



Scottish  
Swimming

# Strategic Vision for Aquatics Facilities from 2025

Developed by Scottish Swimming  
in partnership with **sportscotland**  
and OLM



**sportscotland**

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Physical Activity for Health: Framework and Aquatic Facilities .....	5
Definitions of Swimming Facilities .....	6
Scottish Swimming Facility Priorities 2017–2021 Review .....	7
Strategic Vision for Aquatics Facilities .....	8
Strategic Priorities .....	9
Strategic Priorities Rationale .....	10
Facility Analysis .....	11
Facility Design .....	12
Inclusive Access .....	13
Sustainable Facilities .....	14
Operational Guiding Principles .....	15
Conclusion .....	17
Appendix 1 – Pool Diagrams .....	18
Appendix 2 – Public Swimming Pool Provision in Scotland .....	19
Appendix 3 – Aquatic Sports Facility Requirements .....	20



# Executive Summary

---

**This document presents Scottish Swimming’s strategic vision for facilities from 2025, updating the 2017 Facilities Strategy. It addresses the challenges posed by ageing swimming facilities and financial pressures, providing a clear direction for the growth and protection of aquatics in Scotland.**

The document also builds on the 2023 [‘Future of Swimming Facilities’](#) report, by assessing current facility stock and identifying areas which need support and investment.

Our strategic vision statement for facilities is:

**The right pools in the right places to ensure everyone can swim**

This document outlines the strategic priorities needed to achieve this vision and to ensure we have sufficient aquatic facilities in Scotland, not only for the future development of aquatic sports, but for the safety, health and fitness of the population.

We also outline priorities for local, regional, and national facilities, ensuring they meet the diverse needs of our aquatic sports from grassroots and recreational swimming to performance training, while promoting sustainability.

This document is accompanied by [‘The Benefits of Swimming Pools’](#) which was published in December 2024 and sets out why we need pools. Both of these documents aim to improve water access, support the growth of all aquatic sports, and enhance public health and safety.



# Introduction

**Swimming facilities are the cornerstone of the success and growth of aquatics in Scotland. They provide essential spaces for everyone to learn to swim, deliver critical health and wellbeing outcomes, and develop future world class athletes across a variety of aquatic sports. The importance of these facilities extends far beyond the pool itself. They serve as vital community hubs that foster social cohesion, promote physical and mental health, and support a lifelong enjoyment of swimming.**

This strategic vision for aquatic facilities aligns with the Scottish Swimming corporate plan and our vision that everyone can swim. Our corporate plan has four key areas of focus: More Swimmers, Stronger Clubs, Supporting Athletes and Active Communities – none of which are possible without facilities, the aquatic spaces and places which enable these outcomes to happen.

The document outlines the strategic priorities and requirements for future facilities at a local, regional, and national level<sup>1</sup>. It details the key features these facilities must include to meet the diverse needs of aquatic sports, ensuring that Scotland's swimming infrastructure can support everything from recreational swimming to performance training, and provide an energy-efficient, viable stock of swimming facilities that are economic and environmentally sustainable.

By addressing these critical areas, this strategic vision for facilities aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has access to the water space they need, fostering the continued growth and success of aquatics in the country and increasing the water safety and health of the population in general.

<sup>1</sup>Definition cards for local, regional and national pools can be found in Appendix 1



# Physical Activity for Health: Framework and Aquatic Facilities

The Physical activity for health framework was published by the Scottish Government in October 2024 and provides a framework for action to improve levels of physical activity at both a national and local level.

The framework provides context for those developing plans to ensure they consider the importance of improving levels of activity, as well as providing an approach by which public bodies can ensure that the actions which they take to improve levels of physical activity are efficient, sustainable and supportive of continuous improvement.

Aquatic facilities contribute to the following outcomes of the framework:

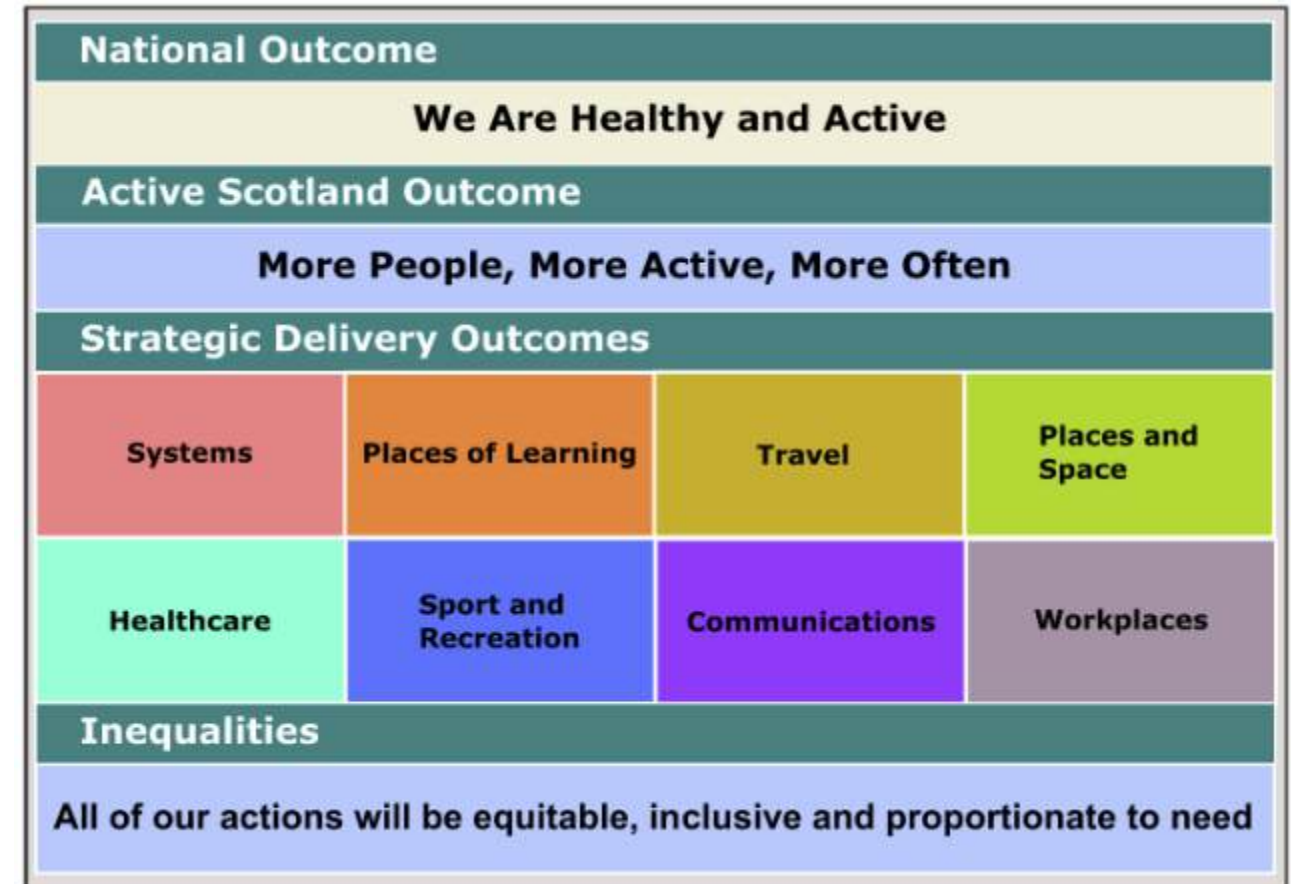
**Active Places of Learning** by providing environments where structured and unstructured physical activity can be promoted to learning communities through active environments and opportunities such as community learn to swim, school swimming and water wellbeing which promote positive mental and physical health.

**Active Places and Spaces** by providing communities with good quality places for people enabling communities to access environments which promote physical activity and make this physical activity inclusive and sustainable.

