



# COVENTRY AQUATICS STRATEGY 2014-2024

JULY 2014

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Aquatics Strategy is a response to Coventry's wider Sports Strategy for the next ten years (2014 to 2024). It provides the framework for taking forward the various aquatic disciplines and development pathways in the sport within the context of the city's overarching Coventry Sports Strategy. The Aquatics Strategy further outlines the role aquatics will play in delivery of the various aims and objectives contained within the Coventry Sports Strategy, while also making detailed and specific recommendations about the work to be undertaken with regards to aquatic sports.

It is an important document which sets the framework for future decisions about the provision of swimming and aquatics disciplines in the city. It also makes reference to the supporting infrastructure that needs to be put into place to ensure that Coventry continues to provide and further develop high quality aquatics opportunities for all residents.

### **Definition**

For the purposes of this Strategy, 'aquatics' covers the disciplines of swimming (teaching and performance), diving, synchronised swimming, water polo, lifesaving, triathlon, and a range of water based activities (e.g. sub-aqua) which may require access to supervised pool space for training and active participation

### **Coventry SWOT**

This strategy is being prepared and published at a time of unprecedented challenges to funding across the city. The table below identifies strategic and operational challenges that emerged through the consultation undertaken to inform the strategy in the form of a brief SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

# COVENTRY AQUATICS STRATEGY 2014 – 2024

Table 1: Coventry SWOT analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The city's successful track record in swimming, featuring a successful club with circa 430 competitive members and ASA Beacon status.</li> <li>◀ High quality swimming club with a successful track record developing performance swimmers.</li> <li>◀ Political support for the sport.</li> <li>◀ The city has a strong investment model based on the repatriation of efficiencies to invest in new and refurbished sports facilities.</li> <li>◀ Good relationship with the ASA in relation to city-wide swimming development</li> <li>◀ Track record in delivering regionally significant aquatics events.</li> <li>◀ Coventry has a track record of delivering courses that lead to ASA qualifications</li> <li>◀ Currently in the process of developing a single swimming development programme across all Coventry Sports Trust (CST) and Coventry Sports Foundation (CSF) sites.</li> <li>◀ Good transition links from Learn to Swim to club coaching.</li> <li>◀ Two universities keen to support their students to become more active.</li> <li>◀ New aquatic facilities being developed at Centre AT7.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The poor quality and associated high running costs of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre, the city's largest swimming pool and central facility.</li> <li>◀ The poor quality of many other pools in the city.</li> <li>◀ Current lack of good quality swimming provision in the north of the city.</li> <li>◀ Some pools not being operated to their full potential.</li> <li>◀ General low participation in sport by women and girls in the city.</li> <li>◀ Low participation levels in sport in/across some of the city's most deprived communities.</li> <li>◀ Historical lack of a co-ordinated aquatics offer as a result of mixed economy of operators.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities...to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Drive increases in participation aligned to a co-ordinated aquatics offer across CST and CSF facilities.</li> <li>◀ Drive increases in participation at the new aquatic facilities at Centre AT7.</li> <li>◀ Target increases in participation by women and girls.</li> <li>◀ Develop a new flagship aquatics facility; aligned to city centre regeneration.</li> <li>◀ Develop a complementary school swimming offer which seeks to increase Key Stage 2 attainment levels.</li> <li>◀ Take full advantage of ASA support and products to deliver improvements.</li> <li>◀ Reinforce swimming as a key activity to drive health improvement and lifestyle change.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The national austerity measures being implemented; especially their impact on non-statutory local authority services.</li> <li>◀ On-going funding pressures – further public sector budget cuts.</li> <li>◀ Growing rates of inactivity and obesity.</li> <li>◀ Need to consider financial viability over social objectives – in relation to the location of facilities.</li> <li>◀ Need for a realistic pricing strategy for any new city centre aquatics facility. Provision will need to be accessible to local people.</li> <li>◀ Coventry City Council dissuaded from making difficult decisions.</li> </ul>

## Strategy drivers

The rationale for the strategy is driven by the need to address some major participation and health challenges across the city. As the country's major participation sport, aquatics in all its forms, but primarily swimming, has a real potential to contribute to the wider physical activity and health improvement strategy for the city. It is recognised that aquatics will have a key role within the Coventry Sports Strategy and Indoor Facilities Strategy given that:

- ◀ Swimming is a major participation sport.
- ◀ Coventry has poor Key Stage 2 swimming attainment levels compared to comparable cities.
- ◀ Coventry has a successful track record in developing elite swimmers.
- ◀ The city currently has a diving facility, although the five and ten metre diving boards have been closed for many years.
- ◀ Swimming pools, by their nature, are comparatively costly facilities to operate.
- ◀ The high cost associated with the operation of swimming pools becomes more relevant during a period of local government efficiency drives.
- ◀ The city has one of the country's oldest 50m pools which, if it were to continue to be a functioning facility, would require significant investment.
- ◀ Coventry has an 'island' of swimming pool water in the city-centre with limited high quality accessible pools in its outlying local neighbourhoods.
- ◀ The initial facilities planning modelling undertaken by Sport England identifies key areas in the city which have limited access to a swimming pool.
- ◀ Some pools are not operated to their full potential and have the ability to perform a specific role in the development of aquatics across the city.

In summary, Coventry is at a cross-roads and needs to set in train a direction of travel which not only recognises the importance of learning to swim and the other aquatics disciplines, but also takes account of the future context of local government and the provision of public swimming facilities. Therefore, this Aquatics Strategy is not solely a driver for performance swimming, it seeks to cover the full range of aquatics disciplines within a Coventry that is changing and developing a new impetus; and is looking to ensure that sport really contributes to the wider health and social drivers in the city.

Another key component of the strategy, which is a focus for the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), is the development of a more business-focused approach to managing swimming pools. This includes the management and programming of pools to reflect market need and aspirations, while ensuring that key business development tools are used to maximise income generation and reduce the subsidy requirements of pools.

## Context

Coventry has a proud tradition of swimming and aquatics over a long period of time. In the main this has centred on the fact that the city is home to one of the country's oldest 50m pools; at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre. The city has hosted a wide range of events and previously established itself as one of the country's premier swimming competition venues. However, the 1990s saw the development of a new wave of 50m pools such as Ponds Forge and Grand Central Pools and the last ten years has witnessed further increases in 50m pool facilities at locations such as Leeds, Sunderland, Loughborough, Plymouth and Corby, on top of those developed for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In addition to this, there are currently plans (including some now underway) for new pools to be developed in the Midlands at Nottingham, Derby and at the University of Birmingham. As a consequence, the future status of the competition pool at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre is under scrutiny; not only in relation to its role as a swimming competition venue in the West Midlands but also in the context of the fact that it is a facility that is ageing, needs significant investment to keep it open and is considered uneconomic to refurbish.

