



# North Norfolk District Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy

## Final Report

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# 1: Introduction & Context

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- 1.1 In September 2014 North Norfolk District Council commissioned naa to produce an indoor leisure facility strategy for North Norfolk District, with the objective being to set out the strategic direction and local need for indoor sports facilities up to 2036 and beyond.
- 1.2 The strategy is based on an audit and assessment, which has gathered and developed the evidence base. This has applied the Sport England methodology of Assessing Needs and Opportunities (ANOG) guidance, which is the industry - accepted methodology for developing an evidence base for sports and leisure facilities.
- 1.3 This hard evidence data has been combined with extensive consultations to initially obtain views on what is important (and why) to people in the district and then to feedback naa's views on the findings. This has been with all providers, operators and organisations with an interest in the provision of sports facilities in the district, public, commercial and voluntary organisations. Site visits and meetings with all the operators of the facilities in the district have also been held to understand how things work on the ground.
- 1.4 Assessing the current and future need for sports and leisure facilities and ensuring this is based on requirements up to 2036 is only part of the story - facilities are the means to the end. The ultimate objective is to increase participation in sport and physical activity and create an active and healthy lifestyle for residents across North Norfolk.
- 1.5 Consequently it is important to understand who across the District participates in sport and physical activity, which sports/activities they do, how often and why, how far they travel to participate and what are the motivations and barriers to increasing or starting some participation?
- 1.6 To get this understanding the work has involved the review of data for North Norfolk District based on Sport England evidence and findings on participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity. This has been reviewed and challenged through the series of public consultations and site visits.
- 1.7 All this work contributes to the development of the evidence base upon which the strategy is based. This along with the objectives of the District Council, its vision for sports and leisure facilities across the District and the key drivers for change which will impact on the delivery of the strategy.
- 1.8 The findings from the development of this evidence base – known as the audit and assessment - are set out in a separate Appendices to the strategy. This includes Sport England's data from its Active People survey; data on the health profile of North Norfolk and the costs of inactivity; and data from the Sport England Active Places Power facilities database.
- 1.9 All this information has been supplemented by information gathered on the catchment profile of the main centres, online surveys to Parish and Town Councils, the extensive consultations already described and a review of the financial performance of the two main public leisure centres. Collectively, it forms the audit and assessment report.
- 1.10 The key findings, issues and options that are raised by the audit and assessment are summarised in this strategy document and set out as strategy recommendations and framework for delivery. The final section is about financing the strategy recommendations, monitoring and review.

1.11 The sports facility types included in the project brief are: sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness centres and gyms, dance studios, squash courts, indoor bowls centres and indoor tennis centres. Specialist facilities for certain sports have been addressed where these have been identified in consultation. This relates to gymnastics and indoor cricket. The assessment includes all providers of these facilities: public sector, the District Council and state schools, commercial and tourist sectors, independent schools and voluntary organisations.

1.12 The audit includes all facilities in the district. However to be included in the supply and demand assessment there has to be public/community use of the venue, based on the amount of time and type of access there is for use by the public, clubs and the local community, at each individual facility. This is set out in the assessment report and reported on in the findings for each facility type in subsequent sections.

1.13 The sequence of the strategy document is:

- Section 2 - Strategy objectives and key features of North Norfolk
- Section 3 - Indoor sports facilities and a healthy lifestyle – “Making the Case”
- Section 4 - Assessing Needs and Opportunities for each sports facility type – the methodology
- Section 5 - Sports Facilities – key findings, issues and options for each facility type,
- Section 6 - Strategy recommendations and framework for delivery
- Section 7 - Financing the strategy recommendations, monitoring and review

1.14 The appendices are:

- Appendix 1: North Norfolk key documents and application to the North Norfolk Indoor Leisure Facility Strategy
- Appendix 2: North Norfolk profile of participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity
- Appendix 3: Full audit and assessment for each of the seven sports facility types included in the project scope
- Appendix 4: Description of findings from the site visits, consultation events and specific consultation with stakeholders.

## 2: Strategy Objectives and Key Features

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2.1 North Norfolk District Council set some key objectives and drivers for change for the strategy. These are set out below together with the source in brackets;

- to contribute to creating an active and healthy lifestyles for all residents (Council's role as part of its public health responsibilities and agenda);
- to facilitate and support communities to deliver and improve the health of local people (District Council Health Strategy 2010 – 2014);
- to engage with local people in shaping local services (project brief);
- to promote a positive image of North Norfolk as a premier visitor destination and maximise the potential of the Council's tourism assets (Council Corporate Plan 2010 – 2015);
- to help define the role of the District Council in the delivery of leisure service provision (project brief);
- to increase participation in sport and physical activity (Council Sports Strategy 2010 – 2015); and
- to develop the local infrastructure of the district's current and future need for sports and leisure facilities, based on the most effective use of facilities, both the Council's and others in partnership, and sustaining the longevity of Council owned assets (Council Sports Strategy 2010 – 2015).

2.2 Within the precise remit of the project the key objectives and requirements are;

- a detailed quantity, quality and accessibility audit of existing provision of all indoor sports and leisure facilities in the District across all providers;
- an assessment of the adequacy of these facilities to serve the needs of existing and likely population in the period ending 2036 and to take account of the needs of all users including tourists. The future assessment has been undertaken up to 2021 and then to 2026, as it is only feasible to project population changes with any degree of accuracy up to 2026. Furthermore Sport England guidance is to develop sports facilities strategies on the basis of a 10 year horizon, as it considers hard evidence of change beyond 10 years is difficult to predict. The needs of subsequent dates will need to be addressed as the strategy develops and is monitored, to plan for what is likely to happen beyond 2026; and
- the need for an evidence base to aid decision making regarding priorities for the District Council and for its owned facilities.

2.3 As context for the development of the evidence base assessment and the strategy, it is important to set out some very important features of North Norfolk. Some of these are givens and cannot be changed but they are very influential in setting the direction for the strategy and its delivery. Others are some major findings from the work itself and again influence the strategy direction – but which can be changed.

## **Population Change and the Sporting Population**

- 2.4 In determining the future demand for sports facilities the changes in population are integral to that assessment. It is reasonable to assume that an absolute increase in population will lead to an increase in the demand for sports facilities. However it is important to consider the age structure of the population now and how this is projected to change up to 2026 across North Norfolk (bearing in mind the provisos set out above about the recommended end date of the strategy).
- 2.5 It could be that the age structure of the population means that although there is a projected increase in absolute population numbers up to 2026, the age structure of the population means there is a lower total number of people in the main age bands for sports participation in 2026 than in 2014 (the base date used for the study).
- 2.6 The key findings of population change are set out as context for the assessment for each sports facility type.

### North Norfolk Population 2014

- 2.7 In 2014 the population of North Norfolk is estimated at 102,600, of which 48% are men and 52% are women (the figures are based on a 2013-based Population Projections dataset from 2013-2037 by five year age group and gender, available on Norfolk Insight). The headlines on the overall population structure for North Norfolk compared with England national averages are:
- slightly higher proportion of females than in England wide, due to an aged population in the district;
  - fewer people in the 16-19 age group;
  - fewer people in the 20-24 age group;
  - a lot fewer people in the 25-34 age group;
  - fewer people in the 35-49 age group;
  - more people in the 50-64 age group; and
  - a lot more than the national average of pensioners (i.e. those over 60/65), with 35% over 65 compared with around 20% nationally and regionally, and particularly in the 75+ group.
- 2.8 The 16+ population in North Norfolk has increased since 2007, while younger people have decreased in number. The overall increase in population since 2007 has been about 5%, which corresponds with the national and regional average.
- 2.9 There is a small proportion of non-white residents at less than 1% of the total North Norfolk population, and a larger proportion of disabled people, which could be a reflection of the predominance of older age groups in North Norfolk.

### North Norfolk Future Population

- 2.10 The total population is projected to rise from 102,600 in 2014 to 106,500 in 2021, a 3.8% increase, and to 109,600 by 2026 a 6.8% increase. The proportion of females to males will remain higher. Over the two periods, the population is estimated to change as follows:
- By 2021, increases in 5-14, 30-39, 55-64 age groups, with the biggest increase in 70+ of 23%. Decreases in 15-29, 40-49 and 65-69 age bands
  - By 2026, compared with 2014, increases in 5-14, 30-39 and 55+, with the biggest increase in 75+ of 44%. Decreases in the 5-9, 20-29 and 40-54 age bands.

## Implications of Population Change for Sports Participation

- 2.11 If these changes are analysed in accordance with the different age groups that have the highest participation and frequency of participation, the situation is expected to be as follows (percentages rounded):

**Table 2.1: Population change by age band 2014 – 2021 and 2014 - 2026 for North Norfolk District**

Age group	Change 2014-2021	Change 2014-2026
<b>Total population</b>	+4%	+7%
<b>Active population (6-54)</b>	-2%	-3%
<b>Less active population (55 – 59)</b>	+ 11%	+ 10%
<b>Inactive population (0-5, 75+)</b>	+10%	+17%
<b>Junior sport (10-19)</b>	-1%	+7%
<b>Adult indoor sports (20-44)</b>	-2%	-1%
<b>Veterans sport e.g. bowls (45- 74)</b>	+2%	-1%

- 2.12 The key findings from this assessment are:

- While the total population is estimated to rise by 4% over 2014 – 2021 and 7% over 2021 – 2026 for the purposes of participation in sport, the active population (i.e. those aged between 6 and 55 who are more likely to take part in sport) is projected to fall by 2% - 3% over the same period
- There is a category of less active population in the 55 – 59 age group and this is projected to increase by 11% between 2014 – 2021 and by 9.6% over 2014 – 2026. This age band does participate, albeit it has a lower rate of participation than in the younger age bands of the active population, hence the term less active population. This less active population does have a sizeable increase over the 2014 – 2026 period and will offset the decline in the more active population. (6 – 54). Indoor sports/activities in which this age band participates most are swimming and indoor bowls across both genders and for men snooker. Low impact exercise classes are also a popular activity and mainly for women. Motivations for participation are a health benefit and as a social and recreational activity. Outdoor activities are more popular especially walking and for men golf, fishing and cycling
- The inactive population meantime rises by 10-17% over the same period. It is important to distinguish the active from the inactive population in terms of age bands because the active population is the basis of the demand assessment. As table 2.1 sets out there are different changes in the percentage of the population in the various age groups of 6 – 55. It is important to understand what these changes are in each age range as this will directly impact on the demand for the seven types of sports facilities in the strategy
- As a proportion of the total population, the active population falls in total numbers from 51,150 in 2014 to 49,940 in 2021 and 49,620 by 2026. In percentage terms this represents a drop from 50% of the total population in 2014 to 47% in 2021 and 45% in 2026. Conversely the inactive population rises by the same percentages
- The implications for the main indoor sports are that participation considered alone (and irrespective of any increases in participation as the result of sports development initiatives) is likely to decline for adults. It will increase slightly for

young people, although the built indoor facilities considered in this assessment and strategy tend to be relatively less well used by people under 20

- The major increase in the individual age groups (i.e. over 75) is unlikely to have any significant impact on participation, as most people at this age no longer take part in sport and only around 2% - 3% undertake regular physical activity. The sports that are most relevant to older people and included in the project brief are indoor bowls and indoor tennis.

