

## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Plymouth City Council Aquatics Strategy  
**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 13 April 2010  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Jordan  
**CMT Member:** Director for Community Services  
**Author:** James Coulton, Assistant Director of Community Services (Culture, Sport and Leisure)  
**Contact:** E mail: [james.coulton@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:james.coulton@plymouth.gov.uk)  
Tel: (01752) 307013  
**Ref:**  
**Part:** 1

---

### Executive Summary:

Developed in tandem with the Life Centre build project and refurbishment of the University College Plymouth Pool (Marjon), there is a need for a strong vision to support the promotion and delivery of a new aquatics programme across the city. To develop this vision, the City has embarked upon the commissioning of an 'Aquatics Strategy'. The Strategy covers the sports of swimming, diving, octopush, synchronised swimming, water polo, swimming teaching, life saving and a range of other water based activities which require access to indoor water space for training and active participation, but not for specialist medical or treatment conditions.

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 water spaces that will be provided in Plymouth in the future. It is not the purpose of the Aquatics Strategy to assess the need for specific types of pool facility in the future, which is addressed in the Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy, previously approved by the Cabinet.

The Aquatics Strategy will provide a framework for future aquatic programmes, across the city and sub-region, with the Life Centre forming the central hub of delivery. The Strategy is seen as crucial in terms of unlocking external funding from other agencies such as: British Swimming, Sport England and UK Sport.

Following on from the Report and presentation to Cabinet on the draft Aquatics Strategy (10 November 2009), public consultation was undertaken during a 12 week period, to meet the requirements of the PCC's Statement of Community Involvement and Compact. Consultation was promoted using leaflets, posters, road shows, face to face meetings, and also provided opportunities for verbal and written feedback, including emails, and the use of the Limehouse consultation resources. The consultation was undertaken jointly by Business Support Officers and Leisure Officers from within the Community Services Department.

The main themes of consultation feedback relating to the draft Aquatics Strategy, were:

- (a) pool programming ( not enough time for public swimming, nor programmed at an appropriate and suitable time for public access)
- (b) lack of swimming lesson opportunities for adults
- (c) general observations about the maintenance and service standards of current pools
- (d) poor access to current pools by those with disabilities

The final Aquatics Strategy addresses the above issues.

---

### **Corporate Plan 2010-2013:**

The Aquatics Strategy supports the delivery of the following Corporate Improvement Priorities (CIPs):

- (CIP6) Providing more and better cultural and leisure activities
- (CIP4) Reducing inequalities between communities.

---

### **Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land**

The cost of producing the draft Aquatics Strategy has been contained within existing budgets and a revenue contribution from the Amateur Swimming Association SW.

Culture, Sport and Leisure are currently in dialogue with the Amateur Swimming Association to secure a revenue funding contribution to support the first phase implementation of the Aquatics Strategy April 2011 – March 2014. Similar awards have been made to six English cities and their associated aquatic delivery programmes since 2009.

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.

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.

---

### **Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.**

Assisting in meeting needs identified in swimming pool facilities strategy.  
Improved access for all target groups covered by equalities impact assessment.  
Equalities Impact Assessment complete.

---

**Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

Members are recommended to note the recommendations given in the draft Aquatics Strategy and to adopt the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy as the framework for the development of future aquatics programmes across the city.

---

**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

Not to produce a Strategy, this option was rejected as it would reduce our ability to lever external funding and jeopardise our ability to strategically develop Aquatic activity across the City in the new Life Centre and other facilities.

---

**Background papers:** Plymouth City Council Final Draft Aquatics Strategy ( Appendix 1)

---

**Sign off:**

|   |                            |            |                   |           |                         |                      |  |           |  |                       |  |
|---|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Fin</b>                                    | CoSF<br>LC910<br>003<br>SA | <b>Leg</b> | <b>AT</b><br>1117 | <b>HR</b> | <b>MG</b><br>2903<br>10 | <b>Corp<br/>Prop</b> |  | <b>IT</b> |  | <b>Strat<br/>Proc</b> |  |
| <b>Originating SMT Member – James Coulton</b> |                            |            |                   |           |                         |                      |  |           |  |                       |  |

**Plymouth City Aquatics Strategy****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Developed in tandem with the Life Centre build project and refurbishment of the University College Plymouth Pool (Marjon), there is a need for a strong vision to support the promotion and delivery of a new aquatics programme across the city. To develop this vision, the City has embarked upon the commissioning of an 'Aquatics Strategy'.
- 1.2 The Aquatics Strategy will provide **a framework for future aquatic programmes**, across the city and sub-region, with the Life Centre forming the central hub of delivery. The Strategy is seen as a crucial document in terms of unlocking external funding from other agencies such as: British Swimming; Sport England; and UK Sport. The Strategy will also provide an important framework for the future Leisure Management Operator to deliver effective pool programmes.

**2. Aquatics definition**

- 2.1 The Strategy covers the sports of swimming, diving, octopush, synchronised swimming, water polo, swimming teaching, life saving and a range of other water based activities which require access to indoor water space for training and active participation, but not for specialist medical or treatment conditions.

