

**ADOPTION OF LOCAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF CORE  
SPORTS FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE****(Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)****1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Members consider the adoption of local standards for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A need to develop and adopt local sports facility standards has been identified through recent research. It is intended the adoption of standards will assist in maintaining an appropriate range of sports facilities in the district to meet future need. It is proposed that, in the near future, a leisure facilities strategy will be developed which will embrace the local standards identified within this report.
- 2.2 The need for a clear and prioritised framework for future investment in sports facility provision is critical given the likely need for additional provision as a result of population growth in the district, principally in the St Neots area, and the need for ongoing investment in the existing infrastructure.
- 2.3 There is also a need for objective standards, as a measure of change. Keeping pace with changes in population numbers and needs will be important in maintaining accessibility to sports facilities. The dispersed nature of the district, with the four main towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Neots and St Ives, smaller villages and more rural areas means that district-wide standards are a means of maintaining a strategic overview of provision versus demand.
- 2.4 There are two main factors which are particularly relevant to the future provision of sports facilities. These are the future implementation of the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) in the district, and the significant population growth predicted. Local standards can be used when new developments are proposed to guide and inform the nature and extent of resources, financial and operational, which are needed to ensure that Huntingdonshire has sufficient up-to-date, fit-for-purpose, and accessible sports facilities. This should allow proactive planning to meet future demand.
- 2.5 In order to assist in the development of local standards, Strategic Leisure Limited was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of existing provision and to identify future needs based on predicted population growth using Sport England's nationally recognised model the 'Sports Facility Calculator'. Their report provides the evidence for the proposed standards.

### **3 EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE STANDARDS**

- 3.1 A report was produced by Strategic Leisure Limited in March 2008. This research was looking at community sports facility provision; both present and future needs.
- 3.2 The research focused on indoor sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness facilities, indoor bowls) and artificial turf pitches (ATPs), and considers existing and planned facilities incorporating: local authority leisure centres, voluntary sector sports clubs, private sector facilities, and secondary schools, that will be re-built or re-furbished under PFI or the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.
- 3.3 The district has a significant sporting infrastructure which includes provision for activities such as golf, sailing, etc. and a large number of individual sports clubs. These are very important to facilitate increased participation and encourage people to become involved in activity on a regular basis. However, the lack of a nationally agreed methodology for recommended levels of provision means these facilities are excluded from this report. They will be included in a further strategy to be presented later in the year.
- 3.4 The key drivers for adoption of local standards, and eventually a strategy, are:
- ◆ The need to plan strategically and ensure sustainability of future provision
  - ◆ The need to inform the Local Development Framework (LDF), and Supplementary Planning Documents and set out expectations for S106 contributions from developers towards future sports facility provision
  - ◆ The priorities and objectives for the Sustainable Community Strategy
  - ◆ The need to identify what provision is needed in St Neots, given the significant population increases planned for this area
  - ◆ The requirement to identify the needs of those living in rural areas, where accessibility to sports facilities is more limited
  - ◆ The need to increase participation in sport at local level (LAA target)
  - ◆ The emerging opportunities for partnerships – Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - Schools, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sports Clubs etc.

### **4 CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMAND – SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS**

- 4.1 This assessment of need is based on Sport England's 'National Sports Facility Calculator' which identifies the level of provision needed for the current population, and future changes. The suggested standards are therefore based on population numbers.
- 4.2 To make the assessment relevant to local need, the modelling accounts for the actual number of sports facilities that are deemed accessible; those currently available on a pay and play basis. This additional analysis highlights where there are built facilities in the district that are not currently fully accessible for community use. This situation, which is common across the UK, would suggest that the way forward could be a

combination of opening up existing sports facilities to ensure there is greater community access and developing new facilities; this is an area that will be considered in the eventual strategy. The outcome of the supply and demand analysis is summarised in Annex 1. The research identifies short-falls for certain types of facility.