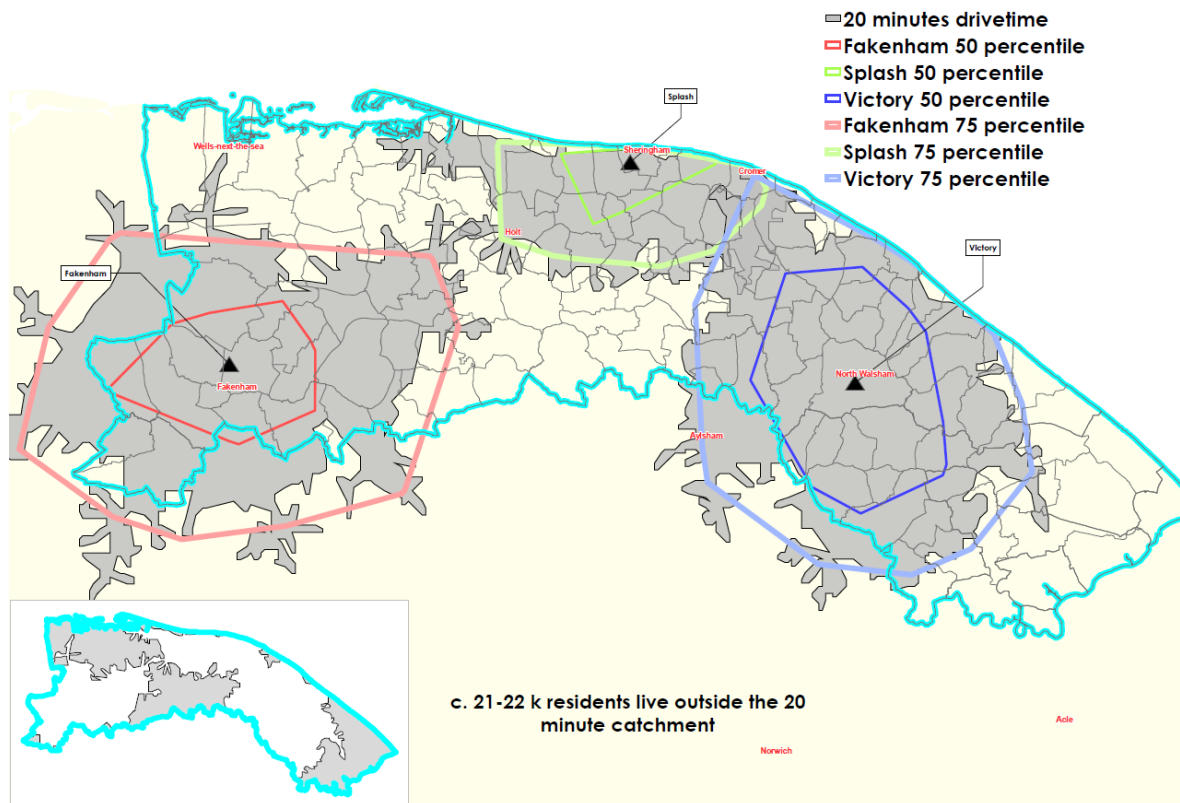
- 2.13 To summarise therefore, there is likely over the period of the strategy to be an overall decline in the most active population (5 – 54) of about 2-3% compared with the increased population of 4-7%. There is however an increase in the less active population (55 – 59) of between 10 – 11% which will offset some of the decline in the more active population. There will be an increase in population in the junior sport age range whilst the population in the veteran sport age range increases very slightly.
- 2.14 In terms of overall demand for the facilities that are being considered in this study, population change is unlikely to result in increased demand by itself. However what must also be considered are targets and development initiatives put in place by North Norfolk District, sports clubs and National Governing Bodies of Sport and others to increase overall participation rates in particular sports. If these are achieved then this will result in increases in participation.
- 2.15 Furthermore given the demographic changes then the need for indoor sports facilities and the activities they provide could increase the demand for health and well-being programmes, alongside the traditional indoor hall sports programmes. So for example more demand for exercise and fitness classes for a health benefit. Plus an increasing demand for activities such as recreational badminton yoga and pilates.
- 2.16 A trend noticed by Badminton England is the need for public leisure centres to schedule more court time for recreational badminton in the afternoons because of increasing demand from an older population. This population has free daytime for activities and prefers to participate in the day than evenings. School sports facilities are not accessible during term times and so the focus is on public leisure centres to provide for an emerging peak period.
- 2.17 Given all these findings it is reasonable to say that maintaining the current overall rate of sports and physical activity participation by age and gender as measured by the Active People surveys will be an achievement in itself. There will be a shift in demand for more recreational activity from an aging population, and activities which have a health and well-being focus for all age groups will become more prominent.

#### **Settlement Pattern of North Norfolk District**

- 2.18 The settlement pattern and location of the main towns across the District is set out in map 2.1 overleaf. It also shows a 20-minute drive time catchment area of the main public sports facilities located in North Walsham, Sheringham, Cromer and Fakenham.
- 2.19 The 20-minute drive time catchment area is used because it is the accepted catchment area (based on Sport England research) for the majority of users to travel to participate on a regular basis.



**Map 2.1: Settlement pattern of North Norfolk District with a 20 minute drive time catchment area of the main sports facility venues in North Norfolk District 2015**



2.20 The map shows the extent of the catchment areas and leaves areas of the district “outside catchment” of these most important facilities of sports halls or swimming pools. The areas outside catchment are the areas shaded grey in the inset map. These areas are outside the catchment of the named facilities. A significant point is that it is not possible to have all the main settlements within a 20 minute drive time of the most important facility types of swimming pools and sports halls. The total population outside the catchment areas of these venues is between 21,000 – 22,000 people. The map does only show the area of North Norfolk which is outside the catchment area of North Norfolk facilities. There are facilities in neighbouring authorities such as Breckland that will extend into North Norfolk and reduce the land area which is outside catchment. However the map is illustrating the area of North Norfolk which is inside and outside the catchment area of the North Norfolk facilities.

2.21 The challenge it sets for the strategy is how to meet the needs of residents now and in the future for these facilities? The dispersed nature of the population/settlements means there are three choices:

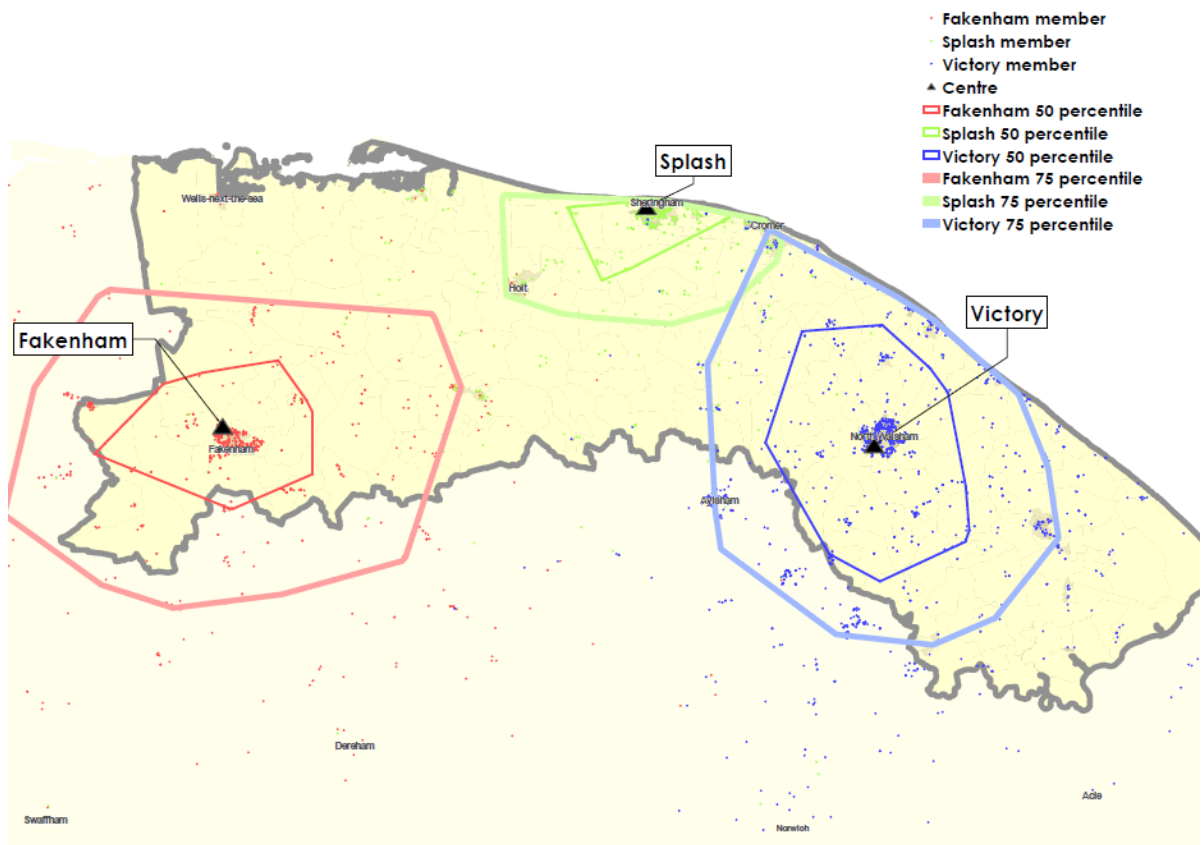
- residents travel further to use the facilities – but the Sport England research shows that participation will not happen on a regular basis because of cost and competing demands on time to do other activities which fit into the lifestyle of individuals and families;
- provide more facilities than may be needed in recognition of the settlement pattern of the District. This however has a cost of providing and maintaining more facilities than may be needed. There may not be a core business case to justify provision and provide a viable facility without very extensive financial support. Provision is driven by the settlement patterns and lack of access, not the supply

and demand and capacity of the existing facilities to meet all the demand across the district; and

- make more use of what already exists by increasing access to some sports halls and swimming pools that are (possibly not considered by residents) as facilities that are accessible to the public. This mainly applies to swimming pools and in effect it is stretching the catchment areas a bit further – so addressing the settlement pattern and trying to increase access across a wider area and to more residents.

2.22 To underline the point about how local the catchment areas are for facilities are, map 2.2 plots the location of the membership of the Victory Centre in North Walsham, the Splash Centre in Sheringham and the Fakenham Sports and Fitness Centre. The map illustrates these centres because they are the three public leisure centres and where information on membership is available.

**Map 2.2: Catchment area for 60% and 75% of the membership of Victory Swim and Fitness Centre, Splash Leisure and Fitness Centre and Fakenham Sports and Fitness Centre**



2.23 The smaller line for each of the three facilities shows the catchment area for 60% of the membership of each centre. Whilst the line for the larger area around each centre, shows the catchment area for 75% of the membership of each centre. Membership usually represents people who are regular participants and so is a good indicator of the catchment area for a sports facility. The maps do underline how local the catchment area for regular participation is and the viability of a sports facility is based on regular and repeat participation.

2.24 This finding on the implications of the settlement pattern of the district is addressed later in the strategy in relation to the needs assessment for particular sports facility types.

### **Concentrated Sports Facilities Provision**

- 2.25 The final feature of North Norfolk District relates to areas of concentrated provision of sports facilities in one area but where the ownership, management and access of each individual facility mean that possibly there is not the most sports and cost effective use of the venues. In short the scale, range and potential of these facilities is dissipated because each is managed in isolation. The collective critical mass of a sporting hub with community use and access across several different types of facilities and activities is not realized, whilst individually each sports operator and owner has to continue to try and provide a viable venue.
- 2.26 An objective and key driver for the District Council in developing and delivering this strategy is an explicit recognition of the need to work in partnership in the future with all providers and operators of sports facilities. To do this to maximize the benefit from what already exists for the benefit of all residents.
- 2.27 One example of this fragmented provision and operation is in Cromer where there are several venues and individual facilities very closely located to each other but each under separate ownership, management and access arrangements. In this one location there are at least three different owners (local authority, sports club, school/academy) and operators and 6 different facility types (sports hall, swimming pool, artificial grass pitch, tennis courts, squash courts and outdoor pitches).
- 2.28 A way forward for the strategy is to create a more cohesive structure to the management and operation of this separate sports facilities. Create a sporting hub with more critical and sporting mass.
- 2.29 These three strategic features of North Norfolk of: population change; settlement pattern across the District; and concentrated sports provision but isolated operation are addressed in the subsequent sections of the strategy. They are set out here because they are fundamental to the assessment of need, the strategy direction and content.

