

Sport England's Facilities Planning Model

East Staffordshire Borough Council

Provision for Swimming

Executive Summary Report Runs 1 and 2

October 2013

Executive Summary Provision for Swimming Pools

Overview

- 1.1 This executive summary report describes the key findings on the supply and demand for swimming in 2013 (run 1). Then how supply and demand for swimming changes based on the projected population growth between 2013 – 2031 (run 2).
- 1.2 The sequence of the Executive Summary is to set out
 - a. a very short summary of the overall assessment from run 1 and run 2 (set out in a yellow box)
 - b. important findings under supply and demand for both runs 1 and 2. The key text is shown in bold so as to identify it quickly.
 - c. key issues, challenges and options to address the key issues. This is the last part of the Executive Summary and again is set out in a yellow box

Overall Assessment from run 1

The run 1 assessment identifies the single biggest issue is the distribution of swimming pool demand across the 8 swimming pool sites in East Staffordshire. There is enough overall swimming pool capacity to absorb the total demand for swimming from East Staffordshire residents in 2013. It is the ownership/management and varying hours of public access to the swimming pool sites in the weekly peak period that is creating an imbalance in the level of use at individual pools.

This imbalance is causing the public swimming pools to be very full and the school/commercial pools to have considerable unused capacity at peak times. To repeat, overall across East Staffordshire there is enough swimming pool capacity in 2013 to meet demand. Some swimming pools will attract more users if there is more population within the catchment area of one particular pool when compared with another.

The key issue that emerges in 2013 is can swimming pool demand be distributed across more pools so the used capacity of each pool is more evenly spread, whilst the full range of swimming activities is still provided.? The opportunity to address this issue is that 25% of the total water space in East Staffordshire is not available for public use at peak times because it is located in commercial pools. The challenge/realism is can this swimming pool supply be accessed so as to increase the pool capacity available for the public at peak times?

If not, then the issue is how can the demand for swimming within the catchment area of the main public swimming pools at Meadowside Leisure Centre and Uttoxeter Leisure Centre be met, whilst also reducing the use at these pools?

The run 2 assessment includes the projected increase in population in East Staffordshire and the surrounding local authorities between 2013 – 2031. The run 2 analysis will determine the extent to which this run 1 issue/challenge does change. Plus the impact of population growth and the aging of the core resident population between 2013 – 2031 have on the demand for swimming pools. The key issues and options to address these issues are then set out.

Run 1 Supply and demand for swimming 2013

Supply and access to swimming pools

- 1.3 In 2013 there are a total of 10 swimming pools on 8 sites in East Staffordshire. The total supply in water space is 2,083 sq metres of water. **When calculated based on the water space available for public use in the weekly peak period supply is reduced to 1,549 sq metres of water. This is a reduction of 25% of the total water space in East Staffordshire.** There is a significant difference in the total pool water area and that available for public use at peak times.
- 1.4 Based on the comparative measure of pool provision per 1,000 population. East Staffordshire has 17.9 sq metres of water per 1,000 population. This is significantly above the West Midlands Region figure of 11.8 sq metres of water per 1,000 population. Also East Staffordshire has the highest provision across the five neighbouring local authorities in the study area. Next highest is Derbyshire Dales at 15.9 sq metres, the lowest is Stafford at 8.1 sq metres of water, less than half the provision in East Staffordshire.
- 1.5 Of the total eight swimming pool SITES in East Staffordshire five are public and three are private commercial sites. The commercial pools: Bannatynes Health Club; DW Sports Fitness and Hoar Cross Hall Gym Leisure and Eden Day Spa are all in Burton on Trent. Also the public site at Meadowside Leisure Centre is also in Burton. There is good provision of pool sites in Burton. However when assessed on how much of this supply is available for the full range of swimming programmes at peak times then the supply picture changes/reduces and virtually all of the 25% of pool space not public for public use is in Burton.
- 1.6 This is a recurring key theme of the study assessment, namely a high quantity of pool provision but low levels of access at the commercial pools at peak times means there is pressure on the public pools to provide for the full range of swimming programmes. Addressing this imbalance by both provision and management interventions is the key and vexing issue emerging from the study.
- 1.7 Features of the swimming pool provision are:
- The commercial pool sizes vary from 160 sq metres of water at Bannatynes to 260 sq metres of water at Hoar Cross. So the commercial pools are quite small pools (Note: for context a 25 m x 4 lane swimming pool is 210 sq metres of water).
 - the 5 public swimming pool sites vary from the smallest pool at Smallwood Manor, 200 sq metres of water to Meadowside Leisure Centre at 325 sq metres of water, plus a learner/teaching pool of 104 sq metres of water.
 - The 8 pool sites in East Staffordshire were opened over two phases and each phase was either public or commercial sector provision. Two public pools opened in each of the 1970 and 1980 decades. Whilst the 3 commercial pools were opened in the 2000 decade. Abbots Bromley School for Girls is the oldest pool and was opened in 1960.
 - Three sites have had major refurbishment: Abbots Bromley School for Girls pool 2009; Meadowside Leisure Centre 2010 (opened in 1980); Smallwood Manor pool 2012 (opened in 1970). The oldest public pool site not refurbished is Denstone