**Active Healthcare** by embedding physical activity opportunities within communities, enabling NHS Scotland, health practitioners and physical activity providers to work together to provide appropriate opportunities and programmes for different patient populations.

**Active Sport and Recreation** by providing people of all ages with a range of programmes and opportunities to be physically active and get involved in.

We would encourage anyone considering the development of a facility to read the full framework, available [here](#).



# Definitions of Swimming Facilities

It is helpful at this stage to summarise what we mean by local, regional and national facilities. It is difficult to categorise pools accurately as pools may have geographical significance particularly in sparsely populated areas, or they may be classed as regional for one sport but national for another. A more in-depth definition of facility design is set out later in this document with specific requirements in Appendix 1.

## Local Pools

Local pools are the most common type of pools found in Scotland accounting for 96% of pool stock. They are therefore critical as a network of accessible water spaces. They range in size but ideally, are 25m by 12m (6 lanes) with a moveable floor to support all aspects of aquatic development from learning to swim, to disability swimming, to community access for individuals and families, schools, clubs and local competitions.

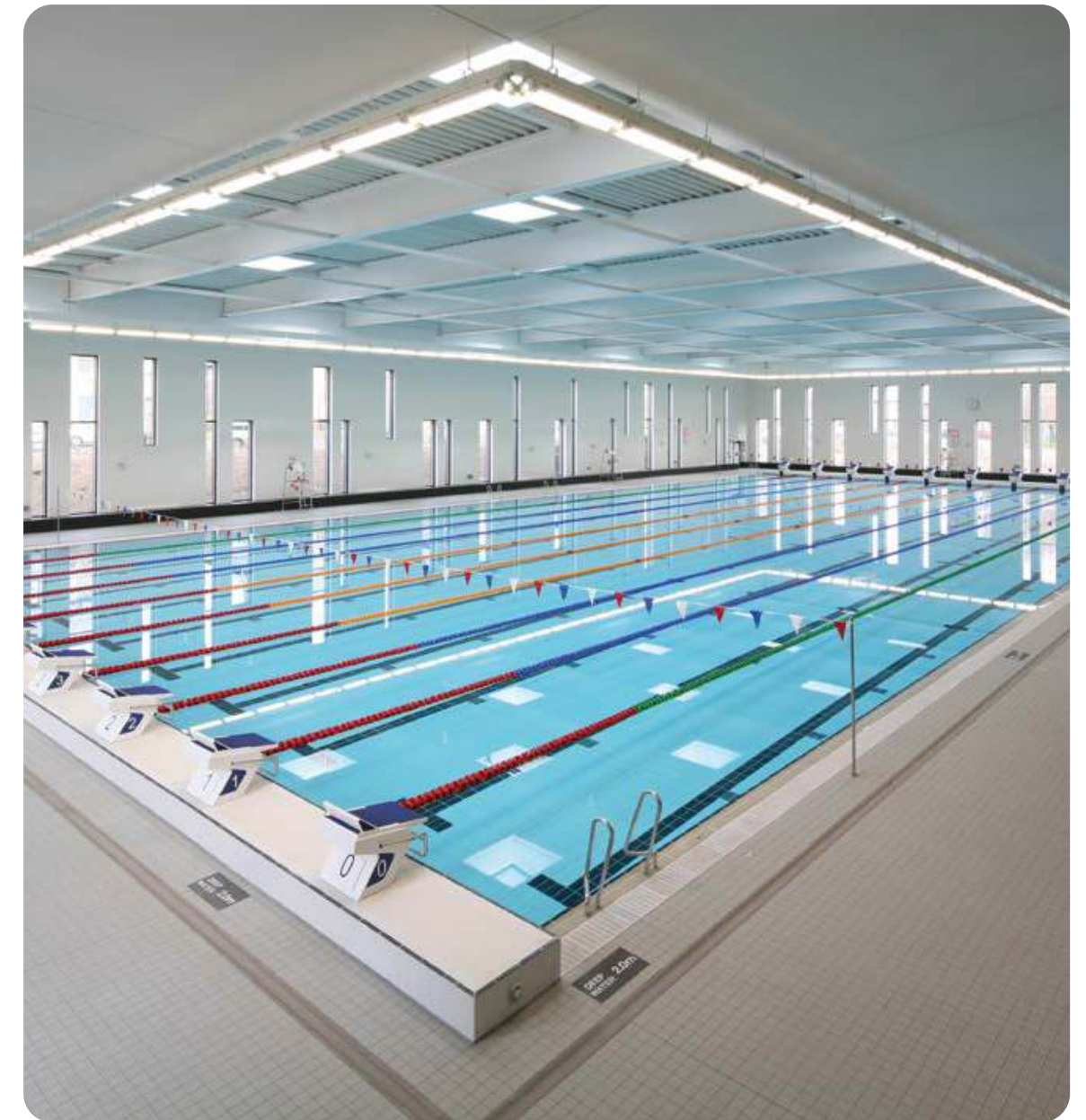
## Regional Pools

Regional pools build upon the usage and access of local facilities to provide competition and training facilities for athletes in clubs as well as access for multi-user groups. They account for 3% of available pool provision in Scotland and include a 25m by 20m (8 lanes) pool with raised start and finish ends and electronic timing to cater for swimming competitions, with depths to accommodate different aquatic sports and sufficient space for spectating, officials and athletes for competitions. These facilities should include a separate warm-up pool which can be used as a teaching pool when not utilised for competitions. This gives greater versatility to these pools and enables more water users.

## National Pools

National pools, accounting for 1% of pool stock in Scotland, are essential for hosting national and international competitions and to develop world class athletes within Scotland. Ideally national pools are 50m by 25m (10 lanes) with a separate diving pool, building on the requirements of regional pools by offering substantial spectator seating and ancillary facilities required by performance athletes.

Community lies at the heart of every pool. A national facility is unique in its ability to simultaneously serve as a national, regional and local resource for its users. This diversity is also reflected in regional facilities whose design, programming and operation must also prioritise and support the local communities they serve. Regardless of size and classification as local, regional or national, all swimming pools offer huge benefits to communities for safety, health and fun.



# Scottish Swimming Facility Priorities 2017–2021 Review

The facilities strategy 2017 set out the strategic priorities for 2017 to 2021. There was a strong emphasis on delivering regional facilities as well as national standard diving facilities for the development of the sports. While there has been some progress, notably in the development of two regional pools, generally progress has been limited as a direct result of the pandemic 2020-2021 and the unfavourable economic climate over the last six years. Pressures have been considerable on the sector simply to keep existing pools open and operable. A summary of the previous strategic priorities and progress against these is provided in Table 1 below.

In response to the previous strategy, more research and consultation has been carried out into deep water provision and the needs of artistic swimming, diving and water polo. Furthermore, in 2023 Scottish Swimming commissioned research to assess the future of swimming pool provision in Scotland, publishing the report [‘The Future of Swimming Facilities in Scotland.’](#)

This report uncovered alarming figures around the age of pool stock across Scotland and there is now a more urgent need to renovate existing facilities and build new pools simply to maintain current levels of pool provision. A second report also published in 2023, [‘A Sustainable Future: Enhancing Energy Efficiency in Scotland’s Swimming Pools’](#), detailed strategies for pool providers to improve energy efficiencies and subsequent cost savings in existing pools to make them more sustainable.

Scottish Swimming would like to thank and acknowledge the Scottish Swimming community, local partners and **sportscotland** for their support in developing this strategic vision and the research and reports commissioned in 2023 as well as their commitment to invest and maintain the current stock and development of future facilities in Scotland. This has been invaluable in supporting pool owners and operators and in helping to shape our strategic vision.