## 3: Indoor Leisure Facilities and Healthy Lifestyle: Making the Case

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- 3.1 As set out already the indoor leisure facility strategy for North Norfolk has to meet requirements other than assessing the need for indoor sports facilities. In addition the contribution that sport and leisure can make to a healthy lifestyle for residents. It is generally accepted and documented that being active through sport and physically activity does have a health benefit but relating the two is helpful in making the case.
- 3.2 This is not to say sports facilities are the panacea to getting North Norfolk more active but it does provide context for the challenges faced in North Norfolk and the benefits that can be achieved from a more active and healthier population – given one of the key drivers for the District Council for the leisure facilities strategy is a more active and healthy population.
- 3.3 The data and evidence can assist in making the connection between health organisations and those involved in developing and delivering sports facilities and development programmes. The table overleaf illustrates the two dimensions of how active North Norfolk is and the costs and benefits to health of more activity. Appendix 2 contains a full description and the facts and figures relating to the sporting and physical activity profile for North Norfolk.

**Table 3.1: Sport and physical activity profile for North Norfolk**

How active is North Norfolk?	What are North Norfolk's sporting statistics?	What does inactivity cost?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Norfolk's rate of adult sports and physical activity participation is virtually unchanged over the period of the Active People surveys 2006 – 2014.</li> <li>In 2006 some 34% of the North Norfolk adult population participated at least once a week. By October 2014 the rate is almost unchanged at 34.2% it did increase to 37.3% of adult participating at least once a week in 2011.</li> <li>The North Norfolk rate of participation is in line with ONS comparator authorities. North Norfolk has tracked the rate and then improved on the rate in West Dorset. In October 2006 North Norfolk was on a par with East Devon but the latter has increased participation by 4% over the period 2006 - 2014.</li> <li>The areas of highest participation In North Norfolk are in Fakenham and Holt where the rate of once week participation is between 38% - 42% of the adult population. This is a statement of the differing levels of participation by area and should not be taken as an indication of the need for facilities.</li> <li>Since 2011 female participation has declined from 40.8% to 28.5% in 2014 participating at least once a week.</li> <li>Male participation has increased from 30.6% of males participating at least once a week in 2011 to 40.3% in 2014.</li> <li>In 2014 there was a 12% difference in once week male and female participation. This contrasts with a 7.3% gap in October 2006, when female adult participation was at 26.8% of the North Norfolk population and male participation was 34.1%.</li> <li>Swimming is the most popular activity as it is in the Region and England wide – despite a declining rate of participation in all areas. The rate of once month participation In North Norfolk is on a par with the Region at 11.4% of the adult population and slightly below the England wide percentage of 11.8% of all adults swimming at least once a month.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9% of North Norfolk adult residents are regular sports volunteers, compared to the national average of 6%.</li> <li>26.7% are members of sports clubs, receiving tuition or taking part competitively, compared to 33.6% nationally.</li> <li>55.6% of North Norfolk residents are satisfied with sporting provision in the area, compared to 60.3% nationally. This is wider than just satisfaction with facilities but facility provision and quality is a big component.</li> <li>The most popular sports for adult's participation are in order of participation: swimming, recreational cycling; football; gym and finally fitness and conditioning classes So three out of the five most popular activities are included in the District's Leisure Facilities Strategy.</li> <li>The rate of total NON-participation in sport and physical activity in North Norfolk is virtually unchanged between 2006 – 2014. It was 53.8% in 2006 and 53.7% of the North Norfolk adult population in 2014 not taking part in any sport or physical activity.</li> <li>In did fluctuate between these dates and decreased to 49% in 2011 but then reverted to the overall trend level of 53%.</li> <li>In terms of non-participation by gender, female participation is higher than males at 61.3% of females doing no sport or physical activity in 2013. This compares with 53.5% of adult males doing no activity. It is usually the case that female non-participation is higher than male.</li> <li>Of the totally inactive population some 36% of adults said they do wish to participate – this is the target potential for increasing participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The health costs of inactivity in North Norfolk are at least £1.7 million per year in 2013 – 2014.</li> <li>The North Norfolk costs from treating major illness are £1,781 per 100,000 population. This is almost the same as the Regional figure at £1,785 per 100,000 population and below the England wide figure at £1,817 per 100,000 population.</li> <li>The costs of treating particular illnesses in North Norfolk in 2012 were diabetes £343,000; coronary heart disease £957,000 and cerebrovascular disease e.g. stroke £286,000.</li> <li>Overweight adults (not obesity) in North Norfolk represent 69% of the adult population and it is 66% in the Region and 63% England wide. So a slightly higher overweight adult population in North Norfolk.</li> <li>The child percentages for under 16's in North Norfolk (for obesity) are 20% of all children, 18% in the Region and 19% England wide.</li> <li>The health gains (nationally) of a 30-49 year-old who plays football are valued at £27,600 over their lifetime.</li> </ul>

## 4: Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor Sports Facilities – The Methodology

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- 4.1 This section summarises the methodology that has been used in the development of the needs assessment and strategy. The assessment has been produced to follow the guidance from Sport England in its Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for indoor and built sports facilities.
- 4.2 There are seven sports facility types included in the strategy. These are: sports halls; swimming pools; health and fitness centres and gyms; studios; squash courts; indoor bowling centres; and indoor tennis centres. Consideration has also been given to indoor provision for other sports, where these have been raised during consultation - activities that can take place in sports halls (e.g. indoor cricket) or which would prefer to have a purpose built facility (e.g. gymnastics). The use of community and village halls has also been broadly considered, as these provide opportunities for sport in smaller villages where no purpose built sports facilities exist. The description of each facility type is included within the assessment of the findings.
- 4.3 The needs assessment has focused on assessing needs based on quantity, quality, accessibility and availability, which are the components of the ANOG and readily recognised and adopted in the planning process. The Sport England ANOG guidance advises to set out the findings from the needs assessment in the strategy in terms of three main outcomes;
- **Protect:** an evidence base which can inform policy formulation and seek to protect exiting facilities where there is an identified current and future need for use by the community;
  - **Enhance:** an evidence base which can inform policy and seek to enhance the provision of existing facilities where there is an identified current and future need and the most effective way to meet this need is by improvement to what already exists. This could be by enhanced facility provision but it could also mean changes in the access and availability of existing facilities to make the existing supply deliver more use for the community; and
  - **Provide:** an evidence base which can inform policy and lead to provision of new facilities where there is an identified need now and in the future, and where the most cost and sports effective way to meet this need is by provision of new facilities.

**Figure 4.1: Sport England Approach to Assessing Needs**



4.4 The stages of the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) approach are set out below and this is followed by a description of how the ANOG has been applied in North Norfolk:

A *Undertaking the Assessment:*

Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor your assessment

Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand

Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together

B *Application of the Assessment*

***Undertaking the Assessment***

***Stage 1: Prepare and tailor the assessment***

4.5 A scoping meeting of the North Norfolk Project Steering Group and key stakeholders was convened in October 2014 to set out the aims of the study, understand in more detail the key objectives for the strategy, the key drivers for change and to establish everyone's views on the collective needs and priorities for the study. The outcome of this preparation was to refine the scope of the brief.

4.6 A review of the North Norfolk District Council key corporate, strategic and sports documents identified in the project brief was then completed. This allowed naa to become familiar with the key Council documents and understand the relationship between the strategy and the wider Council objectives. The focus was in understanding but then asking and setting out "how does this apply to the Leisure Facility Strategy"? Then using this knowledge in the subsequent stages of the project. The review of documents is set out in Appendix 1.

4.7 After this work and following a review of the headline findings on participation and facility provision across the District, three separate consultation meetings were held where representatives of partnership organisations, national governing bodies of sport, local clubs, schools, District, Town and Parish Councils were invited, so the aims of the study could be presented.



- 4.8 More importantly the focus of the consultations was for naa to understand the views of these organisations and individuals on what they considered the study assessment should focus on and the most important outcomes

### **Stage 2: Gather information on supply and demand**

- 4.9 To gather information on the supply side, site assessment visits were made to all the facilities in the project scope. This included all types of providers and types of operation from pay and play, to club access at school venues, as well as the commercial membership providers and the tourism venues which cater for holidaymakers on their sites but do also provide access to their swimming pools, indoor bowls halls and gyms for local resident use.
- 4.10 At the site visits meetings were held with the business and/or facility manager. Discussion focused on the type of operation, the objectives, hours and types of use, changes and challenges in operation of the venue for community use from the provider and the customer. Discussion also focused on the core business case and the business model applied. Where possible data was collected on the operational business plan but this was not always requested, as it is commercially sensitive information.
- 4.11 The site visits and consultations allowed for a cross check on what the hard evidence data was saying about the facility provision but more importantly what is happening on the ground, the community access to the venues and the barriers to increasing participation. Information where available was also collected on customer surveys, membership details, user group forums or engagement with clubs to provide details of casual and club user information.
- 4.12 A full set of the findings from the site visits and consultation is set out in Appendix 4 to the strategy
- 4.13 An early and recurring theme from the site visits and consultations was that there is quite a high level of sports facility provision in the district and it is across several different providers. However it operates sometimes in discrete pockets of activity, so the collective effect and critical mass from all this provision is not readily known. The example of Cromer has already been cited. However there is also Gresham's School in Holt, which is providing extensive club and community groups' access to use the school's indoor (and outdoor) sports facilities. Also some of the commercial providers provide casual pay and play use of their venues as well as for their membership, for example Pinewood Leisure Club for its swimming pool, gym and indoor bowls centre.
- 4.14 In preparing a strategy setting out the way forward on the need for sports facilities across the district, it is important to consider all providers and all ways of operation. Very often it is possible to make more effective use of what already exists by working differently and in partnerships than trying to provide new facilities based on existing ways of working and thinking – to repeat a key objective of the District Council is to work more in partnership in the future. The scope to do this is very evident in North Norfolk and get more sports and cost effective outcomes from what already exists. This is set out in the strategy directions and recommendations section.

### **Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together**

- 4.15 The final part of this stage is to bring all the findings together into the actual assessment of the current and future demand for each of the facility types.
- 4.16 The assessment is set out in full in appendices to this strategy document. The Appendices as reported are;



- Appendix 1: North Norfolk key documents and application to the North Norfolk indoor Leisure Facility Strategy
- Appendix 2: North Norfolk Profile of participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity
- Appendix 3: Full audit and assessment for each of the seven sports facility types included in the project scope
- Appendix 4: Description of findings from the site visits, consultation events and specific consultation with stakeholders.

### ***Application of the Assessment***

- 4.17 The application of the assessment is set out next with the key findings for each sports facility type. This is a summary of the full assessment, the key findings and the issues and options that arise from the assessment.
- 4.18 This is followed by the application of the assessment in the section on strategy direction recommendations, set out under the headings of: Protect; Enhance; and Provide.
- 4.19 There are first generic recommendations with a rationale for action and what is required. This is followed with the same approach for each of the seven facility types.
- 4.20 The final section of the strategy sets out the monitoring and review and describes the actions required, responsibilities and timescales.

## 5: Sports Facilities – Key Findings, Issues and Options for each Facility Type

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- 5.1 This section sets out the key findings from the assessment report for each of the seven facility types. It summarises the findings, key issues and options that arise from the FULL assessment report. This may seem like repetition but it is considered that the strategy does have to contain this summary of the assessment, otherwise there is no context for the strategy direction and recommendations.
- 5.2 Swimming pools are the most important facility type in terms of participation and the costs of provision and operation. So the findings on swimming pools are set out in a bit more detail than for the other facility types.