- 4.3 It is recommended that, using Sport England’s nationally recognised model the ‘Sports Facility Calculator’, that Huntingdonshire adopts the following local standards for future core sports facility provision. Figures are based on 1000 head of population.

Table 1

<b>FACILITY TYPE</b>	<b>Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population</b>
<b>Sports Hall</b> (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m
<b>Indoor Swimming Pool</b> (@ min 212 sq m or 4 lane x 25m)	10.96 sq m
<b>Fitness Stations</b>	3.6 stations
<b>Indoor Bowls</b>	0.05 rink
<b>Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size)</b> ( 1x 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed standards will be used to assess future need for sports facilities and will be used as part of the proposed Sports Facilities Strategy. They are also a simple population multiplier, which together with the predicted supply/demand for facilities illustrated in table 3, planning officers can use to assess potential need created by any development.
- 5.2 The research report also includes a series of recommendations based on the analysis of supply and demand. The Sports Facilities Strategy Group will consider these recommendations when developing the strategy.
- 5.3 Nothing in this report should be taken to imply that the Council will always be the provider of any facility. Increases in provision may be achieved by: encouraging increased accessibility to existing facilities; assisting in the development of community facilities; developing new facilities or encouraging the private sector to fill the market opportunity.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

It is RECOMMENDED that

- ◆ Members agree to the adoption of the local standards as identified in this report (Table 1) for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Sports Facilities Standards Report 2007-2020, Strategic Leisure, March 2008  
Activity Profile: Huntingdonshire, Sport England with Living Sport & ERPHO,  
July 2007

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Table 2 Current supply/demand

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current Level of Provision (2007)	Notes
<b>Sports Hall</b> (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	8612 sq m.	4536 sq m	The survey discounted smaller sports halls. There is 2376 sq m of space within these smaller venues and there are 2 sports halls currently in development. Predicted need for <1 additional sports hall. There are issues about the types of activities small sports halls can support.
<b>Indoor Swimming Pool</b> (@ min 212 sq m)  [Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m]	10.96 sq m	1844 sq m	938 sq m	The survey discounted smaller pools. Including <u>all</u> smaller pools there is 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district. There are issues about both accessibility and the types of activities small pools can support.
<b>Fitness Stations</b>	3.6 stations	605	586	Almost 40% of these facilities are in HDC leisure centres. At the time of the survey there was a shortfall of 19 fitness stations. Since the survey new fitness stations are being developed within HDC leisure centres.
<b>Indoor Bowls</b>	0.05 rink	8.41 rinks	14 rinks	There is an apparent over-supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.
<b>Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size)*</b> ( min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	6.7	5	There was an identified need for more pitches There are current plans to develop 2 more pitches.

\*NB There are different types of Synthetic Turf Pitch (sand dressed, 3G, etc) not all are suitable for all sports/uses. The mix of types will be considered by the strategy group.

**Table 3 Predicted supply/demand in 2021 due to population change\*\***

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current Level of Provision (2007)	Notes
<b>Sports Hall</b> (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	9646 sq m	4536 sq m	2 in development in 2008-11. Further 2 large sports halls required (by 2021) to cope with demand from population increase. There are some small halls in the district that may not be fit for purpose.
<b>Indoor Swimming Pool</b> (@ min 212 sq m)  [Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m]	10.96 sq m	2065 sq m	938 sq m	The 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district, includes some very small pools that may not be fit for purpose.
<b>Fitness Stations</b>	3.6 stations	678	586	Increasing demand for fitness stations set to continue.
<b>Indoor Bowls</b>	0.05 rink	9.4 rinks	14 rinks	There is still likely to be an apparent over-supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.
<b>Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full Size)</b> ( 1x 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	7.5	5	2 more planned before 2021 – in hand. Thus need for <1 extra pitches.

\*\*NB: The predicted demand for facilities (above) is based solely on population growth. It is likely that demand may increase from existing residents, as the Government and agencies promote the health benefits of increased physical activity. This increase in demand due to market trends/health promotion will be considered further in formulating the strategy.