Coventry City Council has commissioned a technical options appraisal on the future development of the building and the provision of public sport and leisure (including aquatic) facilities in the city centre. It has considered sixteen options for future city centre sport and public leisure provision: from full and partial refurbishment of the current building; to part closure and part refurbishment; to complete closure; to new provision. In parallel with this, the Council has also considered wider options for facility development to address the impact of some of the scenarios proffered. To some degree these have been encapsulated within Sport England's FPM assessment to provide a wider context for future decision making.

This Aquatics Strategy is, thus, an important document in setting the framework for future decisions about the provision of swimming and aquatics disciplines in the city and the supporting infrastructure that needs to be put into place. This is essential to ensure that Coventry continues to provide good quality aquatics opportunities for all residents.

A number of key decisions have already been taken and there are other potential plans which help to inform this strategy; these include:

- ◀ The City Council's decision to close Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre and to re-provision aquatic facilities at Centre AT7, scheduled to open in August 2014.
- ◀ The City Council's desire to create a wet and dry sport and leisure facility that is significant to the Midlands as part of strategic city-centre regeneration.
- ◀ The planned redevelopment of President Kennedy and Ernesford Grange Schools, both of which could potentially result in the loss of current on-site swimming pools.
- ◀ A more coherent management solution across the operation of the city's public sport and leisure offer.
- ◀ The City Council's approval and support of an investment model that repatriates operational efficiency savings to invest in new and improved sports facilities.
- ◀ The ASA's decision in 2011, given finite capital resources, not to part-fund a scheme to refurbish the diving platforms at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre.
- ◀ The subsequent closure of the five and 10 metre diving boards at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre as a result of their outdated specifications and poor condition.

# COVENTRY AQUATICS STRATEGY 2014 – 2024

Subsequent to the decision to close Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre and develop aquatic facilities at Centre AT7, the infrastructure of publically accessible swimming pools by the end of 2014 will be as shown below

Figure 1: Coventry swimming pools that offer community access – September 2014

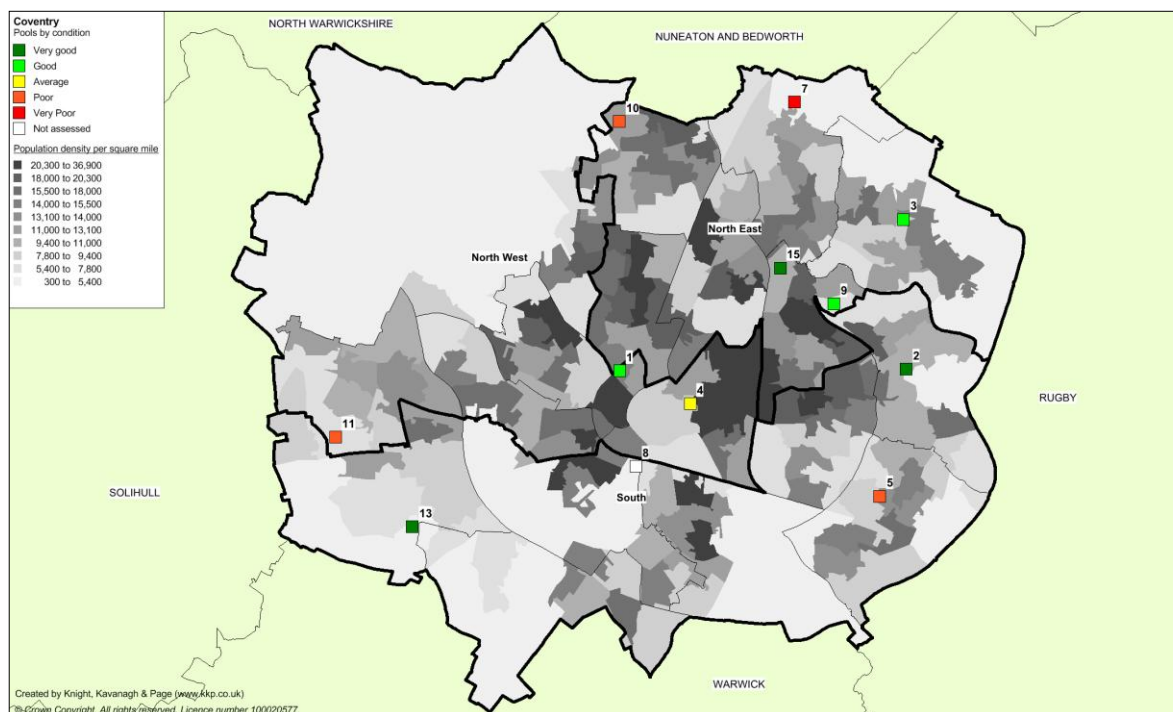


Table 2: Coventry swimming pools – quality rating of pools and changing facilities

ID	Pool Site	Pool Type	Quality Rating Pool	Quality Rating Changing	Analysis area
3	Cardinal Wiseman School/Language College	Main/General	Good	Good	North East
7	Foxford Leisure Centre	Main/General	Very Poor	Poor	North East
9	Lyng Hall School Sports Centre	Main/General	Good	Good	North East
10	President Kennedy School & College	Teaching	Poor	Poor	North East
15	Centre AT7	Main/General	TBC	TBC	North East
1	Bablake School	Main/General	Good	Good	North West
4	Coventry Sports & Leisure Centre	Main/General	Average	Average	North West
11	Tile Hill Wood School & Language College	Teaching	Poor	Poor	North West
2	Caludon Castle School	Main/General	Very Good	Very Good	South
5	Ernesford Grange Sports Centre	Main/General	Poor	Poor	South
8	King Henry VIII School	Main/General	Good	Good	South
13	Xcel Leisure Centre	Main/General	Very Good	Very Good	South



In the main, the city's poor quality pools are located on school sites, where it is most noticeable that the north east of the city is partly served by two school swimming pools that are of either 'poor' or 'very poor' quality.

Although Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre has an average rated swimming pool, this needs to be considered within the wider context of a facility that is in a poor technical condition (e.g. building structure and plan and machinery), has poor customer flows, poor disabled access and is unattractive and dated

This Aquatics Strategy will provide a framework for the longer term investment in the sport and enable key partners to work together to achieve the longer term objective of improving aquatics provision across the city.