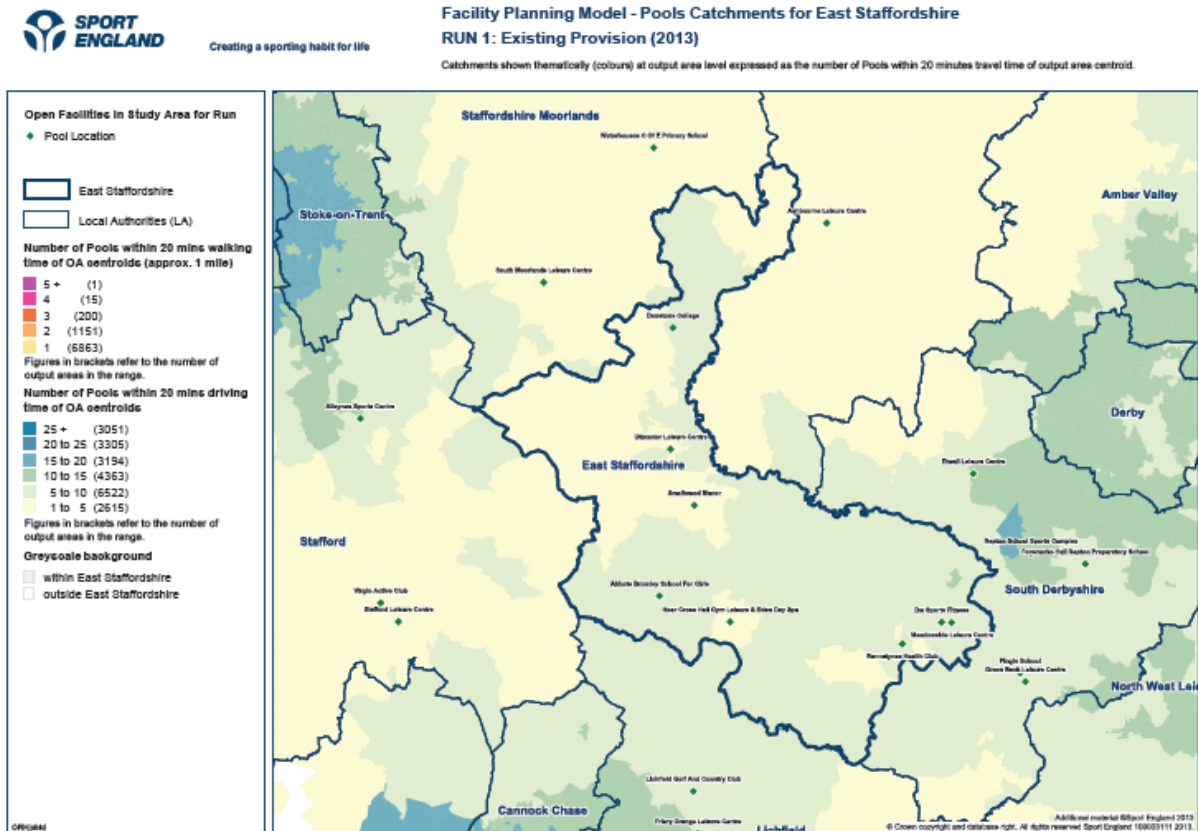
College opened in 1979. Uttoxeter Leisure Centre opened in 1985 is scheduled for a major refurbishment in 2014. None of the three commercial pools have had a major refurbishment.

- So a modern/refurbished public pool stock in 2013 but which will age to 2031 and require continuing upgrading/modernisation – assuming the demand assessment directs this to be the best way forward.