### **3. Scope of the Aquatics Strategy**

- 3.1 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 water spaces that will be provided in Plymouth in the future. It is not the purpose of the Aquatics Strategy to assess the need for specific types of pool facility in the future, which is addressed in the Plymouth Swimming Facility Strategy, previously approved by the Cabinet.

### **4. Purpose of the Aquatics Strategy**

- 4.1 An Aquatics Strategy for Plymouth is about more than just developing facilities. It will provide policy guidance on how the city's pools are programmed in the future. This will ensure that the needs of the public, schools, clubs and other key stakeholders are met through a flexible approach, designed to meet the needs of local people and to deliver key CIP outcomes. The innovation and flexibility included in the Life Centre design, for example the moveable floors, will assist in delivering programmes of aquatics activity to increase participation and develop excellence.

### **5. How we have developed and consulted on the Aquatics Strategy**

- 5.1 The development of the strategy was launched in March (2009) and involved an initial round of consultation with key stakeholders. During the winter of 2009/2010 a second round of consultation, involving the public was undertaken covering a 12 week period. This was delivered to meet the requirements of PCC's Statement of Community Involvement and Compact. Consultation was promoted using leaflets, posters, road shows, face to face meetings, and also provided opportunities for verbal and written feedback, including emails, and the use of the Limehouse consultation resources. The consultation was undertaken jointly by Business Support Officers and Leisure Officers from within the Community Services Department.

### **6. What our research and consultation told us about Aquatics in the city**

- (a) There is currently not enough accessible swimming pool time, which are available for community use. There are regular times when there is no public swimming at Central Park Pools or Plympton Swimming Pool
- (b) The current learn to swim programme does not meet the needs of adults, junior or those with disabilities in the city – capacity is an issue
- (c) Given the current limitations on pool water capacity, the city is currently unable to fully meet the needs of swimming club pool time, and aquatic disciplines such as water polo and synchronized swimming and Octupush
- (d) 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/ schools are unable to access the pool time they need to deliver curriculum swimming

- (e) There are currently 3 swimming clubs who operate in the city. A centralised high performance training programme, would ensure the elite swimming structure in the city and could unlock external funding to promote elite swimming in the city
- (f) The city is unable to meet all the needs of disability swimming (currently delivered by Pisces Swimming Club one session per week)
- (g) The city is unable to meet the broader aquatic programme demands because of current pool space: triathlon training, sub-aqua, canoeing, sea survival, aqua-fit, swim fit etc
- (h) Swimming remains one of the most popular participation sports in the city; however there are variations in participation levels, between the least and most affluent wards.

## **7. Key priorities underpinning the Aquatics Strategy**

Based on the identified needs of aquatic sports in the City, and the opportunity presented by the development of the Life Centre and refurbished UCP pool, Appendix 1, pages xiv to xviii, identifies the key actions for future development and delivery of aquatic programmes in the city.

The successful delivery of actions outlined below will depend upon an integrated partnership approach involving the following key agencies; higher education, PCT, Sport England, local clubs and the Amateur Swimming Association. It will not be the sole responsibility of the city council to fund all identified development outcomes as this will be limited by the level of resources available.

## **8. Amateur Swimming Association ( ASA) Beacon Programme**

With a view to increasing the number of English swimmers/divers being ranked as World Class, the Amateur Swimming Association, established a Beacon Programme in 2009. The Beacon Programme has been rolled out to eight cities in England, with Plymouth having been identified as the ninth and final programme. The nearest geographical programmes to Plymouth, are Portsmouth and Coventry.

It is intended that the Beacon Programme in Plymouth would cover Swimming, Diving, and Water Polo and that the delivery would dovetail with the existing diving and swimming delivery in the city, which would be coordinated through a new Academy Structure. Officers from Culture, Sport and Leisure are currently in dialogue with the ASA, with regards to the funding of the programme, which is likely to see a revenue stream to support the first phase until March 2014. In addition the ASA would directly fund: coach mentoring, a coach workforce development programme and sports science support for athletes, through Service Level Agreements with HE institutes in the city.

## **9. Funding requirements**

The cost of producing the draft Aquatics Strategy has been contained within existing budgets and a revenue contribution from the Amateur Swimming Association SW.

Culture, Sport and Leisure are currently in dialogue with the Amateur Swimming Association to pull down a 200k revenue funding contribution to support the first phase implementation of the Aquatics Strategy April 2011 – March 2014. Similar awards have been made to six English cities and their associated aquatic delivery programmes since 2009.

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.

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.

## **10. Summary**

The Aquatics Strategy will provide a framework for future aquatic programmes, across the city and sub-region, with the Life Centre forming the central hub of delivery. The Strategy is seen as a crucial document in ensuring 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 elite athletes. In addition the Aquatics Strategy is a prerequisite to the unlocking of external funding from other agencies such as: British Swimming, Sport England and UK Sport.

## **11. Recommendations**

Members are recommended to note the recommendations given in the draft Aquatics Strategy and to adopt the Plymouth Aquatics Strategy as the framework for the development of future aquatics programmes across the city.