development of disability swimming – link to delivery of Plymouth City Council’s Corporate Plan, which has accessibility – of opportunity and provision – at its heart • Develop vocational training – potentially in partnership with the University of Plymouth
Learn to Swim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current inability to meet junior and adult learn to swim programme • Many different organisations, public, commercial and clubs involved in teaching swimming • Lack of citywide coordination • No clear pathways linking learn to swim, school swimming, and clubs • Lack of consistency in quality and delivery across the city • Not all teachers/teaching organisations deliver the ASA Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring a citywide consistency in swimming teaching, irrespective of the venue, individual teacher or organisation • Dovetailing the Learn to Swim Programme within the School Swimming Programme (Water Safety and Water Skills) • Ensuring equity of take up – pricing to be targeted at children in the most deprived wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the fundamental importance of Learn to Swim to the overall Life Centre Business Case and longer term sustainability • Develop policy on the citywide programme for teaching learn to swim, for example a more flexible approach which facilitates access to lessons outside the traditional 4pm to 6pm midweek timeslots • Create more opportunities to learn to swim for adults and juniors – exemplar programmes, based from the Life Centre which roll out across the city • Meet current demand for swimming lessons in the city (currently Plymouth is a net exporter of demand). The success of the Strategy will be driven by the successful delivery of the Learn to Swim Programme. • Ensure the resources are appropriate to deliver an excellent swim programme, high quality swimming teaching delivered by the right kind of teachers • Ensure it is appreciated that Learn to Swim is key to facilitating access to other aquatic and water sports

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
School Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination and corporate vision across the city in terms of school swimming (this does not reflect best practice of similar sized cities elsewhere in the UK) • Some young people ‘miss out’ on school swimming lessons due to re-location/changing schools etc, because individual schools fit the lessons into different key stages of the curriculum • Lack of a consistent approach to the stage at which young people learn to swim • Lack of consistency in lesson delivery, accessibility, price, etc at pools across the city • Insufficient resources for top up courses • Lack of consistent quality in swimming teaching and the environment for teaching swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a citywide, City Council led policy on school swimming • Improving citywide coordination of school swimming • Ensuring access to school swimming is affordable • Ensuring inter-departmental awareness of all opportunities for aquatic activities, and swimming lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing a citywide policy on school swimming – what, when and who, for example, all schools have to ensure all Key Stage 2 pupils can swim 25m (led by Children’s Services, but delivered in partnership with Culture, Sport and Leisure) • Developing a policy and implementation partnership with Children’s Services in relation to school swimming • Joint marketing of opportunities for young people, for example holiday programmes and top up courses
Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, there are times when the community has no access to recreational water space in any of the pools in the city • Low participation rates in specific areas of the city and amongst particular community groups • Impact of Free Swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the city community is aware that there will be increased access to water space, and it is used (link to increased participation, improved health etc) • Ensuring equity of access to high quality water space in the city • Increasing participation in Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) from non, or low participant sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement this citywide policy on access to water space for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation). For example, there must be increased access for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) at all satellite pools (UCP Marjon and Plympton). This will be achieved through reducing the level of club use at satellite pools. The Life Centre, as the main hub facility, will always have water space available for public swimming, in addition to access to the leisure pool. • Ensure Free Swimming and/or other future national initiatives are monitored across the city to facilitate assessment of impact on participation, and enable resources to be appropriately targeted

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Diving			
High Performance Diving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One diving business in the city – Plymouth City Sports Limited (diving) • Reliance on one head coach (this has been addressed recently through the ASA) • Focus on performance, given the success of some individuals • Potential for better links to local gymnastics clubs; currently talent ID is through the linked tumble tots operation • Limited dryside training facilities • Could be better integrated into an overall citywide aquatics pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing additional coaching resources at all levels • Linking all opportunities and training for diving – learn to dive, recreational and high performance as part of one programme, delivered at one facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing all diving activities as part of an aquatics facility • Further developing the profile of diving in the city • Developing the role of Plymouth’s high performance diving structure at sub-regional and regional level • Sustain Plymouth as one of the four High Performance Diving Centres in the UK and to be the preferred location for high performance diving training and competition in the UK
Learn to Dive and Flip and Fun (recreational diving)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently lack of access to water space to develop this programme • Lack of coaches 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of recreational diving in the city • Increasing awareness of recreational diving as an opportunity, and possible diversionary activity; potential for partnerships with Community Safety teams, YOTs etc • Opportunity to link into citywide Talent ID Programme • Developing participative opportunities at sub-regional and regional level
Other Aquatic Disciplines			
Water Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to water space, particularly for training, and competition • Lack of coaching resources – numbers and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the participation pathway between junior and senior clubs (the University role could be important) • Addressing the growing demand for the sport in the city – water space for training and competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the profile of the sport in the city • Developing higher performance levels – linked to the University

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Octopush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of access to good quality pool time – timing and space Lack of coaching resources Need provision of underwater cameras to facilitate filming of the sport to assist in promotion Currently nowhere to stage competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the growing demand for water space for this sport Consider the competitive and spectator needs in relation to the Life Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the profile of the sport in the city – this will need targeted promotion and the ability to ‘spectate’ /observe for training purposes, such as underwater filming
Synchro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently no activity in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding the level of development resources to put into this discipline the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of this discipline, based on the availability of appropriate resources Potential to link with activity base in Exeter Potential to link with local gymnastics centre
Aqua aerobics, pool walking, aqua jog, aquafit, swim fit etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming of these activities eg appropriate time Compatibility with other activities Participant groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring aquatics programmes across the city are complementary in relation to these activities, and reflect market segmentation results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of consistency in programming and delivery across the city
Training for other water sports eg sub aqua, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, sea survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming of these activities eg time Compatibility with other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring opportunities for these sports/activities are part of the overall aquatics pathway, but also link into the activities and programmes at the Mountbatten Outdoor Centre, and the University curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased coordination between water sports clubs, indoor pool providers and the Mount Batten Centre Improved opportunities for indoor training for outdoor water sports
Life Saving (RLSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring consistency in delivery of training courses Ensuring individuals use this qualification to benefit aquatics in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimising the qualified workforce in the city and sub region for the benefit of aquatics development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for Life Centre operator to develop consistency in programming and delivery across the city Link qualified individuals to local clubs Work with the University to link qualified individuals to local clubs and schools as part of both curriculum delivery and vocational development To develop links with RNLI, surf lifesaving clubs or similar

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Pentathlon and Triathlon Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming of these activities - timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring appropriate access to water space is facilitated for recreational and elite athletes in these sports, as part of their overall training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of the training opportunities available through local clubs
Outdoor Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access due to seasonality of operation • Water depth inappropriate for all aquatic sports and disciplines • Cost of operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising use when operational • Ensuring appropriate levels of supervision and management • Balancing cost and opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During closed season could use outdoor pools for training • Encouraging some users to participate regularly in indoor water space – recreational or as part of more organised aquatics activity

Recommendations for the Future Delivery of Aquatics in Plymouth

- 1.33 Based on the identified needs of aquatic sports in the city, and the opportunity presented by the development of the Life Centre and the refurbishment of UCP pool, the following are the recommendations for future development and delivery of aquatics in the city.
- 1.34 The delivery of the programme outlined is dependent upon the contribution from the Amateur Swimming Association, other partners and Plymouth City Council (subject to available resources). The successful delivery of actions will depend upon an integrated partnership approach involving a number of agencies including higher education, Primary Care Trust, Sport England, the ASA and local clubs

Plymouth Aquatics Academy

Recommendation (1) Establish a Plymouth Aquatics Academy this will be a new citywide structure for the organisation and delivery of swimming, diving and water polo, not based on one club identity. The programme will be a partnership between the Leisure Operator, the Amateur Swimming Association and the City Council within the resources available.

Recommendation (2) Subject to funding from the Amateur Swimming Association, appoint a Director of Aquatics of this Academy responsible for the overall development and delivery of aquatics in the city.

Recommendation (3) The Director of Aquatics will be responsible for the overall programming of performance aquatics in the Life Centre in close consultation with the Amateur Swimming Association, the leisure operator and Client (Plymouth City Council, within the resources available).

Recommendation (4) Based on the standards set by Plymouth City Council, the future leisure operator will be responsible for programming of Learn to Swim, and School Swimming at the Life Centre and other pools in the city operated under the same contract, and where appropriate, other public sector facilities such as UCP Marjon.

The leisure management operator and the Director of Aquatics will liaise to ensure progression on the pathways. The existing Swim Coordinator post will be responsible for delivery of the lesson programme, which will follow the national learn to swim programme format of delivery and to the level detailed in the Leisure Management Contract specification for Plymouth City Council facilities. This individual will be located within the Aquatics office in the Life Centre to facilitate the development and delivery of aquatics activity overall, from participation to performance.

Aquatics Club Development

Recommendation (5) The Director of Aquatics will establish a swimming club forum to improve inter-club working and communication.

Recommendation (6) The Director of Aquatics will establish a centralised, city high performance training programme for swimming, diving and water polo, and encourage all city based clubs to participate in and support this for their elite athletes.

Recommendation (7) Subject to funding from the Amateur Swimming Association, establish a centralised high performance sub-regional training programme, and encourage all regional swimming clubs, diving clubs and water polo clubs to participate in and support this for their elite athletes.

Recommendation (8) Establish a coach education programme targeted at city, sub-regional and regional coaches, and promote opportunities for coach education in the city, funded from external funds or contained within fees and charges..

Recommendation (9) Establish the Life Centre as one of the main competitive venues of choice in the UK, within the resources available.

Disability Swimming

Recommendation (10) Within the resources available or external funding, establish formal citywide links between schools, clubs and the disability swimming club (Pisces) as part of the Aquatics pathway and the Aquatics Academy to ensure further development of disability swimming in the city. ASA Playground to Podium will provide the links for talent development.

Recommendation (11) Develop a lesson programme for disability swimmers linked into the mainstream Learn to Swim Programme in partnership with Pisces and the ASA, funded from external resources/ fees and charges.

Recommendation (12) All swimming teachers and volunteers should be trained to differentiate between the needs of disability and non-disability swimmers.

Learn to Swim

Recommendation (13) Develop and implement a policy on a citywide programme for teaching learn to swim which creates more flexible opportunities to learn to swim for adults and juniors, also targeted at groups who have not had learn to swim opportunities (within the resources available).

Recommendation (14) Within the resources available seek to meet the current and future demand for swimming lessons in the city, and deliver an excellent learn to

swim programme that is accredited to Swim 21.

Recommendation (15) The development of this new strategy for aquatics should work towards agreement on a core offer for swimming in the city. It would link to a similar policy for school swimming. This would mean putting together a common, core 'curriculum', with clear aims and objectives, as well as guidance and support on how to achieve a set of core outcomes. This would be a minimum 'delivery standard'.

Recommendation (16) The concept of aquatic opportunities for individual participants to develop their skills needs to be very explicit from the start of a child's aquatics experience. Every child should have the opportunity to learn to swim with confidence and competence which will enable them to make real choices and enjoy quality experiences in aquatics, within the resources available.

School Swimming

Recommendation (17) Develop and implement a citywide Services for Children and Young People policy on school swimming to ensure all children can swim a minimum of 25m by Key Stage Two. Developing the implementation of this policy should commence prior to opening the Life Centre.

Recommendation (18) Adopt a joint marketing approach between Services for Children and Young People and Culture, Sport and Leisure to promote aquatic opportunities for young people, within the resources available.

Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation)

Recommendation (19) Develop and implement the citywide policy on access to, and promotion of, water space for recreational swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation). The policy must be to increase access for recreational swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) at all satellite pools, including UCP Marjon and Plympton. This will be achieved through reducing the level of club use at satellite pools. The Life Centre, as the main hub facility, will have water space available for public swimming at all times, in addition to access to the leisure pool.

Recommendation (20) Ensure free swimming and other future national initiatives in the city are monitored to assess impact on participation, and therefore enable resources to be appropriately targeted (subject to external funding or within the resources available).

Recommendation (21) Develop and implement a coordinated citywide approach to broader aquatic programming such as aqua-aerobics, pool walking, training times for triathlon and pentathlon.

Diving

Recommendation (22) Establish all diving activities as part of the Aquatics Academy to increase the profile of diving in the city, including recreational, high performance, regional and sub-regional.

Recommendation (23) Sustain Plymouth as one of the UK's four high performance diving centres and the preferred location for high performance diving training and competition; post 2012.

Water Polo

Recommendation (24) Develop the profile of the sport in the city, particularly high performance linked to the University, through improved access to water space for training and competition.

Recommendation (25) Work to establish one water polo club in the city, available to both senior and junior teams.

Octopush

Recommendation (26) Develop the profile of the sport in the city by improving access to water space for training, competition and spectator provision. Work towards the establishment of a city club, and focus available resources on the long term development of this activity.

Synchronised swimming

Recommendation (27) Consider longer term development of this discipline based on the availability of appropriate resources and the potential to link with an existing club in Exeter.

Other Water sports

Recommendation (28) Identify opportunities to increase coordination between

water sports clubs, indoor pool providers and the Mount Batten Centre to deliver pool training opportunities for outdoor water sports.

Life Saving

Recommendation (29) Utilise the development of the Life Centre as the opportunity to develop citywide consistency in programming and delivery of life saving courses. Link qualified individuals to local clubs and develop links with RNLI, surf lifesaving clubs or similar.

Outdoor Pools

Recommendation (30) Continue to maximise the use of outdoor pools to provide a balanced pool programme of activities, within the resources available.

- 1.35 The above recommendations provide the strategic framework for aquatics in the city moving forward and will underpin and inform the specific actions taken as part of the Aquatics Action Plan (implementation and delivery).