Access to swimming pools based on the 20 minute drive time catchment area

- 1.8 Residents in around 70% of the land area of East Staffordshire have access to between 5 – 10 swimming pools (area shaded green in the map below) , based on the 20 minute drive time catchment area of pools. The exception is the NW side of the authority where there is access to between 1 - 5 swimming pools (shaded cream)

Map: Access to swimming pools based on the 20 minute drive time catchment area. Run 1

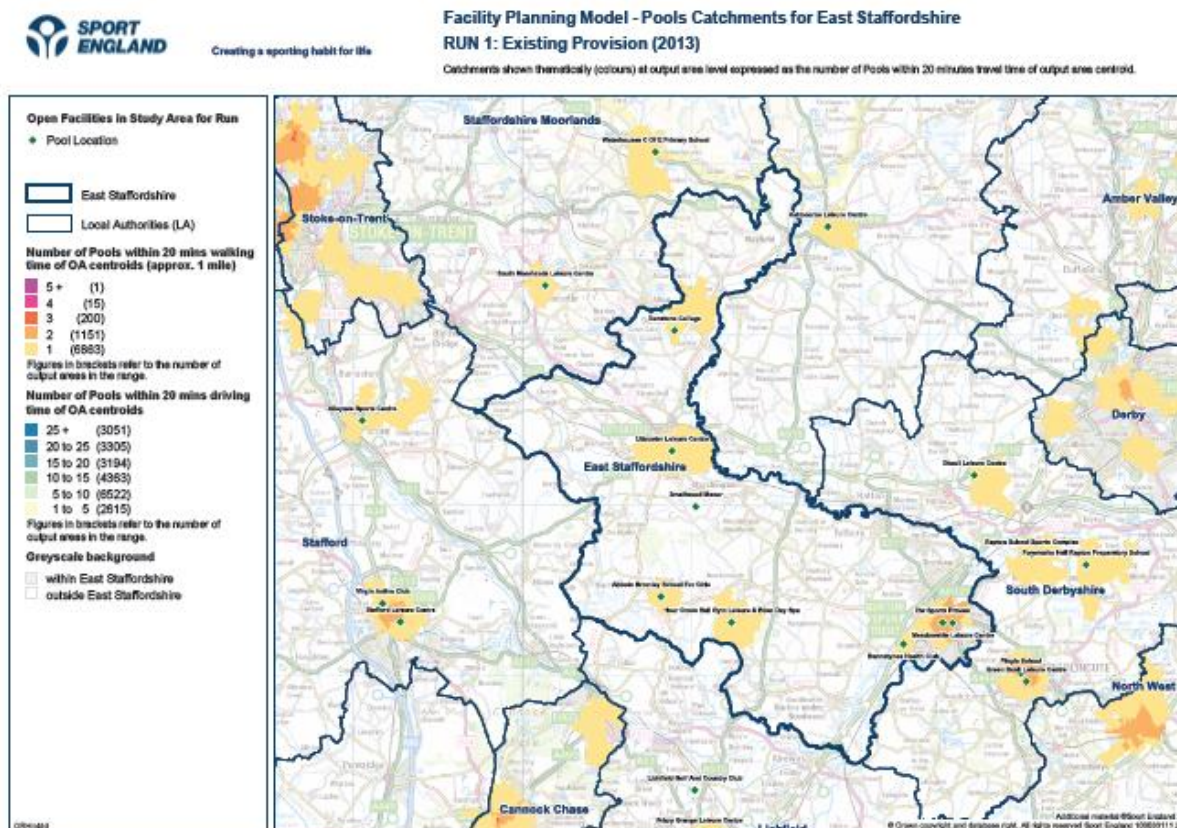


- 1.9 The estimate is that in 2013 some 84% of all visits to pools are by car, so it is the dominate travel mode. The average for West Midlands Region is 78% of all visits to pools by car.
- 1.10 So overall **good levels of accessibility to between 5 -10 pools for the majority of East Staffordshire residents based on car travel/catchment area of pools and car travel represents 84% of all visits to pools.**

Access to swimming pools based on walking

1.11 The walk to catchment area is defined as being 20 minutes or 1 mile. Not surprisingly this is a small land area and in 2013 some 7% of all visits to pools are estimated to be by walking. Around 5% of the land area of East Staffordshire is within the walk to catchment area of one swimming pool. Set out in the map below.

Map: Access to swimming pools based on the 20 minute/1 mile walk to catchment area. Run 1.



Supply and demand for swimming pools

1.12 The total population in East Staffordshire in 2013 is 115,821 people. The authority has the second highest population of the six authorities in the study area. Stafford has 132,523 people and Derbyshire Dales 71,315 people.

1.13 **Total demand for pools based on the visits per week in the weekly peak period in East Staffordshire in 2013 is 7,384 visits. Total supply based on the availability of all pools for public use at peak times is 13,429 visits. So total supply exceeds total demand by 6,045 visits in the weekly peak period.**

1.14 However, the impact of the already mentioned low levels of access to commercial pools at peak times for public use means that most of the swimming demand is met at public pools and this means they are very full. So overall a disproportionate high demand/use of public pools at peak times – the recurring theme.