**Table 1: National and Regional Facility Priorities 2017 to 2021**

Facility Type	sportscotland Region	Location	Progress
National Standard Diving Facility	West	Glasgow	Not progressed
National Standard Diving Facility – Dry Dive provision	Grampian	Aberdeen Sports Village	Not progressed
Regional Standard Swimming & Diving Facility	West	East Dunbartonshire	Partially delivered <sup>2</sup>
Regional Standard Swimming Facility	Grampian	North East	Delivered <sup>3</sup>
Regional Standard Swimming Facility	Tayside	Perth	Limited/Some progress <sup>4</sup>
Regional Standard Swimming Facility	East	Edinburgh / East	Not progressed
Regional Standard Swimming Facility	Central	North Lanarkshire	Not progressed

<sup>2</sup> 25m x 8 lane regional swimming facility built (Allander Leisure Centre opened 2024) – no regional diving facility has been delivered within the West.

<sup>3</sup> 2 x 25m 6 lane facilities built– not to regional specifications but meets the requirements for training and competitions in the area (Banchory Sports Village opened 2019 and Inverurie Sports Complex opened 2020).

<sup>4</sup> New Perth pool in discussion.

# Strategic Vision for Aquatics Facilities

Our strategic vision for aquatics facilities in Scotland is **the right pools in the right places to ensure everyone can swim**. In order to achieve this, our vision requires:

<b>1. National Venues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain three national aquatic venues located in key population centres: Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen</li></ul>
<b>2. Regional Venues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop and refurbish a network of strategically located regional facilities to support training and competition needs for aquatic sports</li><li>• Ensure specialised deep water provision is accessible at a regional level (e.g. 2m depth for water polo, 4m for diving, 3m for artistic swimming)</li></ul>
<b>3. Local Venues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build, develop and maintain a network of accessible local facilities for health, safety and enjoyment</li><li>• Include spaces for club training and local competitions</li></ul>
<b>4. Sustainable Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment to ongoing investment is secured for the maintenance and modernisation of existing pools</li></ul>
<b>5. School Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate community access into the design and management of new school pools, ensuring clubs and community groups benefit</li></ul>
<b>6. Collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work collaboratively with stakeholders to optimise facility access and usage</li></ul>
<b>7. Lifecycle and Future Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage Local Authorities to establish lifecycle plans for aquatic facilities to mitigate risks to future provision</li><li>• Strategically design and locate new pools to meet both community and sporting demands</li><li>• Urge stakeholders to engage with Scottish Swimming to ensure informed decision making</li></ul>



# Strategic Priorities

We have identified key priority areas by assessing the current distribution of pool facilities. It's crucial to emphasise the importance of safeguarding existing facilities. The aforementioned Future of Facilities report highlighted the advanced age of many pools, stressing the need for timely refurbishment or replacement to ensure their continued use. Local insights into facility needs should be gathered on a region-by-region basis, considering cross-border opportunities where necessary, and this document alongside our interactive map and a conversation with the Scottish Swimming team can help you identify the right priorities.

This document identifies several key priorities where focus is needed to sustain community access to water space and ensure the maintenance and growth of all aquatic sports across Scotland.

These priorities are broken down below and opposite.

## Overall Aquatic Needs

Objective: A network of pools, including deep water coverage, which are accessible and programmed to support the growth and development of artistic swimming, diving, open water, swimming and water polo.

Our aims are to:

1. Maintain 70% of the population within a 45 minute drive of a **national** swimming facility
2. Increase to 75% of the population being within a 30 minute drive of a **regional** swimming facility
3. Ensure everyone has access to a **local** swimming facility for health, fitness and fun

## Strategic Priorities for Aquatic Facilities

Our strategic priorities are detailed in tables 2 and 3 and are based on ageing stocks of pools, previous facility strategy priorities not met, and population density and capacity challenges. The rationale for these priorities is explored further on page 10.

Table 2: Strategic Priorities for Aquatic Facilities

Category	Objective/Priorities	Preferred Location
Swimming Priorities	Development of 4 regional pools to support training and competitions.	<b>Central and West Region</b> (e.g. Falkirk, East Renfrewshire, North Lanarkshire) <b>East Region</b> (e.g. Livingston, Edinburgh, West Fife) <b>Scottish Borders</b> (for regional competitions)
	Establish a national-level deep water pool to support diving and artistic swimming competitions.	<b>Glasgow or Greater Glasgow area</b>
Aquatic Sports Priorities	Provide regional and national access to 2m constant-depth pools for competition and training specifically for water polo.	<b>Nationwide</b>
	Develop a deep water pool to enable artistic swimming and water polo competitions.	<b>Central or East Scotland</b>
	Ensure safe and inclusive ancillary facilities (parking, changing) for structured open water competitions.	<b>Scotland's natural open waters</b>
	Develop dry diving facilities at all national and regional diving venues.	<b>Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Ayr, Dundee</b>

Table 3: Pipeline Pools

Pipeline Pools	Support the development of new and replacement pools with a focus on environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, and renewable resource use. These facilities will also enhance grassroots and pathway development for aquatic sports.	<b>Alloa, Clackmannanshire</b> <b>Beeslack Community High School, Midlothian</b> <b>Blairstown, Perth and Kinross</b> <b>Currie High School, Edinburgh</b> <b>Galashiels, Scottish Borders</b> <b>Giffnock, East Renfrewshire</b> <b>Larkhall, South Lanarkshire</b> <b>Perth, Perth and Kinross</b> <b>West Fife</b>
	Collaboration with local authorities to maximise opportunities for sports development.	

# Strategic Priorities Rationale

The map opposite shows the aforementioned strategic priority areas. The reasons for these priority areas are as follows:

Area	Reason
A. Glasgow	No national standard deep water facility
B. Central/West	Ageing stock and high demand
C. East	Population demand and current capacity issues
D. Borders	High % of ageing stock

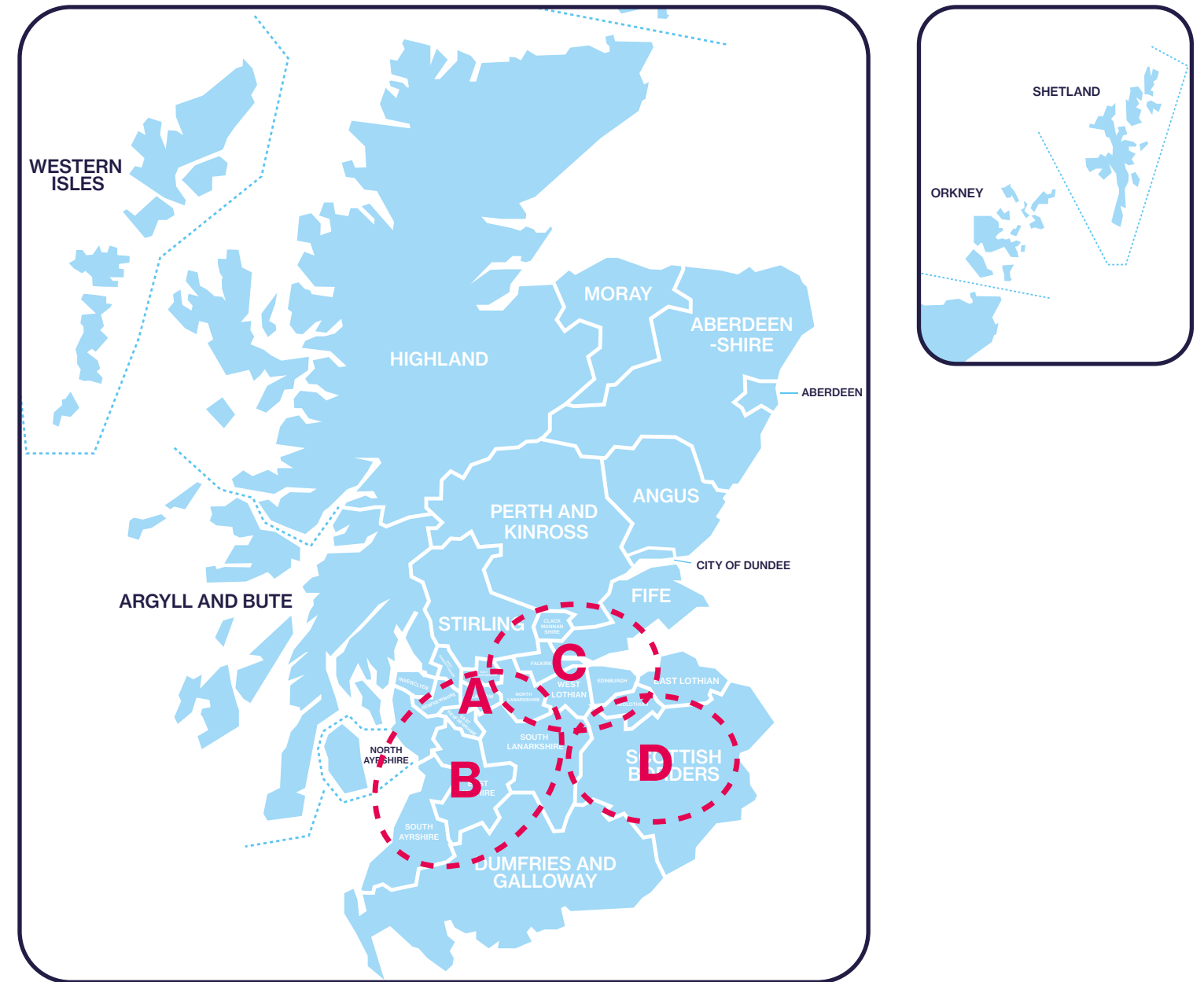
There is also a critical need to maintain our existing pool stock to deliver all aspects of the aquatics pathway. There is an ageing distribution of pools in Scotland and very limited deep water access and facilities for the aquatic sports of diving, artistic swimming and water polo to train and compete.