Section 2

Introduction and Context

2 Introduction and Context

Introduction

- 2.1 Plymouth has a long and successful history of aquatic sports, a tradition that remains very much alive today with the recent international and Olympic swimming and diving achievements of individuals such as Tom Daley (diver), Cassie Patten (swimmer), Brooke Graddon (diver), Sharron Davies (swimmer) and Tonya Couch (diver). The city is home to three swimming clubs, a diving Academy, a water polo club, several octopush clubs, and University water polo and octopush teams. This is, however, despite the relatively poor quality of existing aquatic facilities and an overall lack of high quality water space across the city.
- 2.2 Plans for the development of the Life Centre, refurbishment of pool at UCP Marjon in the north of the city, and a planned pool for the east of the city, represent a significant opportunity to put in place new aquatic programmes from learn to swim to elite performance and highlight the need for a strong vision and unified approach to the promotion and delivery of a aquatic activities across the city.
- 2.3 In particular the development of the Life Centre offers a high quality facility which, for the first time in the City and the sub-region will provide opportunities for world class athletes, aspiring performance athletes and the community, to participate simultaneously across the range of aquatic activities.
- 2.4 Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan identifies that Plymouth will be recognised as one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone. The Council developed 14 improvement priorities as a means to achieve the vision for Plymouth. These priorities, as detailed in the Corporate Plan include:
- **Improving customer service;**
 - **Informing and involving residents;**
 - **Reducing inequalities between communities;**
 - **Providing more and better culture and leisure activities;**
 - **Improving skills and educational achievement;**
 - **Improving access across the city;**
 - **Providing better value for money;**
 - **Developing high quality places to learn.**

- 2.5 The current quality of aquatics facilities contrasts sharply with the aspirations for the city to be a 'top' coastal city. The city has now to improving aquatics facilities in a way that will ensure high quality, regional standard facilities that will contribute to putting Plymouth on the map. The main focus of the Life Centre will be on increasing levels of sport and physical activity and encouraging people of all ages to lead healthy, active lifestyles. It will also contribute towards the overall vision for Plymouth by enhancing the vibrancy and attraction of the city as a place to visit.
- 2.6 As a state of the art aquatic and dry sports complex, to be located in Central Park, the Life Centre will replace the existing Central Park Leisure Pools (40 years old), the Plymouth Pavilions Leisure Pool, and the Mayflower Leisure Centre (35 years old).
- 2.7 In developing the vision for the future provision of swimming pools in the city, the Council has developed a delivery partnership with the University of Plymouth (20,000 on site students) based on a financial contribution to the Life Centre; the Life Centre will be the central hub for the swimming facilities in the city, providing opportunities for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation), Learn to Swim, School Swimming, Club use, University curriculum delivery, and high performance training for diving and swimming. As a coastal city, Plymouth has a good natural environment for other water sports such as canoeing, sailing and windsurfing. However, clubs facilitating these activities currently lack access to good quality indoor training provision.
- 2.8 The Life Centre is one of the key priorities in Plymouth City Council's capital programme. This underpins the Council's firm commitment to improve the leisure and cultural facilities across the city and to help tackle issues around physical activity levels and health inequalities (Corporate Improvement Objectives 4 and 6). The city Council and its partners have worked closely with Sport England, and other partners such as Plymouth Argyle Football Club, the University of Plymouth, Plymouth Sports Forum, and over ten Governing Bodies, in the last two years to develop the Plymouth Life Centre project. Construction commenced in early 2010 and the facility will be operational in autumn 2011.

Rationale for the Aquatics Strategy

- 2.9 The development of the Life Centre, refurbishment of a pool in the north of the city, and planned pool for the east of the city, represent a significant opportunity to put in place a new aquatics programme which will address participation from learn to swim to elite performance, covering all aquatic disciplines. In particular the development of the Life Centre, offers a high quality facility which, for the first time in the city and the sub-region, will provide opportunities for world class athletes, aspiring performance athletes and the community, to participate simultaneously in aquatic activities.

- 2.10 The ASA has identified clear objectives for the future focus of aquatics provision; these are:
- **Learn to Swim;**
 - **Health and Lifelong Participation;**
 - **Workforce Development;**
 - **Athlete Development;**
 - **Governance Structures and Development;**
 - **Facilities.**
- 2.11 This Aquatics Strategy reflects these priorities to ensure their delivery at local level; as one of the first of these new waves of strategies, it is a critical part of the ASA's future approach to aquatics development and delivery. Based on an holistic integration of all aquatics disciplines, coaching and coach education, all linked to high quality, fit for purpose facility provision, and underpinned, through the Beacon Programme with appropriate revenue and support resources, the vision for aquatics in the city endorses a partnership between the ASA, the Council, the University, and clubs, to realise the practical implementation of the Plymouth Aquatics Pathway.
- 2.12 In order to achieve more than just the bricks and mortar, the vision for aquatic delivery in the city includes the developmental infrastructure which will support and facilitate Grow, Sustain, Excel. This strategy therefore provides a clear and strategic approach to the future development of aquatic programming in the city.
- 2.13 The assessment of need undertaken as part of the Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy has highlighted the lack of provision of public pool water in the city.
- 2.14 The new facilities provided at the Life Centre, and refurbishment of UCP Marjon Pool will attract city swimmers to city pools as opposed to the current situation where Plymouth is a net exporter of public swims. (Approximately one third of swimming activity in pools located in neighbouring authorities are from Plymouth residents).
- 2.15 The development of the Aquatics Strategy will enable future provision of swimming, diving and other aquatic sports to be coordinated, targeted at areas of the greatest need, and importantly be accessible to both the city and the wider region.
- 2.16 Implementation of the Aquatics Strategy will mean change in terms of the delivery, programming, management and accessibility of aquatic sports in Plymouth. This change is critical to ensure that the significant investment in the Life Centre and UCP Marjon is fully realised in terms of increased participation at all levels, accessibility for all, and improved community health and wellbeing.

Purpose of the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy

- 2.17 The purpose of the Aquatics Strategy is to firstly to provide a review and assessment of existing provision in the city (facilities, clubs, programmes) – put simply, who is doing what, where and how, and who is currently accessing this provision, and at what level.
- 2.18 Having established this context, the Aquatics Strategy identifies current issues and challenges in the delivery of aquatic activity in the city, and also highlights good practice and opportunities for further provision.
- 2.19 Development of the Aquatics Strategy is based on addressing identified issues and challenges. It establishes a framework for the way forward, which will support and enable the pathway for active participation. Linked to the development of the Life Centre (as a focal aquatic facility), the Aquatics Strategy is a citywide strategic plan, and looks at each aquatic activity from this perspective.

Aquatics – a Definition

- 2.20 For the purposes of this strategy ‘aquatics’ covers the sports of swimming, diving, octopush, synchronised swimming, and water polo, plus swimming teaching, life saving, triathlon, and a range of water based activities which may require access to supervised pool space for training and active participation, but not for specialist medical or treatment conditions/requirements.

Development of the Plymouth Life Centre

- 2.21 The scale and mix of sports facility provision in the city is about to be transformed through the building of the Life Centre. It will replace the outdated Mayflower Centre (comprising two halls with 10 and 5 badminton courts respectively, a small gym, one squash court and a four rink indoor bowls hall) and Central Park Leisure Pools (33.3m x 6 lane, plus diving pool, teaching pool) and the leisure pool at Plymouth Pavilions, the site of which links to the development of the Central Boulevard (Millbay AAP)
- 2.22 This state of the art facility will be unique in the South West and will provide a hub of community activity for local residents of all ages and abilities, as well as being a regional centre that will attract some of the South West’s leading sportsmen and women.
- 2.23 The vision for sport and leisure in the city reaches beyond the replacement of existing outdated facilities, using modern planning techniques based on the Sport England Toolkits and best practice guidance, to understand the needs of the community (not just sport but wider community needs) for the next 20 to 30 years.
- 2.24 The planned development provides the opportunity to work in partnership, contribute to the overall regeneration of the city through use of the existing Pavilion site to enhance the development of the Central Boulevard, and critically deliver identified community and corporate priorities for Plymouth’s communities.

2.25 In relation to provision for aquatic activity, the Life Centre will comprise:

FACILITY ELEMENT	DETAIL OF FACILITY ELEMENT
<p>50m x 10m lane swimming pool (and spectator accommodation)</p>	<p>Olympic size pool meeting the needs of both swimming clubs and the wider community, with moveable floors and booms allowing flexible use for different activities. (The strategic need for the aquatic facilities has been underpinned by the Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy (2006-2016), Sport England Facilities Planning Model (2007); ASA Whole Sport Plan (partnership re-affirmed with ASA by Sport England in June 2009), the ASA regional strategy and partnership commitment from University of Plymouth).</p> <p>The dimensions of the 50m pool will facilitate its operation as 3 x 25m pools (2 with moveable floors), which together with the separate diving pool actually provides 4 x 25m tanks, 3 of which will have moveable floors. This will provide maximum flexibility to programme the pool for the benefit of community Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation), as well as for lessons, clubs, and high performance training squads.</p>
<p>Diving pool (and spectator accommodation)</p>	<p>One of the ASA's four High Performance diving facilities in the country. The inclusion of a moveable floor will allow maximum flexibility for programming as a standard pool.</p> <p>A curtain between the diving pool and the main 50m tank will enable both privacy for elite diver training and also use by some community groups who for cultural reasons require more privacy in a public swimming pool.</p>
<p>Dryside diving</p>	<p>Top class training facility for competitive divers, with trampolines, springboards, harnesses, crash mats and other specialist equipment. The facility is also seen to provide a valuable resource for other recreational groups in the city, such as disabled groups or junior trampoline activities.</p>
<p>Leisure water</p>	<p>Leisure pool for all the family, which will include flumes, bubble pool, and shallow beach water entry facilitating early years swimming.</p> <p>This will be a separate facility, adjacent to the 50m pool, at the opposite end of the swimming hall from the diving pool.</p>

FACILITY ELEMENT	DETAIL OF FACILITY ELEMENT
Ancillary accommodation	Accommodation includes: reception/ office space/ staff room/ changing – wet and dryside / aquatics office/ meeting room, and spectator provision.

- 2.26 The 50m swimming pool in the Life Centre will be the only one of its kind in the South West sub-region, although at the time of writing there are proposals for a 50m Private Funded Initiative in Bristol; the nearest 50m pools are at Bath University (part of the English Institute of Sport, so there is limited community and club access), and at Millfield School, Somerset (private school with limited access to the swimming pool, which is restricted to students at the school or members of clubs using the facilities).
- 2.27 Until the Life Centre is built, swimmers who must train in a 50m pool have to travel out of the county. The only opportunity for long course training is that presented by the 50m x 1 lane training tank built by a parent of a young swimmer at Dinnaton Swimming Club (based at Yelverton, West Devon).

Developing the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy - approach

- 2.28 The Plymouth Aquatics Strategy has been developed through a process of consultation and assessment, involving:
- **Face to face meetings with identified stakeholders;**
 - **Review of existing aquatic activity in the city;**
 - **Survey to all stakeholders, to identify the current challenges facing aquatic activity in the city;**
 - **Launch of the Strategy process, to which the Council invited identified key partners and stakeholders;**
 - **Additional telephone consultation to follow up specific issues/gain additional information;**
 - **Quality assessment of existing swimming lesson delivery in the city;**
 - **Regular Project Meetings, involving the ASA;**
 - **Interim consultation with the ASA on Beacon status and organisational structure;**
 - **Consultation with all identified stakeholders on the draft strategy;**

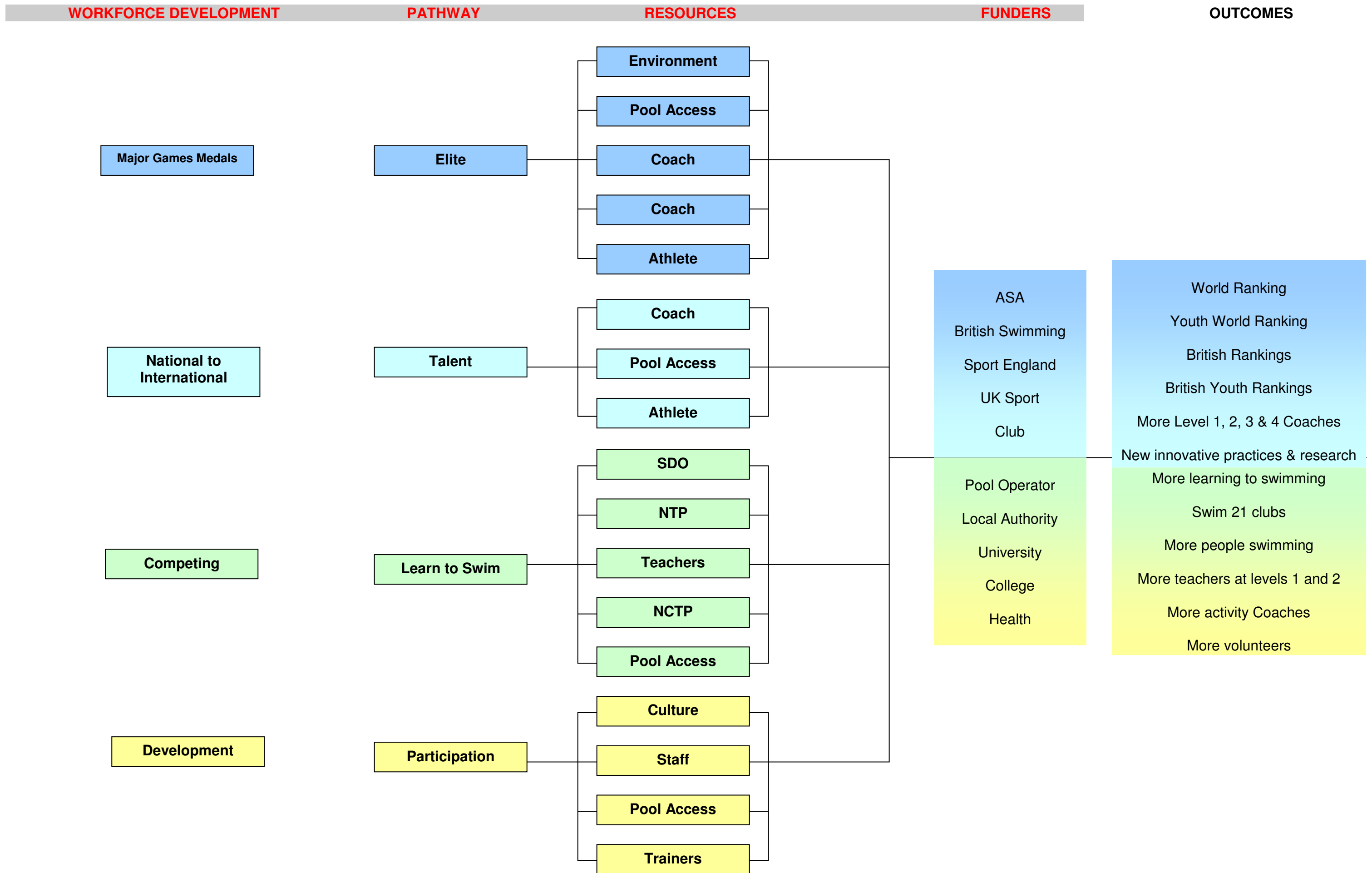
- **Consultation with the community in accordance with the City Council's Statement of community Involvement and Compact (see Appendix 7).**

- 2.29 The launch of the Aquatics Strategy was sponsored by Plymouth City Council and the Amateur Swimming Association who also led on the development of the strategy itself and ensured the engagement of the aquatic stakeholders in the city. The launch event (March 2009) clearly set out the rationale for developing the Aquatics Strategy and highlighted the need for investment in the development of the Aquatics Pathway in the city so as to reflect the significant capital commitment to the building of the Life Centre and refurbishment of the pool at UCP Marjon.
- 2.30 The production of an Aquatics Strategy sets out a clear vision for the future the citywide development and delivery of a range of aquatics activities, from recreational participation to elite performance, as well as coach education, which is critical to secure ASA support, financial and resources. Full details of all the consultees involved in the strategy process are included in Appendix 1.