Satisfied demand

- 1.15 Satisfied demand is defined as the amount of total demand that is met by the capacity at the swimming pools from residents who live within the driving, walking or public transport catchment area of a pool.
- 1.16 In 2013 the estimate is that 90% of the total demand for swimming across East Staffordshire is satisfied demand. So a high level of total demand which can be met/satisfied. For comparison the percentage of satisfied demand across West Midlands region is 91% and Lichfield and South Derbyshire Districts have satisfied demand levels at 93% of total demand.

Retained demand

- 1.17 Retained demand is how much of the East Staffordshire demand for swimming is met by pools located in East Staffordshire. It is calculated on the basis that residents use the nearest pool to where they live and which is in East Staffordshire.
- 1.18 Retained demand in 2013 is estimated to be 83% of total satisfied demand. East Staffordshire has the highest level of retained demand of any of the six authorities within the study area.
- 1.19 In effect, **pool locations in relation to meeting the East Staffordshire demand for swimming are very good. So much so that for 83% of the East Staffordshire demand the nearest pool to where residents live is located in the authority.** The majority of this access to pools is based on car travel.

Exported demand

- 1.20 The residual of the total satisfied demand, after retained demand, is exported demand. This means the nearest pool to where some East Staffordshire residents live is located outside the authority and there is enough capacity at these pools to meet the East Staffordshire demand.
- 1.21 In 2013 some 17% of the East Staffordshire total satisfied demand for swimming is exported. The largest export is to South Derbyshire with 12% of the total exported demand. Then 1% to each of Lichfield, Staffordshire Moorlands, Derbyshire Dales and outside the study area (percentages are rounded).

Unmet Demand

- 1.22 Given the overall preceding findings on supply and demand it may seem contradictory to set out unmet demand findings. Unmet demand is defined as: demand for swimming which cannot be met because (1) there is too much demand for any particular pool within its catchment area; or (2) the demand is located outside the catchment area of any pool and is then classified as unmet demand.
- 1.23 **Unmet demand in East Staffordshire in 2013 is 9.7% of the total demand for swimming. This is equivalent to 117 sq metres of water and for context a 25 metres x 4 lane swimming pool is 212 sq metres of water. In 2013 East Staffordshire has 1,549 sq metres of water available for public use in the weekly peak period.**
- 1.24 **Some 99% of the total unmet demand is by the second definition - demand located outside the walking catchment area of a pool.** The 1 mile walking catchment area is a

small area, so it is not surprising that 78% of the East Staffordshire population live outside the walk to catchment area of any pool.

- 1.25 However it is important to set out that only 7% of all visits to pools are by walking. So 78% of the population living outside the walking catchment area of a pool but only 7% of visits to pools are by walking.
- 1.26 **Overall and on all measures unmet demand in terms of percentages and total water space is low. Also 99% of unmet demand is locational and only 1%, which represents 2 sq metres of water, is due to lack of swimming pool capacity. This is at the Meadowside Leisure Centre which cannot accommodate around 60 visits per week in the peak period because it is estimated to be full.**

Used Capacity

- 1.27 The findings under used capacity are the most significant for run 1. Used capacity is a measure of usage and throughput at swimming pools and estimates how well used/ full pools are. The Sport England facilities planning model is designed to include a 'comfort factor', beyond which pools are too full. The model assumes that usage over 70% of capacity is busy and the pool is operating at an uncomfortable level above that percentage.
- 1.28 **The total used capacity of East Staffordshire's is an authority wide average of 52.6% of pool capacity used. In effect, the pools are estimated to be reasonably full but there is a good level of unused capacity before the "pools full" comfort level of 70% of used total capacity is reached.**
- 1.29 **However the authority wide average of 52.6% of pool capacity used masks quite different levels of pool capacity used at individual pools.** These percentages for used and unused capacity at each pool are set out in the table below.
- 1.30 **The Meadowside Leisure Centre is estimated to be operating at 100% of its capacity; it is effectively full and cannot absorb some 62 visits per week in the peak period.**
- 1.31 **This contrasts with the estimated used capacity at the Abbots Bromley School for Girls and at Denstone College where the estimated used capacity is 26% and 28% respectively. Furthermore, the commercial Hoar Cross Hall Gym Leisure and Eden Day Spa is only estimated to have 13% of its capacity used at peak times.**(Note: the model does estimate the level of used capacity for pools based on the actual hours available for public use at peak times).
- 1.32 **The Uttoxeter Leisure Centre is the other public swimming pool which has a high level of used capacity and is estimated to be 62%, only some 8% below the Sport England pools full comfort level of 70% of pool capacity used.**
- 1.33 So overall the authority wide average of 56.2% of pool capacity used is very misleading.
- 1.34 The key issue emerging is about trying to balance/distribute the swimming pool demand around the authority so that there is less pressure on these two main public pool sites and more use/access to the other pools sites. This is because overall there is enough swimming pool capacity to meet demand in 2013.
- 1.35 The challenge is can the school/commercial pools increase access for public use and provide a wider range of swimming programmes? The full range is casual public

swimming, lane swimming; learn to swim programmes, schools and club based swimming development programmes.

