

# Sandwell Aquatics Centre



Delivering the only brand-new venue for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, with a legacy impact for the community for generations

## CLIENT

Wates and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

## LPA

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

## STATUS

Complete

## SERVICES

Planning

## Our role

- Turley provided planning consultancy on the delivery of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, a new purpose-built facility designed to host the aquatics events for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and as a legacy community facility for Smethwick, to address an existing under provision of sporting facilities in the area.
- Advice included; loss of playing pitches, integration with residential setting, strategic advice concerning timescales for delivery.
- A full planning application for the project, which included the erection of the leisure centre and the temporary works ('games mode') to enable its use as a venue for the Commonwealth Games was submitted at the end of January 2019. This represented a significantly reduced timescale to submission of a planning application which was required to be of the highest-quality, given the need to reduce the risk of post-submission delays, the clients and stakeholders involved, and the prestige of the project. The application was subsequently approved at the end of April 2019, representing a 13-week determination period.

## Results

- The approved development delivered a purpose-built leisure centre, which hosted the Commonwealth Games aquatics events.
- Subsequent to the Games, these temporary elements including the majority of spectator seating were removed, with the building then retro-fitted with sports halls, fitness suites, studios, gym and other complementary uses including outdoor football pitches and play spaces and landscaping, in accompaniment to the pools and 1,000 retained spectator seats. These uses are delivered within a £70m flagship building of high-quality design.
- The new Sandwell Aquatics Centre has delivered a state-of-the-art, world-class facility within one of the most-deprived and physically inactive areas of the UK, which had previously identified a clear and pressing need for new swimming and leisure facilities. In doing so, the development has provided a tangible benefit to the local community, facilitating healthy and active lifestyles, with over 15,000 visits to the centre weekly since its opening in summer 2023.
- The new building is one of the most energy-efficient Olympic-sized swimming pools delivered in the UK.

**Turley**