

## Key Partners Event – May 2008

London Swimming gathered a number of its key partners together to assess progress against the objectives set out in 'A strategy to Get London Swimming 2008-2012+'.

The session was chaired by Mary Connelly (Regional Director for Learning Skills Council) and attended by a range of organisations including the London Development Agency, Sport England, Skills Active, Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, Aquaterra, GLL, Pro-Active West, Parkwood and Club representatives.

Although the strategy had been launched in February 2008 certain objectives had already been actioned by London Swimming over the previous nine months.

The key partners did not focus on the overarching objectives:

1. More people in more pools
2. Clear performance pathways that deliver internationally
3. A real / realistic legacy for 2012+

Instead the focus was on the remaining objectives and how these were then grouped to deliver the above.

**1.0 'A Youth Council that empowers young people and delivers change'** was seen as a useful barometer for how swimming develops and motivates its workforce and participants into the future. Listening to our customers and acting on and for them were seen as important attitudes that the swimming world needs to take on.

We really need every career adviser in London to be able to sell teaching swimming as an option".

"Its really simple – you can earn three times the minimum wage as a swimming teacher. So if you can do one hour teaching swimming it gives you two hours back for study".

"We need to scale up our capacity to deliver large events. When the Aquatics Centre is up and running then London will need to put on full scale internationals. At present we are running galas in leisure centres but we have to think about running something akin to Wembley. It is a question of scale".

"We need the clubs to pick up the baton. They need to invest in the future. They need to start asking young people what they want and really listening to the answers".

**2.0 'Build a teaching and coaching workforce that is current in its practice and reflects the diversity of London'** this was regarded as the objective which underpinned the entire strategy.

"You now have a new suite of qualifications, you need to build capacity across London to ensure these are accessible and you have to iron out the operational issues around booking".

"Ensuring that the teaching and coaching workforce is as diverse as London is not just the right thing to do it's the smart thing to do. London is already a diverse city becoming even more so. We know that in the non-technical roles in a leisure centre that we are in-line the demographic of each Borough but with swimming teachers we are a long way behind".

"The National Skills Academy has a big role to play in terms of making this happen. You also need brokers or recruitment agents who can get into those communities and generate the clients".

"We have moved our staff onto three scales to reflect their currency and effectiveness. This change will make a big difference in terms of attitude to training in our business".

"People assume that to be a good swimming teacher you have to be a great swimmer. This needs careful marketing to people to ensure we cast the net wider than at present".

**3.0 Widespread public recognition of the 'Decent Pools Standard'** At present this is a conceptual standard.

"The public understand 'blue flag on beaches'. We need a publicly understandable standard that can be used to focus customer views".

"Lets not confuse concern over local provision with local service. The two issues are linked but not mutually accessible".

"You need to prove that this works in pilot areas. This will prepare the ground for a public debate".

**4.0 Widespread public recognition of 'Safe Routes to Pools' campaign.** At present this pulls together the need for swimming to be greener and to sustain participation by increasing the number of individuals able to access facilities under their own steam.

"By mapping all the swimming facilities across London you have positioned yourself well on the way to being able to recommend integrated travel and leisure services".

"The next step is to move on your relationship with Transport for London and to get some delivery evidence around this approach".

## **5.0 Develop the 'one stop shop' website for parents wanting to know how to support their child in their chosen sport**

"Creating a portal that will direct and support parents to local services has huge potential".

"This offers an opportunity to communicate a talent pathway directly to parents and start their own journey".

## **6.0 A large multi use pool per 1.2 million of the London population to be built between now and 2012.**

"You need to be wary about flagship pools. These can damage local provision as it did in Sheffield. We also need to be wary about car parking space as current restrictions make them unworkable for competitions. Aren't we better off using the 566 pools we have better than building 5 new big ones".

"There is the need for flagship pools to enhance the existing stock. It is a question of putting in place the proper strategic planning and demand assessment. It is a question of putting the right pools in the right places for the right people".