### ***Sports Halls Summary, Key Issues and Options***

- 5.3 The assessment identifies;
- the current supply of sports halls in terms of the number, size and quality of sports halls is a good range. Furthermore there is a good balance of provision located at public leisure centres and separate school sites;
  - in terms of the supply and demand balance, there are insufficient sports halls to meet all the needs of the community. Demand exceeds supply by 7 badminton courts when comparing the total North Norfolk demand with the total North Norfolk supply. This reduces to four badminton courts when the location of sports halls in neighbouring authorities are included and which are accessible to residents of North Norfolk; and
  - as demand is greater than supply the assessment is that sports halls are very busy in the peak period and above the Sport England level of 80% of capacity used at peak times. However the site visits suggested there is slightly more capacity than the hard evidence data says.
- 5.4 The key issues are:
- the collective benefit of the sports halls is somewhat dissipated because of separate ownership, management and access arrangements for community use across the sports hall sites. There are three different providers of sports halls and so it is challenging to be able to say how the full stock could be managed and programmed to create more benefit/use - in effect making more use of what already exists. Better co-ordination of programming across venues could result in reducing the capacity used at peak times;
  - the settlement pattern of the district does work against achieving complete integration and access to venues by residents. The shortfall in Sheringham for example is unlikely to be met by the provision in Fakenham;
  - residents will access different sports halls for a variety of reasons - those closest to where they live, quality, programming and what fits their own and family choice in time and lifestyle. If demand exceeds supply it is likely that North Norfolk will most likely continue to export demand for sports halls;

- there are changes in the patterns of use for sports halls, with increasing demand for individual fitness based activity like dance, exercise and fitness classes. This complicates decisions on what the supply and type of provision should be in the future. Decisions should be based on these changing trends and their longevity. Also how the provision and programming of sports halls can meet wider North Norfolk District objectives, to repeat, dance and exercise classes gets more people participating than the playing of hall sports and dance/exercise classes appeal more to females. Female participation is lower than for males in North Norfolk; and
- future provision could be for a flexible space that can accommodate a range of dance and fitness/exercise classes and not actual traditional sports halls. Provision of a large dance studio in Wells and Sheringham located on a school site could be one example of meeting the unmet demand there.

#### 5.5 Options for the future provision of sports halls are:

- do nothing is not an option especially as the sports halls are estimated to be over used and so quality will deteriorate and participation will be affected;
- develop a coordinated approach to management, type of use and programming of the existing sports halls across all providers - so as to get more effective use out of the existing stock;
- decide how the District Council separately managed and operated sports halls on school sites at Cromer Academy, North Walsham High School and Stalham High School fit into the integrated provision of sports halls across all providers in the future – again the theme of maximizing use from what already exists;
- consider provision of new sports halls or a flexible indoor space (not necessarily a dedicated sports hall) in Sheringham and Wells. If the latter then this could be integrated on a school site so as to maximize use and operation in Wells but with a different approach in Sheringham (see swimming pools section). There is also the opportunity to change the provision, for example North Walsham is not identified as an area in need of additional sports hall provision. However it could be that provision is changed by the addition of an indoor gymnastics centre, which is a requirement in this part of the district;
- if new provision is for dance/flexible spaces then focus indoor hall sports activities at existing venues and through the coordinated management and access to these venues. Again, in effect getting more out of what already exists. Acknowledging participants will travel further to participate; and
- review the village halls provision - there are at least 5 village halls throughout the district plus the Holt Youth Project, which has a one badminton court size venue. The centre at Holt can accommodate some physical activity (not formal sport). There may be scope to increase time for more activity in centres such as Holt and village halls to overcome, in some small part, the areas of the District outside the catchment area of a sports hall.

#### 5.6 These options are set out under the Strategy direct and recommendations section under the project, enhance and provide headings.

#### **Swimming pools**

#### 5.7 There are 8 swimming pools in North Norfolk on 6 sites. It is a mixed economy of supply, ownership, age and type of use. For inclusion in the assessment pools have to be 160 m<sup>2</sup> of water (20m x 4 lane) and have access for community use. These pool sites are summarised in the Table 5.1 overleaf.

**Table 5.1: Swimming pool provision North Norfolk**

Name of facility	Type	Dimensions	Water area	Year built	Year refurbished	Ownership/type of access
CROMER HIGH SCHOOL	Main/General	20 x 8	160	1979	2001	Academy Trust/school swimming
FITNESS EXPRESS AT KELLING HEATH	Main/General	19 x 10	190	2000		Commercial/tourism
GRESHAM'S HIGH SCHOOL	Main/General	25 x 10	250	1970	1999	Independent school/school and community use
PINEWOOD LEISURE CLUB	Main/General	25 x 10	250	1992	2007	Commercial/tourism and local membership +pay and swim
PINEWOOD LEISURE CLUB	Learner/Teaching/Training	10 x 3	30			
SPLASH LEISURE AND FITNESS CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 14	350	1988	2004	NNDC/public leisure centre pay and swim/ tourists
SPLASH LEISURE AND FITNESS CENTRE	Learner/Teaching/Training/leisure pool	3 x 2	6			
VICTORY SWIM & FITNESS CENTRE	Main/General	25 x 13	325	2003		NNDC/public leisure centre pay and swim and clubs

5.8 The significant findings on the swimming pool supply are;

- the size of the main pools. Four of the six main pools are 25 metres x 4 lanes (212 m<sup>2</sup>) or larger. This is the benchmark pool size that can accommodate all the main swimming activities of learn to swim, recreational swimming, fitness/lane swimming, club use and swimming development. There is no provision for water polo or diving but these are specialist activities and would not be expected to be provided for in North Norfolk;
- there is a wide range of providers (last column in the table) - there are five different providers of swimming pools. With two public leisure centres, both provided by North Norfolk District Council, two commercial providers and two school providers;
- access for casual recreational swimming – the main activity - is available at three sites, including Pinewood Leisure Club (which may not be readily known). There is also access for community organisations (not pay and swim) at Gresham's School; and
- the pool stock is quite old - the oldest pool being Gresham's School, opened in 1970 but extensively modernised in 1999. The most recent pool is the Victory Centre in North Walsham opened in 2003.

5.9 To underline the strategic comment in section 2 of the strategy – lots of provision and lots of activity – but with different providers, operators and access arrangements.

5.10 In addition, to these sites there are a further three-swimming pools in North Norfolk which are not included in the assessment because of their size, being below 160 m<sup>2</sup> of water and/or because they do not provide for public access. Furthermore there are 2 school swimming pools in Fakenham which are at the Academy and Junior School, which catered for school learn to swim programmes but closed in 2014.

5.11 The accommodation of the national curriculum requirement to teach primary aged school children to learn to swim in the Fakenham area is now very challenging because of the distances, time and cost to take children to the nearest pools, which include Wells, Splash at Sheringham and Dereham Leisure Centre.

5.12 The full list of swimming pool sites across North Norfolk and their details are set out in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2: Swimming pool provision North Norfolk**

Site Name	Ward	Facility Sub Type	Marked Lanes	Size	Water area m <sup>2</sup>	Access	Ownership/management	Year Built/re furb
SPLASH LEISURE AND FITNESS CENTRE	Sheringham North	Main/General	6	25 x 14 m	350	Pay and Play	Local Authority/Trust	1988/2004
SPLASH LEISURE AND FITNESS CENTRE	Sheringham North	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	3 x 2m	6	Pay and Play	Local Authority/Trust	1988/2004
VICTORY SWIM & FITNESS CENTRE	North Walsham West	Main/General	6	25 x 13 m	325	Pay and Play	Local Authority/Trust	2003
PINEWOOD LEISURE CLUB	Corpusty	Main/General	6	25 x 10 m	250	Pay and Play	Commercial	1992/2007
PINEWOOD LEISURE CLUB	Corpusty	Learner/Teaching/Training	0	10 x 3m	30	Pay and Play	Commercial	1992/2007
ALDERMAN PEEL SPORTS COLLEGE	Priory	Main/General	6	17 x 8m	136	Pay and Play	School/in house	1970/2013
GRESHAM'S HIGH SCHOOL	Holt	Main/General	5	25 x 10 m	250	Sports Club / Community Association	Independent School/in house	1970/1999
CROMER HIGH SCHOOL	Suffield Park	Main/General	0	20 x 8m	160	Sports Club / Community Association	School/LA in house	1979/2001
BROADLAND HIGH SCHOOL	Hoveton	Main/General	4	18 x 6m	108	Pay and Play	School/in house	1975/2009
FITNESS EXPRESS AT KELLING HEATH	High Heath	Main/General	1	19 x 10 m	190	Pay and Play	Commercial	2000
CROMER COUNTRY CLUB	Suffield Park	Main/General	0	18 x 8m	144	Registered Membership use	Commercial	n/a
LINKS COUNTRY PARK HOTEL AND GOLF CLUB	The Runtons	Main/General	0	15 x 8m	120	Registered Membership use	Commercial	1993/2012
ROSSI'S LEISURE	North Walsham West	Main/General	0	17 x 8m	136	Registered Membership use	Commercial	2003
<b>Total</b>			<b>34 lanes</b>		<b>2205m<sup>2</sup></b>			

5.13 The existing stock is considered to be in fair condition overall, but the challenge of an ageing stock is one which will have to be faced over the duration of the strategy. This assessment indicates that the main 'public' pools are in good condition, though Splash is now nearly 28 years old. Its function as a recreational swimming pool with a wave machine and other leisure features is designed for both residents and tourist use.

5.14 The school pools are focused more on learn to swim as the primary function and are therefore smaller in scale – between 130 – 160m<sup>2</sup> of water and are not designed to function as a public recreational swimming facility. Outside of learn to swim they function mostly for club use. The school pools can be updated and modernised and the Cromer Academy pool has received this investment in the plant and pool hall.

- 5.15 They will however remain with the same pool tank size and this limits the swimming activities they can cater for. However it is a resource and the cost of replacing such a resource and providing a pool which can cater for all the swimming activities makes it very challenging to achieve.
- 5.16 So “losing” a resource such as a school pool despite its pool tank limitations is not to be considered without extensive consideration of the implications. Furthermore Alderman Peel School in Wells has demonstrated very clearly that with a positive and committed approach many of the limitations of the pool size can be overcome and a successful community programme of use achieved, which includes a full range of swimming lessons, lane swimming, Seals swimming club, adult swimming, swim 4 fitness, and ladies only, and incorporates some casual use (i.e. pay and swim).
- 5.17 The Pinewood Leisure Club provides for private membership but also provides for a pay and swim facility. It is in very good condition and offers much potential for additional further community use, as does the pool at Gresham's School.
- 5.18 The total swimming pool provision in North Norfolk equates to 15m<sup>2</sup> of water space per 1,000 population. This is higher than the England wide figure at 12.7 m<sup>2</sup> of water space per 1,000 population and the regional figure at 12.5 m<sup>2</sup>. It is also much higher than the neighbouring authorities: Broadland 6.7 m<sup>2</sup> of water space; Breckland 9.7 m<sup>2</sup> of water space and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk 9.8 m<sup>2</sup> of water space per 1,000 population.
- 5.19 The six pool sites included in the assessment provide a total of 1560m<sup>2</sup> of water. When this is assessed based on the amount of hours available for community use – across all the sites – this reduces to 1360m<sup>2</sup>. So some 12.8% of the total water space is not available for public use. The total supply available for public use equates to 11,800 visits per week in the peak period.
- 5.20 The water space not available for public use is more a consequence of programming ACROSS the school and commercial venues, which reduces the hours at peak times for community use. It is not that any venue is restricting community use.
- 5.21 The demand for swimming by North Norfolk residents equates to 6050 visits per week in the same peak period, or about 1000m<sup>2</sup> of water taking into account a 'comfort factor' of pools being up to 70% of their total capacity. The 70% comfort level is a guideline from Sport England.
- 5.22 The supply and demand assessment therefore has an indicative over supply of about 360m<sup>2</sup> of water when looking at the demand and supply within North Norfolk. It should be noted that this figure does not take into account cross boundary movements or the attractiveness of facilities in terms of quality and accessibility, so it needs to be treated with caution. It is simply comparing the North Norfolk demand with the North Norfolk supply of swimming pools.
- 5.23 Taking account of the cross boundary movement based on where residents live and the location of pools inside and outside the district and access to them by North Norfolk residents based on a 20-minute drive time catchment area for each pool, shows that 75% of the North Norfolk demand can be met. This figure is lower than the England wide 91% and East Region 90% averages but in line with two of the neighbouring local authorities of 74.4% in Breckland and 72.2% in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.
- 5.24 In short, despite the good and high overall provision of swimming pools in North Norfolk their locations are clustered as shown in the maps in section 2 of the strategy. This means some areas of North Norfolk are outside the catchment area of an existing swimming pool – most notably in the Fakenham area.