International competitions such as the Commonwealth Games, Olympics and Paralympics provide a positive focus to ensure we continue to have the right facilities in the right places at the right time to deliver appropriate training and competition opportunities for our sports. Conversely, if we do not address issues with deep water pool provision and access, we run the risk of artistic swimming and water polo being left behind.

Based on the age and number of pools in each area the areas at highest risk are shown in Appendix 2.

Facility requirements will vary based on whether the pool is a local, regional or national facility and which sports it is catering for, as well as the local club and community requirements. We have outlined the requirements for each type of facility and for each sport later in this document.

We would expect all regional and national pools to meet the needs for competition and training at a regional or national level respectively as well as the needs of local communities for safety, health and wellbeing.



Map 1

# Facility Analysis

In this section, we look at aquatic facilities across Scotland, leveraging data provided by sportscotland and outlining our rationale for the strategic priorities. The dataset comprises 430 swimming pools, collectively offering just over 90,000 square metres of water space.

By visualising the geographic distribution of these pools using our interactive mapping tool, we gain a clearer picture of where these resources are located. We have overlaid this spatial data with population statistics and Scottish Swimming club membership, allowing us to identify potential gaps in coverage and highlight areas with unmet demand for water space. This analysis is crucial in ensuring that aquatic facilities are not only sufficient in number, but are also optimally located to serve the needs of the population and our range of aquatic sports.

## National Coverage

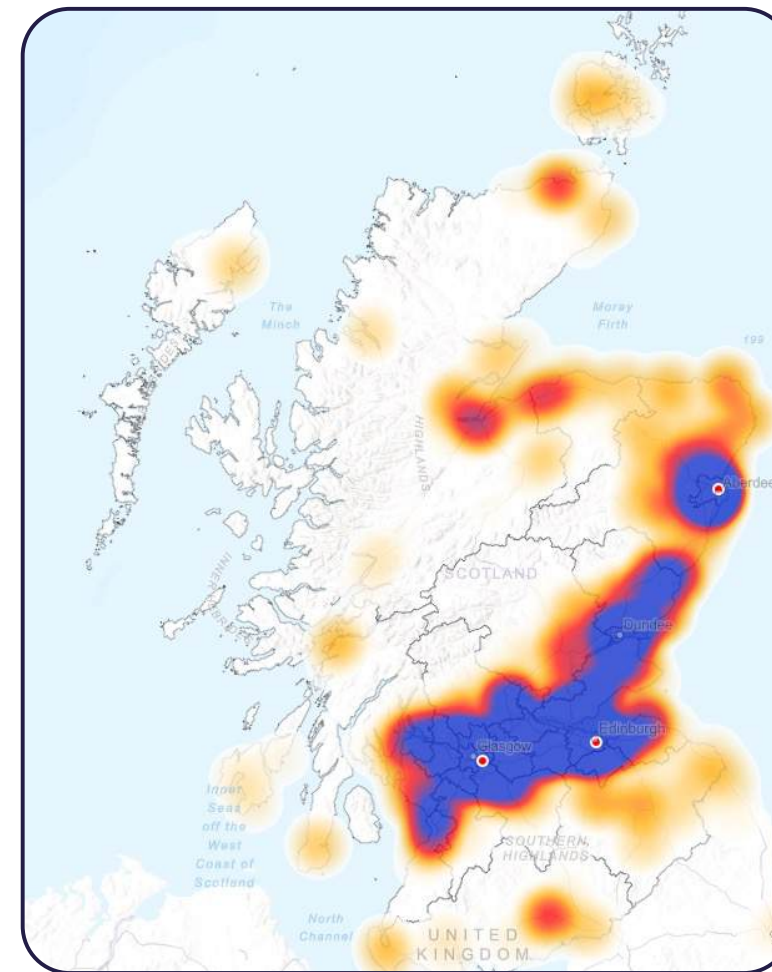
Map 2 shows a heat map of Scottish Swimming membership with most dense membership areas in blue. The three national pools are marked and show that the most densely populated areas are well served by national centres.

## Regional and Local Coverage

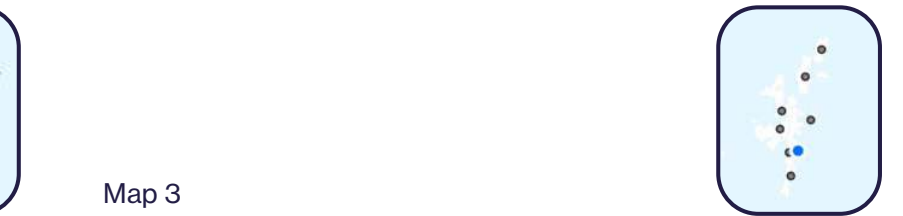
Map 3 shows the distribution of national, regional and local pools.