## **7.0 Lobbying for the temporary pools used at the Olympics to stay in London.**

"We need to look at the seven available 50 metre tanks with non-traditional eyes. These could be used to open up heated outdoor provision. These could be used to increase water in key strategic locations such as Kingston and north Brent".

## **8.0 A minimum of 5 Beacon Programmes in London (one per sub-region) by 2012.**

"It is important that talent pathways can be summed across Boroughs and facilities and sport science can be levied at the elite".

"It's important that a Beacon programme can offer athletes a real opportunity. A level of service that is simply not possible in their club environment".

## **9.0 Each sub-regional to conduct an annual survey on participation rates and attitudes to swimming in children**

"At present the North Partnership leads this way with accurate and robust data. As the remit for the Pro-Actives becomes clearer then this research must be allocated and delivered".

"This is market critical data. Young people are huge users of our service and to have little or no information on their participation rates and preferences is steering blind".

## **10.0 A pool strategy at sub-regional level**

“Having completed the census of existing pools London Swimming needs to articulate an aspiration for pools that can lead the sub-regional agenda”.

“Sub-regional should mean the ability to map across existing boundaries. Otherwise neighbouring Boroughs can’t be compared simply because they sit in different Pro-Active partnerships”.

“There is always going to be a tension between local and sub-regional. London Swimming needs to be the repository of the information an intelligence gatherer that can be used at a sub-regional level”.

“This will need high level engagement with planning. The GLA / Sport England need to play a part but they can only work if they have a picture to work to”.

“We can case study the work being done by the 5 Host Boroughs as an example of sub-regional planning both in facility and delivery terms”.

## **11.0 Undertaking an annual state of swimming analysis in the 5 Olympic Boroughs**

“This provides a clear baseline for the sports development plans for the Aquatics Centre. A crucial and timely piece of work. Well done”.

## **12.0 Each Borough to have a swimming strategy and a pool strategy**

“Whether these match the aspirations of population predictions of 2026 and 2031 is less of an issue. Having a plan and a sense of direction is critical. We have seen Southwark set its direction and once you have the funding in place others will follow”.

## **13.0 Turning the good practice from EDS into common practice in other Boroughs**

“London Swimming has a duty to spread good practice and embed what is happening in the EDS pilots into Borough swimming strategies across the capital”.

“Your current work with Barking & Dagenham and the industrial change that you are undertaking will increase the impact of EDS by taking it to a third site on an even bigger scale”.

## **14.0 Ensure clubs delivering a quality programme recognised through Swim 21 receive enhanced levels of support**

“Swim 21 has been restructured to improve its relevance and ensure it’s about delivering quality programmes. Clubs now need to step up to the mark and work to its standard”.

“Operators and Councils are now using Swim 21. We have moved the debate on in some Boroughs from what pool time is available to how what you are delivering benefits this community”.

“Clubs need to share resources and deliver clear pathways in their area”.

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**15.0 Pool operators to review their pool programmes to focus on customer service, retention and aspiration.**

“This goes hand in glove with 13.0. It's not about developing lots of products. It about changing the culture of our service and letting people know that what they experience in our pools will be different”.

**16.0 Pool operators producing an annual environmental report**

“This has to happen. The change in public perception. Planning regulations and council targets as well as the ultimate business agenda. We simply can't afford to waste water and electricity”.

**17.0 Work with pool manufacturers and investors to see if temporary swimming pools can be used to change the capitals pool landscape.**

“London Swimming has helped to bring to market a revolutionary concept. You have done your part. You now need to stand back and let market forces take over”.

**Summary:**

London Swimming has worked with partners to articulate an ambitious and challenging strategy for Swimming in London.

You now need to prioritise your resources. You can't take every area forward at once. Focus on delivering some initial wins so that we gain momentum to ensure internal and external stakeholder engagement.