- 5.25 The amount of demand that is outside catchment is termed as unmet demand. This is because despite there being enough pools to accommodate all the demand some of this demand is located outside the catchment area of a pool site and, in effect, the residents would have to travel long distances (and beyond the recognised 20 minute drive time for regular participation) to access a pool.
- 5.26 This unmet demand because of lack of access equates to a total of about 250m<sup>2</sup> of water (just larger than a 25m x 4 lane pool) and is relatively evenly spread across the district with the higher areas of unmet demand being, in order, Fakenham and North Walsham (the latter area is probably more due to demand fanning out from areas to the south and east than from North Walsham itself – the pool at Rossi's is not considered in the assessment because of its size, but it meets some local demand for members of Rossi's).
- 5.27 If there is one area best suited to accommodate most of this unmet demand it is Fakenham. This would not however soak up all this locational unmet demand as there will always be in rural areas some demand that is outside the catchment area of a swimming pool. It is the scale of this unmet demand that determines what to do about it.

### **Summary, Key Issues and Options for Swimming Pools**

- 5.28 Overall the findings are that North Norfolk has a good level of swimming pool provision, which is distributed, across the district. There is a mixture of providers with public leisure centres, commercial providers and commercial holiday providers who also provide access for public pay and swim use. So a mixed economy of providers and access.
- 5.29 The provision is however skewed in terms of its distribution within the district. This creates areas with very high levels of pool provision within North Norfolk and other areas with little or no provision or access. This has been intensified by the closure of the two school swimming pools in Fakenham in 2014. This means there is no pool now in Fakenham that can provide for children to meet the key stage 2 national curriculum requirement to learn to swim, acquire a life safety skill and develop swimming competence.
- 5.30 This lack of pool provision for learn to swim plus the wider lack of access to pools for community use in some parts of the district will impact on a lot of residents' ability to be active and swim on a regular basis.
- 5.31 So it is an overall contradictory position of enough swimming pool capacity ACROSS the district to meet the total demand for swimming by North Norfolk residents, but because of the location of pools and their catchment areas there are areas of the District where there is demand for swimming and which is outside the catchment of the existing pools, thereby making them inaccessible to these residents. This demand outside catchment is quite spread out but of sufficient quantity in the Fakenham area to consider the need for swimming pool provision.
- 5.32 This last finding is an example or feature of the consequences and challenges in providing sports facilities created by the settlement pattern of the district, described in section 2 of the strategy.
- 5.33 The key issues for swimming are posed as questions and suggested answers/approaches;
- Swimming is the most popular activity in North Norfolk in terms of participation and it is the only cradle-to-grave sports facility for participation. Most importantly (fundamentally) there is a life skill and safety requirement to swimming – which gives it more importance. Swimming can deliver more of the Council's sports, physical activity healthy lifestyle and wider objectives as set out in section 1 of the



strategy than any other facility type. Do all these factors make it the number one sports facility type to provide for?

- How to reconcile that overall there are enough swimming pools within the district to meet the total demand for swimming by North Norfolk residents. However, the location of the pools is concentrated and so not all residents can access the pools – this will impact on their participation levels for swimming – for ALL swimming activities. So paradoxically although supply is greater than demand there are areas of the district where there is unmet demand. Furthermore the assessment sets out that this is of sufficient scale for additional water space, notably in the Fakenham area.
- Re-provision of existing swimming pools in new parts of the district to meet the unmet demand/access issue in other parts of the district is one way but it could also mean more people travelling to use pools. It moves the problem around geographically. There is no “halfway location” for a new or replacement swimming pool that would meet the needs of ALL residents and be within the catchment area of all residents.
- How to reconcile access to swimming pools in areas of unmet demand with the increasing requirement to also re-provide or modernise existing swimming pools – which is the bigger priority within swimming pools provision? Based on the needs assessment and meeting the Council’s wider objectives in section 1 of the strategy then modernisation/re-provision of the Splash Centre is a greater priority. It is located in the area of greatest swimming demand for residents and tourists and the Council has contractual and financial commitments in place for the operation of the centre.

5.34 In determining the future options for swimming pools provision in the strategy, it has had to weigh up all the findings from the needs assessment and the issues which arise from it. The key is not to try and develop options which try to balance out all the issues but apply the evidence base findings, address the issues and develop options which best meet the overall strategy objectives.

5.35 The options for swimming pools provision are to;

- establish a swimming pools providers and operators group so as to understand the role of each provider and ways that there can be more effective use of the total stock. To understand the issues of each type of provider and develop a more coordinated approach to meeting the needs of the community across all providers. In particular this relates to the Cromer Academy Pool to Pinewood Leisure Club and Gresham’s School in developing a wider programme of community use;
- address the “skewed” distribution of swimming demand based on the settlement pattern of the District. Options are:
  - accept the situation and continue to rely on the location of pools in the District and neighbouring authorities to meet some of the North Norfolk demand for swimming (this could result in lower rates of swimming participation in some areas of the district because residents live outside the catchment area of the pools and the time, distance and cost of travel could result in lower participation);
  - investigate with swimming pool providers in Wells (Alderman Peel School) and Holt (Gresham’s School) the scope, realism and opportunities to provide access for residents in areas outside the catchment area of an existing pool to make more regular use of these pools. This relates to increasing access for



residents in the Fakenham area. Acknowledging this will require programming and have a cost of trying to increase the access, especially in relation to learn to swim programmes for primary school children. This appears very challenging to achieve in Wells because there is already extensive community use of the pool. Also the time and cost of travel to either Wells or Holt is, in all likelihood, going to restrict the long term achievement of this option;

- investigate re-opening and improving the pool at Fakenham Academy for learn to swim programmes for school-aged children up to key stage 2. This investigation needs to establish the scope and costs of operating the pool for this purpose and possibly wider community use, such as adult learn to swim programmes. Experience of the management, operation and costs of use of the Alderman Peel school in Wells for community use provides very relevant experience;
- retain swimming pools in the areas of greatest demand within the district. The Victory Leisure Centre pool is self-evidently an example and needs no further comment; and
- The Splash Centre is located in the area of the district where there is the greatest demand for a swimming pool at this or a nearby location. The options for retention of the existing building or re-development of a new pool. The existing building is a leisure pool accommodating tourism and local resident uses but has a challenging pool configuration to meet all the swimming activities of learn to swim, recreational swimming and club based swimming development programmes. Determining the objectives for swimming development and type of pool provision – leisure or conventional configuration, or a hybrid of the two is the central decision and this influences the options to then investigate for future provision to meet both residents' use and those of tourists.

5.36 The way forward on all of these options is set out in the strategy direction and recommendations section and the financing topics are considered in Section 7.

### ***Health and Fitness Centres - Summary, Key Issues and Options***

5.37 Overall there is a good distribution of gyms across the whole district, with all the main towns (except Cromer) served by centres. There is a tendency towards smaller centres with the largest venue only having 45 stations. The centres are a combination of commercial and local authority facilities with the majority available on a pay and play basis, albeit that membership is probably available in all. The quality of facilities is good, not surprising given the competitive nature of provision between the different types of providers.

5.38 There is consistency between (1) the supply side findings which show the North Norfolk provision at 2.6 stations per 1,000 population to be only around half the national and regional average and lower than all surrounding districts except Breckland, and (2) the participation findings which show around 4% of North Norfolk adults participating at least once a month in gym and which is less than half the East Region and England wide participation rate.

5.39 So overall there is a lower supply in comparison with other areas but which reflects a lower participation/demand rate than other areas.

5.40 These consistent findings are in contrast with the Fitness Industry Association methodology which identifies a shortfall of between 200 – 250 stations across the district.

Given the commercial nature of gym provision if there were this shortfall in provision then there would be more and larger gyms in the district.

- 5.41 The overall assessment is that the number of venues; the different types of access for pay and play and membership across public and commercial venues; the location and access to venues based and catchment areas are - collectively all about in balance for the District.
- 5.42 It is not anticipated that demand is going to increase, based on demographic change in the period up to 2026. So any increase in demand and implicitly supply is going to be generated by any increase in participation from the current low level in comparison to other areas' rate of participation.
- 5.43 So there are no major issues in relation to provision for gyms. It may be that each of the different providers does lose market between the public and commercial venues in the Sheringham area and North Walsham area as they compete for memberships but this is the nature of gym provision and not new to the providers.
- 5.44 It may well be that changes in gym supply are not driven by change in the gyms per se but as an integral part of a new major sports facility, in particular swimming pools. So there is a read across between future provision for gyms and other facility types, notably pools, so as to provide critical mass and viability for a new facility. This will be replacement of existing gym provision with some enhancement in scale.
- 5.45 The options for provision of health and fitness gyms are:
- based on the overall supply and demand assessment (and not discounting the FIA methodology) there appears to be little demand or need for additional and new provision of gym facilities, except possibly a small scale centre of around 20 stations in the Cromer area and which could be part of the Cromer integrated sports hub concept; and
  - consider the scale and type of provision in any re-development project, most notably a re-development of swimming pool provision in the Sheringham area. The scale of any gym re-provision will be based on the core business case for the total project and facility mix but the requirement for a 50-station facility does seem valid.
- 5.46 The options are set out in the strategy recommendations section of the strategy under the project, enhance and provide headings.

### ***Studios Summary, Key Issues and Options***

- 5.47 There are only 4 studios identified in North Norfolk although there may well be other facilities throughout the district fulfilling a similar function to dance studios but which are not purpose built (for example activities taking place in community centres, village halls and school halls).
- 5.48 The participation/demand data on dance studios is very difficult to extrapolate from published sources because it is not compiled for ALL the activities that take place in dance studios and then assessed for that ONE facility type. For two activities that take place in dance studios, dance exercise and aerobics, the estimate is that participation is around 300 and 500 respectively across North Norfolk. Discussion with venue operators and the programming indicated that demand for dance studios is being met.
- 5.49 In terms of projected change and future participation/demand the estimated reduction in the active population (aged 6-55) between 2014 and 2021 of 2.4% and then 3%, by 2026 means there is unlikely to be an increase in demand for studios on the basis of

population change. Any increase is going to be from an increase in the current rate of participation in the activities that take place in dance studios.

- 5.50 So overall there do not appear to be any major issues in the provision of dance studios and the existing supply is meeting demand and has scope to cater for any upturn in demand and participation.
- 5.51 As with changes in gym, supply changes in dance studio provision are not driven by change in the gyms per se but are as an integral part of a new major sports facility, in particular a combined wet and dry venue such as a swimming pool and dance studio. It may well be that the re-provision of an existing venue such as a swimming pool has a read across for also re-provision of a dance studio so as to provide critical mass and viability for a new facility.
- 5.52 The options for dance studios are set out in the strategy recommendations section of the strategy under the project, enhance and provide headings.

