

Council – 15 February 2022
Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)

Motion from Cllr Keating - The Future of Swimming in North Somerset

Council recognises the vital role swimming pools play in our local community. Swimming pools are community hubs where people of all ages come together for fun, fitness and sport.

It is estimated that the enormous benefits swimming brings to people's physical and mental health saves NHS and Social Care services more than £357 million each year across the UK. The benefits of physical activity on well being are recognised in North Somerset's own recently adopted Health and Well being policy.

Council reaffirms its commitment to providing top class swimming facilities in North Somerset.

Council notes with concern the report published by Swim England in September 2021 – A Decade in Decline: The Future of Swimming Pools in England – which warns that, without proper investment and refurbishment, up to 2000 swimming pools could be lost across the UK over the next decade.

Many swimming pools in North Somerset are coming towards the end of their lifespan, while others such as that at Churchill Sports Centre have been indefinitely closed due to historical lack of investment and the impact of the Covid pandemic.

Council also notes that Leisure centres can account for as much as 40 per cent of a council's direct carbon emissions. New or refurbished pools are much more sustainable (both economically and environmentally) than those left unimproved and can play a key part in meeting our climate change ambitions.

Council resolves to adopt the recommendations contained in Swim England's 'Future of Swimming Pools in England' report to:

- Undertake a Strategic Needs Assessment to identify the investment needed to improve existing swimming pools in North Somerset to avoid a future shortfall in the provision of local swimming facilities.
- Bid for full Government funding for the refurbishment works that are identified (and for new pools if required).
- Council further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to demand that the full £1 billion of grant funding recommended in Swim England's report is made available to local authorities to refurbish and expand their swimming pool provision. As part of this funding grants should also be made available to support local authorities to undertake full strategic needs assessments of their local swimming provision

Cllr Patrick Keating,
Blagdon and Churchill Ward