- 1.36 The issue is not about the number, location and capacity of the pools. It is about the ownership/management of pools and increasing time and access to provide more public/swimming development programmes of use at peak times. Do this so as to distribute the demand for swimming across the pools and reduce the used capacity of the two main public swimming pools at Meadowside Leisure Centre and Uttoxeter Leisure Centre.
- 1.37 This is the management approach to addressing this issue rather than developing a provision approach to the issue, whereby the capacity at the public pools is increased. Do this so as to reduce the used capacity from 100% at Meadowside to around 65% and stabilise Uttoxeter at around 63%. This would create some spare headroom capacity of around 5% - 7% at both pools before the 70% pools full level is reached.
- 1.38 Approaches and options to resolve this key issue of used capacity are set out after the description of the findings for run 2. This is because the projected population growth and its impact on increasing swimming demand and in turn used capacity of pools have first to be quantified and factored into the assessment.

Table 1: Percentage of Swimming Pool Capacity Used and Unused at the East Staffordshire Pool Sites. Run 1

Name of facility	Type of pool	% of capacity used	% of capacity not used
East Staffordshire			
Abbots Bromley School for Girls	Main pool	26%	74%
Bannatynes Health Club Burton on Trent	Main pool	44%	56%
Denstone College	Main Pool	28%	72%
DW Sports Fitness	Main Pool	48%	52%
Hoar Cross Gym Leisure & Eden Day Spa	Main pool	13%	87%
Meadowside Leisure Centre	Main Pool	100%	0%
Smallwood Manor	Main Pool	23%	77%
Uttoxeter Leisure Centre	Main Pool	62%	38%

Run 2 Supply and demand for swimming 2031

Overall Assessment from run 2

This single biggest issue identified in run 1 remains in run 2. In essence, even with the projected population growth there still remains enough swimming pool capacity to meet the projected total demand in 2031. It is the distribution of this demand across the pools and the differing levels of public access to pools at peak times which are creating an imbalance.

If East Staffordshire could re-distribute the demand for swimming across a wider range of pools then there is NO ISSUE because, as consistently assessed under all headings, total supply for swimming exceeds total demand in 2013 and in 2031.

The challenge is can the school/commercial pools increase access for public use and provide for a wider range of swimming programmes? The full range is: casual public swimming; lane swimming, learn to swimming programmes; and schools and club based swimming development programmes. If NOT then there is an issue of the main public pools being very full to capacity and resolution of this issue could be by additional swimming pool provision.

The issue is about the ownership/management of pools and increasing time and access to provide more public/swimming development programmes of use at peak times. Do this so as to distribute the demand for swimming across the pools and reduce the used capacity of the two main public swimming pools at Meadowside Leisure Centre and Uttoxeter Leisure Centre.

Overview

- 2.1 Run 2 assesses the supply and demand for swimming in East Staffordshire and the wider study area based on the projected changes in demand created by the population growth between 2013 – 2031. Plus the impact of projected housing growth and housing allocations in key sites has on the demand and distribution of demand for swimming.
- 2.2 The population data for East Staffordshire for 2013 was derived from ONS based projections using the 2011 census. The 2031 population data was provided by East Staffordshire which took account of housing growth areas across the authority but mainly in Burton and Uttoxeter.
- 2.3 There are no changes in the number and location of swimming pools between runs 1 and 2. The only supply change is refurbishment of Uttoxeter Leisure Centre in 2014. This does not affect the total pool supply since the pool size and opening hours remain the same.
- 2.4 Run 2 includes the impact of the aging of the core resident population between 2013 – 2031 which will also influence the demand for swimming. This could mean there are fewer or more swimmers in the main age bands for swimming participation in 2031 when compared with 2013.
- 2.5 The projected population for East Staffordshire in 2031 is 135,746 people. This compares with a population of 115,821 people in 2013. So there is a projected increase in population of 19,925 people, which represents a 17.2% increase over the 2013 population.

- 2.6 The findings reported on in run 2 are for the same headings and sequence as for run 1. At the end of the report of findings the key issues are and options to address these issues are set out in a yellow box.