### ***Squash Summary, Key Issues and Options***

- 5.53 There are four venues for squash in North Norfolk District providing a total of 11 courts. The venues are well distributed and access to courts for residents based on their catchment areas is good. North Norfolk has the highest rate of provision when compared with neighbouring authorities and is higher than for East Region and England wide. The quality of courts is generally good - despite being opened in the 1970's, they have been well maintained. However given the age of the courts there will be a continuing need to maintain the courts.
- 5.54 The projected population growth and reduction in the active population in North Norfolk is unlikely to increase demand for squash up to 2026. Any increase in demand is going to come from an increase in current participation levels. The Governing Body is promoting squash participation but it has remained at best static in recent years.
- 5.55 Overall there are no issues in the number, location and distribution of squash court venues. Access is predominantly for members and there is maybe a slight issue of access for pay and play use and encouraging people to try the sport. However the commercial venues will offer this access to try and then encourage membership. Also it is unlikely a public leisure centre will provide squash courts for pay and play on the basis of the current number of courts and locations.
- 5.56 The options to consider for future squash provision are considered as follows:
- it is unlikely there is a need for additional courts;
  - focus on partnership with clubs as the providers of squash. Encourage clubs to develop pay and play access as well as membership; and
  - longer term quality improvements where necessary to ensure long-term fitness for purpose.

- 5.57 These options are set out in the strategy recommendations section of the strategy under the project, enhance and provide headings.

### ***Indoor Bowls Summary, Key Issues and Options***

- 5.58 There are three purpose built indoor bowls facilities within North Norfolk providing a total of 18 rinks. All three venues are commercial venues, which operate on a membership basis but do provide rinks for pay and play and to encourage membership. Average

membership across the three centres is between 350-400 members and at best static. Retaining current membership levels is challenging and an achievement.

- 5.59 The North Norfolk centres were all built in the 1970s and each has been refurbished or extended more recently. Quality is generally considered to be good and fit for purpose. Continued investment over the strategy period will be required to maintain building quality and condition. This is challenging to achieve in the context of membership levels.
- 5.60 North Norfolk has the second highest level of provision based on a measurement of rinks per 1,000 population at 0.17 rinks. Only Great Yarmouth has a higher provision at 0.25 rinks per 1,000 population. The average for East Region is 0.07 rinks and for England it is 0.03 rinks per 1,000 population. Bowls provision in Norfolk County is high because of the demographics of the county and a long established history of participation in outdoor bowls.
- 5.61 The key issue in indoor bowling seems to be one of reconciliation between supply now, participation now and a projected increase in demand for indoor bowls provision based on population growth.
- 5.62 The options for indoor bowling are:
- On balance the assessment is that there is no need for additional provision of indoor bowling centres or rinks. The focus should be on supporting the existing centres to promote indoor bowls as a participant activity. In effect, helping the centres increase their membership (as there is around 40% of spare capacity across all centres). The projected increase in demand for indoor bowls from population growth can be absorbed by the spare capacity at the existing venues.
- 5.63 These options are set out in the strategy recommendations section of the strategy under the project, enhance and provide headings.

#### ***Indoor Tennis Summary, Key Issues and Options***

- 5.64 There are no indoor tennis centres in North Norfolk District. Again the Sport England methodology does not consider indoor tennis in the same degree of detail as some other facilities. It is possible however to assess demand by reference to Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) data. In 'Priority Project Funding, Policy and Operational Procedures', the LTA states that one indoor court can serve 200 regular tennis players.
- 5.65 The Active People Survey found that about 1% of adults regularly participated at least once a week in 2012 across Norfolk, the latest year for which participation data is available. The County level is the lowest geographic level at which participation data is available.
- 5.66 Applying the County participation rate to the district's current adult population of 88100 residents shows there is potential for  $88,100 \times 1\%$  divided by 200 = around 4 courts for the district. In reality this is likely to be lower given the age profile of the district currently and the projected change up to 2026. In terms of projected future demand – the already reported reduction in the active population (aged 6-55) between 2014 - 2021 of 2.4% and between 2021- 2026 of 3% could reduce the demand/participation unless development initiatives are undertaken.
- 5.67 So overall and taking all the findings together there are currently no indoor courts available in North Norfolk. On the basis of the Norfolk County demand calculation modified to take account of the changes in the North Norfolk population age structure and active population, there is justification to consider a demand and provision for an indoor tennis centre of 2 courts.

5.68 A provision of this scale is supported by the Norfolk LTA facilities strategy and the North Norfolk area is one of the preferred locations by the LTA.

5.69 The options for indoor tennis are:

- Initial provision of a 2-court tennis centre located at the Cromer Lawn Tennis and Squash Club venue as part of the Cromer Sports Hub. This would provide further critical mass to the Cromer Sport Hub. Bringing these together under one operation is more sports and cost effective. Also it builds on the long history of an established outdoor tennis club venue.

### **Other Sports Facility Types**

5.70 While it is not the prime intention of the study to consider specialist facilities for sport, as the brief concentrates on community provision, nevertheless the initial consultation with clubs and some governing bodies has identified some specialist facility requirements, which might be able to be incorporated in existing or proposed new community sports halls and the like, or provided in their own right. Consideration of these specific issues is addressed below.

### **Gymnastics**

5.71 Gymnastics was not one of the sports/facility types included in the project brief. It was however a sport/facility type which was articulated clearly as a need in the consultations and is therefore included in the strategy.

5.72 North Walsham Sports Hall Gymnastics Club currently operates from the small hall at North Walsham Sports Centre for 15 or so hours per week on most evenings and at the weekend. The club currently has about 140 members aged 3-16, the vast majority girls, and there is a waiting list of 160 (which represents a two years' wait to join).

5.73 The club's catchment is wider than the local area and includes parts of Norwich, Cromer and Reepham. The club is in need of a permanent venue preferably in the North Walsham area, to accommodate existing users, but also competitive gymnasts (up to 18 hours a week) and all potential gymnasts from Pre School to adult. The ideal facility would allow fixed equipment to be left in situ between sessions, and a purpose built venue is not necessary – a converted industrial or warehouse unit would be acceptable.

5.74 The club is supported in principle by British Gymnastics, whose objective is to work towards 'more people taking part in gymnastics activities through developing and increasing opportunities, space, delivery partners and volunteers'. Facility needs are increasing the numbers of dedicated facilities and improve existing facilities, and increasing access to non-dedicated venues. There is a clearly identified strategic and local need for improved gymnastics facilities in the area, and the strategy should include proposals to facilitate these.

### **Gymnastics, Issues and Options**

5.75 The issue is can the need for a permanent base for the gymnastics club be met? Leadership of a project would need to be a partnership between the North Walsham club and North Norfolk District. An option could be to provide a dedicated venue at the North Walsham Sports Centre but this would then conflict with dedicated time for other activities. The resolution of this issue could be provision of a sports hall at another location. This option is set out in the strategy recommendations section.

## **Cricket Nets/Indoor Cricket Leagues**

- 5.76 Similarly Indoor cricket was not an activity which was included in the project brief but it did arise in consultation and so the findings are included. North Norfolk is a relatively weak area for cricket club provision and participation in Norfolk. There are currently only 8 clubs in the District. Latent demand for cricket is low, as indicated by the Active People surveys on participation and the population profile for the area is not ideally matched to cricket participation. That said it has been highlighted through consultation that cricket needs these clubs to continue to flourish as any further losses would increase the issues of travel to local clubs in this rural area. The clubs in the area are generally successful and well organised, with 5 of those 8 clubs holding English Cricket Board Clubmark Accreditation and running successful youth sections. There is good use made by existing cricket clubs in the area of indoor sports halls at Cromer, Fakenham, North Walsham and Gresham's School for nets and indoor competition.
- 5.77 The quality of existing indoor facilities is the area of need highlighted by clubs within the Norfolk Cricket Board facilities strategy. Overall the quality of facilities for cricket is poor, especially with regard to netting, matting, flooring and lighting. The ECB Player Survey 2014 has indicated strong evidence that cricket participation is affected by the quality of facilities. NCB anticipates that enhancing the quality of indoor provision will have a beneficial impact on retention of players. The key challenge for indoor cricket is to improve the quality of indoor provision, giving clubs the best chance of providing a quality experience and retaining players.
- 5.78 The option for indoor cricket is that any project for new or re-provision of sports halls should in the project specification include the requirements for indoor cricket leagues and nets.
- 5.79 This concludes the summary of findings, issues and options for each of the sports facility types in the strategy.



## 6: Strategy Recommendations and Framework for Delivery

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- 6.1 This section sets out the recommendations for each sports facility type based on the findings, issues and options set out for each facility type, in the preceding section. This starts with generic recommendations which relate to the overall strategic approach to the provision of indoor sports facilities in North Norfolk. These are recommendations about setting the strategic direction and working in partnership. It is then followed by recommendations relating to each facility type.
- 6.2 The recommendations are categorized under the headings of 'Protect', 'Enhance' and 'Provide', as recommended by Sport England in the ANOG guidance. These categories are not mutually exclusive and some options will sit comfortably both within 'Enhance' and 'Provide' for example.
- 6.3 Also some recommendations are not self-contained to one facility type or location and so there is a read across between some of the options. They have been cross-referenced. Between them, they encompass the approach to underpin the development of a sustainable framework for the future provision of facilities across North Norfolk District.
- 6.4 Before describing each of the three headings it is important to provide some context of their application in North Norfolk. The needs assessment has identified that the scale of the existing provision across each facility type facility now and up to 2021/2026. The assessment has included the implications of the projected change in population and the overall reduction in the active population of North Norfolk have on the projected demand for each sports facility type now and in the future.
- 6.5 In effect, the increase in total population is offset (for most sports) by a reduction in the size and age distribution of the active population (aged 5 – 55). The combined impact is that the quantity of provision is for most facility types sufficient to meet the projected demand in the future. There are issues over and above quantity, these being of quality, access and availability of the sports facilities, so as to make the most overall effective use for the community.
- 6.6 Hence the focus in this section of the strategy is more about;
- Protection of what already exists – because there is an identified need and demand;
  - Enhancement and making more effective use of the existing sports facilities. This is by strategic management and intervention to work with all providers in partnership. Do this so as to ensure that opportunities to work collaboratively are taken and the opportunities for community use are maximized; and
  - New provision of facilities is much less of a focus, in large part because of the needs assessment finding that there is not a considerable amount of new provision identified. It is also based on the it is also based on the realism that the District Council has to make expenditure savings of £1.8m up to 2018 and the Council's expenditure position beyond that date is unknown. It is not for the Council to find development in isolation and the strategy is one for the District. It is the context of the Council's financial position which is important to note. There are opportunities for partnership funding through the re-letting of a long-term leisure management contract with direct capital investment by the commercial operator.
- 6.7 There are two further important points on the strategy direction;

- **Firstly** the needs assessment has been very careful to assess supply and demand based on the known rates and frequencies of sports participation using Sport England, National Governing Bodies and local data where this is possible. The projection of future supply and demand is based on the projected population changes and assuming the current rates and frequencies of sports participation. Should the rate and or frequency of participation increase then there is the need to review the assessment on the quantity of provision. It is an objective of North Norfolk District Council to increase sports and physical activity participation and create a more active population, but as yet this is unspecified
- **Secondly** there is the need to replace existing provision if, based on age, condition and quality, a building has reached the end of its sports and cost effective life. So there is re-provision of an existing facility. Replacement or re-provision provides the opportunity to define the FITNESS FOR PURPOSE and OBJECTIVES of a re-provided facility, and also to possibly change the location of an existing venue so as to increase access, and most importantly change the scale and content to meet the needs in the future.