Strategic Context

Developing an Aquatics Strategy

- 2.31 The development of the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy reflects the strategic approach adopted by the ASA to the planning of future provision for aquatic activity. It is also linked to the potential future establishment of this facility as a Beacon Centre which would deliver training and educational opportunities to improve athlete performance, and critically, build workforce capacity. This Aquatics Strategy presents an opportunity to explore the delivery of a Beacon aquatics programme in Plymouth.
- 2.32 A model of the Beacon Centre concept is illustrated overleaf:



National Context

- 2.33 The development of the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy also sits within an overall national and regional context for increasing participation in physical activity and sport, improving the quality of community health and life, and investing in quality built facilities which provide access to all.
- 2.34 A summary of the relevant national context is set out below. The regional context for aquatics is set out in Section 3. Table 1 summarises the key national strategies that have been reviewed as part developing this Aquatics Strategy, due to their influence and impact on the future provision of swimming provision within Plymouth.

Table 1 – A summary of national documents of relevance

NATIONAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR SPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amateur Swimming Association, National Facilities Strategy for Swimming (2002) • Amateur Swimming Association, Introduction to Swimming, Building on Change, 2005 – 2009 (Corporate Plan for Great Britain and England) • Amateur Swimming Strategy (2009 – 2013) • Amateur Swimming Association, National Plan for Teaching Swimming • DCMS, Swimming Charter • Amateur Swimming Association, Building Schools for the Future • DCMS Playing to Win – a new Era for Sport (2008) • Sport England Strategy (2008 – 2011) Grow Sustain Excel • Equality Standard for Sport (2004) • Sport England The Framework for Sport: A Vision for 2020 (2003) • UK Action Plan for Coaching • DCMS Game Plan (2002) • Physical Education School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSYP 2002) • Sport Playing its Part (Sport England / DCMS) • Every Child Matters: Change for Children and Young Peoples Regulations

NATIONAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR SPORT

(2003)

- Choosing Health: Making Healthy Choices Easier: Department of Health White Paper Executive Summary (2004)
- At Least Five a Week: A report from the Chief Medical Officer (2003)
- The Equity Standard – A Framework for Sport
- The 5 Hour Offer (DCMS/DfES)
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), National Swimming Strategy, A Vision for Swimming (2009-2013)

- 2.35 The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) is the National Governing Body for Swimming in England. The ASA is currently working in partnership with the DCMS and Sport England to deliver the Free Swimming initiative throughout England.
- 2.36 The ASA has reviewed its strategy for the next four years (2009 – 2013). A Vision for Swimming identifies four objectives:
- **Ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn to swim;**
 - **Offer everyone the opportunity to enjoy swimming or water-based fitness activities for health and fun throughout their lifetime;**
 - **Ensure everyone achieves their different personal health goals throughout their lifetime;**
 - **Ensure the nation achieves gold medal success on the world stage;**
- 2.37 Swimming's vision includes the clear statement "to ensure everyone has an opportunity to learn to swim." This should be through a fully inclusive programme, regardless of age, ability or ethnicity.
- 2.38 The responsibility for leading on the teaching of swimming, inclusive of all aquatics, rests with the national governing body.
- 2.39 There are local differences in the way partnerships, schools and local authorities achieve their objectives, however the general approach includes the following:
- **Production of best practice documents for the teaching of swimming;**

- **Provision of education opportunities linked to the National Framework (QCA) and the UK Coaching Certificate;**
- **Provision of a professional development and licensing system;**
- **Provision of a training programme for school teachers to ensure that Learn to Swim, delivered by schools, is of a consistent and high quality (National Curriculum Training Programme – NCTP);**
- **Development of an accreditation system for pool operators;**
- **Provision of facility strategy guidance and advice;**
- **Ensure there is a comprehensive network of ‘fit for purpose’ swimming pools.**

2.40 The above points are linked to the Government’s objective that every pupil should be taught to swim unaided for a sustainable period of time over a minimum length of 25m by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 (primary school).

2.41 Table 2 outlines the key themes, visions and outcomes of the strategy:

Table 2 Key themes, visions and outcomes of the ASA National Strategy:

KEY THEMES	VISION	OUTCOME
Learn to Swim	To ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn to swim	Between 2009-2013 – 85% of children achieving KS2 attainment target
Health and Lifelong Participation	To ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy swimming or water based fitness activities for health and fun throughout their lifetime	600,000 more people swimming at least once a month
Athlete Development	To ensure everyone achieves their different goals throughout their lifetime (talent pathway). To ensure we achieve gold medal success on the world stage	Increase the number of England programmed athletes ranked at World (Senior/Youth/Junior) level by 10%
Facilities	To ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn to swim	To encourage the Government and others in authority, to recognise the value of swimming and to

KEY THEMES	VISION	OUTCOME
		provide a sufficient number of well designed and managed swimming facilities, which meet the various general needs of the community, clubs and talent programmes
Workforce Development	To ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn to swim	To develop and deploy an appropriately skilled workforce that meets the needs of participants, clubs and employers
Governance, Structures and Partnerships	To ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn to swim	The best managed governing body in England

Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), Playing to Win

- 2.42 There is currently a national agenda based on the Government’s ‘Playing to Win’, which sets the framework for how the Government want to see sport develop in the future. It is a key document in that it sets the direction for the Sport England Strategy 2008 as well as providing a vision for 2017.
- 2.43 Playing to Win sets out how through the PESSYP, Government will deliver a five hour sport offer for people. This will be achieved by providing:
- **2 hours of high quality PE each week within the school day for all 5-16 year olds who want it;**
 - **An additional 3 hours of sporting activity each week for all 5-16 year olds and the creation of new opportunities for all 16-19 year olds to participate in 3 hours sport each week, delivered by a range of school, community and club providers beyond the school day.**
- 2.44 Extending the Governments offer to young people presents a real challenge. The Youth Sport Trust is working with a network of Further Education Sport Coordinators, School Sport Partnerships and Sports Colleges, and the new national network of Competition Managers to deliver more.

Sport England Strategy (2008 – 2011)

- 2.45 The June 2008 Sport England Strategy identifies a need to look at the sport

development system and determine whether it is fit for purpose. The Strategy highlights three key challenges for community physical education, community sport and participation in physical activity, and it is evident that schools and colleges have a critical role to play in delivering the grow, sustain and excel framework, and indeed within the Olympic Legacy.

2.46 The three key challenges facing community sport that have been identified within the Sport England Strategy (2008) are:

- **Increasing participation in sport – currently, 20.9 per cent of the population participate in sport and physical activity three times a week and 50.6 per cent of the population does not participate in at least one session of sport each week.**
- **Tackling drop-off - thousands of people drop out of playing sport each year. There is a particular problem at the age of 16, where 25,000 drop out of sport each year.**
- **Developing talent - England has a successful track record of elite success in a number of sports. We must ensure that we tap into the vast range of sporting potential across the country to maintain the pipeline of talent up to elite levels.**

DCMS Free Swimming Initiative

2.47 The Free Swimming Initiative (FSI) offers a significant opportunity to support the development of swimming provision as part of a wider scheme and which can contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the Council, thereby providing positive opportunities and benefits for the community.

2.48 In 2008, a £140 million fund to boost sport and fitness through free swimming for 16 years (and under) and for over 60s was announced as a key element of the Government's plan to ensure a lasting sporting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The initiative is part of a combination of measures in the 'Legacy Action Plan: Before, During and After: Making the most of the London 2012 Games', which was unveiled on 6 June 2008 by Tessa Jowell (Olympics Minister), Andy Burnham (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) and Alan Johnson (Secretary of State for Health). The plan builds on the five legacy promises made in 2008, includes new programmes and builds on existing ones which have been enhanced and inspired by the UK's hosting of the Games.

2.49 The Free Swimming Initiative has been implemented in Plymouth; this demonstrates the commitment of the Council to develop participation in swimming across the city.

2.50 The Free Swimming Initiative (FSI) is a programme that has been designed to extend opportunities to swim and to maximise the health benefits of wider participation in swimming. The FSI is a cross-Government initiative with funding contributions from the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the

Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

2.51 The FSI aims to:

- **Contribute to Government’s ambition of getting two million more people more active by 2012 and has critically been designed to attract new participants as well as encouraging existing swimmers to go more often, and to focus on sustaining increases in participation.**
- **Encouraging Local Authorities to open up nearly 1,600 publicly owned swimming pools free to over 60s in England through a new £140 million fund; using the fund as a “challenge fund” to encourage Local Authorities to offer free swimming to under 16s and to rejuvenate and maintain pools. (Note: the current programme expires at the end of March 2011.)**
- **Contribute to the Government’s commitment to meeting a target of getting two million people more active by 2012 - to be achieved through the new Sport England strategy to get 1 million people more active through sport and supported by programmes coordinated by Department of Health and other departments.**
- **Contribute to improving the way Sport England invests in sport through new, more effective relationships with national governing bodies and working through county sports partnerships will deliver a substantial increase in sports participation.**



Section 3

Aquatics in the South West Region

3 Aquatics in the South West sub Region

Strategic Priorities

- 3.1 Clear strategic priorities for the ASA at national and regional level are:
- **Learn to Swim;**
 - **Health and Lifelong Participation;**
 - **Athlete Development;**
 - **Workforce Development;**
 - **Facilities;**
 - **Governance and Commercial.**
- 3.2 Devon is the largest county in the sub region with 38 active swimming clubs. The region currently lacks a regional and sub-regional level facility for overall aquatic activity, and specifically a publicly accessible 50m pool. The pools at Bath University and at Millfield (Somerset) have predominantly a high performance focus and are not available for recreational or general club use.
- 3.3 In its South West Strategy for Swimming, 'Building the Future', the ASA South West Region identifies the need for a regional facility in Plymouth, which would provide for swimming and diving, as well as other aquatic disciplines.
- 3.4 The ASA South West Region has confirmed that the development of the Life Centre will make Plymouth the major centre for swimming development in Devon and the South West. The Life Centre will also become the major talent development centre for Devon and Cornwall.
- 3.5 The current lack of a regional and sub-regional hub, which could facilitate improved coordination of performance swimming (training and development), coaching and coach education, is a key need, that will be addressed by the Life Centre.
- 3.6 The ASA's 'A Vision for Swimming', 2009-2012 confirms the ASA's commitment to this scale of facility development, with support for the development of a 50m pool in Plymouth.
- 3.7 The ASA also highlights Plymouth as being one of the nine Beacon Delivery sites in England, the next nearest being Portsmouth and Coventry.
- 3.8 To ensure the investment in aquatics realises benefits in terms of the above strategic priorities, the ASA has proposed to fund a Director of Aquatics and a Development Officer as part of the Beacon Programme.

- 3.9 The Chief Executive of the ASA endorses the proposed facility mix for the Plymouth Life Centre: “It is a truly tremendous scheme. For swimmers in Plymouth and the South West there has been a strategic need for a 50m pool, and the building of the Life Centre will fulfil this need; there is also a strategic need for a new diving facility in Plymouth, which in addition to meeting the needs of the city and its divers, will also serve as a catalyst for the development of diving in the West Country as a whole.”
- 3.10 The current position in the SW region regarding provision for aquatics is set out overleaf in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Aquatics in the region and Devon sub-region

REGIONAL / SUB-REGIONAL AQUATICS PROVISION	SUMMARY POSITION
<p>Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are currently no 50m pools in the Devon sub-region; high performance swimmers have to travel out of the sub-region and in some cases, the region, to train and compete in long course pools. • There are 50m pool facilities at Millfield School, Somerset (private school), and at Bath University as part of the English Institute of Sport (EIS). Bath University is one of 5 Intensive Training Centres in the UK, supported by British Swimming. Whilst these facilities are used sometimes by clubs in Devon, for specific events and/or training, they are inaccessible on a regular basis for training purposes, given their focus on the gifted and talented, and their location. • The only 50m training facility currently available in the Devon sub region is a 1 lane tank, constructed in a back garden by a parent of one of the promising young swimmers at Dinnaton Swimming Club. This facility is essentially for personal use, although there is some limited club use. • The development of new swimming facilities, high quality and purpose designed, is an issue for several local authorities. The authorities neighbouring Plymouth, have taken into account the plans for the development of the Life Centre in assessing their own needs. This has resulted in strategic planning across boundaries for future provision as at Ivybridge, where South Hams will develop a 25m x 6 lane pool, in recognition that there will be a 50m pool in Plymouth. • Plymouth continues to deliver a network of pool facilities in line with the Swimming Facility Strategy.
<p>Clubs</p>	<p>SWIMMING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several successful swimming clubs in the Devon sub-region. These include Plymouth Leander, based in Plymouth which is the most successful junior club in the UK in terms of age group championships. (For the detailed Plymouth Leander profile, see Section 4) • Other aquatics clubs in Plymouth include the Devonport Royal Swimming Association, Pisces Disability Group, Royal Navy and Royal Marines, the University. • Kelly College, Tavistock is another successful junior club. Based at a private school, they have their own 25m pool and squad, based at this facility. • Dinnaton Swimming Club, Ivybridge; this club is currently based at a private leisure club. South Hams DC has detailed plans to develop a new 25m pool at Ivybridge to replace the existing facility. The plans for this facility reflect the need for a satellite pool in this area, to feed into the Plymouth Life Centre, and provide an appropriate short course pool at which Dinnaton Swimming Club could be based. Dinnaton Swimming Club also uses Pool facilities in Plymouth owned and operated by PCC. • There are other key swimming clubs in the Devon sub-region based in Barnstaple, Exeter, Kingsbridge, Newton Abbot, Paignton, Torquay and Tiverton. • There are also a number swimming clubs in Cornwall, who also lack an accessible 50m pool for training purposes. These include Caradon Swimming Club. <p>DIVING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Diving Academy is the key club in the Devon sub-region and has a long and successful history in the sport. (For full details on the Plymouth Diving Academy, see Section 4). It is currently one of four designated high performance programmes in England, and part of the world class sports programme. • Although there are some diving facilities, there is limited diving activity elsewhere in the region and sub-region, principally due to the lack of appropriate