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## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### Strategic context

This Aquatics Strategy has been developed in the context of the City's wider strategic vision and aims for sport as well as those identified by the ASA and other key organisations responsible for developing sport, such as Sport England. An overarching strategic context is provided in the Coventry Sports Strategy document, but the key themes are as follows:

- ◀ The national strategic themes that sport can contribute to:
  - ◀ Increasing levels of physical activity
  - ◀ Achieving a healthy weight and reversing the rising tide of obesity
  - ◀ Making sport a national habit
  - ◀ Sport being a key partner with health in tackling issues of health and wellbeing
- ◀ At a local level, the key influencing factors that affect sport include:
  - ◀ Sport defining its role locally in improving levels of physical activity among residents and the positive impact this has on health.
  - ◀ The low levels of participation in sport and physical activity among Coventry's residents, but especially among women and girls.
  - ◀ The high levels of obesity in the city, especially among young people (which is higher than the national average).
  - ◀ Low levels of car ownership in the city with almost one in three residents not having access to a car.
  - ◀ The changing age structure of Coventry's residents with significant increases in the older and younger age groups.
  - ◀ The significant growth in the BME community, which as a percentage of the overall population was 16% in 2001; estimated at 25% in 2007 and predicted to be 35% by 2031.

### **ASA Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017**

At national level the ASA has a Strategic Plan for Swimming and Aquatics and has identified the following strategic objectives:

- ◀ To increase the number of schools providing quality swimming, in line with ASA guidelines, as part of a local learn to swim network.
- ◀ To maximise the effective use of available water space in England in order to attract, retain and grow the number of people taking part in regular aquatics activities.
- ◀ To build, develop and maintain a quality sustainable club infrastructure and network that meets the needs of the community it serves.
- ◀ To increase the size and success of the English talent pool – ensuring swimmers reach their full potential.
- ◀ To improve the skills and technical capabilities of the aquatics workforce and its ability to innovate.
- ◀ To enhance the ASA's leadership of the swimming industry.

### **Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 – 2024**

The City Council, its partners and stakeholders have undertaken extensive consultation to develop the city's Mission, Vision Aims and Strategic Objectives for the Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 - 2024. The Strategy will be owned by a network of sports partners and recognised and endorsed by other key stakeholders because of the contribution that sport makes to quality of life and to tackling wider challenges in the city.

The overarching mission statement for the Coventry Sports Strategy is identified as follows

***Mission:***

***To develop a more active, inclusive and vibrant Coventry through positive experiences in sport***

This will be delivered through the implementation of eight headline Vision Aims (underpinned by associated Strategic Objectives). The eight Vision Aims for the development of sport within the city from 2014 – 2024 are:

- ◀ To inspire more people within the city to take up and regularly take part in sport
- ◀ To provide a wide range of high quality and exciting sporting opportunities and experiences
- ◀ To inspire more people to volunteer, coach and be facilitators of sport
- ◀ To identify and support talented athletes to reach their sporting potential
- ◀ To provide a range of modern, accessible and high quality sports facilities in the city
- ◀ To attract high profile sporting events to the city and to celebrate sporting achievement
- ◀ To grow and promote sport in the city through effective partnerships
- ◀ For sport to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit

The Aquatics Strategy is a contextual response to the above Mission and Vision Aims. It will highlight the context for each Vision Aim and seek to develop a range of aquatics objectives to be delivered to contribute to the achievement of the strategic objectives.

## **VISION AIM 1: PARTICIPATION**

### ***To inspire more people within the city to take up, and regularly take part in, sport***

Coventry has a real challenge to get more people participating in sport and in particular aquatics. This challenge relates to higher than average inactivity levels; low take up among women and girls; a high proportion of residents with a limiting long term illness and high levels of obesity (including childhood obesity) all of which have a negative impact on participation levels.

However, aquatics has a sound basis for moving forward and contributing significantly to achieving the above vision aim. This assertion is based on analysis of Sport England's Active People survey data and Coventry's Sports and Leisure Survey (2012):

- ◀ Even though swimming participation levels in Coventry are below regional and national averages, it remains the most commonly cited sport in which people would like to take part more frequently.
- ◀ Swimming is also the key activity in which people presently do not take part but in which they would like to (42.4%) – Coventry Sports and Leisure Survey (2012).
- ◀ The Coventry survey also found that a swimming pool is ranked as the number one facility (45.8%) that people would most like to use/have access to (that is/are not currently offered at their nearest/most used leisure centre).
- ◀ Nationally, aquatic sports exhibit consistently higher participation rates for women, occasionally reaching double or higher than the equivalent men's rate; in Coventry six in 10 swimmers are women.
- ◀ Compared to many other sports, aquatics has an even spread of participation across all age groups reflecting the fact that it is a sport with which people tend to stay, or find it easier to return to.

Therefore, aquatics is an important factor in inspiring more people within the city to take up and regularly take part in sport, given that it is 'front of mind' in many people's participation aspirations and is recognised as an important 'weight bearing' activity for those having a long term limiting illness or who are obese. Additionally, aquatics activity is significantly popular with women and girls and will be a key tool for addressing low participation levels among this target market.

*To deliver Vision Aim 1 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivery of the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ Regular adult participation in aquatics will be at a higher level than national and regional averages
- ◀ Participation in aquatics by children and young people will increase
- ◀ Participation in aquatics by disabled people will be at a higher level than the national and regional averages
- ◀ Aquatics will be a key component of the city's drive to address obesity levels and improve levels of physical activity amongst those with a long term limiting illness.
- ◀ Aquatics will be a key driver in increasing overall female participation levels in the city