6.8 A description of each heading is;

#### **Protect**

- To maintain the overall balance of facilities where the needs assessment has identified a continuing need for community use. This recognises there could be re-provision of existing facilities by identifying a better facility mix and/or location to meet demand and improve access.

#### **Enhance**

- To upgrade and enhance existing sports facilities for community use so as to ensure that sports facility needs are met by the provision of appropriate, high quality facilities in the future
- To manage and programme facilities effectively and sustainably across sites and promote partnership working to enable greater use of existing sports facilities and the sharing of skills, expertise, resources and facilities
- To improve accessibility to sports facilities, in order to encourage greater participation by all sectors of the community
- In order to increase participation for a healthy and active lifestyle benefit, it is considered enhanced facilities at existing sites (which are already known to the local community) are a more effective way to encourage and develop more participation across a wider population.

#### **Provide**

- To provide facilities for sport and active recreation where, based on the needs assessment, there is a gap in the existing supply and/or a demand which exists now and which is projected to be sustained and possibly increase
- To provide updated information on sports participation and the demand for facilities based on the needs assessment reports.

6.9 The suggested recommendations for delivery of the strategy and what could be done under each of these headings are set out in Table 6.1 below. Firstly there are generic recommendations that apply across the district and these are set out as G recommendations. Each G recommendation is described followed by the rationale/



justification and suggested action. This is followed by the recommendations for each facility type: SH Sports Halls; SP Swimming Pools; H&F Health and Fitness; S Studios; SQ Squash; IB Indoor Bowls; and IT Indoor Tennis. There are also recommendations for gymnastics GYM and indoor cricket CRIC. These sports/facility types were not included in the project brief, however in the consultations they emerged as key topics and are therefore included.

**Table 6.1: Strategy recommendations rationale and action required**

Rationale and Action Required GENERIC (G)	
<b>PROTECT</b>	<p><b>G1 Develop a forum for all providers and operators of sports facilities to meet as a group and better understand the roles of each provider and share information</b></p> <p>Currently there is no forum whereby North Norfolk District Council, the commercial providers, schools and clubs who provide and operate indoor sports facilities can meet to understand the roles of each provider and discuss opportunities for more effective use and access to f facilities across all the different providers.</p> <p>It is acknowledged there are discrete and different rationales for each provider. It is also understood there is no opportunity to review and consider how all providers could work collaboratively to ensure there is the most access for all residents to participate and understand the role of each provider.</p> <p>The recommendation is for the District Council to lead the establishment of this group The key purpose to be to understand the role and remit of each provider, share information and provide opportunities for more collaborative working so as to maximise the access for local residents.</p>
Rational and Action Required	
<b>PROTECT AND ENHANCE</b>	<p><b>G2 Review the differing approaches on access to education based sports facilities for community use so as to develop a more cohesive approach for community use and maximize the opportunities for community use (relates to G1)</b></p> <p>There is a mixed economy of providers and access to school based sports facilities, ranging from formal community use agreements between the District Council and individual schools to provide for school and community use under one operation with a core business case and shared responsibilities and costs.</p> <p>There are also individual schools who independently provide for education and community use under their own direction and assessment of need and business case.</p> <p>The study has also shown that school based sports facilities used for curriculum use are vulnerable to closure without first identifying the current and continuing need for wider community use of these facilities.</p> <p>The needs assessment report (Appendix 2) sets out the requirements for each sports facility types up to 2026 and beyond. The action is to use the assessment report findings when there is any consideration to close, reduce or increase community use of education sports facilities. In effect it is a watching brief to consider the impact of any changes recognizing this mixed economy of providers, operators with formal and informal agreements at different venues.</p>

	<p>This recommendation could also be part of the work of the operators forum set out as G1</p>
<p><b>PROVIDE (AND ENHANCE)</b></p>	<p><b>G3 Development of the sports hub concept at Cromer (also relates to recommendation SH 2)</b></p> <p>The assessment has identified lots of sports facility provision and activity in different parts of the district by different providers but where the collective benefit is not realised because of isolated operation by each provider. The Cromer example set out in sections 2 and 5 of the strategy is an example.</p> <p>Furthermore the continued operation of some of these facilities by individual owners or operators maybe vulnerable to changing circumstances where one particular provider may decide in isolation there is not a continuing need, or, the cost of providing the facility outweighs the benefits.</p> <p>There is potential benefit in terms of maximising the opportunities for participation and shared costs of management and operation by creating a Cromer Sports Hub where the overall management and operation of all the venues in the Cromer location is made brought together under one organisation. This provides critical sporting and financial mass as well as providing longer-term security to individual sports venues. It also provides enhanced opportunities for external capital grant aid funding from organisations such as Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport who are very supportive of the sports hub concept and invest in sports hub capital projects.</p> <p>The organisations involved in the Cromer Sports Hub are: Cromer Academy (swimming pool) North Norfolk District Council and Cromer Academy (sports hall) North Norfolk District Council and Cromer Lawn Tennis and Squash Club (outdoor tennis courts and squash courts plus potential for an indoor tennis centre). The Cromer location and mix of facilities provides the best opportunity to develop a sports hub in the District. The range of existing facilities appeal to all age ranges and both genders. The quality of the existing stock across the venues is good.</p> <p>Recommendation G 3 is the recommendation that has the potential to protect and develop the widest stock of facilities at one location and deliver significant benefits.</p> <p>The action is to undertake a feasibility study, with the engagement of all current owners and operators of the current sports facilities, described above. To develop the sport hub model which sets out the options for changing the ownership and operation of the individual facilities into one cohesive structure with a funding plan and viable operational business model.</p>

## SPORTS HALLS

<b>ENHANCE</b>	<p><b>SH 1. Determine how the District Council separately managed and operated Cromer Sports Centre, North Walsham Sports and Stalham Sports Centre can be better integrated with other sports halls provision.</b></p> <p>It is acknowledged these are District Council venues which have contracted commitments with schools for joint education and community use on a shared cost and operation basis.</p> <p>The study and assessment report has identified that the existing supply of these three sports halls needs to be retained in quantity terms but there are options for changing how it is provided. Firstly the inclusion of the Cromer sports hall in the Cromer Sports Hub already set out under G 3. Secondly the study identified the need for the North Walsham Gymnastics Club to have a dedicated venue to meet is current membership and sustained waiting list. There may be the opportunity to re provide the existing North Walsham Sports Hall at an adjacent site to the Victory Leisure Centre. This would meet the need for a sports hall in North Walsham for community use. It would also allow a dedicated venue to be provided for the gymnastics club at the existing sports hall in North Walsham. The study did not identify any potential for change in Stalham there is a need for a sports hall in this part of the district to meet the community demand.</p> <p>The action required is for North Norfolk District Council with the partners in the community use agreements to review the most sports and cost effective ways to retain this level of sports hall supply from these three centres but at potentially a new location for North Walsham and in a different operation at Cromer.</p>
<b>PROVIDE</b>	<p><b>SH 2 Consider the provision of a new sports halls or a large flexible indoor sports space such as a studio in both Sheringham and Wells</b></p> <p>The needs assessment has identified that across the District the demand for sports halls exceeds supply and the sports hall are well used</p> <p>The assessment has also identified there is demand for sports halls and a gap in provision in both Sheringham and Wells. The existing sports halls in both locations are located at Sheringham High School (1950) and Alderman Peel Sports College (1970) in Wells. Both are, in effect, school gymnasiums and are one badminton court size. They are not fit for purpose in meeting the requirements for playing indoor hall sports or providing for fitness/exercise classes.</p> <p>The assessment has identified a need for a sports hall in and this could be a 4 badminton court size sports hall at each location. This will provide for indoor hall sports and exercise classes for education, club and community use at each location.</p>

In terms of locations to maximize the benefits of the venue the first choice location would be a school site. The Alderman Peel School is a sports college with an established track record in developing community use of its sports facilities use. In Sheringham the location could be Sheringham High School as the first choice. However the potential re-development of the Splash Centre could provide the venue and more critical mass if the decision is to develop a more flexible indoor space for exercise, fitness and dance classes. In effect a studio rather than a sports hall.

## SWIMMING POOLS

### **SP 1. Maintain a review on the existing supply of swimming pools to meet demand for community use up to 2026 and beyond.**

The assessment has identified that across the District the supply of swimming pools is sufficient to meet current demand now and up to 2026 and beyond. However this overall assessment has to be qualified because the District wide assessment has a “skewed distribution” of the location and catchment area of swimming pools (set out in section 2). This has created areas of the District that are outside the catchment area of an existing swimming pool for regular participation. Notably in Fakenham where there has also been the closure of two school pools in 2014. This has created problems of fulfilling the key stage 2 national curriculum requirement of teaching children to swim and swimming competence.

The action for this recommendation is that there needs to be a mechanism in place across all levels of local government, owners and operators of pools to consider the impact of any further potential closure of swimming pools, especially swimming pools on school sites. In this approach there does need to be clarity as to how the programmes of use for example learn to swim will be met based on the reduced supply of swimming pools and that the programmes are secured with other providers. It is recommend that this action could be undertaken by the providers and operators group described in G1.

<p><b>PROTECT</b></p>	<p><b>SP2 investigate the scope to (re) provide a swimming pool in Fakenham by the re-opening of the Fakenham Academy swimming pool, to provide for learn to swim programmes and potentially wider community use.</b></p> <p>The needs assessment had identified very clearly there is a level of demand for swimming in the Fakenham area. So whilst (to repeat) there is overall enough swimming pool supply and capacity for the district to meet residents demand now and in the future, there are areas of the district where demand and lack of access to pools because of their location and catchment area of pools is creating unmet demand.</p> <p>The issue in Fakenham has undoubtedly been exacerbated by the closure of the two education pools in 2014. This means that realistically the time and cost of travelling to the nearest pools in North Norfolk of any of Wells, Holt or Sheringham means that the national curriculum requirement up to key stage 2 for children learn to swim and have swimming competence cannot be realistically delivered. Plus the time, cost and distance for Fakenham residents to access the nearest swimming pools is restricting their participation, as well as possibly access for adult learn to swim programmes.</p>
<p><b>ENHANCE</b></p>	<p>The opportunity to meet learn to swim needs and potential for wider community use in Fakenham is to investigate the scope to re-instate the Fakenham Academy swimming pool. This will require a full condition and services survey to identify the costs of reinstating the building. It will also require a detailed business plan to identify the operating costs, projected income and the management operation of the pool.</p> <p>It would provide a pool for the national curriculum requirement of learn to swim programmes in Fakenham. It could also provide for wider community use swimming programmes, The Alderman Peel School pool operation in Wells does demonstrate how a small school pool can develop a programme of community use. So there is local experience of achieving a viable operation for community use as well as learn to swim programmes at a school pool and which is located within the District.</p> <p>The responsibility for progressing this recommendation should include the District Council, the Fakenham Swimming Group along with Norfolk County Council, the Town Council and the local schools.</p>

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### **SP 3 Maintain the provision of swimming in the Sheringham area by replacing or modernising the Splash centre**

The needs assessment has identified that the area of greatest demand for swimming in North Norfolk is located in Sheringham. Modernisation or re-provision of the Splash Centre is the most important swimming recommendation.

The reasons being: the pools is nearly 28 years old and in need of major modernization or replacement at either this site or within Sheringham - if it is re-provision; it is located in the area of greatest swimming demand for residents and tourists; the Council has contractual and financial commitments in place for the Centre; the financial performance of the centre is good but the centre is in need of major investment, if this centre is to be modernised.

So there are two options: modernisation of the existing building, or re-provision of a new pool at this site or in Sheringham.

#### **PROVIDE**

In deciding on which option the fundamental question to answer is – is the current Splash Centre a swimming pool which is fit for purpose in meeting ALL the swimming activities of: learn to swim; recreational and lane fitness swimming; and swimming development based around clubs? Plus meet the needs of tourists?