REGIONAL / SUB-REGIONAL AQUATICS PROVISION	SUMMARY POSITION
	<p>facilities.</p> <p>WATERPOLO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several waterpolo clubs in the sub-region, all linked to swimming clubs. These include clubs at Barnstaple, Devon port Royals, Plymouth (the University and the Navy), Exeter, Kingsbridge, Newton Abbot, Paignton and Tiverton. • Demand for waterpolo is growing through these clubs, but availability of water space for training and competition is a major issue for the majority of clubs. <p>OCTOPUSH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Octopush is a growing sport in the county, with clubs now based in Plymouth, and at the University of Plymouth, Dawlish, Totnes, Ilfracombe, and Kingsbridge. <p>SYNCHRONISED SWIMMING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently very limited synchronised swimming activity in the County; the main focus for synchronised swimming is currently in Bristol and Exeter, where there are active clubs.
Workforce	<p>There are a few individuals capable of coaching at the high performance levels within the region, but there is a need for more resources at this level. The challenge is to achieve more, higher qualified individuals, to enable better support to elite athletes.</p> <p>Linked to the high performance coaching, there is also a significant need for more opportunities for local delivery of coach education, to enable sharing of expertise and experience, both practical and organisational.</p> <p>There is generally a shortage of volunteer support for swimming in the region.</p>
Performance	<p>Within the south west there are a few venues and clubs with a reputation for delivery of high performance swimming and diving. In the Devon sub region, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diving – Plymouth Diving Academy (based at Central Park Leisure Pools) • Swimming – Plymouth Leander Swimming Club (based at Plymouth College); Kelly College, Tavistock; <p>Plymouth Leander is Swim 21 accredited at Performance and Development level to 2012.</p>



Section 4

Aquatics Provision in Plymouth

4 Aquatics Provision in Plymouth

Introduction

- 4.1 In order to develop the Aquatics Strategy for Plymouth, it is important to understand the city itself, current levels of activity and the infrastructure for swimming, diving, and other water-based sports in the city. Plymouth has real potential, as recognised in ASA support for the development of the Life Centre, to offer regional aquatics facilities and services.
- 4.2 The following information summarises the city's demographics, how aquatic activity is currently provided, where, and by whom in Plymouth, and builds on the data outlined in Section 3.

Demographic Summary

- 4.3 As the 15th most populous city in England and covering an area of 30.6 square miles (79.3 sq km), Plymouth is the largest settlement on the English south coast with a current population of 259,000, much larger than the administrative centre of Exeter. Its residents (who include a large student population) comprise over 23 per cent of Devon's population (1,109,900) and 16 per cent of the combined population of Devon and Cornwall combined (1,629,300). Plymouth's size and its geographical location means that it effectively serves both Devon and Cornwall as a regional centre.
- 4.4 By 2020, the city's population is predicted to be between 278,000 and 300,000. Specific parts of the city will be host to substantial amounts of new housing built over this period, for example there are plans to build 2,500 new homes in North Plymstock, as well as Derriford and 1,500 new homes in Millbay/Stonehouse. The proposed new settlement identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy at Sherford (adjacent to South East Plymouth in the South Hams district) is scheduled to accommodate around 5,500 houses with up to 12,000 new residents. These residential developments and the consequent increase in population will impact on the demand for facilities, including access to swimming pools, within Plymouth.
- 4.5 The University of Plymouth has over 30,000 students, making it one of the largest universities in the United Kingdom and an important focus for economic activity. The city has a travel to work population of 345,000 and a retail catchment of over 500,000 people. Seventy eight per cent of those employed within Plymouth also live in the city. Seventeen per cent commute into Plymouth from the districts of Cornwall, South Hams or West Devon. With 3.5 million people a year visiting Plymouth for the day and 2.4 million overnight stays, the city also has a strong tourist economy.

- 4.6 It is important to appreciate the size of Plymouth and its influence on the southwest sub region. The nearest, larger city is Bristol, which is approximate two and a half hours driving time and 130 miles away (with a population of 416,400). The overall density of population in the South West is comparatively low; most towns within the region, unlike the city, do not have the size of population to support investment in large-scale sports facilities.
- 4.7 Plymouth is linked to Saltash (Cornwall) in the west across the Tamar Bridge, to the north, to West Devon via a small corridor of land in South Hams (Woolwell) and in the east, to the South Hams and via the A38 Devon Expressway, to Exeter and beyond. It has ferry links to France and Spain and an airport with daily flights to other major UK cities; these communication links are important for the development of major sports facilities, such as the Life Centre, which have the potential to be international training and competition venues, as well as providing a balanced programme for recreational swimming on a day to day basis.
- 4.8 Historically, the primary economic focus of the city related more to its maritime connections than its rural hinterland. However the concentration of learning, health, cultural, leisure, and shopping, tourism and employment facilities now places the city at the hub of the wider South West sub-region.
- 4.9 The city's geography and demography is characterised by a number of discrete neighbourhoods, recognised by the Council as a basis for local service delivery. It is these localities, Central and North East, North West, South West, and South East, including Plympton and Plymstock, around which much of the analysis of the need for new and improved swimming pool provision has been based.

Aquatic Facilities

Existing Swimming Pool Provision in Plymouth

- 4.10 In Plymouth swimming pool facilities are provided through the public sector (the local authority and education, for example schools and Further Education, and commercial sectors. There are currently 13 sites in Plymouth where people can swim or take part in other aquatic activities. Appendix 3 shows the location of the existing swimming pools in Plymouth. Table 4 overleaf provides a summary of the existing swimming pools, together with ownership and operational details. In addition to these there are specialist/medical indoor pool facilities, such as Derriford Hospital, Woodlands and Millford schools, which not covered by this strategy.

Table 4 Current Swimming Pool Provision - Plymouth

SITE NAME	OWNER TYPE	MANAGEMENT	ACCESS POLICY	FACILITIES (MAIN/ LEARNER/ DIVER)	CLUBS USING FACILITIES	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Central Park Leisure Pools	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Community Use	Width 12m; Length 33.3m; Area 399.6sq m	Devonport Royal Swimming Association	
Diving Pool	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Community Use	Width 12.5m; Length m 12.5; Area 156.25sq m.	Plymouth Diving Academy	Used as a venue for national diving competitions; indoor diving training facilities are currently accommodated in two converted squash court in the Mayflower Leisure Centre.
Learner Pool	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Community Use	Width 9m; Length 16.4m; Area 147.6sq m.	none	
Club Continental (Hotel)	Commercial	Commercial Management	Members	Width 10m; Length 10m; Area 100sq m.	Learner/Teacher/Training SwimCats Swim School	Hotel pool
Club Motivation (Hotel)	Commercial	Commercial Management	Members	Width 7.5m; Length 17m; Area 127.5sq m.	None	Pool use included in Gym Membership
Fort Stamford Health and Fitness	Commercial	Commercial Management	Members	Width 5m; Length 17m; Area 85 sq m.	Learner/Teacher/Training (Health and Fitness Suite)	Must be over 16 years old unless with parent
University College Plymouth St Mark and St John	Higher Education	University	Members and Community	Width 10m; Length 25m; Area 250sq m.	UCP / Devonport Royal Swimming Association	
Nuffield Health Fitness and Wellbeing	Commercial	Commercial	Members	Width 8m; Length 20m; Area 160sq m.	None	Built 2000
Plymouth College Ford Park	Independent School	School	Sports Club Community Association	Width 11m; Length 25m; Area 275sq m.	Plymouth Leander; ASA courses	Built 2001
Plymouth Pavilions	Local Authority (PCC)	Trust	Community Use	Width 12m; Length 30m; Area 360sq m.	Community use and used by the ASA for coach education courses	Refurbished 2007
The Devonshire Health and Racquets Club	Commercial	Commercial Management	Members	Width 12m; Length 25m; Area 300sq m.	Esporta Health Clubs	Refurbished 2004
Plympton Swimming Pool	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Pay & Play	Width 8m; Length 25m; Area 200sq m.	Dinnaton Swimming Club, meet Tues 8.30-9.30pm and Thurs 5-8pm/ Plymouth Leander AM	Refurbished 2004
The John Kitto Community College	Community School	School	Sports Club / Community Association	Width 10m; Length 18m; Area 180 sq m.	Education	Refurbished and re-opened in April 2009

SITE NAME	OWNER TYPE	MANAGEMENT	ACCESS POLICY	FACILITIES (MAIN/ LEARNER/ DIVER)	CLUBS USING FACILITIES	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Mount Wise swimming Pool	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Free Public	Width 12m; Length 25m; Area 300sq m.	N/A Community use. Outdoor pool and only limited accessibility as operated seasonally.	Opens May - September annually - Outdoor Pool
Tinside Lido	Local Authority (PCC)	Local Authority (PCC)	Pay & Play	Width 50m; Length 5m; Area 2500sq m.	N/A Community use. Outdoor pool and only limited accessibility as operated seasonally.	Open May –September annually - Outdoor Pool
HMS Drake	Ministry of Defence	MOD	MOD		Restricted Royal Navy /Royal Marines swimming clubs and some local schools	

- 4.11 Five of the pool sites identified in Table 4 are owned by the local authority; of these, two are outdoor lidos, which only operate on a seasonal basis. Pools operated by the Council include the Central Park Leisure pools, which are the main public swimming provision in Plymouth, and Plympton Pool. Although the main pool was refurbished in 2003, Central Park Leisure Pools are of a poor quality and do not currently meet the needs or expectations of the local community or the clubs who use the facilities. The quality of the ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms, is also poor.
- 4.12 In addition, Plymouth City Council owns the Plymouth Pavilions site which is managed through an operational arrangement with a Trust. The Pavilions is the only leisure water in the city.
- 4.13 Table 4 highlights swimming facilities located on education sites:
- **The John Kitto Community College;**
 - **Plymouth College Ford Park;**
 - **UCP Marjon Swimming Pool.**
- 4.14 The facility at John Kitto Community College has recently been refurbished and will in the future provide some limited community access for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation), although this is an outdoor pool. The Plymouth College pool is predominantly used by this private school for its own curriculum and for the Plymouth Leander Swimming Club (squads and individuals) for training purposes. Plymouth College offers swimming scholarships to talented swimmers from around the world who are educated at the school (subsidised fees) and who automatically become members of Plymouth Leander. These young swimmers train at the Plymouth College pool, as well as other facilities used by Plymouth Leander, and compete for Plymouth Leander.
- 4.15 The pool at Plymouth College is available for limited community use, predominantly by groups, such as local schools and other clubs.
- 4.16 The existing pool at University College of St Mark and St John is subject to refurbishment as a joint investment project between the College and Plymouth City Council. (The Council is investing £1.2 million in the refurbishment of the existing pool, which is due to re-open early in 2010). The investment is driven by the aim of providing increased access for the community to a high quality local facility in this area of the city. The new pool at UCP Marjon will act as a satellite to the Life Centre; it will provide for pay and play community access, curriculum delivery at the College, Learn to Swim and School swimming, and some club access.

Strategic Context for Swimming in Plymouth

- 4.17 In addition to the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy, the strategic context for future provision of swimming pools in the city is provided by a number of other key documents. These underpin the case for the development of new and improved facilities and for a step change in the way that aquatic activities are delivered in Plymouth. These documents include:
- **Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy 2006 – 2016;**
 - **A Pool for the North Plymouth: Initial Site Options Appraisal 2007;**
 - **Facility Planning Model (FPM) Sport England 2007;**
 - **ASA national and SW Regional Plans, including the new Whole Sport Plan for Swimming;**
 - **Analysis of need – (updated facility aspect of Sports Plan) 2007;**
 - **Business Plan 2007, and ongoing updates;**
 - **Agreement to proceed to leisure operator procurement (OJEU published March 2009);**
 - **The Vital Spark: a cultural strategy for the city of Plymouth 2009-2020;**
 - **Plymouth Sports Facility and Development Strategy (first main draft report in March 2009).**
- 4.18 The **Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy (2006 – 2016)** aims to provide Plymouth with the right number of swimming pools, of the right quality, in the right place. Using a 2016 forecast population for Plymouth (including a new South Ham’s community in Sherford) of 266,689, the assessment of need predicts a future requirement of 2988sq m of publicly accessible pool space.
- 4.19 Based on existing levels of local authority provision, this equates to an overall deficiency of 2.8 swimming pools (25m x 4 lane equivalent) if no new pools were to be developed between now and 2016. However, this shortfall will be addressed with the development of the Life Centre.
- 4.20 The proposal to demolish the existing Pavilions swimming pool will also lead to a shortfall of available water space within the city and an additional 2.8 swimming pools (25m x 4 lane equivalent) are required to compensate by 2016. This shortfall will be addressed by the extended community use agreement for the refurbished pool at UCP Marjon and also through the planned new pool at Sherford.