## VISION AIM 2: SPORTING OPPORTUNITY AND EXPERIENCES

### ***To provide a wide range of high quality and exciting sporting opportunities and experiences***

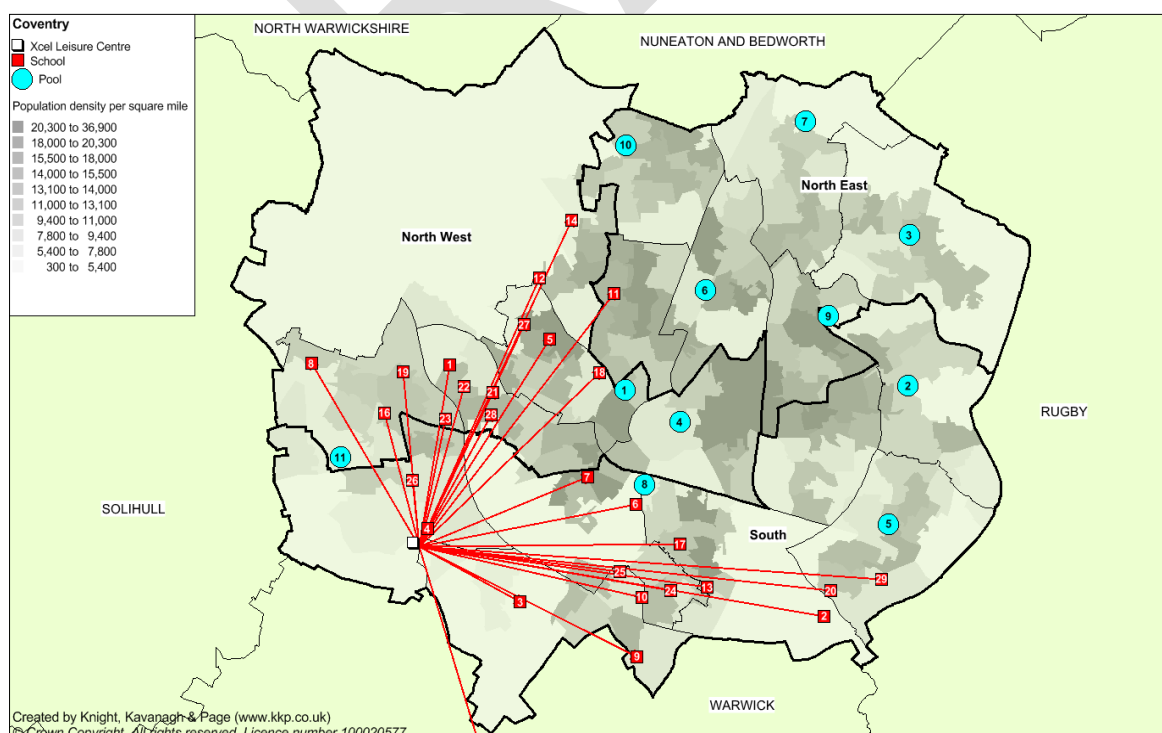
Aligned to Vision Aim 1, which is focused on inspiring more people within the city to take up and regularly take part in sport, it is recognised that to achieve this people need quality, enjoyment and satisfaction from their aquatics activity to stimulate them to make different (positive) lifestyle choices. It is fundamentally important that swimming and the various aquatic disciplines position themselves as a valued part of everyday life for individuals and provide a viable, attractive alternative to non-activity among residents. The key areas where aquatics opportunities will contribute to the above are in relation to the following:

#### *School swimming*

The delivery of a cohesive education swimming offer has historically been hindered by Coventry having two separate public leisure operators (i.e. Coventry Sports Trust and Coventry Sports Foundation). A more consistent and coherent public sport and leisure offer has more recently been achieved through Coventry Sports Trust (CST) appointing Coventry Sports Foundation to provide management consultancy services to CST, presenting a real opportunity to consider alternative approaches to the delivery of education swimming. Added to the two key leisure operators, additional arrangements for public swimming access are made at some of the city's school pools, such as at Caludon Castle School.

A key challenge for the education sector is that there has been no consistent and co-ordinated offer to schools from the various operators of pools. In some instances the facility quality has been variable, as has the price and quality of teaching. There is now an opportunity to develop a new way of delivering school swimming which will help to address the poor Key Stage 2 (KS2) attainment levels across the city.

*Figure 2: Coventry schools that currently use the Xcel Leisure Centre*



By way of example, the above map illustrates the degree to which some schools are prepared (or forced) to travel to access KS2 swimming at facilities which are, for example:

- ◀ Available
- ◀ Perceived to be better quality
- ◀ Provide better quality instruction for pupils or
- ◀ Where lessons are delivered at (more) appropriate times for schools

In some instances, schools will by-pass an existing facility to travel to their swimming pool of choice. The map illustrates this clearly where some schools drive past Ernesford Grange School & Community College, Bablake, Tile Hill Wood and King Henry VIII schools in order to access swimming at Xcel Sport and Leisure Centre. In addition, notably limited use is made of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre for school swimming; with just 11 schools in total reported as currently using them.

The key challenge in providing a school swimming service is the degree to which transport costs impact on the overall budget. In some instances, the costs associated with school swimming are predominantly transport related; sometimes in the region of 70-80% of the overall cost. A key driver for the city should be to deliver a school swimming scheme which enables schools to minimise transport costs and to invest a greater degree of the budget in delivering the school swimming itself.

#### **Good practice example: School swimming in Trafford**

Trafford Leisure Trust has worked with all schools in the Borough to develop a comprehensive school swimming offer. The scheme has resulted in a greater take up of school swimming, higher attainment levels and more of the overall budget being spent on the delivery of swimming lessons. The key features of the scheme can be summarised as follows:

- ◀ All school swimming lessons are 1 hour long instead of 30 minutes.
- ◀ There is a reduction in the overall number of lessons, thus reducing related transport costs.
- ◀ The savings from transport costs have been invested in reducing the teacher: pupil ratio, which now equate to the same ratio as the Trust's learn to swim scheme.
- ◀ Schools have had to work around the potential impact on the school timetable, but have seen the benefit in the delivery of improved lessons and learning outcomes.

The above example of good practice should be considered as an approach across all the key pools in Coventry. This will require a cost benefit analysis and detailed consultation with schools and the City Council's education team.

#### **Learn to Swim**

CST and CSF have been working with the ASA to deliver a new comprehensive Learn to Swim scheme across the city. The operators have previously offered the Inspire and Aquarius Learn to Swim programmes at their respective swimming pools. The cost of these programmes varies considerably and it is worth noting that the more costly scheme at Xcel Leisure Centre has attracted more participants than the combined operations at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre and Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre pools (which have a substantially greater quantity of water space to work in).

In total there are approximately 2,750 young people registered onto the Learn to Swim schemes across the pools in Coventry. If we assume that participants are generally aged between 4 and 7 years of age, it is possible to determine that the potential market for swimming lessons in this age group is over 15,500. Therefore, both operators between

them are achieving almost 18% penetration into the market. Given that they are the main providers of public swimming lessons it demonstrates the scale of the potential market and the proportion that is not presently taking up swimming lessons and, potentially, losing out on a life skill which will enable them to make use of swimming pools throughout their lives.