Total Supply Findings

- 2.7 Total supply of swimming pools across the study area between 2013 – 2031 does not change. East Staffordshire has 10 individual pools at 8 sites. Across the rest of the study area there are 25 pools at 20 sites.
- 2.8 Similarly the total supply of visits from the 10 pools based on their variable availability for public or club use remains unchanged at 13,429 visits in the weekly peak period.
- 2.9 **The impact of the population growth is to reduce the water space per 1,000 population in East Staffordshire from 17.9 sq metres of water to 15.3 sq metres of water per 1,000 population.** Across West Midlands region the change is from 11.8 to 10.5 sq metres of water per 1,000 population.

Location and access to pools Run 2

- 2.10 Given there are no changes in swimming pool sites or locations then the spatial findings on access to pools and their catchment areas remain unchanged from those set out under run 1.

Total Demand

- 2.11 The impact the population growth on the total demand for swimming is to increase total demand to 8,364 visits in the weekly peak period in 2031 from 7,384 visits in 2013. So an increase of 980 visits or of 13.2% between the two years.
- 2.12 **So whilst total population increases by 17.2%, total demand for swimming increases by 13.2%. The difference between the two percentages represents the aging of the core resident population between the two years and how this impacts/reduces the demand for swimming.**

Supply and demand

- 2.13 In 2031 the total supply of swimming pools is still greater than total demand. Total East Staffordshire supply remains at 13,429 visits in the weekly peak period. Whilst total demand increases to 8,364 visits from 7,384. So in terms of visits supply exceeds demand by 980 visits.
- 2.14 **In 2031 across East Staffordshire total supply is 1,549 sq metres of water available for public use at peak times, whilst total demand is for 1,378 sq metres of water. So supply exceeds demand by 171 sq metres of water, even with the projected total population growth included.** (Note; for context a 25 metres x 4 lane pool is 212 sq metres of water).
- 2.15 **So whilst there is not a key issue of supply and demand balance the key issue remains of how demand is distributed across all the pools based on the very variable public access to pools at peak times to individual pools. The imbalance is in hours of access, to pools at peak times, distribution of demand across the pools and how this variable access is creating very full public pools with other pools having lots of unused capacity. This key issue from run 1 prevails.**

Satisfied demand

2.16 Satisfied demand is virtually unchanged in run 2. This is because the pool locations do not change and so there is still the same catchment areas/access to them. Plus there is still a greater pool supply than there is demand for swimming. So satisfied demand in run 2 is 90.3% of total demand and in run 1 it is 90.5%. Still a very high level of total demand which can be met.

Retained and exported demand

2.17 Demand met at East Staffordshire pools from East Staffordshire's residents is 81.5% of the total satisfied demand and in 2013 it is 83.4%. **So the population growth is resulting in East Staffordshire retaining 1.9% less of its own demand at the borough's pools.**

2.18 However **the key finding is that for over 80% of the East Staffordshire demand the nearest pool to where residents live is in East Staffordshire and there is enough capacity at these pools to absorb this level of demand – just that some pools (Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres) are absorbing more of this demand than others – recurring theme.**

2.19 Of the East Staffordshire demand exported and met at pools in neighbouring authorities this increases to 18.5% of the borough's satisfied demand from 16.6% in 2013. Put another way nearly one in five of the borough's demand for swimming visits is met outside the authority.

2.20 The satisfied demand which is exported is to South Derbyshire 12% of the total exported demand of 18.5%. The pressure to absorb demand is highest in the Burton on Trent area and the location of South Derbyshire adjacent to Burton, suggests the increase in exported demand is from Burton to South Derbyshire.

Unmet Demand

2.21 **The population growth does not increase unmet demand for swimming because total supply remains greater than total demand. In 2031 unmet demand is 9.5% of total demand and in 2013 it is 9.7% of total demand.**

2.22 ALL of the unmet demand, except 0.5%, is locational NOT lack of swimming pool capacity. It is unmet demand located outside the 20 minutes/1 mile walking catchment area of a pool.

2.23 **This total unmet demand in 2031 equates to 131 sq metres of water, in 2013 it is 117 sq metres of water. So the impact of population growth along with aging of the core resident population between 2013 – 2031 is to increase unmet demand across East Staffordshire by just 14 sq metres of water.**

2.24 The overall point is that all but 0.5% of unmet demand is due to demand being located outside the walking catchment area of a pool. Whilst walking to a pool only represents just over one in 20 visits.