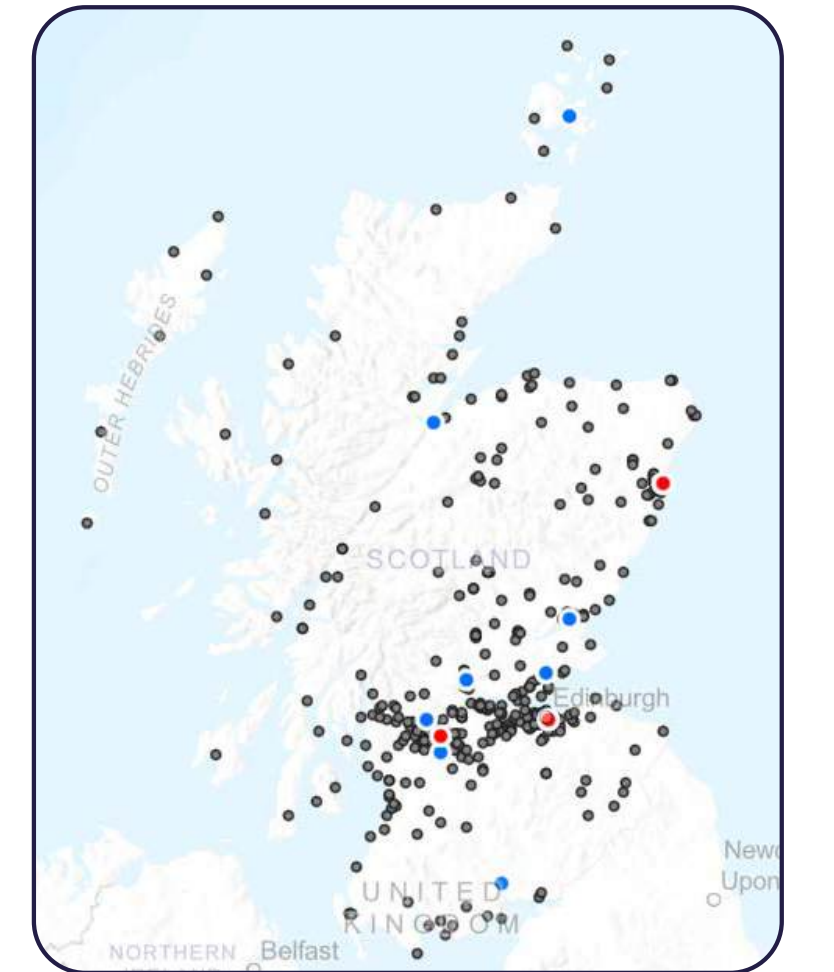
Map 2



- National facility
- Membership areas
- Most dense membership areas



Map 3



- National facility
- Regional facility
- Local/Other\* facility  
(\*This encompasses all local pools including private and leisure facilities)

# Facility Design

---

**Identifying areas of need for water space is just one aspect of the process; determining the type of facility and the key components required to meet the needs of all aquatic user groups is equally, if not more, important.**

The needs of the different aquatic sports vary widely. When considering the need for a facility to accommodate artistic swimming, diving, and water polo, it is essential to consult with clubs and users of such facilities to assess and identify demand. It is important to note that all aquatic facilities provide a platform for the commencement of an individual's journey into an aquatic sport such as artistic swimming, diving or water polo. Even at pools with reduced depths certain skills can be practised and experiences gained.

As outlined previously, Scottish Swimming identifies three categories of facilities: local, regional, and national. This classification helps prospective pool developers understand the diverse essential requirements of aquatic sports and the communities they serve. By doing so, we can ensure a fit-for-purpose, sustainable network of aquatic facilities across Scotland.

## Local Pools

Local Pools are essential to the network of aquatic facilities across Scotland, catering for multi-user groups. Appendix 1 details Scottish Swimming's key indicators for a local pool and are intended to initiate discussions on the development of a local pool.

The inclusion of specifics such as moveable floors in local facility designs are essential. This technology allows the facility to be more flexible, enabling all user groups to access the facilities thereby enriching the pool programme. Moveable floors can also be used as a pool cover at night to retain heat and create energy efficiencies.

At all times we would encourage a full cost benefit analysis is undertaken on the inclusion of such items during the design phase. Ensuring high quality construction and regular maintenance of key features like moveable floors maximises a facility's versatility, efficiency and long-term value for the entire aquatics pathway.

## Regional Pools

Regional Pools build upon the requirements of a local facility, and are designed to support the development of athletes through club activities. These facilities should be equipped to host competitions at a regional level and include components that foster the growth of various aquatic sports. The graphics in Appendix 1 represent the key requirements for a regional pool and are intended to initiate discussions on its development. The key requirements will vary across aquatic sports, and there is more detail on the requirements for artistic swimming, diving, open water and water polo in Appendix 3.

For swimming, in regional pools it is essential that we include items such as raised ends at the start and finish end as well as electronic timing. The inclusion of these within the design is not expensive, however they enhance the user experience and capability of the pool to cater for athlete development and club operations for all aquatic sports at a regional facility.

## National Pools

National Pools are designed to support high levels of competition and play a critical role in developing a nation's top athletes and future world class performers. There are three national facilities in Scotland in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. These facilities are capable of hosting national and international events, showcasing Scotland's outstanding aquatic pathways and affirming its status as one of the world's leading aquatic nations. Again, the key requirements will vary across our aquatic sports, and there is more detail on the requirements for artistic swimming, diving, open water and water polo in Appendix 3.

In all aquatic sports, national pools must be World Aquatics compliant and include sufficient spectator seating capacities, along with additional ancillary facilities that cater to performance athletes and top-tier events. Appendix 1 represents Scottish Swimming's key indicators for a national pool, offering guidelines on what should be included in these premier aquatic facilities.

**All aquatic facilities need to consider broader community needs for water access for health, fitness and fun.**

# Inclusive Access

For those with disabilities, swimming is the highest participation sport, alongside cycling<sup>4</sup>. Scottish Swimming's #SeeMyAbility programme shows that 66% of children with disabilities on the Scottish Swimming National Learn to Swim Framework are in mainstream lessons compared with 54% in 2020. The weight bearing properties of water means swimming uniquely supports, not only those with disabilities, but those recovering from injury and the inactive. It is therefore important that aquatic facilities are accessible to all.

This document focusses upon the pool tank and specific wet side areas and Scottish Swimming are committed to ensuring facilities are accessible to all. The terminology of inclusive access incorporates not only items such as easy walk-in steps, pool hoists and lifts but also changing provision, facility design and inclusivity to enable all users to access aquatic facilities. We encourage all pool developers, operators and owners to refer to sportscotland's inclusion toolbox [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Household Survey 2022



# Sustainable Facilities

**Sustainability in new and existing swimming facilities is crucial, both environmentally and economically. As the Scottish Government intensifies its efforts to achieve ambitious carbon reduction targets, including reaching net-zero emissions by 2045, the importance of creating and maintaining sustainable swimming facilities becomes ever more apparent. Swimming pools and leisure centres are typically energy-intensive, requiring substantial amounts of electricity and heat to maintain water quality, air temperature, and overall facility operations. Transitioning to more energy-efficient practices and renewable energy sources is therefore essential to reduce operational costs and minimise environmental impacts.**

Retrofitting older facilities to incorporate energy-efficient technologies, as shown opposite, such as heat pumps, solar panels, and improved insulation can significantly reduce carbon emissions. This not only helps to meet the government’s environmental targets but can result in substantial cost savings over time, as these systems are generally cheaper to operate and maintain.

Scottish Swimming’s work in 2023 on facility sustainability, supported by sportscotland, highlights the sector’s commitment to these environmental and economic goals. The report emphasises the need for both new builds and retrofits of existing swimming pools to incorporate sustainable practices. In doing so, operational costs can be lowered, making facilities more affordable to run while contributing to Scotland’s broader sustainability objectives.

We welcome the building of Passivhaus<sup>5</sup> sustainable pools at Blairgowrie and Currie – both due to open in 2025 and the new Clackmannanshire pool also being designed to meet Passivhaus standards.

<sup>5</sup> Passivhaus is a building standard which prioritises energy efficiency and reduced carbon footprint.

## Energy & Carbon Strategy

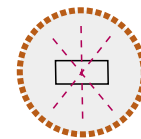
### Key



Principles targeting lowering carbon in use

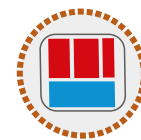


Principles targeting lowering embodied carbon



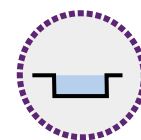
### *Building Orientation & Compact Form*

This impacts the heating and cooling loads and helps to balance where areas of glazing are useful or increasing energy loads.



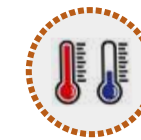
### *Thermal Zoning*

If hot spaces and cool spaces are grouped there is a reduced energy loading as the temperature differential that is needing to be overcome is minimised.