The new programme being developed across the city is based on the ASA learn to swim pathway and there is an aspiration that the same delivery model will be applied to all publically accessible leisure facilities. It is imperative that it is developed in such a way that it seeks to build on the existing penetration rate and develops a greater degree of opportunity for young people to become competent swimmers. This will impact on the volume of time allocated across the city's pools to provide swimming lessons; not just for young people but also for adults. This is a key part of the Coventry public being able to make informed decisions about their physical activity likes and aspirations.

### ***Transition to coaching and club***

The City of Coventry Swimming Club currently works closely with CST to provide a 'Pathways Programme' for learn to swim participants who demonstrate a desire to progress to competitive swimming. These are children that have progressed through the scheme and show a degree of talent. The Club currently runs three Pathways sessions and invites swimmers to attend an extra session for 10 weeks in order to enable them to determine whether they wish to progress to the Club and a competitive environment, and to enable the Club to identify those with the appropriate talent.

This is regarded as a model of good practice by the ASA; however it is also recognised that the transition from the Learn to Swim programme to the swimming club still requires further development. The transition arrangement only relates to Coventry Sports Trust facilities and there is a need to expand this to incorporate Coventry Sports Foundation facilities, such as the Xcel Leisure Centre which has a significant Learn to Swim programme. The development of a new Learn to Swim scheme should, therefore, consider how this link is retained and developed fully in order to make sure that a competitive pathway is retained and developed further.

### **Water polo**

The City of Coventry Swimming Club has a successful water polo programme. This offers young swimmers and those coming to the end of their swimming career the opportunity to try alternative disciplines in order to retain them within the sport. It offers opportunities from mini polo through to senior competitive water polo. The women's team is currently ranked in the top five in the country.

Where possible, programming and facility provision to support water polo opportunities should continue to be supported, as they present clear exit routes for swimmers and contribute to the city offering a comprehensive aquatic experience.

### **Synchronised swimming**

The city does not currently provide a synchronised swimming offer, but signposts potential participants to Rugby and Birmingham where the sport has a greater presence.

## **Masters swimming and Triathlon**

The City of Coventry Swimming Club has a Masters swim squad which has links with the local triathlon club. These clubs operate closely together and share pool time throughout the week.

The above programmes and wider aquatics disciplines will be enhanced through the development of a co-ordinated aquatics offer across the city. At the top end of this pathway, the City of Coventry Swimming Club is instrumental in delivering high quality opportunities for participants. However, it is clear that additional work needs to be undertaken to develop a comprehensive pathway to service this club and to expand the number of people in the city who are able to swim to a competent level.

*To deliver Vision Aim 2 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ To have a single education swimming offer for the city which is accessible to all schools.
- ◀ To increase the number of schools buying into the education swimming offer.
- ◀ To develop and coordinate a single Learn to Swim programme across all publically accessible leisure facilities.
- ◀ To increase by 50% the number of young people attending Learn to Swim sessions at Coventry's public swimming pools by 2024.
- ◀ To retain a comprehensive aquatics offer and development pathway across all disciplines for aspiring athletes outlined within an Aquatics Implementation Plan.
- ◀ To increase quality and satisfaction levels with the city's education and Learn to Swim programmes.



### **VISION AIM 3: COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS**

#### ***To inspire more people to volunteer, coach and be facilitators of sport***

Like many other parts of the country Coventry has its challenges in developing its aquatics skill base to deliver across all the disciplines. This includes the teaching infrastructure to deliver Coventry Sports Trust and Coventry Sports Foundation Learn to Swim programmes as well as the City Council's school swimming programme. However, the City of Coventry Swimming Club has indicated that it currently has a sustainable supply of teachers, coaches and volunteers for the range of aquatics disciplines it delivers. It works to a model of being self-sufficient in the development of coaches to deliver across its fifteen coaching groups.

The size and scale of the Club means that it has a reasonable supply of volunteers to assist with its management and operation (i.e. it does not appear to face the same challenges that hamper smaller clubs in accessing appropriate volunteers; however it is currently reliant on older volunteers and there is a need to continually address succession planning in this area). It also offers a range of coach and teacher development opportunities for swimmers coming to the end of their careers, who then assist with some squad sessions. However, this is a time limited cycle given that many younger coaches move on to university, so there is a continual cycle of training and developing new coaches to support the club's various functions. Therefore, at present the club appears to be self-sufficient in the context of the longer term development of its coaches and volunteers and will continue to invest in this in this format.

CCSC also provides coaches for some of the university programmes and as a case in point, the Club's water polo coach also coaches the University of Warwick team. The Club's self-sustaining modus operandi should be identified as a model of good practice and shared with other clubs in the city. However, what it does rely on is having a critical mass of people from which to select to take on and develop key volunteering roles.

One of the key areas for development is the nurturing and creation of excellent teachers to deliver the city's Learn to Swim programme. This is being tackled through the City Council, Coventry Sports Foundation and Coventry Sports Trust's working relationships with the ASA and the development of the Learn to Swim programme. This will be a key operational requirement aligned to the wider aspirations of increasing by 50% the size of the Learn to Swim scheme across all the city's public leisure facilities.

The City Council and partners need to work to ensure the growth and development of both the employed and voluntary workforce, matching the rate of growth within the sport at any given time, whilst ensuring those involved feel valued. Particular attention will need to be paid to managing transitions in the required coaching and volunteering infrastructure within the club sector, pending changes within the mix of the city's aquatic facilities over the course of the next 10 years.

The outcome of such a development approach should be that the City Council, clubs and partners can be confident in having a workforce fit for purpose to deliver the required range of aquatic activities, across the city, based on consumer needs.

*To deliver Vision Aim 3 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ To continue with the existing funding and investment programme to encourage and develop all volunteers, coaches and aquatics facilitators.
- ◀ To ensure that aquatics is fully integrated within the city's sports volunteering network.
- ◀ To ensure opportunities exist for young aquatics competitors to move into teaching, coaching and officiating.
- ◀ To explore apprenticeship options across the city, in partnership with CCSC.

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## **VISION AIM 4: SUPPORTING TALENTED PLAYERS/ATHLETES**

### ***To identify and support talented athletes to reach their sporting potential***

As noted above, the City of Coventry Swimming Club has achieved 'Beacon' status from the ASA and as such is recognised as a key club in developing swimmers through to performance and potentially onto elite level. Over recent years this status has been accompanied by funding from the ASA which has enabled the Club to employ a head coach and programme manager. However, the club has recognised the importance of these positions and has in recent times been looking to ensure that it is self-sufficient in this context in order to continue to maintain these important paid roles.