2.25 **The areas of highest unmet demand are in Burton and Uttoxeter but only around 45 and 20 sq metres of water in each area respectively (map 11 in the main report). The areas in map 11 do correspond to the areas and priority ordering of the housing action area sites and areas of highest population density in the East Staffordshire housing allocation map of sites (set out in the fpm word project specification).**

Used Capacity

- 2.26 As in run 1 used capacity or how full the pools are is the most significant set of findings in run 2.
- 2.27 Across the authority and as an average of the used capacity of all 10 pools this is NOT an issue. **Used capacity increases to 58% by 2031, an increase of 5.5% over the 2013 percentage of 52.6%. So still well within the pools full comfort level of 70% of capacity used.**
- 2.28 **IF East Staffordshire could re-distribute the demand for swimming across the total pool stock then there is NO ISSUE because, as consistently reported, total supply for swimming exceeds total demand in 2013 and in 2031. It is getting the authority wide average of 58% of pool capacity used to happen in practice which makes this the single biggest issue.**
- 2.29 The table of used capacity for each pool site is set out below with the run 2 percentages now included. **The “good news” is that Meadowside Leisure Centre used capacity decreases from 100% to 87% but is still way above the pools full percentage level.** The reason for the drop is the impact of the population growth across the whole study area which causes demand to be redistributed.
- 2.30 **However used capacity at Uttoxeter Leisure Centre increases by 11% to 73% and is now above the pools full comfort level.**

Table: Percentage of swimming pool capacity used and unused at each of the East Staffordshire pool sites, runs 1 and 2.

Name of facility	Type of pool	% of capacity used Run 1	% of capacity used Run 2
East Staffordshire			
Abbots Bromley School for Girls	Main pool	26%	16%
Bannatynes Health Club Burton on Trent	Main pool	44%	73%
Denstone College	Main Pool	28%	29%
DW Sports Fitness	Main Pool	48%	80%
Hoar Cross Gym Leisure & Eden Day Spa	Main pool	13%	19%
Hoar Cross Gym Leisure & Eden Day Spa	Learner/teaching pool		
Meadowside Leisure Centre	Main Pool	100%	87%
Meadowside Leisure Centre	Learner/teaching pool		
Smallwood Manor	Main Pool	23%	15%
Uttoxeter Leisure Centre	Main Pool	62%	73%

Issues, Challenges and Options to Resolve the Issues**Options to increase the amount of water space available for public use and create a balanced supply and demand in pool provision**

- 2.31 The options can be described as falling into two areas (1) management options and (2) provision options. Management options are about making better use of what already exists, much lower cost but require greater co-operation, strategic planning and managing the total swimming programmes of use across several different owners and operators. So lower cost but more challenging to plan and deliver.
- 2.32 Provision options are higher costs, both capital and revenue but usually only involve one provider and so are easier to plan and deliver.
- 2.33 **Options 1 - under management change – reduce** the level of imported demand for use of East Staffordshire pools. In 2031 imported demand represents 21% of the used capacity of East Staffordshire's pools – one in five of all visits. The biggest imported demand is from South Derbyshire at 11% of the total 20% imported demand.
- 2.34 It is very easy to write but very challenging to achieve management intervention to reduce the imported demand by a significant effect. By so doing it creates more capacity for use by East Staffordshire residents. However there are boarder and more important matters of relationships with these other authorities. This option could however lead to a review with neighbouring authorities to consider how joint working and pool programming could manage the swimming pool demand across boundaries.
- 2.35 It is noticeable that East Staffordshire main export of its demand is also to South Derbyshire and it could be said that SD's import and ES's export cancel each other out and so this option is counter productive. However the actual figures do reflect the population density in this area and they do show there is an issue for both authorities in the supply and demand for swimming pools, exacerbated by population growth. This option based on the fpm findings does point very directly to if East Staffordshire wishes to develop partnerships on swimming pool provision then South Derbyshire is the authority which is most important in terms of pool supply and demand for East Staffordshire.
- 2.36 **Option 2 - under management change** is to increase public access to some of the water space currently not available. In 2031 the total water space in East Staffordshire is 2,083 sq metres of water. However only 1,549 sq metres of water is available for public use at peak times. So there is 25% of the total water space which is not available for public use at peak times. Predominantly this is the commercial providers and the schools who do not provide for public use.
- 2.37 The availability of pools for public use is low at several venues, reflected in the level of used capacity of the pools at peak times for public use. Whilst Meadowside and Uttoxeter Leisure Centres have used capacity of 87% and 73% respectively in run 2, Denstone College has 28% of used capacity, Abbots Bromley School for Girls 26% and Smallwood Manor 23%. So a very big imbalance in the availability of pools at peak times for public use, reflected in the used capacity.
- 2.38 The commercial pools are not included in this option of increasing public access at peak times to pools because they do not provide for this type of use/access. The school sites will probably not be able to provide for public pay as you swim casual swimming