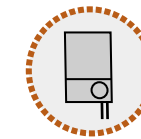
### *Pool tank construction*

Reviewing the pool tank construction to look for embodied carbon benefits. This could be a metal tank that can be reused / recycled more easily or low-carbon concrete that offers greater thermal performance.



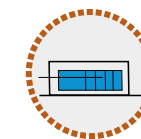
### *Operational Temperatures & Water Use*

The required temperatures have a huge impact on the sizing and specification of heating / cooling systems. Setting these early can lead to energy efficient decisions.



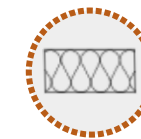
### *Heat And Power Source*

The heat and power source directly impacts the amount of carbon used during the life of the building



### *Building Glazing*

The amount of glazing impacts the heating and cooling loads



### *U - Value & Air Tightness*

These factors directly influence the heating requirements of the building. While increased U-values marginally increase the embodied carbon (additional insulation), the payback on reduced in use energy can off set this as quickly as 12 months.

# Operational Guiding Principles

---

## Overview

**This section provides guidance for pool providers to optimise facility use and for aquatic clubs to enhance partnerships and secure water access. Key focus areas include:**

- **Partnerships**
- **Facility Access**
- **Pool Programming**

Despite economic pressures and rising operational costs, local authorities and pool providers play a critical role in delivering aquatic opportunities for the communities they serve. Well-run and maintained pool operations are critical in extending the life of a pool for current and future generations. Demand for access to water is high across all user groups, particularly for swimming lessons and club access, as communities increasingly seek opportunities to participate in aquatic activities. Many clubs report challenges in accessing water time and meeting community demand.

This strategic vision encourages pool providers, clubs and wider stakeholders periodically to review their approaches, foster strong relationships, and align goals for the shared purpose of enhancing aquatic opportunities. Collaborative action should prioritise:

- Reviewing pool programming to increase accessibility and optimise facility use
- Extending facility hours and expanding community access, particularly in school pools
- Integrating pools in new school developments for broad community benefit
- Enhancing access for competitive events to support athlete development

## Partnerships

Aquatics is a community-centred sport, and Scottish Swimming aims to develop agreements with all local authorities that can ensure facilities, programmes and pathways are accessible, inclusive, and equitable. Strong partnerships among local authorities, leisure trusts, and clubs are essential for aligning efforts and sharing resources efficiently.

Each partnership should focus on:

- Establishing a shared vision for aquatics in the community
- Defining roles and commitments among partners, including resource sharing where feasible
- Creating measures for success that reflect goals in participation, club growth, and athlete development

Clear agreements outlining purpose and shared resources allow partners to pool efforts and expertise, leading to a stronger and sustainable aquatic community. For more information on partnership agreements please contact Scottish Swimming.

## Facility Access

While ensuring access is essential, collaborative planning is key to maximising facility use for both community and athlete needs. Early engagement with all stakeholders to define the facility's primary purpose and scheduling priorities enables smooth operations and effective programming. Regular reviews ensure that programming remains aligned with community needs and partner goals.

# Operational Guiding Principles (continued)

## Pool Programming

Supporting all levels of swimming through robust programming is the foundation of effective and sustainable facility use. Comprehensive pool programming should address the entire aquatic pathway and be integrated within a community-wide water management strategy.

Key programming principles include:

- Allocating facilities based on programme suitability, such as smaller pools for swimming lessons and larger pools for competitive training
- Building partnerships among clubs, pool providers, and community stakeholders to support a long-term vision for athlete development
- Maximising water time for diverse user groups, balancing needs with operational capacities
- Promoting a positive culture that encourages collaboration among all pool users
- Maintaining consistent facility access to support continuity for regular users
- Conducting regular assessments of facilities to ensure they meet evolving community and user needs

Through strategic pool programming, communities can increase water safety, participation, improve skill development, and enhance the overall quality of teaching and coaching. Long-term partnerships help secure the role of clubs and community groups as vital contributors to facility success.

## Further Considerations

To further support a collaborative and coordinated approach to aquatic programming, providers and partners should consider establishing a Local Aquatic Strategy and facilitating a Local Aquatic Forum. Scottish Swimming is happy to support, attend and if appropriate, lead these forums to encourage collaboration between stakeholders.

- **Local Aquatic Strategy:** This strategy serves as a guiding document that defines the vision, goals, and priorities for aquatics within the community. Developed collaboratively among local authorities, trusts, and aquatic clubs, the strategy ensures that resources are allocated effectively and that all partners are aligned in supporting the growth of aquatics at all levels.
- **Local Aquatic Forum:** A Local Aquatic Forum brings together key stakeholders—pool operators, clubs, schools, and community representatives—to share best practice, identify emerging needs, and encourage open dialogue. This forum fosters a network of support for the aquatic community, creating an inclusive space for ongoing feedback, shared planning, and coordinated development efforts. Through the forum, stakeholders can regularly assess progress, address shared challenges, and celebrate successes, ensuring that local aquatic initiatives are both resilient and responsive to community needs.

By incorporating a local aquatic strategy and forum into planning and operations, pool providers, clubs, and community stakeholders can collaboratively create a thriving aquatic environment that is sustainable, inclusive, and well-suited to the needs of all participants.

# Conclusion

---

**Scottish Swimming's Strategic Vision for Aquatics Facilities 2025 aims to improve facility use, access, and programming through collaborative partnerships and standardised agreements to support the development of aquatics in Scotland. By analysing the current spread of pool provision by geography, demography and age, we have highlighted areas where pools are lacking and where current provision fails to address the needs of the different aquatic sports. This has helped us to shape our strategic priorities and recommendations:**

## 1. National Venues

- Maintain three national aquatic venues located in key population centres: Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen

## 2. Regional Venues

- Develop and refurbish a network of strategically located regional facilities to support training and competition needs for aquatic sports
- Ensure specialised deep water provision is accessible at a regional level (e.g. 2m depth for water polo, 3.4m for springboard diving, 3m for artistic swimming)

## 3. Local Venues

- Build, develop and maintain a network of accessible local facilities for health, safety and enjoyment
- Include spaces for club training and local competitions

## 4. Sustainable Investment

- Commitment to ongoing investment is secured for the maintenance and modernisation of existing pools

## 5. School Partnerships

- Integrate community access into the design and management of new school pools, ensuring clubs and community groups benefit

## 6. Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with stakeholders to optimise facility access and usage

## 7. Lifecycle and Future Planning

- Encourage Local Authorities to establish lifecycle plans for aquatic facilities to mitigate risks to future provision
- Strategically design and locate new pools to meet both community and sporting demands
- Urge stakeholders to engage with Scottish Swimming to ensure informed decision making

## Financial Landscape

The financial landscape remains challenging. Access to investment for capital projects continues to be very limited. Scottish Swimming aims to support all partners explore the opportunities and options which are right for them both in terms of design and return on investment.

## Next Steps

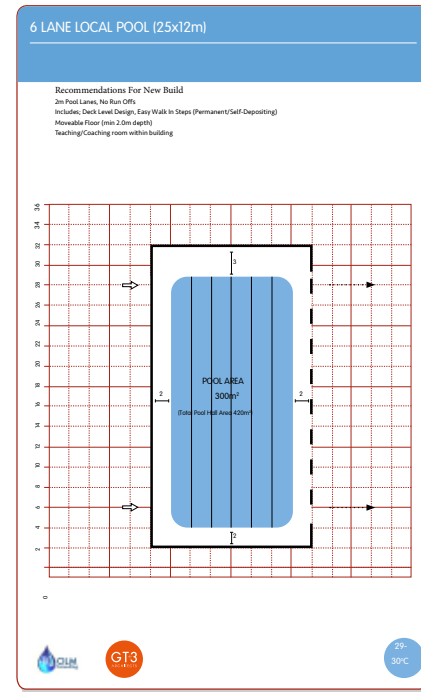
Without the support of **sportscotland** and partners this strategic vision would not be possible and we thank you for the support and commitment to reach this stage. The interactive mapping tool is particularly useful to facilitate conversations around new and existing facilities and we are ready to guide partners in their endeavours to create the next wave of sustainable pool provision for the benefit of current and future generations.