Beacon status has enabled the Club to provide additional support in developing regional swimmers, which includes sports science, nutritional advice and strength and conditioning. These are key aspects of support to talented athletes that the city is looking to develop and enhance across a range of sports via the Coventry Institute of Sport (CIS). This is a proposed partnership between key stakeholders and key clubs across a range of sports, in order to create a 'catalyst for performance'. This will be an early support package for talented athletes which seeks to:

- ◀ Support and nurture talented athletes in the city.
- ◀ Provide guidance and intervention on a range of support needs which complements their individual coached programmes.
- ◀ Provide access to relevant support which enables athletes to reach their full potential and progress onto NGB specific high performance programmes.

Aquatics, and in particular the City of Coventry Swimming Club, is currently in a unique position where it can help to shape the partnership and the nature of the support for athletes across the city, given its previous experience and established support programme. It will also be important for the Club to determine what works (and doesn't) as part of this package and to work with the CIS to enable informed decisions to be made about the future support offered to swimming and other sports, not least as the current period of Beacon funding approaches its completion in 2017 and pending changes within the mix of the city's aquatic facilities over the course of the next 10 years.

The City of Coventry Swimming Club is recognised as one of the city's and region's high performance clubs and the Club is recommended to commit to being a key partner in the development of the CIS. It also has established links with the universities and the potential to expand these through the development of closer working relationships and offering support to university aquatics teams. There is also potential for the Club to work with both institutions to offer scholarships to performance swimmers in a bid to attract talent to the city.

*To deliver Vision Aim 4 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ To continue to develop talent within the key sport of swimming and where applicable deliver this within the wider ASA framework of Beacon Club status.
- ◀ To develop talent pathways across all relevant aquatic disciplines and to signpost talented athletes to the most appropriate opportunities where applicable.
- ◀ To maintain links with sports such as Triathlon and Modern Pentathlon in order to provide alternative development pathways for swimmers.
- ◀ To be an integral part of the Coventry Institute of Sport.

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## **VISION AIM 5: FACILITIES**

### ***To provide a range of modern, accessible and high quality sports facilities in the city***

The longer term swimming pool infrastructure is a fundamental driver in the delivery of this Aquatics Strategy. As noted, the future of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre is a subject that has been under consideration by the City Council for a number of years. It is clear through work on the Strategy that the Council is now in a position, and prepared, to make a strategic decision on this matter.

It is important for any longer term strategy to take account of the current profile and use of facilities and the evidenced unmet demand, in order to inform any new pool developments, refurbishments or rationalisation. The following factors need to be considered when determining the need for new swimming pools across the city:

- ▶ The need and strategic commitment to increasing participation in aquatic sports.
- ▶ The quality of the existing infrastructure.
- ▶ City Council aspirations for a facility that is significant to the Midlands region.
- ▶ The cost of potential new developments.
- ▶ Opportunities to drive efficiency savings to support a stronger city wide investment model in sport
- ▶ Existing use of key sites (this is with specific reference to the swimming club use of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre) and the ability to accommodate this within any current or new development(s).
- ▶ Wider Sports Strategy objectives to deliver performance pathways in aquatic sports.
- ▶ The spread of facilities across key communities and the ability of those facilities to be programmed for health-related initiatives.

The majority of these issues have been dealt with in the Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment Report which underpins the wider Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy. However, as options have been considered and refined, one of the key factors that needs to be taken into account is the degree to which the City of Coventry Swimming Club time can be spread across a range of other pools.

The club currently has 15 coaching groups that have access to 46 hours of pool time per week (the majority of which is at Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre). These coaching groups range from those working with new club swimmers who train for three hours per week, through to performance swimmers who require up to 20 hours of pool time per week. Therefore, a considerable amount of pool time needs to be found across the city in order to accommodate the coaching and performance profile of the City of Coventry Swimming Club.

The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has identified a desire to retain a 50m competition swimming pool in the West Midlands and the club would be keen for this to be retained in Coventry. However, both the ASA and City of Coventry Swimming Club are cognisant of the financial challenges faced by the City Council as the owners of the facility and by Coventry Sports Trust as the operators of the current facility.

One of the key elements that makes a swimming pool facility suitable as a competition venue is the provision of adequate seating, which itself is a costly addition to any such swimming pool development and one that provides limited return on investment. To some degree, this is why many of the recent 50m swimming pools that have been or are being developed (including the planned 50m swimming pool at the University of Birmingham) exclude the specified spectator capacity of circa 1,000 seats that is required for the hosting of national competitions.

Given the financial challenges faced by Coventry City Council and the options appraisal undertaken concerning city centre sports and public leisure provision, it is considered that there is limited justification for the City Council to replace the 50m swimming pool, with or without the provision of seating capacity in order to host swimming competitions.

### ***Indoor facilities strategy***

The detailed analysis and approach to providing a range of modern, accessible and high quality aquatics facilities in the city is outlined in the Indoor Facilities Strategy. The strategy covers key aspects such as:

***Regionally significant facility:*** the City Council has an aspiration to develop a city centre facility of significance to the Midlands. It is not proposed for this to include a replacement 50m pool, but rather be a major leisure attraction with an associated 25m swimming pool and health and fitness facilities. The proposed facility will also link into a wider strategy to redevelop part of the city centre, providing improved connectivity between the railway station and the city centre.

***Regional competition pool:*** Coventry has developed a track record of hosting regional swimming events and the club infrastructure and the city's profile in swimming currently continue to make it a significant location for the sport moving forwards. Therefore, it is recommended that, where evidenced by demand, any further pool development proposals within the city should pay due consideration to whether the facility specification should be for an eight lane 25m competition pool (as a minimum) with seating for circa 250 spectators and room for 250 competitors.

***Community swimming pools:*** Coventry City Council has already taken the decision to close Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre and to re-provide aquatic facilities nearby at Centre AT7. In addition to this, there is the potential that, as a result of the national Priority School Capital Programme, the two existing swimming pools currently located at President Kennedy School and Community College and Ernesford Grange School and Community College could close, as the scheme does not include the provision of funding to replace or refurbish swimming pools. Furthermore, demand modelling suggests that there is need for additional water space in the east of the city, not only to accommodate community swimming but also to allow additional programming for the City of Coventry Swimming Club. However, any future swimming pool development in the east of the city will need to be financially viable and justified by evidenced demand.