- programmes, however there maybe scope to create club use at these venues or create peak time for lane swimming or fitness swimming programmes.
- 2.39 This could transfer these programmes from the main public venues and reduce the used capacity of these pools. This option does however have costs, in opening up other pools for these programmes of use and possibly reducing income generation/cost recovery at the main public pools. The 25% pool provision not available for public use at peak times does however suggest this is the SCALE option to consider.
- 2.40 **Option 3 - under management change** is to review the management and programming of the public pools so as to provide more pool time for the swimming programmes in most demand. In effect this is creating more capacity by making more pool time available for the most popular swimming activities.
- 2.41 Again, this is easy to write and fiendishly difficult to do and achieve because it challenges and changes committed swimming programmes of use between club development, swimming lessons, casual and lane/fitness swimming. Plus it again challenges the financial operational model for the pool and the financial performance requirements on cost recovery.
- 2.42 However, given the need to reduce used capacity and create more capacity then doing this by programming the most popular activities is the most manageable option because it is under the control of the public operator. A programming review could also identify ways to condense programme of use across different pool sites. Given the predominate travel mode to pools is by car and 85% of all visits to pools are by car then offering specific programmes at only one site maybe acceptable to customers used to travelling up to 20 minutes by car to swim. Yet again easy to write on paper but challenging in meeting customer relations and service standards.
- 2.43 **Option 4 – under management change** is to review the existing pools which are outside the supply base for the fpm study, predominantly because they are too small. Appendix 1 of the main report lists 5 swimming pools which are excluded on grounds of being too small and below the 160 sq metres of water. An option is to consider if one of these sites could be suitable for a dedicated use, such as learn to swim programmes, again thereby reducing the used capacity of the main public pools.
- 2.44 In summary and as shown the four management options to reduce the used capacity of the East Staffordshire pools are limited in scope and impact in relation to the scale of the issue.
- 2.45 There are also concerns about customer and bordering authority relationships and most importantly the costs of meeting increases in use of pools, whilst also potentially reducing the income generation at public pools. Therefore the other set of options for provision of additional water space are also considered.
- 2.46 **Option 5 – under new provision** is to increase the pool capacity at one of the existing pools which the Council may consider in the period between 2013 – 2031 is in need of further modernisation or refurbishment. It is acknowledged that Meadowside Leisure Centre was modernised in 2010 and Uttoxeter Leisure Centre will be modernised in 2014. However the period up to 2031 is another 18 years and as population increases the pools will experience more demand. Plus used capacity is already high and so the “wear and tear” on the buildings will increase. In short, there will be a need to further modernise these pools over the next 18 years, based on the fpm findings. If this happens and the site and financial model allows for it then increasing the water space at what are the

two most popular venues is the least cost PROVISION option.

- 2.47 **Option 6 – under new provision** is to consider joint development with a neighbouring authority. It is noticeable that South Derbyshire has a negative supply and demand balance and the average used capacity of its pools is 91%. Its pool stock with the exception of Etwall Leisure Centre (2009) is quite old. Finally as already set out the biggest import/export exchange of demand for East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire is with each other. In short the authority may also be considering its future need for swimming pool provision and on the fpm assessment if there is consideration of joint development this is the authority which is most favourable to East Staffordshire.
- 2.48 **Option 7 – under new provision and management change** – is that most likely there is no one solution to the issue of reducing used capacity and creating more pool capacity and it is likely to be a combination of management change and possibly new provision with one or more other authorities. So the way forward could be a hybrid of the options set out.

Preferred Option

- 2.49 To summarise and repeat - the challenge is, can the school/commercial pools increase access for public use and provide for a wider range of swimming programmes? (Options 1 – 4). If NOT then these is an issue of the main public pools being very full to capacity and resolution of this issue could be by additional swimming pool provision (options 5 – 6).
- 2.50 The management options are more challenging to achieve because they involve the co-operation and agreement of several providers to either allow greater access to their pools for more public use and/or change the programming of pools to create more pool capacity but for a more narrow range of swimming programmes. It is for East Staffordshire Council to assess the realism of being able to deliver them or if they are non starters.
- 2.51 If they are not achievable then option 5 with provision of additional water space so as to reduce the used capacity at Meadowside and meet the projected increase in demand within Burton makes it the realistic option to progress. IF this could be achieved at the Meadowside site this is the most preferable location. However if the site and current building configuration does not allow this then the new provision option is for a 25 metre x 4 lane with a learner pool as the new build option. The priority location for a new pool to meet the need to reduce used capacity is Burton

Context for the fpm report

- 2.52 The facility planning model methodology is robust and rigorous and provides a set of options to address the issues identified. It is not however the definitive answer/way forward. The findings provide an extensive evidence base on which to base local consultations with sports organisations and facility managers so as to check and challenge the fpm findings and provide a more rounded and complete assessment. This along with the strategic and corporate objectives of East Staffordshire Borough Council will provide the best way forward for swimming pool provision across East Staffordshire.