

‘Not Treading Water’ – Swimming Recommendations

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Strategic Priority : Healthy City, Learning City, Safe City

Corporate Improvement Objectives: CIO1 & CIO3

1. Why has this report come to the Committee?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members regarding progress on the recommendations that were made following the Culture and Leisure Review of swimming in 2007-2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the start of the 2007/08 municipal year, the Committee agreed “to review the development of swimming within the city and make recommendations for its further development.”
- 2.2 The scope of the review aimed to:
- i. Obtain an overview of the national and local policy in relation to swimming;
 - ii. Consider existing and planned facilities within the city
 - iii. Consider the progress being made in complying with national standards;
 - iv. Consider ways of promoting swimming and improving usage;
 - v. Consider the potential development areas
 - vi. Consider the teaching of swimming;
 - vii. Consider role of swimming in promoting health and well being
- 2.3 The review concluded that whilst nationally there is concern about swimming pools closing, the development of swimming facilities in Sunderland is unprecedented. Regionally, no other local authority is building three swimming pools within the same year.
- 2.4 Sunderland has worked hard to ensure that a clear strategic planning framework is in place for the provision of swimming facilities and access to water space is improved for all city residents.
- 2.5 The City Council has demonstrated a significant commitment to the development of swimming and aquatic sports. This includes the partnership funding received to see the city benefit from a regional Beacon Coach, Regional Diving Development Officer, a Community Swimming Coach and a Head Coach for the City of Sunderland Swimming Club. The City Council and partners have shown a willingness to change structures and processes necessary for Sunderland to offer a strong foundation and clear pathways. Such changes include the adoption of the National Teaching Plan which will improve the development of swimmers from the earliest stages up to competitive levels.
- 2.6 The review also concluded that new developments have been well thought out in terms of access and disability. The affordable pricing framework will also help to ensure that all residents of Sunderland are able to participate in the nation’s favourite sporting activity. Swimming Club fees are low compared with other areas

of the country. Effort has also been made to link swimming with other sports and fitness activities so that an all-encompassing approach to health and well-being can be achieved.

3. Not Treading Water Recommendations

3.1 There were 16 recommendations made as a result of the Committee's review. The Committee asked that Community and Cultural Services report on the progress made in relation to these recommendations.

3.2 **Appendix 1** details the recommendations and progress made to date.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Members of the Committee are requested to note the content of this report and the progress made in relation to the recommendations.

5. Background Papers

5.1 The following background papers were relied upon to compile this report

- Not Treading Water Final Report August 2008

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APPENDIX 1

‘Not Treading Water’ – Recommendations

| Recommendation | Update |
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| <p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>That the Sunderland Aquatic Centre is launched successfully and Year 1 operations meet the aspirations from financial, social and swim development perspectives.</p> | <p>The Sunderland Aquatic Centre has been launched successfully, offering a balanced programme to meet its financial, social and swim development targets.</p> <p>Sunderland's newest and most ambitious regeneration project Sunderland Aquatic Centre opened to the public on 18 April 2008. This is the region's first 50m pool and the only facility of it's type between Leeds and Edinburgh.</p> <p>The centre has been developed with support from partners and features the regions first 10 lane 50m pool, a diving pool, 2 wellness exercise studios, a split-level Wellness Centre, cardio-cycle zone, kinesis zone and free-weights zone. The centre is there for everyone to use from beginners to young athletes and those who simply want to splash about in a big pool. In the pool there is a full programme including, fun family sessions, learn to swim, 10 aquafit classes every week (including teen classes), diving courses, parent & toddler sessions, and many others.</p> <p>The Learn to Swim programme has started very well, with 84% lesson take-up over the 132 weekly courses.</p> <p>The Wellness Centre has over 2300 members and is nearly 900 members above target. The Wellness Centre supports the city's GP Referral programme and will also include weight management session in January 2009.</p> <p>The Centre continues to attract regional headlines by winning the Landmark Award 2008 for the North East (Judges Gem Award). In addition the Centre will host the NE BBC Children in Need evening on 14 November and the NE Sports Awards on 7 December 2008.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>That the Hetton and Silksworth 25m pool projects are successfully tendered and completed within agreed timescales.</p> | <p>The two projects are in progress, having successfully tendered to Pelikan contractors for a design and build for both sites. Planning approval has been achieved at both sites and work will start October 2008.</p> <p>The consultation and development of the programme, and revised business planning for the two sites will take place across the next six months, in preparation for the development being completed in 2009/2010.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>That funding should be identified and attracted to support improvements in the Washington Leisure Centre. Alternatively, design proposals and costings should be sought to attract investment to develop a step change in the facilities there.</p> | <p>It is recognised that Washington Leisure Centre is an aging facility and in need of investment. Options for Centre improvements will require significant funds. Work is not scheduled for 2008, given other commitments but clearly remains an emerging priority for such investment. Consideration of how improvements can take place will be part of the next phase facility planning.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>That a partnership agreement between the ASA, Sport</p> | <p>Whilst a formal partnership agreement is not in place, a number of key documents and partnership programmes are being developed, including the Sport England and ASA</p> |