**Gap analysis:** In addition to the indicated demand in the east of the city (referenced above), Sport England Facilities Planning Modelling identifies a potential gap in swimming pool provision in the north west of the city. Although the north west has limited population density at present, indications are that there could be future housing growth in this part of the city over the next ten years. This additional growth would create further demand for water space in this area of the city. As a result of any such future housing growth in the north west of the city, there is the potential that a new primary and/or secondary school would be required. There may, therefore, be an opportunity to refurbish or develop a new swimming pool as part of any such proposed development. However, in such a situation where housing growth produces the necessary critical mass and associated demand in this area of the city for new aquatic provision, the City Council would need to make further decisions between the relative merits and successes of a 'school owned swimming pool' with limited community access and a community swimming pool located on a school site that provides programmed access to the school.

*To deliver Vision Aim 5 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ The development of a new city centre leisure pool of significance to the Midlands, coupled with a 25m swimming pool to complement a major city centre health and fitness offer.
- ◀ The operation of the proposed city centre leisure pool and associated facilities in such a way that they generate efficiencies and deliver a surplus to cross subsidise community swimming pools and wider sports provision.
- ◀ The coordinated and efficient programming of facilities across the city to ensure assets are utilised to their full potential and are supporting a citywide model of efficiency within aquatic provision.
- ◀ The subsequent development of new community swimming pool provision (where justified by evidenced demand) in the south east and / or north west of the city, with one of the developments potentially comprising a regional competition pool with appropriate spectator and ancillary facilities.
- ◀ Developing new pools only when it is clearly demonstrated that the operation of the existing infrastructure is reaching capacity and the potential market exists to accommodate additional swimming and/or wider aquatic sports and activities.
- ◀ Working with the ASA and Sport England to identify appropriate funding opportunities for investment into the city's aquatic infrastructure.

## **VISION AIM 6: EVENTS**

### ***To attract high profile sporting events to the city and to celebrate sporting achievement***

The ability to attract and deliver high profile aquatics events to the city will be determined by the infrastructure available. As highlighted previously, Coventry's historical track record in hosting regional and national swimming championships is founded on having the only 50m competition pool in the West Midlands. Therefore, by default, it has been the 'preferred' location for some events. However, it is also worth noting that some of the events previously held at the pool have in recent years moved to Corby, as a result of Corby now offering a better quality competition environment.

Aquatics will therefore potentially need to work hard across partnerships in the city to ensure the sport can continue to host and attract events. However, Coventry's established track record should stand it in good stead in this regard. This is not only in relation to securing a competition facility infrastructure where demand supports this, but it also reflects the other key components that drive events - the availability and proximity of officials, for example. The city will, thus, benefit from continuing to ensure that it has the wider capacity available within the City of Coventry Swimming Club to contribute to deliver these events locally, throughout the period of transition in facility provisions ahead.

*To deliver Vision Aim 6 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ Ensure the key aquatics partners continue to develop relationships with regional event organisers in order to attract aquatics events to the city.
- ◀ Ensure that the City of Coventry Swimming Club continues to hold sufficient numbers of officials and volunteers to enable high quality events delivery.
- ◀ To ensure that aquatics contributes to and supports the development of events that celebrate local sporting achievement.



## **VISION AIM 7: PARTNERSHIPS**

### ***To grow and promote sport in the city through effective partnerships***

The development and delivery of an Aquatics Implementation Plan will require partnership working from a range of stakeholders including (but not limited to):

- ◀ Coventry City Council
- ◀ City of Coventry Swimming Club
- ◀ The Amateur Swimming Association
- ◀ Coventry Sports Foundation
- ◀ Coventry Sports Trust
- ◀ Coventry University
- ◀ University of Warwick
- ◀ CSW Sport
- ◀ Public Health
- ◀ ASA West Midlands Regional Board.

To maximise efficiencies and deliver a coherent Plan for delivering aquatic and overarching Sports Strategy outcomes for the city, each partner will need to commit to delivering the key aspects of programmes, activities or initiatives that fall within their scope and sphere of influence.

Where appropriate, individual partners must commit to joining the Coventry Sports Network and deliver the key outcomes of this Strategy. Furthermore, the development of the Coventry Institute of Sport will be critical to the development of performance swimmers, water polo players and triathletes, etc. The City of Coventry Swimming Club is well placed to be instrumental in shaping this, given its experiences gained as an ASA Beacon Club.

At the lower end of the performance pathway, the club and leisure operators will need to continue to work closely on the development of a high quality Learn to Swim scheme for all ages and abilities and the development of transition programmes from the scheme into the club environment. This is critical to maintaining the broad base of swimmers to feed the range of aquatics disciplines offered across the city.

*To deliver Vision Aim 7 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ The City of Coventry Swimming Club being positioned as an integral partner in the Coventry Sports Network.
- ◀ The Club and facility operators working closely to drive implementation of the Strategy and develop a Sports Implementation Plan to support on-going aquatic development in the city.
- ◀ The Club and operators sharing expertise in a bid to grow the number of swimmers entering the lower end of the Aquatics pathway in order to strengthen the performance peak.

## **VISION AIM 8: MAKING COVENTRY A BETTER PLACE**

### ***For sport to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit***

Aquatics is an integral component in the delivery of activity programmes for people with a limiting long term illness and those that are overweight. The ASA has helped to promote swimming as an intervention with national health partners in response to the Department of Health's 'Let's Get Moving' programme, which is a patient-centred recommendation initiative to get people more active.

However, the wider aquatics programmes and disciplines also contribute to broader education, employment and regeneration objectives within the Sports Strategy that are designed to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit. Swimming is a life skill and one which enables people to access facilities and services that bring fun, enjoyment and health benefits.

It is important for operators of public swimming pools to ensure that the appropriate concessionary pricing schemes are in place to safeguard access to facilities for economically challenged communities and for those target groups identified as a priority. Through the effective use of access cards and ICT infrastructure, operators will be able to measure the number and frequency of users from deprived communities and to establish localised targets for improving participation from within these communities. Effective programming will also contribute to ensuring that pools are available for priority groups that do not currently participate in sport and physical activity as often as recommended (or do in other similar areas).

The profile of a city can be raised by the value that residents and visitors place on having specialist, unique or significant facilities available within them. This is also the case for events, as is demonstrated by the London 2012 Games and Glasgow 2014. These events not only contribute to a sense of pride in the city, but also the wider benefits of attracting visitors and the economic benefits this can deliver.