## Contact us

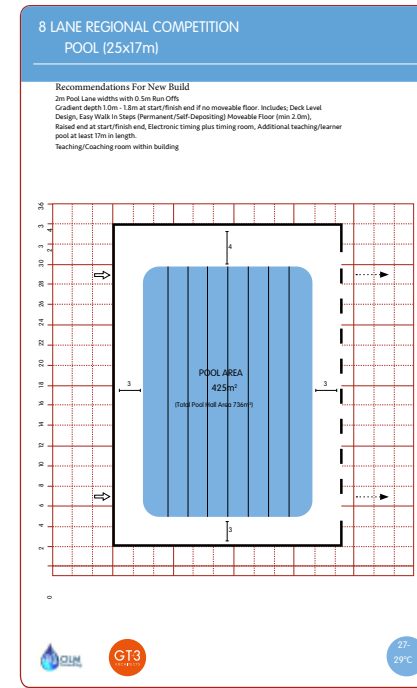
Contact us at [info@scottishswimming.com](mailto:info@scottishswimming.com) for further information.

# Appendix 1 – Pool Requirements

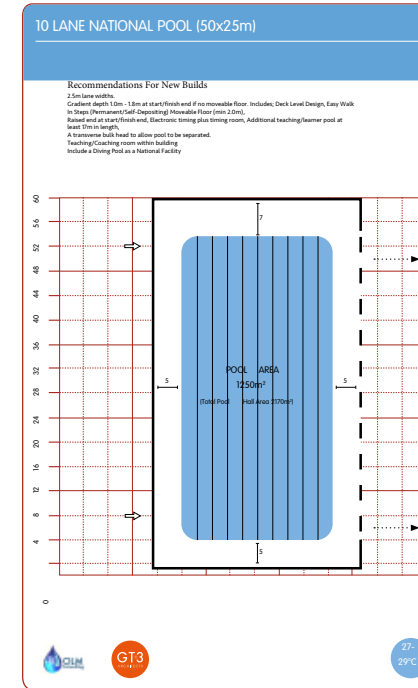
## Local Pool



## Regional Pool



## National Pool



Click on a specific pool for more information

# Appendix 2 – Public Swimming Pool Provision in Scotland

This table provides an overview of public swimming pool provision across Scotland's 32 local authorities, categorising facilities by type, assessing ageing infrastructure, and evaluating accessibility based on drive-time analysis.

The data highlights regional variations in the number and condition of sites, offering insights into potential areas for investment and improvement.

Local Authority by population size	Public Swimming Provision by Local Authority					Ageing Stock		Drive Time	
	Total Sites	National	Regional	Local (25m)	Local (14-24m)	Average Sites Operational Years	% Sites Over 38 Yrs	Regional (30min)	National (45min)
Glasgow City	23	1	0	10	12	41.9	60.87%	100.0%	100.0%
City of Edinburgh	21	1	0	13	7	35.0	52.38%	100.0%	100.0%
Fife	13	0	1	9	3	30.5	23.08%	94.3%	33.5%
North Lanarkshire	7	0	0	7	0	37.6	28.57%	100.0%	100.0%
South Lanarkshire	9	0	1	5	3	30.2	22.22%	100.0%	99.4%
Aberdeenshire	13	0	0	10	3	32.8	53.85%	46.9%	78.6%
Highland	17	0	1	9	7	33.1	41.18%	50.3%	0.0%
Aberdeen City	11	1	0	8	2	29.2	45.45%	100.0%	100.0%
West Lothian	16	0	0	7	9	30.8	37.50%	43.3%	100.0%
Renfrewshire	5	0	0	4	1	26.8	20.00%	100.0%	100.0%
Falkirk	10	0	0	3	7	29.0	30.00%	100.0%	100.0%
Perth and Kinross	5	0	0	3	2	27.8	20.00%	39.7%	3.5%
Dumfries and Galloway	8	0	1	3	4	31.9	37.50%	68.7%	0.8%
Dundee City	12	0	1	7	4	28.9	41.67%	100.0%	0.0%
North Ayrshire	4	0	0	4	0	29.3	50.00%	1.1%	56.6%
East Ayrshire	4	0	0	3	1	27.0	0.00%	73.7%	72.7%
Angus	7	0	0	4	3	23.0	28.57%	77.3%	2.5%
Scottish Borders	8	0	0	8	0	46.6	100.00%	3.6%	15.3%
South Ayrshire	4	0	0	4	0	39.5	50.00%	5.8%	29.4%
East Dunbartonshire	4	0	1	2	1	29.3	50.00%	100.0%	100.0%
East Lothian	6	0	0	6	0	35.7	16.67%	74.3%	100.0%
Moray	6	0	0	4	2	38.0	66.67%	0.0%	0.0%
East Renfrewshire	4	0	0	3	1	52.0	100.00%	100.0%	100.0%
Stirling	7	0	1	5	1	24.1	14.29%	100.0%	89.4%
Midlothian	6	0	0	5	1	29.2	33.33%	100.0%	100.0%
West Dunbartonshire	3	0	0	3	0	30.7	33.33%	100.0%	100.0%
Argyll and Bute	7	0	0	6	1	30.9	42.86%	1.3%	4.2%
Inverclyde	2	0	0	1	1	25.0	0.00%	29.5%	77.8%
Clackmannanshire	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.00%	99.0%	100.0%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	4	0	0	2	2	27.3	0.00%	0.0%	0.0%
Shetland Islands	6	0	1	0	5	32.2	16.67%	85.3%	0.0%
Orkney Islands	5	0	1	1	3	40.8	40.00%	87.6%	0.0%
<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>40.00%</b>	<b>68.17%</b>	<b>69.70%</b>

## Notes

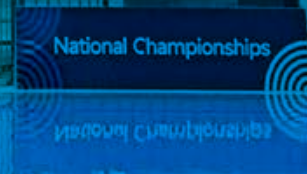
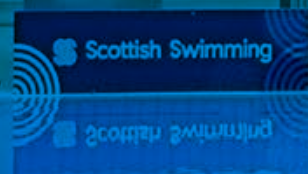
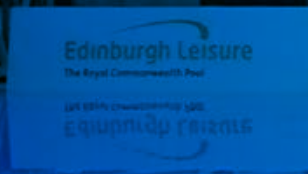
**Scope of Data:** The dataset includes publicly accessible pools, including those in schools and universities, but excludes leisure water. It measures sites rather than individual pools, meaning some facilities with multiple pools are counted as a single site.

**Pre-1940s Pools Adjustment:** Some well-maintained pools built before 1940 have been set at 40 years old to ensure their inclusion without distorting average facility age within each local authority.

**Drive-Time Metrics:** Accessibility is measured by a 30-minute drive time to a regional pool and a 45-minute drive time to a national-level facility, reflecting general availability rather than public transport accessibility.

**Limitations & Future Planning:** While this data provides a useful snapshot of swimming provision, other factors such as local demand, facility condition, and future pipeline projects must also be considered when planning new pools or refurbishments. Scottish Swimming encourages stakeholders to engage with them to ensure these insights inform future decision-making.

# Appendix 3 – Aquatic Sports Facility Requirements



# Appendix 3 – Aquatic Sports Facility Requirements

**This guidance aims to support the Strategic Vision for Aquatics Facilities 2025 by setting out the requirements, including pool depth, for artistic swimming, diving, and water polo as well as giving consideration to the ancillary facilities required for the growth of open water events.**

It is intended for use by local authorities, facility designers, and pool operators involved in the planning, construction, or refurbishment of pools that may serve the needs of aquatic sports clubs across Scotland.