4.21 The mid 2007 population of Plymouth was 197,700; that of Portsmouth was 250,700 and of Sunderland 280,300; based on these levels, existing swimming pool lane provision is as follows:

- **Plymouth - 25**
- **Portsmouth - 46**
- **Sunderland - 72**

Capacity Ratio (Pool Space / 1000 pop (2001 Census data))

- **England – 13.49 sq m**
- **Plymouth – 11.02 sq m**
- **Portsmouth – 13.12sq m (Not including the Mountbatten Centre)**
- **Sunderland – 20.9 sq m (Including the Sunderland Aquatic Centre)**

4.22 There are also a number of other critical factors to consider in relation to current aquatics activity in the city:

- **Participation**
 - There is an overall shortage of pool water for the city's population when assessed using SE planning tools.
 - Swimming is the largest participation sport in the city; given the low level of participation recorded in the 2006/07 Active People Survey (APS) (18.6 per cent) there is an obvious need to increase levels of participation and swimming provides a key opportunity as it is already the highest participation sport in the city. The APS results 2008/09 show an increase in participation to 23.5 per cent.
 - Existing facilities are not fully accessible in terms of programming and DDA.
 - There are times most days when there is no 'public swim' offer available in the city; fewer than 50 per cent of the opening hours at Plympton Pool and 65 per cent of Central Park Leisure Pools time is available for public swimming.
 - Given the limited access to water space it is impossible to deliver a swimming programme that meets the needs of the city, particularly public swimming, school swimming, learn to swim, and other aquatic disciplines such as Water polo, synchronised swimming and club swimming.
 - As a result of above, the city is currently a net exporter of swims to South Hams/ Cornwall and West Devon.

- **Facility Provision**

- The existing swimming pool and diving facilities at Central Park Leisure Pools are out dated and in need of major refurbishment/ rebuild.
- The diving pool in Plymouth (Central Park Leisure Pools) does not offer 10m and 7.5m Synchro diving; divers have to travel to Southampton to train and compete.

- **Performance**

- The most successful age group swimming club in the country, Plymouth Leander (Swim 21 accredited), is based in the city, at Plymouth College
- One of 4 High Performance Diving Centres – the others being Southampton, Leeds, and Sheffield
- Some of the most successful and talented divers in the world: Tom Daley, Tonia Couch, and Brooke Graddon.

- **School Swimming**

- The city has higher levels of Key Stage 2 students who are unable to attain the Government target of being able to swim a minimum of 25m than the national average, despite being one of the largest UK coastal cities
- The city cannot meet the needs of TOP UP swimming

4.23 **Given the above, the need for additional and replacement high quality, fit for purpose water space is clear. This need is the driver behind the development of the Life Centre, which will transform provision for and delivery of aquatics at all levels in Plymouth.**

Assessing Future Facility Need

4.24 By 2016 Plymouth will have a population of 266, 689 and will require a total amount of public water space in the city of 2988sq m (Sport England, Sports Facility Calculator). Therefore the current deficiency in water space equates to more than one 25m four lane pool. Given the condition of Central Park Leisure Pools, there is a need to close and replace this facility; in replacing Central Leisure Park Pools, there is an opportunity to re-develop a critical mass of water space, providing for both participation and performance. Additional details of future pool needs are addressed in the Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy.

4.25 The future vision for the provision of swimming pools in Plymouth combines the development of new and replacement facilities to meet the identified needs for delivery of aquatic activity and importantly to address the range of issues highlighted in terms of participation and activity. The ASA South West Region supports the review of swimming provision undertaken in the city and the need for the 50m pool which will be provided in the Life Centre.

4.26 The vision comprises of:

- **The development of the Life Centre – a sub-regional 50m facility, reflecting local and regional need for performance and participation, and linked inextricably to the 2020 Vision for Plymouth; it will be one of four ASA regional pools and will be the only public 50m pool in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset;**
- **Refurbishment of the existing pool at UCP Marjon;**
- **Proposed development of a new pool at Sherford/ east of the city, located within the city boundary (linked to future residential development), subject to external funding and partner contributions.**

4.27 In developing this vision for the future provision of swimming pools in the city, the Council has developed a partnership with University of Plymouth (20,000 on site students) to contribute financial contribution to the Life Centre; the Life Centre will be the central hub at the heart of the facilities in the city, providing opportunities for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation), Learn to Swim, School Swimming, Club use, University curriculum delivery, and high performance training for diving and swimming.

4.28 Aquatics is identified as a key sport for the city within the new Plymouth Sports Facilities Strategy. This status will be supported by two additional development officers, who will also link into the Beacon Programme at the Life Centre – the only such designation in the SW, and one of nine such facilities in the UK.

4.29 While the Aquatics Strategy requires the provision of high quality swimming pools to deliver its priorities, it focuses on the activities taking place in the water space and not a detailed appraisal of the facilities or facility need. The Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy is the document which sets out the analysis of need for specific types of provision, such as swimming pools.

Local Aquatics Clubs

4.30 A number of swimming clubs and associations exist across the city, facilitating a range of participatory opportunities. The key clubs are all summarised below.

Table 5 City Aquatic Clubs

CLUB NAME	SUMMARY OF CLUB
SWIMMING	
Plymouth Leander, based at Plymouth College	<p>Plymouth Leander Swimming Club is based from Plymouth College, where it has use of the on site swimming pool for training its 350 members. It is the most successful age group swimming club in England, holding five of the six titles. The Club is currently Swim 21 accredited at Competitive Development and Performance Level. Accredited originally in 2004 for four years the Club was reaccredited again in 2008 through to 2012. Plymouth Leander was also short-listed as CPPR Sports Club of year 2008.</p> <p>The Club has informal links with Torquay Leander, Devonport and Caradon swimming clubs.</p> <p>The Plymouth College/Plymouth Leander partnership commenced in September 2001 to coincide with the opening of the College's on site swimming pool. Since this time, the scholarship scheme has welcomed many day and boarding students (up to 30) who have developed into National champions and medallists and ensured regular selections for both England and Great Britain swim teams.</p> <p>Plymouth Leander operates a learn to swim programme (Swim School), but not through the affiliated club. Lessons are offered to the community, based at Plymouth College Pool. Up to 100 swimmers are involved in the Swim School.</p> <p>The operation of the Club is fundamental to the success of the College Scholarship scheme, and it is critical that it remains based at the College.</p> <p>Plymouth Leander has a very high level of coaching resource (6 full time and 2 part-time paid coaches), although only a limited number of high performance coaches, unlimited access to pool time (own on-site pool), and a bespoke training programme aimed at high performance.</p> <p>Development of the Club squad is inextricably linked to the scholarship programme at the College (international and UK swimmers recruited).</p> <p>The Club is successful competitively with large numbers of representative swimmers at regional and national age group level (around 60 national standard swimmers); however, it does not have very strong formal links with other local swimming clubs.</p> <p>Plymouth Leander also currently uses some pool time at Plympton Swimming Pool (four and a half hours per week) and has expressed an interest in using pool time at the Life Centre for training and galas.</p>
Devonport Royal Swimming Association	<p>Devonport Royal Swimming Association based from Central Park Leisure Pools is a thriving swimming club operating in the Plymouth area, but with members drawn from as far a field as South-East Cornwall, Ivybridge and the South Hams area.</p> <p>The Club has over 400 members, with some as young as four years old, many of whom swim at county level; the Club also has some national standard swimmers.</p> <p>This is a competitive club which also runs a learn-to-swim programme, a masters' section (40 members) and a water polo division. The Club also uses the existing pool at UCP Marjon.</p> <p>The Club is not currently accredited, although representatives attended Swim 21 workshops throughout 2007 and 2008. The Club has links with Plymouth RN/RM and informal links with Plymouth Leander.</p> <p>A key difficulty for the Devonport Royal Swimming Association, in terms of developing higher performance swimmers, is their current relative lack of high level coaching expertise.</p> <p>The Devonport Royal Swimming Association currently hire up to 14.5 hours per week at Central Park Leisure Pools and other venues in the city, such as UCP Marjon for three hours per week. The club is keen to access pool time at the Life Centre for club training sessions and galas.</p>

CLUB NAME	SUMMARY OF CLUB
Plymouth RN/RM, based at Fort Stamford	<p>Established in 1989, Plymouth RN/RM Swimming club is a predominantly recreational club; it provides opportunities for swimming, including lessons, for navy families and the wider community (total of 11 hours per week, at two navy facilities).</p> <p>It is not a competitive club but has good links with the Devonport Royal Swimming Association, to whom it feeds swimmers on for additional training and development.</p> <p>The Club is Swim 21 accredited at Teaching and Skill Development Level; it currently delivers Team Manager training to other local clubs through the Club chairman.</p> <p>A very proactive and developmental club, Plymouth RN/RM is the only military UK swimming club holding accreditation.</p> <p>The Club was short-listed as the CPPR Sports Club of Year 2008.</p>
Pisces Disability Swimming Group	<p>Based from Central Park Leisure Pools, Pisces is the only disability swimming group in the city. The group enters some competitions but is predominantly a recreational club, providing one weekly session (two hours) for up to 140 swimmers and their families.</p> <p>If required swimming lessons can be provided; these represent the only opportunity in the city for people with disabilities to be taught to swim by qualified disability teachers.</p> <p>There are few formal links between Pisces and the other city-based clubs, although Pisces is keen to facilitate appropriate arrangements.</p> <p>The group requires a significant block of time with water access on a regular basis to accommodate the needs of participants with disabilities who are unable to access mainstream pool sessions. Current provision is constantly under pressure from other programming requirements at Central Park Leisure Pools. Pisces currently use two hours per week at Central Park Leisure Pools on Sundays at lunchtime.</p>
DIVING	
Plymouth Diving Academy	<p>The Plymouth Diving Academy operates out of Central Park Leisure Pools in terms of training and competition; it provides the only resources for diving coaching and development in the city. Dryside training facilities are currently provided in converted squash courts in the Mayflower Leisure Centre. The Diving Academy is known internationally and currently boasts Tom Daley, the 2009 10m Platform World Champion, amongst its members. Adjacent to the Central Park Leisure Pools, the owner of the Diving Academy operates PlymGym, a tumble tots facility, which caters for gym parties and early years gymnastics play.</p> <p>The Diving Academy takes children from as young as four years; it currently has three elite divers, plus a team of top divers, and a further team of younger divers who are beginning to achieve national and regional success. The Diving Academy has 300 members, with the same number involved in the Plymgym. The Academy focuses on both elite diving and flip and fun; it has developed its own coaching and coach education programmes; the latter are likely to be formalised through Beacon Programme status through the ASA. Currently there are no formal links between the Diving Academy and the city's competitive swimming clubs; there are limited links between the Academy, Swallows Gym Club and Phoenix Trampoline Club.</p>
OTHER AQUATICS CLUBS	
Plymouth Underwater Hockey Club (Plymouth Pirates - OCTOPUSH)	<p>There are a number of octopush clubs in and around the city, and the sub-region. This fast growing sport is attracting significant participation, at both senior and junior level, with successful clubs based in Plymouth.</p> <p>The main issue for the clubs is securing appropriate access to water space of the correct depth for both training and competition.</p> <p>There is a lack of appropriate facilities to further promote the sport within the wider community, given that the majority of pools do not have facilities for underwater filming; this provides the opportunity to attract spectators. Plymouth Pirates use 2 hours pool time per week at Plympton Pool.</p>
WATER POLO	<p>The main participative opportunities in the city are delivered through the Devonport Royal Swimming Association, in partnership with the University. The Club has developed a junior squad (18 members (u18) currently), which is growing fast, despite difficulties in accessing sufficient water space for both training and competition.</p> <p>The Club works closely with University of Plymouth in developing water polo in the city, given the standard and success of the University's team at national level.</p>

- 4.31 Based in South Hams district, Dinnaton Swimming Club, which has 270 members, currently uses a private facility, and some pool time in Council facilities (approximately 2.25 hours per week at Plympton); however the Club is likely to be based from the new 25m x 6 lane pool proposed for development at Ivybridge, to replace the existing pool facility. Dinnaton Swimming Club has a clear Vision for its future development, but is not currently linked with any of the city-based clubs, although it has developing links with Kelly College. Dinnaton is Swim 21 accredited at Swim Development level.
- 4.32 In addition to Dinnaton Swimming Club, there are a number of other clubs within the sub-region for example, Newton Abbott, Caradon, Kingsbridge, who are likely to access the Life Centre for performance training. The Life Centre will have a crucial role therefore in terms of aquatics development both within the city and the wider sub-region and SW region.
- 4.33 A lack of cooperative working between Plymouth Aquatic Clubs has in the past been a major barrier to the strategic development of swimming. This exciting opportunity must capitalise on what is best for all swimmers and partnership working with the ASA and Plymouth City Council to achieve this end is a key objective.

Learn to Swim

- 4.34 Learn to Swim programmes are currently delivered across the city through a number of venues (educational, public and commercial) and by a range of organisations, including PCC, local swimming clubs, SwimCats, the Plymouth Pavilions, and in some schools, by teachers. Currently, Learn to Swim lessons in Central Park Leisure Pools (Plymouth City Council) take up the equivalent of 65 hours per week, but these lessons do not take up the whole pool lane and equate to 130 x 30 minute lessons, where there are often three or four taking place simultaneously. 990 children per week take part in these swimming lessons). There are 700 children per week taking part in swimming lessons at Plympton Pool. In addition lessons are offered by the clubs (see above), plus around six hours are used at UCP Marjon and approximately 288 hours per annum at Plymouth Pavilions (8 hours per week, for 36 weeks a year, for approx 250 swimmers per week, with a total per annum of 9000 individual pupils, which equates to 1728 separate lessons).
- 4.35 Lessons for swimmers with a disability are delivered through Pisces Swimming Group. This is the only provision for teaching those with a disability in the city to swim. The establishment of a Beacon Programme in the city could therefore offer a significant opportunity in terms of a more coordinated approach to Learn to Swim and coach education.
- 4.36 The majority of lessons delivered in the city follow some form of national guidance, although the level to which this is followed varies, depending on the delivery organisation.
- 4.37 The majority of lessons focus on children aged four year and over, although there are some lessons delivered at the Plymouth Pavilions by SwimCats (private organisation, operating from a number of city venues), which provide for those aged from two years.

- 4.38 The very shallow water in the leisure pool, and its warmer temperature facilitates delivery of lessons for children this young.
- 4.39 The swimming clubs all deliver some form of lessons, predominantly as an income generating activity.