It is a mix of factors that will evolve over the lifetime of the Strategy and enable aquatics to deliver this wider objective in contributing to ensuring that Coventry is recognised as a good place to live, work and visit.

*To deliver Vision Aim 8 of Coventry's Sports Strategy, aquatics will contribute by delivering the following strategic objectives:*

- ◀ Participation in aquatics will make a positive contribution to improving public health inequalities by increasing participation within the most deprived wards.
- ◀ Aquatics programmes will be used to promote and encourage social inclusion and community cohesion within the city.
- ◀ Aquatics disciplines will be delivered to meet the wider cultural needs of specific communities at key times through effective pool programming.
- ◀ The continued delivery of aquatics events will contribute to the city's wider sporting and cultural offer.
- ◀ The development of a city centre, regionally significant aquatics facility will contribute to increased visitor numbers and deliver economic benefit to the city.

## APPENDIX 1 – CITY OF COVENTRY SWIMMING CLUB - POOL USE (JANUARY 2014)

### Coventry Sport and Leisure Centre

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Mon	50m	8 (6 from 7am)	2	5-7.15am	11-24 years	Performance	40
Mon	50m	4	1	4-6pm	14-24 years	Performance	15
Mon	50m	4	1	6-8pm	11-16 years	Performance	25
Mon	50m	5	2	8-9.30pm	12-24 years	Club-Regional	50
Tue	50m	8 (6 from 7am)	2	5-7.15am	15-75 years	Performance + Masters	30
Tue	28m	5	1	4.30-6.30pm	11-16 years	Performance	30
Tue	50m	5	2	6.45-8.30pm	12-24 years	Club-Regional	45
Tue	50m	4	2	8.30-9.45pm	20-75 years	Club + Masters	35
Wed	50m	8 (6 from 7am)	2	5-7am	10-16 years	Regional-Performance	30
Wed	50m	4	2	4-6.15pm	14-24 years	Regional-Performance	40
Wed	50m	4	2	6.15-8.15pm	11-16 years	Performance	26
Wed	Diving Pit	n/a	1	5.30-7pm	7-11 years	Pathways Group (Trust Link)	10
Wed	50m + Pit	8	4	8.30-10pm	9+ years	All Water Polo Groups = Club-Performance	40
Thu	50m	8 (6 from 7am)	3	5.15-7.15am	14-24 years	Club/Regional/Performance	40
Thu	28m	4	1	4-6pm	14-24 years	Performance	15
Thu	28m	4	1	6-7.30pm	11-16 years	Performance	25
Thu	28m	6	2	7.30-9pm	12-24 years	Club-Regional	60
Thu	28m	6	2	9-10pm	14-75 years	Club/Regional/Masters	40
Fri	50m	1	8	5.15-7am	20-75 years	Masters	25
Fri	28m	Whole Pool	12 + lessons/polo etc	4-8.15pm	4-24 years	Club Night - every level	400
Sat	50m	8 (6 from 7.30am)	2	6-8am	14-24 years	Performance (Beacon - West Mids Group)	35
Sat	50m	4	1	8-10am	11-16 years	Performance	25
Sun	50m	8	4	3-4.30pm	7-12 years	Club	80
Sun	50m	8	4	4.30-6pm	8-13 years	Club-Regional	70
Sun	50m	8	3	6-7.30pm	13-24 years	Club-Regional	70
Sun	Diving Pit	n/a	2	3-6pm	7-13 years	Pathways Group (Trust Link)	20
Sun	Diving Pit	n/a	1	6-7.30pm	9-14 years	Youth Water Polo	15
Sun	50m + Pit	8	4	7.30-9.30pm	9+ years	All Water Polo Groups = Club-Performance	40

### Caludon Castle

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Mon	25m	3	1	6.45-8pm	7-10 years	Club	20
Mon	25m	3	1	6.45-8.15pm	9-13 years	Club-Regional	25
Mon	25m	3	1	8-9pm	11-14 years	Club	20
Tue	25m	6	2	6.45-8.30pm	9-13 years	Club-Regional	30
Wed	25m	6	3	6.45-8.30pm	9-14 years	Club-Regional	45
Thu	25m	6	2	6.45-8.30pm	9-14 years	Club-Regional	35

### Bablake School

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Wed	25m	4	1	6-7pm	7-10 years	Club	20
Wed	25m	4	1	7-8pm	11-15 years	Club	15

### Foxford Leisure Centre

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Mon	18m	3	1	6.30-7.30pm	8-12 years	Club	15
Thu	18m	3	1	6.45-7.45pm	8-12 years	Club	15

### Lyng Hall School

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Mon	18m	3	1	6-7pm	8-12 years	Club	15
Mon	18m	3	1	7-8.30pm	11-13 years	Club	15
Tue	18m	3	1	6-7.30pm	11-13 years	Club	15
Tue	18m	3	1	7.30pm-9pm	11-14 years	Club	20
Wed	18m	3	1	6-7pm	8-12 years	Club	15
Wed	18m	3	1	7-8pm	18+ years	Adult Improvers	10
Thu	18m	3	1	6-7.30pm	9-12 years	Club-Regional	20
Thu	18m	3	1	7.30-8.30pm	11-15 years	Club	15
Fri	18m	3	1	5.30-6.30pm	18+ years	Adult Learn to Swim	10
Sat	18m	3	Lessons	9am-2pm	4+ years	Learn to Swim	130
Sun	18m	3	Lessons	10am-12pm	4+ years	Learn to Swim	40

### President Kennedy School

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Thu	20m	4	1	3.30-4.30pm	8+ years	After School Swimming Club	15
Thu	20m	4	1	6-7pm	8+ years	After School Water Polo Club	15

### Tile Hill Wood School

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Mon	18m	3	1	7.00-8.00pm	8-12 years	Club	15
Wed	18m	3	1	7.15-8.15pm	8-12 years	Club	15

### University of Warwick

Day	Size of Pool	No. of Lanes	No. of Squads	Session Time	Age of Swimmers	Standard of Swimmers	Numbers
Tue	25m	3	1	5.15-7.15pm	14-24 years	Performance	15
Wed	25m	3	1	6-7.15pm	9-13 years	Club-Regional	20
Wed	25m	3	1	7.15-8.30pm	20-75 years	Masters	20
Fri	25m	3	1	7-8.30pm	20-75 years	Masters	15