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| England and the City Council is developed to enhance success through better partnership working. | <p>funded Beacon Swimming Programme</p> <p>Expression of Interest forms have been submitted to British Swimming to be considered for some key national swimming galas. Requirements to host such events will require a financial commitment in return for the profile the city will attract from hosting such events. Considerations are being given to the overall balance of such events, community programme and the Year 1 business plan targets.</p> <p>Preparations are being made for an inaugural regional ASA gala that will take place on 29 and 30 November 2008. It is anticipated that over 400 participant and spectators will be in attendance.</p> |
| Recommendation 5: That the Beacon Programme Coach is successfully recruited and all partners play their role in facilitating the scheme. | <p>The Beacon programme is running under the instruction of Dave Legge – English Programmes Talent Delivery, as an interim measure whilst plans are finalised with the ASA to ensure a successful recruitment process.</p> <p>There are currently 39 regional elite swimmers accessing the Sunderland Aquatic Centre for training.</p> |
| Recommendation 6: That Sunderland City Council facilitate, as part of the Beacon Programme, the involvement of both the University and College with the ASA, to maximise their roles in supporting athletes, accommodation and research/scholarships. | <p>The ASA are currently considering commissioning the University to deliver blood testing and other support on Saturday mornings, when regional training sessions are taking place.</p> <p>In addition, partnership meetings have occurred to ensure the University swimming squad is attached and appropriately supported. Promotions to encourage general access to the pool by students are also being considered, particularly through Lifecard take up.</p> |
| Recommendation 7: That Sunderland City Council works in partnership with the ASA, to consider how the Regional Beacon swimming post, regional diving development officer and community swim coach might be sustainable after three years. | <p>The Diving Development Officer post has been advertised and a candidate has accepted the position. He will start in December 2008 and brings with him extensive experience.</p> |
| Recommendation 8: Sunderland City Council works with the ASA and Sunderland Swimming Club in establishing a sustainable plan for the post of Head Swimming Club coach. | <p>This remains a challenge. Whilst membership has grown for the club, expenses to support a wide range of coaches, facility time and participation in galas has also increased.</p> <p>Fund-raising remains relatively consistent. The ASA are looking to support the City Council and the club in some business planning work.</p> |
| Recommendation 9: The ASA, Tyne and Wear Sport and Sunderland City Council work together in establishing a progressive coach education scheme at the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, as a sub-regional Institute of Swimming. This | <p>Discussions have taken place with the ASA regarding arrangements for this and the Aquatic Centre becoming a 'centre for training'. However, it is unlikely that this will be implemented until September 2009/10. A Tyne and Wear Sport, sub-regional workforce development application and plan, will however provide a swimming course at the Aquatics Centre in the next 12 months.</p> |

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| scheme should link as appropriate with both the college and university. | |
| Recommendation 10: That the City Council considers taking part in the Get Safe for Summer programme. | Research will be undertaken in respect of Get Safe Summer and establishing work programme to support the initiative. |
| Recommendation 11: That consideration is given to ensuring that school access to swimming pool provisions is coordinated as much as possible with the new pool provisions possibly through development of a swim bureau to coordinate both swim coaching and transport arrangements. | Consultation with schools is planned as part of programme development for the Silksworth and Hetton pools, across the next six months. An appropriate programme which facilitates easy access during curriculum time for schools will be a focus. Consolidated transport plan, particularly in the Coalfields area will be considered as part of this work, should schools wish such a provision, and be willing to commit long term. |
| Recommendation 12: That participation in school swimming and achievement of the national curriculum continues to be monitored and that schools are encouraged, via the School Sport Partnerships, to improve performance. | Community and Cultural Services continue to offer supportive access at facilities. Uptake citywide remains high. There are currently 11 schools utilising the Aquatic Centre each week and over 30 schools accessing our swimming facilities citywide. The Centre is also supporting local school swimming galas, for example, Argyle House School have recently scheduled their gala for 2 April 2009. |
| Recommendation 13: Continued efforts are made to ensure that all swimming in the city follows the new National Teaching Plan. | The National Teaching Plan has successfully been introduced. Sunderland Aquatic Centre teaches swimming in line with the ASA National Plan for Teaching Swimming (NPTS). Residents can follow a clear plan to progress swimming skills and become increasingly competent, confident and safe in the water. The Centre also ensures that young swimmers are sign posted and made aware of the opportunities for skill development in the Sunderland Swimming Club. |
| Recommendation 14: That the City Council works with clubs to develop better sustainability plans to enable them to afford both the staffing and facilities which they wish for. | The City Council are working with the clubs to consider an approach on galas, which helps support club funds. For example, the City Council and the ASA are currently supporting Sunderland Swimming Club with its first gala on 28 December 2008. This support will involve preparing club volunteers to use specialist timing and testing equipment. In addition, the introduction of galas will provide the club with an insight in how to manage large events and provide much need revenue to develop sustainability. |
| Recommendation 15: That the City Council makes efforts to enable more staff to participate in continuous | A minimum of four CPD workshops will be held at the Sunderland Aquatic Centre every year. These workshops will ensure that coaches teaching skills are upto date in terms of all four swimming stroke techniques. These coaching and teaching techniques can then be used as part of the Learn to |

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| professional development. | Swim programme. |
| <p>Recommendation 16:</p> <p>That the ASA and City Council work with the City of Sunderland Swimming Club to encourage inclusive access to their sessions for talented disabled athletes.</p> | <p>Inclusion is an important aspect of centre programming. The Sunderland Swimming Club are also committed to this under their 'Swim 21' arrangements.</p> <p>However, advice and support is needed from the ASA to ensure the combined working is effective and discussions are currently underway between the ASA and the Swimming Club to progress this.</p> <p>In addition, discussions are taking place with the Sunderland South Swimming Club (Sandhill Centre) who have many talented disabled athletes, to offer opportunities to support their development.</p> <p>The Centre are also working in partnership with Adult Services regarding support to adults with access issues and disabilities.</p> |