Quality Assessment

Overview and Summary

- 4.40 As part of developing the Aquatics Strategy, a detailed qualitative assessment was been undertaken by the Somerset and Activity Sports Partnership (SASP). (This paper was presented to Plymouth City Council Culture, Sport and Leisure as a background paper.)
- 4.41 Every child should have the opportunity to learn to swim with confidence and competencies which will enable them to make real choices and enjoy quality experiences in Aquatics: Swim to be safer; Swim for Leisure and recreation; Swim for health benefits and for fitness; Swim for Aquatic Sport; swim fast for one's school, one's club, one's county, one's region, one's country.
- **Plymouth has a wide range of provision** which has evolved over the years to meet demand. This has generated a financial stream which has driven the development of a large workforce of full and part time swimming teachers employed at a number of different venues.
 - As one would expect from a piecemeal process which has lacked any centrally coordinating force, **there is also a diversity of providers**, prices and venues. There is however, less diversity in the **overall quality of provision and delivery** of swimming lessons than one might expect.
 - **The consumer is able to access learn to swim programmes** for children of all ages and stages from babies to 11 plus. There are, however, considerable price variations which would need to be addressed within a citywide strategy. There are also a number of different teaching environments which range from a single lane in small hotel pools, a leisure pool, a standard 25m college pool and a 33.3m competition pool. All lessons are safe, child friendly and delivered by a qualified workforce.
 - **All swimming teachers are ASA qualified**; many have a wide range of experience and knowledge. All have some access to in-house continued professional development. There seem to be limited opportunities to access, or take up externally delivered and accredited Continued Professional Development (CPD). Informed and well delivered continued professional development training across all providers could drive a culture of continuous improvement and rising standards. It can be used to standardise best practice and develop the shared and core values of a Core Curriculum.

- **Swimming Teachers** observed are for the most part enthusiastic and committed to ensuring that children are safe in the water and can swim. They clearly enjoy working with children. Several key providers have team members who know ‘swimming’ well and have a breadth and depth of experience in the teaching and delivery of swimming programmes which they could bring to a central body developing the Aquatics Brand. The situation should be seen as a platform from which to build of vision of excellence of provision.
 - **Leadership and Management Teams** within every provider organisation visited are generally proactive, aspirational and reflective about the need to provide a good service. There is potential for a broad consensus with respect to the need for leadership, coordination and management at a citywide level. A Plymouth Aquatics Strategy can harness that potential and build the momentum to bring providers together.
 - **All providers** have different but effective **feedback and evaluation mechanisms** which are used to inform development of the programmes as well as quality of delivery. School Swimming has its own constraints. As all providers prioritise customer satisfaction and adult perceptions of value for money it is not surprising that there is some consistency in the way feedback is collected.
 - **Swimmer Experience.** In taking a view about the quality and consistency of swimming teaching across all providers it has also been necessary to take a view on the quality of the ‘swimming experience’ of children in the lessons. The parameters for this assessment are *in every lesson* (1) there needs to be some evidence of improvement (2) there needs to be some evidence that the swimmer has experienced success. (This may be successfully repeating skills acquired previously) and (3) a lot if not *most* movement and travel is evidently confident and relaxed. These criteria can be set against developmental stages and time spent in the lessons programme. If it is also accepted that there is a need for continuous improvement, then a part of the Aquatics Strategy could be to appoint external ‘assessors’ who are able to monitor not only the quality of delivery in terms of structure, planning and content but also be equipped with the tools to monitor the quality of the swimmer experience in terms of attainment, learning, progress and ‘permanence’ of skills.
- 4.42 Every provider visited to date uses the structures and the awards scheme associated with the ASA National Teaching Plan for Swimming.
- 4.43 The new ASA National Plan for Teaching Swimming should be used to build a framework for the minimum/core delivery programme. It promotes the application of the principles of Long Term Athlete or Player Development (LTPS/LTAD) to what is delivered in swimming lessons. Content is redefined in terms of Fundamental Aquatic and Movement Skills.

- 4.44 It links to a clear pathway which children and especially parents can understand. It also links to work in other sports and other National swimming initiatives such as Swim 21, England Talent programmes and the National Curriculum Training Programme.
- 4.45 Evidence from Plymouth and elsewhere in the Region is that levels of understanding are generally low as to how this can bring about significant and critical changes in the quality of delivery of swimming lessons and to our understanding of how children learn and acquire movement and stroke skills in the aquatic environment. Access to good training and development could address this.

School Swimming

- 4.46 Currently there is neither a citywide or consistent policy on school swimming lessons. Those schools who are involved in the School Swimming Programme vary in terms of the stages at which the lessons take place in the curriculum, and therefore there are children who never learn to swim properly, if for example they change schools for some reason, move into or out of the area etc. Given the current lack of water space in the city, the ability to deliver School Swimming lessons is further compromised by cost and timetabling – these relate to both travel and the time involved in accessing appropriate facilities.
- 4.47 The two School Sports Partnerships have focussed on addressing the lack of consistency in delivery of school swimming across the city in recent years, due to concerns about safety (Plymouth is a coastal city), and non-compliance with national Government guidance that all children should be competent to swim 25m minimum by Key Stage 2.
- 4.48 Both the School Sports Partnerships fund and deliver Top Up swimming lesson programmes in the city to increase the number of Key Stage 2 students who are competent to swim 25m, and to ensure that more children are able to swim. Top Up lessons are currently delivered at Plymouth Pavilions, and at some school pools in the city. This approach is fundamental to developing participation in a range of other aquatic disciplines, but requires significant resources. A citywide policy for participation in school swimming lessons would address the current lack of coordination in relation to this aspect of learn to swim.

The Swimming Workforce

Coaches and Coach Education

- 4.49 Whilst there are many volunteers who are currently involved in the development and delivery of aquatic activity in the city, there is a lack of coaches qualified to a high level. This is a specific issue for the swimming clubs in Plymouth, and is an issue across the region.

- 4.50 One factor affecting this situation is the current location of coaching courses; usually based some distance from the city, individuals are faced with significant personal impact in terms of both time and cost to attend these courses. The establishment of locally based opportunities for both coaching, and coach education would have a major impact on increasing both the number of individuals involved in development of aquatics, and critically, the level at which they are qualified to deliver coaching.
- 4.51 A further key challenge will be the need to move from a predominantly volunteer teaching workforce to a professional one. It is vital to retain and value the volunteers and key recommendations should address this.

Life Saving

- 4.52 Life Saving courses are taught at a variety of swimming venues across the city, including Central Park Leisure Pools, Plymouth Pavilions, Plympton Swimming Pool, and UCP Marjon. Although all follow national guidance, there is no citywide policy on the course to be delivered and qualification to be achieved.
- 4.53 Courses delivered annually at Plymouth Pavilions include:
- **Lifeguarding Courses;**
 - **3 ASA/UKCC Level 2 Swimming Teachers Course;**
 - **3 ASA/UKCC Level 1 Swimming Teachers Course;**
 - **1 Water Fitness Instructors Course;**
 - **National Pool Lifeguarding Assessor Training Course;**
 - **First Aid at Work.**
- 4.54 There are two RLSS courses delivered annually at UCP Marjon. Rookies courses are delivered on Saturdays at Central Park Leisure Pools, and Mondays at Plympton Pool; the National Pool Lifeguard Course is also run at various times throughout the year from Central Park Leisure Pools.
- 4.55 There does not appear to be a city based Life Saving Club. The Council currently has a partnership with University of Plymouth and does use some qualified students (qualifications gained as part of degree courses) to work as life guards in its facilities. Some students also assist with life guarding for club sessions, given the links with the University and existing swimming clubs
- 4.56 There are further opportunities to develop this partnership and others across the city in relation to overall water safety and security and lifesaving, similar to other coastal areas in the UK. This approach may also attract vocational training and funding support in relation to student participation.

Equity and Equality

- 4.57 It is important to highlight that the investment in improved and increased water space at the Life Centre will ensure improved accessibility to all aquatic activity and particularly recreational swimming across the city.
- 4.58 All future swimming pool provision in the city will be DDA compliant. This reflects the focus on accessibility in Plymouth City Council's Corporate Improvement Priorities and Equality Impact Assessment.
- 4.59 Programming of aquatic activities will be citywide to ensure that there will be inclusive access to recreational swimming at all times to contribute to improved health and provision of activities is complementary across all pools. The programme will be both balanced and flexible, to meet specialist needs, and address existing accessibility issues. The Learn to Swim Programme will provide the main access point to the swimming development pathway, for children and young people, and also for adults.
- 4.60 The approach to developing and delivering the programme of aquatic activity will reflect Sport England policy guidance; it will be inclusive and integrated based around child protection, programming for the specific needs of minority ethnic groups, vulnerable adults, age and gender specific groups.

Other Aquatic Activity

- 4.61 In addition to pool based aquatic activity in the city, it is important to reflect the significant level of other water based sports provided around Plymouth, which includes sailing, canoeing, wind surfing, sub aqua, scuba diving and surf life saving.
- 4.62 The Mount Batten Centre, managed by a Board Trustees which includes the University of Plymouth and Plymouth City Council, is the focus for sailing, canoeing, kayaking, wind surfing activity, and also provides a base for many of the city's water sport clubs, as well as a number of vocational and recreational courses.
- 4.63 These sports would benefit from the opportunity to access indoor water space for training on a regular basis.
- 4.64 Participation in water based sports requires individuals to possess basic levels of competence in swimming and water safety; there is significant potential for wider and more formalised partnerships between the city's various clubs and other providers for a more joined up approach which would facilitate and support increased participation.

Summary

- 4.65 As a coastal city the current range and variety of aquatic and water based activity is hardly surprising; the relative lack of citywide coordination over fundamental skills such as learn to swim and water safety, however, is.

- 4.66 In addition, although the swimming club network is strong in the city, overall developmental pathways are not always well defined, sometimes to the detriment of individual swimmers who for a number of reasons are unable to participate at their appropriate level.
- 4.67 The high level of success that has been achieved by the city’s swimmers and divers is testament to the commitment and investment by a few individuals in aquatic activity. The Life Centre is fundamental to increasing participation at community level and further developing elite performance, both of which will benefit the city through improved health.



Section 5

Summary of Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for Aquatics in Plymouth

5 Summary of Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for Aquatics in Plymouth

5.1 Based on the review and analysis of aquatics in the city and the sub-region, the following Table 5 (see also vii in the Executive Summary) highlights the issues, challenges and opportunities for each discipline and area of activity. It is these issues, challenges and opportunities that need to be reflected in the development of the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy, and addressed through the establishment of a citywide strategic framework, or pathway, for future delivery of participation, performance and competition, teacher and volunteer education programmes.

Table 5 Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for Aquatics in Plymouth

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Swimming			
Swimming Clubs (non disability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant differences between the three clubs in the city, in terms of resources, access to pool time, coaching expertise, competitive performance and success • Relationships between some clubs appear strained (this may be historic and possibly personality driven, but is in no way unique to Plymouth; the principal issue seems to be about how talented swimmers are attracted and retained • All clubs also provide swimming lessons – predominantly aimed at identifying potential talent and generating income • All clubs would like to access more pool time • There is a general desire to be able to access long course water space for training • Affordability of water space is a key issue for some clubs • All clubs want to retain their own identify, and specifically for competition purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing talented swimmers to sub-regional and regional level (age group and open age), given that many of the squad come from one main club • Developing high performance training sessions on the basis of ability, rather than in relation to a club • Developing more high performance coaches • Supporting more local clubs to become Swim 21 accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve inter-club working and communication • Establish a centralised high performance training programme • Establish a coach education programme targeted at city, sub-regional and regional coaches (link into ASA Beacon Centre designation, and ASA Whole Sport Plan, to optimise co-location of funding opportunities) • Promote opportunities for coach education in the city (link into ASA Beacon Centre designation and ASA Whole Sport Plan, to optimise co-location of funding opportunities) • Establish the Life Centre as one of the main competitive venues of choice in the UK • Create the opportunity for swimming clubs to deliver around the city's 2020 Vision, in terms of vibrancy and accessibility, • Opportunity to deliver the vision and objectives of the new Plymouth City Council Corporate Plan • Ensuring local clubs gain Swim 21 accreditation; the ASA see this as central to supporting the Aquatics Academy and establishing clear roles for swimming clubs

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Disability Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal links between the one club in Plymouth, Pisces, and other Plymouth swimming clubs; • No citywide understanding of the needs of disability swimming; • Lack of access to 'quality' pool time, given the practical and logistical issues of running the disability club; • Lack of volunteers • Learn to swim lessons are delivered in isolation, not as part of an overall programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving understanding of the needs of disability swimmers citywide, to improve accessibility in all pools • Increasing the number of volunteers working with disability swimmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing formal links citywide between schools, clubs and the disability swimming club as part of the aquatic pathway • Provide additional support to mainstream clubs who promote integrated swimming policies • Development of a lesson programme for disability swimmers as part of the Learn to Swim Programme (link into Beacon centre designation, and ASA Whole Sport Plan, to optimise co-location of funding opportunities) • Ensure development of disability swimming – link to delivery of Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan, which has accessibility of opportunity and provision at its heart • Developing vocational training – potentially in partnership with the University of Plymouth
Learn to Swim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current inability to meet junior and adult learn to swim programme • Many different organisations, public, commercial and clubs involved in teaching swimming • Lack of citywide coordination • No clear pathways linking learn to swim, school swimming, and clubs • Lack of consistency in quality and delivery across the city • Not all teachers/teaching organisations deliver the ASA Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring a citywide consistency in swimming teaching, irrespective of the venue, individual teacher or organisation • Dovetailing the Learn to Swim Programme within the School Swimming Programme (Water Safety and Water Skills) • Ensuring equity of take up – pricing to be targeted at communities in the most deprived wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the fundamental importance of Learn to Swim to the overall Life Centre Business Case and longer term sustainability • Develop policy on the citywide programme for teaching learn to swim, for example a more flexible approach which facilitates access to lessons outside the traditional 4pm to 6pm midweek timeslots • Create more opportunities to learn to swim for adults and juniors – exemplar programmes, based from the Life Centre which roll out across the city • Meet current demand for swimming lessons in the city (currently Plymouth is a net exporter of demand) the success of the Strategy will be driven by the successful delivery of the Learn to Swim Programme. • Ensure the resources are appropriate to deliver an excellent swim programme, high quality swimming teaching delivered by the right kind of teachers • Ensure it is appreciated that Learn to Swim is key to facilitating access to other aquatic and water sports