The popularity of aquatic sports continues to increase, particularly as Team GB's success and profile on the world stage grows. It is therefore more important than ever for us to give consideration to facilities that enable our aquatic clubs to grow and thrive at all levels of the pathway.

When considering the need for deep water facilities, it is crucial to consult with clubs and users to identify demand. While Scottish Swimming does not prescribe specific travel distances or locations for deep water facilities, we aim to ensure that each region in Scotland has access to quality facilities to support the growth of our aquatic sports at all levels of the pathway. This consideration is vital when planning new developments or refurbishments.

Where appropriate, Scottish Swimming encourages facility planners to explore opportunities for shared-use designs that meet the pool requirements for all aquatic sports. Such arrangements must ensure that access, space, and technical needs are maintained for all aquatic sports.



# Appendix 3 – Artistic Swimming

Even in pools with reduced depths, beginners can be introduced to artistic swimming and experience the sport at a grassroots level. Fundamental skills and basic movements can still be practiced, allowing swimmers to develop a foundation. However, adequate depth is essential for progressing to the full technical demands of the sport, from foundational figures to complex lifts and acrobatic routines.

## Guidelines for Pool Specifications

Local Level Facility Requirements	
Pool Depth:	2m (2.5m preferred)
Pool Length:	17m
Pool Width:	10m

Regional Level Facility Requirements	
Pool Depth:	2.5m
Pool Length:	25m
Pool Width:	12m
Spectator Seating:	120+

Suitable deck space is required to accommodate officials during competitions.



World Aquatics Facility Standards for artistic swimming can be seen [here](#) (from page 300).

\*Additional Considerations: Ability to accommodate under water music system.

# Appendix 3 – Diving

It is important to recognise that a participant’s journey does not start on a 10m platform, and the foundations are taught by diving from poolside. However, facilities providing deep water are essential to enable the teaching and fundamentals of diving as well ensuring progression for divers in training and competition throughout the pathway.

Scottish Swimming also recognises the importance of dry diving facilities as part of a diverse daily training environment and the role this plays in the development of the sport.

## Guidelines for Pool Specifications

Local Level Facility Requirements*	
Springboards	1 x 1m
Platforms	-
Pool Depth	3.4m
Spectator Seating:	50-80

Regional Level Facility Requirements**	
Springboards	2 x 1m, 2 x 3m (or platform)
Platforms	1 x 5m
Pool Depth	4m
Spectator Seating:	100+

National Level Facility Requirements***	
Springboards	2 x 1m, 2 x 3m (side by side)
Platforms	1 x 3m, 1 x 5m, 1 x 7.5m, 1 x 10m
Pool Depth	5m
Spectator Seating	150+



World Aquatics Facility Standards for diving can be seen [here](#) (from page 158).

\* Poolside diving in a non-diving specific pool with a depth of 2m is accepted at a local level.

\*\* Additional Considerations: Dry land diving facilities - Options for supporting land training should be considered where retro-fitting dry facilities is not possible.

\*\*\* Additional Considerations: Pool side dry diving facility - Options for retrofitting dry diving should be considered at existing facilities, and should be built in to design for new facilities.

Deck space is required for judges high chairs so it should be noted that overhanging balconies in this area should be avoided.

# Appendix 3 – Water Polo

At the early stages, water polo skills can be introduced and developed through learn-to-swim programmes and foundational training in smaller spaces. However, as players progress from junior to senior levels, the game requires more space to accommodate increased strength, speed, and tactical complexity. A larger playing area becomes essential for proper skill development, strategic play, and maintaining the intensity of competition at higher levels.

## Guidelines for Pool Specifications

Local/ Regional Facility Requirement	
Pool Depth:	1.8m
Pool Length:	25m
Pool Width:	12m
Spectator Seating:	50-80/120+

A wider pool width may be beneficial for senior-level play.

National Level Facility Requirements	
Pool Depth:	2m
Pool Length:	25m (Junior and Women), 30m (Men)
Pool Width:	20m
Spectator Seating:	150+

Suitable deck space is required to accommodate officials during competitions.



World Aquatics Facility Standards for water polo can be seen [here](#) (from page 214).

# Appendix 3 – Open Water

**Open Water Swimming is gaining popularity across Scotland, with more participants seeking suitable outdoor venues for training and competition. Although most training takes place in swimming pools, there is a growing demand for accessible, inclusive, safe, and well-equipped open water locations.**

While “wild swimming” generally requires only clean, accessible bodies of water, organised open water swimming events in Scotland demand additional infrastructure.

These venues must provide not only clean water but also ensure accessibility for swimmers, including those with disabilities. They should feature necessary access for safety and rescue craft, emergency vehicles, and essential facilities like changing areas, toilets, showers, and on-site or event-based medical support. Ideally, these facilities should be multi-use, accommodating a broad range of water-based activities alongside open water swimming.

Scottish Swimming recognises the importance of collaboration with local authorities, landowners, and other stakeholders to identify and develop venues that safely accommodate open water swimmers. It is essential to consider open water swimming in the planning and development of any new or existing outdoor water sites.

Early engagement with Scottish Swimming will ensure that these venues meet the needs of the sport and its participants, supporting the continued growth and safety of open water swimming across the country.

## **1. Regional Level Facility Requirement**

Facility would include a body of water capable of accommodating a 1km circuit (approximately 300m by 200m) and a depth of at least 1m.

## **2. National Level Facility Requirement**

Facility would include a body of water without significant currents capable of accommodating a 1.7km circuit (approximately 500m by 350m or equivalent) and a depth of at least 1.4m.



# Appendix 3 – Summary of Requirements for Aquatic Sports

Sport	Local (dimension/depth)	Regional (dimension/ depth)	National (dimension/ depth)	Deck space (officials)	Spectators
<b>Artistic</b>	17m x 10m 2m+	25m x 12m 2.5m+	20m x 30m 3m+	Clear deck space on either side and at one end to accommodate officials	<p><b>Local</b> <b>50-80</b></p> <p><b>Regional</b> <b>120+</b></p> <p><b>National</b> <b>150+</b></p>
<b>Water Polo</b>	25m x 10m 1.8m	25m x 10m 1.8m	25m/30m x 20m 2m+	Area with table and chairs to accommodate officials	
<b>Diving</b>	1m springboard 3.4m depth  * Poolside diving in a non-diving specific pool with a depth of 2m is accepted at a local level	1m springboard 3m springboard / platform 5m platform 4m depth <b>OR</b> 2 x 1m springboards 2 x 3m springboards 4m depth	2 x 1m springboards (side by side) 2 x 3m springboards (side by side) 3m platform 5m platform 7.5m platform 10m platform 5m depth	Area with space for judging and recording. High chairs are used so overhead area should be kept clear.	
<b>Diving (dry land)*</b>	Use pool deck space or matted area  Equipment include: Swiss ball, Bosu, free weights, foam roller, sliders, therabands	Local+ Dry dive board Trampoline Tumble track Crashmats Somersault blocks Matted area Wall bars Chin up bars	Same as regional + Foam pit with dryboard/ platform Overhead rigs Mirrors Ballet barre	N/A	
<b>Open water</b>		300m x 200m or equivalent, Capacity for 1km circuit, 1m depth	500m x 350m or equivalent, Capacity for 1.7km circuit, 1.4m depth	N/A	

\*Diving dryland facilities - options for retrofitting dry diving should be considered at existing regional and national facilities and should be built into design for new facilities. Where retrofitting dry facilities is not possible, options for supporting land training should be considered.



[scottishswimming.com](http://scottishswimming.com)



Name and Registered Office:

Scottish Amateur Swimming Association Ltd  
University of Stirling Sport | University of Stirling  
Stirling | FK9 4LA

Email: [info@scottishswimming.com](mailto:info@scottishswimming.com)



**sport**scotland