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
School Swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordination and corporate vision across the city in terms of the role of swimming (this does not reflect best practice of similar sized cities elsewhere in the UK) • Some young people ‘miss out’ on school swimming lessons due to relocation/changing schools etc, because schools fit the lessons into different key stages of the curriculum • Lack of a consistent approach to the stage at which young people learn to swim • Lack of consistency in lesson delivery, accessibility, price, etc at pools across the city • Insufficient resources for top up courses • Lack of consistent quality in swimming teaching and the environment for teaching swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a citywide, City Council led policy on school swimming • Improving citywide coordination of school swimming • Ensuring access to school swimming is affordable • Ensuring inter-departmental awareness of all opportunities for aquatic activities, and swimming lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and implementing a citywide policy on school swimming – what, when and who. For example, all schools have to ensure all Key Stage 2 pupils can swim (led by Children’s Services, but delivered in partnership with Culture, Sport and Leisure) • Developing a policy and implementation partnership with Children’s Services in relation to school swimming • Joint marketing of opportunities for young people, such as holiday programmes and top up courses.
Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) (to support health improvement and increased participation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there are times when the community has no access to water space in any of the pools in the city • Low participation rates in specific areas of the city and amongst particular community groups • Impact of Free Swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the city community is aware that there will be increased access to water space, and it is used (link to increased participation, improved health etc) • Ensuring equity of access to high quality water space in the city • Increasing participation in Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) from non, or low participant sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement this citywide policy on access to water space for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) e.g. there must be increased access for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) at all satellite pools (UCP Marjon and Plympton). This will be achieved through reducing the level of club use at satellite pools. The Life Centre, as the main hub facility, will always have water space available for public swimming, in addition to access to the leisure pool. • Ensure Free Swimming and/or other future national initiatives are monitored across the city to facilitate assessment of impact on participation, and enable resources to be appropriately targeted

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Diving			
High Performance Diving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One diving business in the city – Plymouth City Sports Limited (diving) • Reliance on one head coach (this has been addressed recently through the ASA) • Focus on performance, given the success of some individuals • Potential for better links to local gymnastics clubs; currently talent ID is through the linked tumble tots operation • Limited dryside training facilities • Could be better integrated into an overall citywide aquatics pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing additional coaching resources at all levels • Linking all opportunities and training for diving, including learn to dive, recreational and high performance as part of one programme, delivered at one facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing all diving activities as part of an aquatics facility • Further developing the profile of diving in the city • Developing the role of Plymouth’s high performance diving structure at sub-regional and regional level • Sustain Plymouth as one of the four High Performance Diving Centres in the UK and to be the preferred location for high performance diving training and competition in the UK
Learn to Dive and Flip and Fun (recreational diving)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently lack of access to water space to develop appropriately • Lack of coaches 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the profile of recreational diving in the city • Increasing awareness of recreational diving as an opportunity, and possible diversionary activity; potential for partnerships with Community Safety teams, YOTs etc • Opportunity to link into citywide Talent ID Programme • Developing participative opportunities at sub-regional and regional level
Other Aquatic Disciplines			
Water Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of access to water space, particularly for training, and competition • Lack of coaching resources – numbers and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the participation pathway between junior and senior clubs (the University role could be important) • Addressing the growing demand for the sport in the city – water space for training and competition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the profile of the sport in the city • Developing higher performance levels – linked to the University

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Octopush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of access to good quality pool time – timing and space; Lack of coaching resources; Need provision of underwater cameras to facilitate filming of the sport to assist in promotion; Currently nowhere to stage competitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing the growing demand for water space for this sport Considering the competitive and spectating needs in relation to the Life Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the profile of the sport in the city. This will need targeted promotion and the ability to ‘spectate’ /observe for training purposes, such as underwater filming
Synchro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently no activity in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding the level of development resources to put into this discipline the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of this discipline, based on the availability of appropriate resources; Potential to link with activity base in Exeter Potential to link with local gymnastics centre
Aqua aerobics, pool walking, aqua jog, aquafit, swim fit etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming of these activities - time Compatibility with other activities Participant groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring aquatics programmes across the city are complementary in relation to these activities, and reflect market segmentation results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of consistency in programming and delivery across the city
Training for other water sports eg sub aqua, canoeing, sailing, windsurfing, sea survival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming of these activities - time Compatibility with other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring opportunities for these sports/activities are part of the overall aquatics pathway, but also link into the activities and programmes at the Mountbatten Outdoor Centre, and the University curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased coordination between water sports clubs, indoor pool providers and the Mount Batten Centre Improved opportunities for indoor training for outdoor water sports
Life Saving (RLSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring consistency in delivery of training courses Ensuring individuals use this qualification to benefit aquatics in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimising the qualified workforce in the city and sub region for the benefit of aquatics development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for Life Centre operator to develop consistency in programming and delivery across the city Link qualified individuals to local clubs Work with the University to link qualified individuals to local clubs and schools as part of both curriculum delivery and vocational development To develop links with RNLI, surf lifesaving clubs or similar

AQUATIC DISCIPLINE	KEY ISSUES	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Pentathlon and Triathlon Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming of these activities - time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring appropriate access to water space is facilitated for recreational and elite athletes in these sports, as part of their overall training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of the training opportunities available through local clubs
Outdoor Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access due to seasonality of operation • Water depth inappropriate for all aquatic sports and disciplines • Cost of operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising use when operational • Ensuring appropriate levels of supervision and management • Balancing cost and opportunity • Transferring some outdoor use by specific groups/individuals to indoor water space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During closed season could use outdoor pools for training • Encouraging some users to participate regularly in indoor water space – recreational or as part of more organised aquatics activity

Quality Assessment – Swimming lesson Delivery

- 5.2 As is the case across the UK, swimming lessons in Plymouth are delivered by a range of different organisations and facilities. In the future, the new leisure operator at the Life Centre will have to develop and deliver the Learn to Swim Programme to standards set by Plymouth City Council.
- 5.3 To assist in informing the future priorities for delivery of aquatics in the city, and specifically the Learn to Swim and School Swimming programmes (including standards), an independent and qualitative assessment has been undertaken of current swimming lesson providers. This assessment was undertaken with the full cooperation of lesson providers across the city, from the public, commercial and voluntary sectors.
- 5.4 The assessment consisted of a consultation with the key contact from the relevant organisation; these organisations were identified in conjunction with the Council and all contacted to explain the purpose and role of the assessment. In addition to a consultation meeting, all lesson providers currently delivering in the city were asked to participate in a qualitative assessment; this involved observation of a lesson, and the individual delivering the teaching. The key points coming from the individual and collective assessments were then used to inform the development of the Aquatics Strategy and particularly the recommendations for the way forward in terms of the Learn to Swim and Schools' Swimming programmes, including future standards of delivery across the city.
- 5.5 Based on the quality assessment the following have been identified as the key challenges in relation to quality:
- 5.6 The development of a new strategy for Aquatics should work towards agreement on a core offer for Swimming in the city. It would link to a similar Policy for School Swimming. This would mean putting together a common, core 'curriculum', with clear aims and objectives and guidance and support on how to achieve a set of core outcomes. This would be a minimum 'delivery standard'.
- 5.7 The new ASA National Plan for Teaching Swimming should be used to build a framework for the minimum/core delivery programme. It promotes the application of the principles of Long Term Athlete or Player Development (LTPS/LTAD) to what is delivered in swimming lessons. Content is redefined in terms of Fundamental Aquatic and Movement Skills. It links to a clear pathway which children and especially parents can understand. It also links to work in other sports and other National swimming initiatives such as Swim 21, England Talent programmes and the National Curriculum Training Programme.
- 5.8 Evidence from Plymouth and elsewhere in the region is that levels of understanding are generally low as to how this can bring about significant and critical changes in the quality of delivery of swimming lessons and to our understanding of how children learn and acquire movement and stroke skills in the aquatic environment. Access to good training and development could address this.

- 5.9 The concept of providing athlete aquatic pathways which maximise an athletes ability should be established. In addition a wide range of aquatic disciplines should be promoted which encourages long term active lifestyles. The fact that Governing Body frameworks everywhere promote the concept is the means to ensure that every child is offered the opportunity to choose the level and route to achieve their personal and family aspirations and goals and to develop their potential. Professionals, who are in a position to give objective advice and guidance, need to be part of the process.
- 5.10 The concept of 'pathways' can be used to monitor and evaluate both quality of delivery and experience of swimmers. It becomes legitimate to ask at every stage and in every teaching environment if each child is being offered the highest level of aquatic learning experience and the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Future Delivery of Aquatics in Plymouth

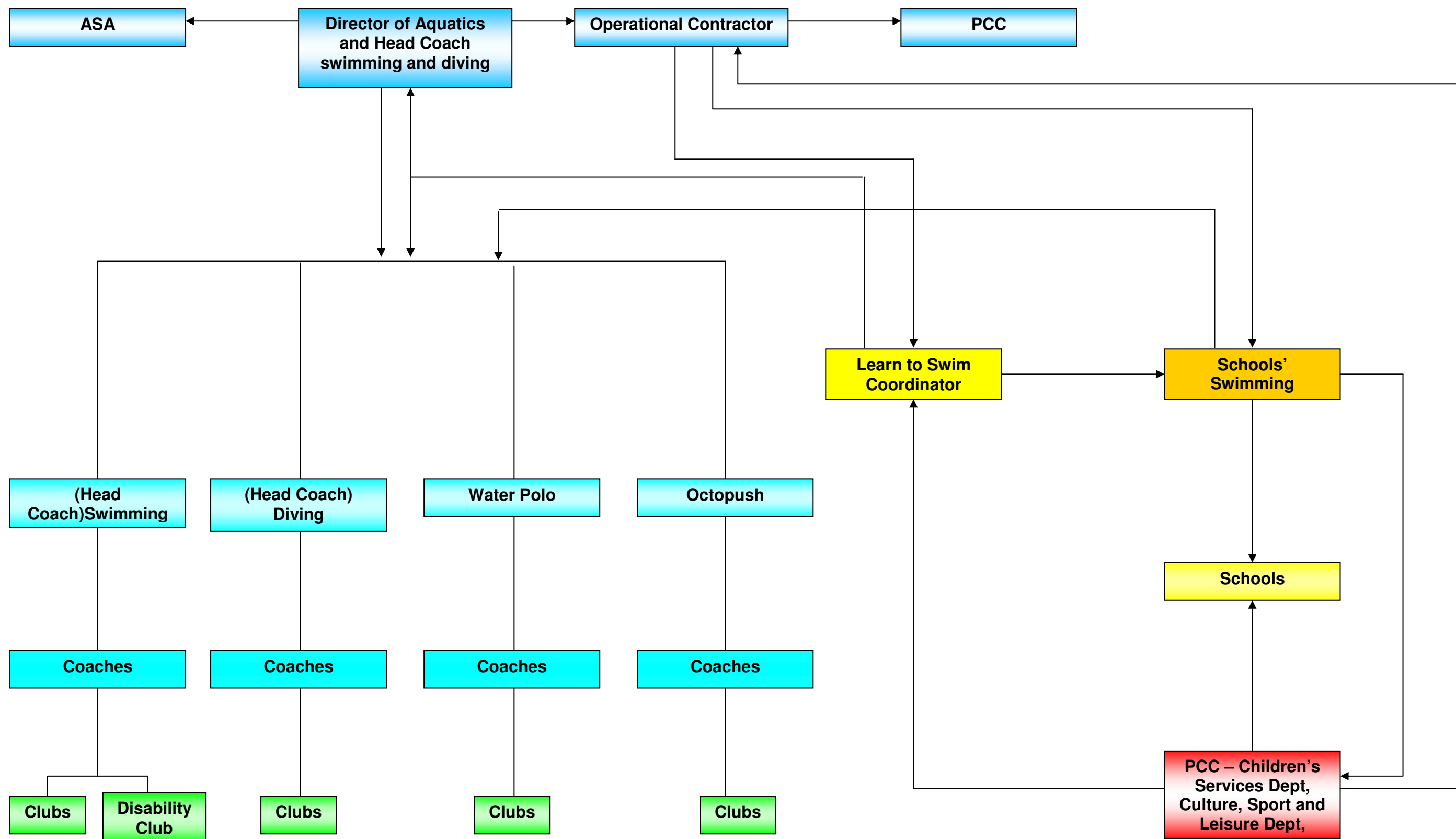
- 5.11 In addition to the issues raised above, it is also critical to identify those in relation to the future organisational structure for aquatics development and delivery in the city so as to ensure that the investment in facilities through the Life Centre and other water space in Plymouth, such as UCP, realise increased community participation, improved performance, and improvements in access to and progress through the Learn to Swim (including School Swimming) opportunities in the city.
- 5.12 Currently, there is no one coordinating body in the city for aquatic activity; swimming pools are provided through the commercial, education and public sectors. This means there are various different organisations delivering swimming lessons in a range of venues. Equally, the local community has a choice of venue for Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation). The three clubs based in the city use a variety of existing venues for training and coaching, but all operate as separate and independent entities in terms of membership, competitive performance and identity.
- 5.13 The Life Centre, given its focus on aquatics provision, provides the opportunity to develop a citywide approach to the aquatics pathway, from Learn to Swim to performance training. The development of a Plymouth Aquatics Academy, which is the preferred aquatic structure promoted by the ASA, would facilitate at all levels of aquatic activity the means of effectively achieving a citywide approach, given the existing club, teaching and recreational networks in the city.
- 5.14 Using the Academy concept, it is proposed that there be an appointment of a Director of Aquatics (DA), who would be based in the Life Centre and would be the first point of contact for the leisure management contractor. The DA's role would be the strategic development of aquatics in the city; this is also likely to benefit the sub-region and region. The delivery of the Academy would initially be through Head Coaches. These Head Coaches would be responsible for developing the performance programmes, liaising with the clubs, appointing and developing coaching staff, and linking into the Learn to Swim and School Swimming Programmes as talented swimmers come through the Academy structure. The detail around this structure will need to be identified together the external funding opportunities.

- 5.15 The Performance part of the Academy would focus on developing training opportunities in both long and short course pools (25m and 50m) for the most talented swimmers and divers in the city and beyond, and those showing potential to develop. The Performance Programme would enable these elite athletes to train with those of similar talent, whilst retaining their club identity; the Plymouth Aquatics Academy would not be a club, and swimmers would not compete in its name. Rather it would be an entity created to facilitate access to appropriate training programmes and facilities, delivered by the best coaches.
- 5.16 The Academy will provide a coordinated approach to the Learn to Swim and school swimming programmes.
- 5.17 The opportunity to designate the Life Centre as a Beacon Centre is also a significant opportunity for aquatics development and delivery, and specifically in relation to coaching and coach education. The Academy will offer a range of coaching courses and the opportunity for aquatic coaches to develop experience by working alongside high level performance coaches; potentially this is the sort of activity that could take place in parallel with Academy training sessions for talented swimmers from around the region. The DA will be responsible for developing the Academy's Beacon Programme, in close liaison with the ASA.
- 5.18 The concept for the Plymouth Aquatics Academy has been developed as a result of consultation with the city's clubs, the ASA, and a review of other recent 50m pool developments. The Academy concept is similar to that established at Sunderland, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool, although each has their own bespoke systems and priorities, to reflect local need.
- 5.19 The operational model is based on the following:
- **Establishment of a Plymouth Aquatics Academy** with a new structure for organisation and delivery of aquatic activity, citywide, not based on one club identity. The establishment and size of such a programme will be dependent upon external funding opportunities.
 - **Appointment of a Director of this body** – responsible for the overall development and delivery of aquatics in the city.
 - **The Director of Aquatics will be responsible for the overall programming of *performance aquatics*** in the Life Centre in close consultation with Plymouth City Council and the contractor. The contractor will be responsible for the programming of Learn to Swim, School Swimming at the Life Centre and other pools in the city operated under the same contract, and where appropriate, other public sector facilities, such as UCP Marjon. Individual club sessions will be programmed by the contractor but will be done in close consultation with the Director of Aquatics to ensure there is both a coordinated approach and that optimum use is made of all available coaching resources and time.

- **Appointment of a number of Head Coaches** for programmes such as swimming/diving, water polo, octopush who will be responsible for the development and delivery of their specific discipline. The Head Coaches will work through a number of coaches at different levels in their disciplines. The exact structure will be different for each discipline. The Swimming Coach is likely to have specific coaches working on for example, different age groups, specific strokes, etc. The coaches will work with performance swimmers, selected to be part of training squads on ability (part of Beacon Programme) but who will continue to swim competitively for their own clubs. The number of coaches will be subject to external funding.
- 5.20 **Learn to Swim and School Swimming** will be the responsibility of the contractor to develop and deliver with liaison over this between the Director of Aquatics and the relevant officers on the contractor's team to ensure progression on the pathway as appropriate, such as learn to swim, school swimming, club, club squads, performance squads etc for each individual. The Swim Coordinator will be responsible for delivery of the National Swim Programme as detailed in the Leisure Management Contract specification for Plymouth City Council facilities. This individual will be located within the Aquatics office in the Life Centre to facilitate the development and delivery of aquatics activity overall, from participation to performance.
- 5.21 The delivery and coordination of School Swimming Policy will also need to involve the two School Partnership Development Managers but will be led by the Department for Children's Services and supported by the Culture, Sport and Leisure section within the Department for Community Services.
- 5.22 **Workforce Development** The beacon programme will deliver UKCC but could sub-contract this to the Institute of Swimming (IoS); the programming and delivery of courses would be undertaken in consultation with the Director of Aquatics, alongside the delivery of the England Talent Programme, to build both coaching capacity and increase coaching skills (in all aquatic disciplines) for the benefit of aquatics delivery in the city. These coaching and coach education programmes would run alongside the day to day operation of the Life Centre and the Beacon Programme.
- 5.23 The ASA/UKCC and other agencies are introducing a system of coach licensing. Plymouth City Council could introduce the concept as part of a Training and Education 'strand' of the Plymouth Aquatics 'brand'.
- 5.24 A further challenge will be the need to move from a predominantly volunteer teaching workforce to a professional one. It is vital to retain and value the volunteers and key recommendations should address this.
- 5.25 In addition to development of Learn to Swim, the Swim Coordinator will also work with the Director of Aquatics in relation to delivery of UK Coaching Courses (UKCC) to meet local need and identification of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs for coaches and swimmers. There is significant potential to link this approach to the University, and the up-skilling of undergraduates through initiatives such as Apprenticeships.

- 5.26 This model is similar to those implemented at Manchester Aquatics Centre, Leeds Aquatics Centre etc. On the basis of this future vision it is clear that there is no one existing model in the city that could take overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the Aquatics Academy, although it is important that existing knowledge and expertise is used.

5.27 The Aquatics Academy concept is illustrated in the following organogram:





Section 6

Developing and Delivering the Future Pathway for Aquatics in Plymouth

6 Developing and Delivering the Future Pathway for Aquatics in Plymouth

Introduction

- 6.1 In relation to the development and implementation of new aquatic programmes in the city, the Life Centre is critical. As the major water space in the city, the Life Centre will be the focus for aquatic activity in Plymouth, including performance level. This does not, however mean exclusive use for clubs and high performance squads; community access and provision, alongside that for the University (part of investment agreement), is also a key priority.
- 6.2 Based on the review, research and consultation undertaken, plus the identified needs and opportunities related to aquatic activity in the city, sub-region and region, it is clear that the Life Centre needs to drive delivery of the city's aquatic programmes. This means that there is a need for a very strong and focussed operational and coaching infrastructure based in the new facility, but working citywide.
- 6.3 The Life Centre sits as the hub for swimming facilities in the city but cannot deliver all the demand for water space and aquatic activity. This needs to be planned and coordinated citywide, as what is accommodated in the Life Centre, as well as what is not, will have an impact on the programming and operation of other pools in Plymouth.
- 6.4 The other important factor to consider in delivering Plymouth's aquatic programme is the potential designation of the Life Centre as an ASA Beacon Centre, which means it has a clear role in both the development of aquatic activity and the workforce who deliver the participative activities, at all levels. Designation as a Beacon Centre would attract significant revenue funding to support an extended workforce and delivery of aquatics development for three years across Plymouth and wider sub-region.
- 6.5 The development of the Life Centre and refurbishment of the pool in the north of the city marks a new era in facility provision in Plymouth. Given the financial constraints on the Council, it is important that the resources for aquatic activity reflect this step change as much as possible and are appropriate in relation to the identified future priorities. It is a significant opportunity to put in place an infrastructure for aquatics which builds on the good practice in the city, learns from other similar facility provision in the UK, such as Bath, Manchester, Leeds 50m pools, and most importantly, addresses the challenges for aquatic activity in the city. The Life Centre is about supporting and facilitating increased participation in aquatic activity at recreational level, just as much as it is about nurturing and developing talented athletes and ensuring they are able to train in appropriate quality facilities.
- 6.6 The concept is the creation and establishment of an Aquatics Academy for the city, based on facilitating and supporting performance at every level. The Academy's principal focus would be about developing ability, irrespective of the club or organisation to which an individual belongs.

- 6.7 Underpinning this performance programme would be the Learn to Swim and School Swimming Programmes; these would provide the opportunity to learn to swim, move into either other aquatic disciplines or water sports, or club level swimming or diving, all coordinated from a central point.
- 6.8 Given the strength and history of the existing city clubs it is important to them that they retain their own identity; this is particularly relevant in terms of competitive swimming. However, given the lack of accessible long course swimming pools (50m) in the overall region, there is significant benefit to be accrued by bringing swimmers of ability together to train on a regular basis in squads. There is also potential to use this approach to create opportunities for coach education for the aquatics workforce at the Life Centre, while the swimmers are involved in practical training sessions.

Recommendations for the Future Delivery of Aquatics in Plymouth

- 6.9 Based on the identified needs of aquatic sports in the city, and the opportunity presented by the development of the Life Centre, the following are the recommendations for future development and delivery of aquatics in the city.
- 6.10 The delivery of the programme outlined is dependent upon the contribution from the Amateur Swimming Association, other partners and Plymouth City Council (subject to available resources). The successful delivery of actions will depend upon an integrated partnership approach involving a number of agencies including higher education, Primary Care Trust, Sport England, the ASA and local clubs

Plymouth Aquatics Academy

Recommendation 1 Establish a Plymouth Aquatics Academy that will be a new citywide structure for the organisation and delivery of swimming, diving and water polo, not based on one club identity. The programme will be a partnership between the leisure operator, the Amateur Swimming Association and the City Council within the resources available.

Recommendation 2 Subject to funding from the Amateur Swimming Association, appoint a Director of Aquatics of this Academy responsible for the overall development and delivery of aquatics in the city.

Recommendation 3 The Director of Aquatics will be responsible for the overall programming of performance aquatics in the Life Centre in close consultation with the Amateur Swimming Association, the leisure operator and Client (Plymouth City Council, within the resources available).

Recommendation 4 Based on the standards set by Plymouth City Council, the future leisure operator will be responsible for programming of Learn to Swim and School Swimming at the Life Centre and other pools in the city operated under the same contract, and where appropriate, other public sector facilities such as UCP

Marjon.

The leisure management operator and the Director of Aquatics will liaise to ensure progression on the pathways. The existing Swim Coordinator post will be responsible for delivery of the lesson programme, which will follow the national learn to swim programme format of delivery and to the level detailed in the Leisure Management Contract specification for Plymouth City Council facilities. This individual will be located within the Aquatics office in the Life Centre to facilitate the development and delivery of aquatics activity overall, from participation to performance.

Aquatics Club Development

Recommendation 5 The Director of Aquatics will establish a swimming club forum to improve inter-club working and communication.

Recommendation 6 The Director of Aquatics will establish a centralised city high performance training programme for swimming, diving and water polo, and encourage all city based clubs to participate in and support this for their elite athletes.

Recommendation 7 Subject to funding from the Amateur Swimming Association, establish a centralised high performance sub-regional training programme and encourage all regional swimming clubs, diving clubs and water polo clubs to participate in and support this for their elite athletes.

Recommendation 8 Establish a coach education programme targeted at city, sub-regional and regional coaches, and promote opportunities for coach education in the city, funded from external funds or contained within fees and charges.

Recommendation 9 Establish the Life Centre as one of the main competitive venues of choice in the UK, within the resources available..

Disability Swimming

Recommendation 10 Within the resources available or external funds, establish formal citywide links between schools, clubs and the disability swimming club (Pisces) as part of the Aquatics pathway and the Aquatics Academy to ensure the further development of disability swimming in the city. ASA Playground to Podium will provide the links for talent development.

Recommendation 11 Develop a lesson programme for disability swimmers linked into the mainstream Learn to Swim Programme in partnership with Pisces and the ASA, funded from external resources/ fees and charges.

Recommendation 12 All swimming teachers and volunteers should be trained to differentiate between the needs of disability and non-disability swimmers.

Learn to Swim

Recommendation 13 Develop and implement policy on a citywide programme for teaching learn to swim which creates more flexible opportunities to learn to swim for adults and juniors, also targeted at groups who have not had learn to swim opportunities (within the resources available).

Recommendation 14 Within the resources available, seek to meet the current and future demand for swimming lessons in the city, and deliver an excellent learn to swim programme that is accredited to Swim 21.

Recommendation 15 The development of this new strategy for aquatics should work towards agreement on a core offer for swimming in the city. It would link to a similar policy for school swimming. This would mean putting together a common, core 'curriculum', with clear aims and objectives, as well as guidance and support on how to achieve a set of core outcomes. This would be a minimum 'delivery standard'.

Recommendation 16 The concept of aquatic opportunities for individual participants to develop their skills needs to be very explicit from the start of a child's aquatics experience. Every child should have the opportunity to learn to swim with confidence and competence which will enable them to make real choices and enjoy quality experiences in aquatics, within the resources available.

School Swimming

Recommendation 17 Develop and implement a citywide Services for Children and Young People policy on school swimming to ensure all children can swim a minimum of 25m by Key Stage 2. Developing the implementation of this policy should commence prior to opening the Life Centre.

Recommendation 18 Adopt a joint marketing approach between Services for Children and Young People and Culture, Sport and Leisure to promote swimming opportunities for young people, within the resources available.

Recreational Swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation)

Recommendation 19 Develop and implement the citywide policy on access to, and promotion of, water space for recreational swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation). The policy must be to increase access for recreational swimming (to support health improvement and increased participation) at all satellite pools, including UCP Marjon and Plympton. This will be achieved through reducing the level of club use at satellite pools. The Life Centre, as the main hub facility, will have water space available for public swimming at all times, in addition to access to the leisure pool.

Recommendation 20 Ensure free swimming and other future national initiatives in the city are monitored to assess impact on participation, and therefore enable resources to be appropriately targeted (subject to external funding or within the resources available).

Recommendation 21 Develop and implement a coordinated citywide approach to the programming such as aerobics, pool walking, training times for triathlon and pentathlon.

Diving

Recommendation 22 Establish all diving activities as part of the Aquatics Academy to increase the profile of diving in the city, including recreational, high performance, regional and sub-regional.

Recommendation 23 Sustain Plymouth as one of the UK's four high performance diving centres and the preferred location for high performance diving training and competition.

Water Polo

Recommendation 24 Develop the profile of the sport in the city, particularly high performance linked to the University, through improved access to water space for training and competition.

Recommendation 25 Work to establish one water polo club in the city, available to both senior and junior teams.

Octopush

Recommendation 26 Develop the profile of the sport in the city by improving access to water space for training, competition and spectator provision. Work towards the establishment of a city club, and focus available resources on the long term development of this activity.

Synchronised Swimming

Recommendation 27 Consider longer term development of this discipline based on the availability of appropriate resources and the potential to link with an existing club in Exeter.

Other Water Sports

Recommendation 28 Identify opportunities to increase coordination between water sports clubs, indoor pool providers and the Mount Batten Centre to deliver pool training opportunities for outdoor water sports.

Life Saving

Recommendation 29 Utilise the development of the Life Centre as the opportunity to develop citywide consistency in programming and delivery of life saving courses link qualified individuals to local clubs and develop links with RNLI, surf lifesaving clubs or similar.

Outdoor Pools

Recommendation 30 Continue to maximise the use of outdoor pools to provide a balanced programme of activities, within the resources available.

- 6.11 The future approach to operational facility management and programming will follow principles of corporate equality standards; access, programming etc will be subject to Equalities Impact Assessment. Programming will be flexible and balanced to meet the needs of a diverse community at recreational level; this will be effectively marketed to ensure increased awareness of the participative opportunities available, and that activities are available to all.

- 6.12 The above recommendations and principles provide the strategic framework for aquatics in the city moving forward and will underpin and inform the specific actions taken as part of the Aquatics Action Plan (implementation and delivery).

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