If it does then the work is to develop a full building condition and services survey along with a financial viability assessment and business case for modernisation of the building.

If the view is that the current Splash Centre does not provide for all the swimming activities described - then the alternative option is to consider the development of a new swimming pool centre on this site or elsewhere in Sheringham

Based on the assessment and consultations in this project the defined facility mix for a re-provided swimming pool is for a 25m x 6 lanes main pool and a 100sq metre learner/teaching pool. On the dry side and based on the assessment findings (plus enhancing the core business case), then the recommendation is to also re-provide the health and fitness suite but with a 50 station gym. Plus new provision of a dance studio to replace the one court activity hall.

The action is for the District Council to commission a full feasibility study considering the 2 options described. The view from this project is that the second option is the one that will provide a fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> swimming pool that provides for all swimming activities in one centre. The study would then require a design, build, cost, management operation and procurement route to meet the facility scale and mix as defined.

## HEALTH AND FITNESS

### **HF 1. Maintain the existing supply of health and fitness venues in the District and promote enhancement of the quality of the venues**

#### **ENHANCE AND RE- PROVIDE**

The assessment recognises it is a mixed economy of provider and operators of health and fitness provision in the District. There is competition between providers and there are distinct markets based on the quality of venues and the ability and willingness to pay a membership.

There are 12 venues in North Norfolk providing 293 stations. The largest is at the Victory Leisure Centre with 40 stations. The small-scale venues reflect the size of the settlements and market for health and fitness in North Norfolk.

Based on the Fitness industry Association methodology, there is a projected shortfall of between 200 - 250 stations. However based on consultations and the pattern of supply this is questioned and not supported, if there were market forces would have addressed this deficiency.

The action is for the District Council to consider the re-provision of health and fitness as part of the Splash Centre (recommendation SP3) where it is suggested there should be a 50-station health and fitness centre.

## STUDIOS

### **S 1. Consider the scope for studios as part of new development projects at Alderman Peel School, Sheringham School or the Splash Centre.**

#### **PROVIDE**

There is a read across between the provision of studios and the provision of sports halls. One does not provide for the other as they serve different functions. (Recommendations SH 2 and SP 3 cross reference).

North Norfolk only has 4 purpose built dance studios and the participation data is limited. This makes it difficult to project demand and need in the future. Undoubtedly demand is increasing for a multi-purpose flexible space to accommodate dance exercise, fitness classes and yoga and pilates.

If the decision is to provide sports halls that could also accommodate exercise and fitness classes then the location in Sheringham should be at Sheringham High School. If the decision is to also provide a studio in Sheringham and there is sufficient long term demand for both then it could be located at a re-provided Splash Centre. This would also add more critical mass and viability to the business case. In Wells the location for either a sports hall or dance studio should be Alderman Peel School.



## SQUASH

### Rationale and Action Required

#### **SQ 1: Consider enhancement of the squash courts at Gresham's school and negotiate increased access for community use through North Norfolk Squash Club.**

There are four venues for squash in North Norfolk providing a total of 11 courts. The venues are well distributed and access to courts for residents based on their catchment areas is good.

North Norfolk has the highest rate of provision when compared with neighbouring authorities and is higher than for East Region and England wide. The quality of courts is good despite being opened in the 1970's they have been well maintained. However given the age of the courts there will be a continuing need to maintain the courts

The changes in the active population in North Norfolk are unlikely to increase demand for squash up to 2026. Squash participation levels in recent years have remained at best static.

Provision is predominantly for members and there is maybe a slight issue of access for pay and play use and encouraging people to try the sport. However the current venues will offer this access to try and then encourage membership.

Gresham's School has 4 conventional courts, with a viewing gallery, in a dedicated building, with separate changing rooms. The courts are maintained for school use with regular painting and new lighting, but the floors and walls require additional work and in general the courts are dated. The courts are used about half of the time by the school, including boarders, and the remaining time (mainly in the evenings) are available for North Norfolk Squash Club (who have one team in the Norfolk League), parents and staff at the school. The school would like to improve the courts with glass backs, preferably as part of a wider improvement of all school sports facilities to extend community use for local residents and existing school users.

The action is to encourage the school and club to apply for external grant aid to organisations such as Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund to improve the quality of the squash courts.

## INDOOR BOWLS

**IB1. Protect the existing stock of indoor bowling centres, number and quantity from any loss, as there is a need to retain the existing quantity of supply across the district to meet demand up to 2026 and beyond.**

### PROTECT

The demographics and sporting participation profile of the district does support the need for and provision of indoor bowling centres. There are three purpose-built indoor bowling centres in the district. Furthermore the assessment is supportive of the need for 3-4 additional rinks based on the participation rates for the Region applied to North Norfolk.

That said the reality on the ground is that the membership at each centre is at best static at around 350 – 400 members at each centre.

So the action is to retain each of the three centres and assist the clubs in developing the membership – because there is a potentially bigger indoor bowling market.

There is a national initiative by the England Indoor Bowling Association to promote the sport with specific targets for new membership and which is being achieved.

The action is for the venue operators with the engagement of the District Council to work together to try and promote the sport and increase membership – it is a key sport/facility for the district based on the sporting profile of North Norfolk.

## INDOOR TENNIS

**IT 1. Consider the provision of an indoor tennis centre of 2 courts. (This relates to recommendation G 3) or Gresham's School**

### PROVIDE

North Norfolk does not have any indoor tennis courts. The Norfolk LTA facilities strategy highlights North Norfolk as a priority area for investment in indoor tennis together with West Norfolk, Great Yarmouth and the Thetford area.

Applying the Norfolk County demand calculation modified to take account of the changes in the North Norfolk population age structure and active population, there is justification to consider a demand and provision for an indoor tennis centre of 2 courts.

Potential locations for an indoor tennis centre are first and foremost at the Cromer Lawn Tennis and Squash Club venue, as part of the suggested Cromer Sports Hub (recommendation G3). Such a project would give significant critical mass and momentum to the creation of the Cromer Sports Hub. The second potential location is at Gresham's School in Holt.

The action is for the District Council to consider along with the County LTA and the Cromer Lawn Tennis and Squash Club the scope to develop an indoor tennis centre at Cromer but as an integral part of the Cromer Sports Hub project.

## GYMNASTICS

### **GYM 1: Consider the opportunities to provide a gymnastics venue. (This relates to recommendation SH 2)**

#### **ENHANCE & PROVIDE**

Gymnastics is not one of the sports facility types or activity included in the project brief. However in the consultations it was cited as an important activity and with a high demand in the North Walsham area. Hence its inclusion in the strategy recommendations.

North Walsham Sports Hall Gymnastics Club currently operates from the small hall at North Walsham Sports Centre for 15 or so hours per week on most evenings and at the weekend. The club currently has about 140 members aged 3-16, the vast majority girls, and there is a waiting list of 160 (which represents a two years' wait to join). The club's catchment is wider than the local area and includes parts of Norwich, Cromer and Reepham.

The club is in need of a permanent venue preferably in the North Walsham area, to accommodate existing users, but also competitive gymnasts (up to 18 hours a week) and all potential gymnasts from preschool to adult.

The ideal opportunity from the club's perspective would be to have dedicated use to allow the fixed equipment to be left in situ between sessions at the North Walsham Sports Centre. However the venue has a range of other uses and activities, not least by the school. However if a management solution could be found then the dedication would allow the club to develop. It would also provide for a sport and a venue for young people and apart from swimming none of the other facility types in the study are focused on very young people's participation.

The club is supported in principle by British Gymnastics, whose objective is to work towards 'more people taking part in gymnastics activities through developing and increasing opportunities, space, delivery partners and volunteers'. Facility needs are increasing the numbers of dedicated facilities, improving existing facilities, and increasing access to non-dedicated venues.

Scope to achieve the club's need for a dedicated base at North Walsham Sports Centre could be achieved if a new sports hall is developed on a site adjacent to Victory Leisure Centre, which it is understood is a consideration.

The action required is for the club in partnership with the District Council and school to consider the scope to provide a dedicated venue for the North Walsham Gymnastics Club at the North Walsham Sports Centre.

## INDOOR CRICKET

### **CRIC 1: Support the provision of indoor cricket nets and indoor cricket leagues in any enhancement or provision of sports halls**

Again indoor cricket was not one of the sports included in the project brief. However in the consultations and site visits the need for indoor cricket did emerge as an issue and was mentioned frequently and hence its inclusion in the strategy recommendations

North Norfolk is a relatively weak area for cricket club provision and participation in Norfolk. There are currently 8 clubs in the district. Latent demand for cricket is low (as indicated by the Active People survey findings) and the demographic profile for the area is not ideally matched to cricket participation. That said it has been highlighted in site visits and consultations that cricket needs these clubs to continue to flourish, as any further losses would increase the issues of travel to local clubs in this rural area. The clubs in the area are generally successful and well organised, with 5 of those 8 clubs holding ECB Clubmark Accreditation and running successful youth sections.

There is good use made by existing cricket clubs in the area of indoor sports halls at Cromer, Fakenham, North Walsham and Gresham's School for nets and indoor competition.

The quality of existing indoor facilities is the area of need highlighted by clubs within the Norfolk Cricket Board facilities strategy. Overall the quality of facilities for cricket is poor, especially with regard to netting, matting, flooring, and lighting. The ECB Player Survey 2014 has indicated strong evidence that cricket participation is affected by the quality of facilities. NCB anticipates that enhancing the quality of indoor provision will have a beneficial impact on retention of players. The key challenge for indoor cricket is to improve the quality of indoor provision, giving clubs the best chance of providing a quality experience and retaining players.

The action is to consider the scope to provide indoor cricket nets and potentially the organisation of an indoor cricket league in any enhancement of an existing sports hall or as part of any new sports hall.

**ENHANCE**

## 7: Implementation, Funding and Planning Guidance

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- 7.1 This part of the strategy sets out some views on the implementation of the main strategy recommendations, guidance on ensuring the provision of the identified future built sports facility needs throughout the district, including through the planning process, and recommendations on the means of financing the provision and modernisation of the sports facility requirements identified in the strategy.
- 7.2 It should be reiterated that while NNDC (as the client for the study in the first place) is the key organisation in putting into place the main strategy recommendations, it is a plan for the district as a whole, and the role of other organisations in implementation is crucial. The Action Plan overleaf has been devised to set out the strategy's main recommendations by sports facility type, and more generally. It includes relative priorities, timescales and overall capital budget costs. By way of explanation the priority categorises recommendations as high/medium/low to reflect local consultation and other factors, the timescale refers to short term (up to 2017), medium term (up to 2021) and longer term (up to 2026) and the budget capital costs are derived from Sport England data where possible, and relate to costs as at Quarter 1 2015, and include external works and fees, but exclude site specific costs, inflation, VAT, land and regional variations. They should therefore be used with extreme caution, and only as a basis for broad comparison. Detailed costs would be expected to be identified at the feasibility stage for all facility recommendations.

## Strategy Action Plan

Recommendation	Priority	Timescale	Main partners	Budget capital cost
<b>GENERIC (G)</b>				
G1 Develop a forum for all providers and operators of sports facilities to meet as a group and better understand the roles of each provider and share information	High	Short	NNDC, leisure operators	Nil
G2 Review the differing approaches on access to education based sports facilities for community use so as to develop a more cohesive approach for community use and maximize the opportunities for community use (relates to G1)	High	Short	Schools, academies, NNDC	Nil
G3 Develop the sports hub concept at Cromer (also relates to recommendation SH2)	Medium	Medium	Cromer LTSC, NNDC, Cromer Academy	£1.45m plus improvements to existing facilities on site (pool, and sports hall, changing)
<b>SPORTS HALLS</b>				
SH1 Determine how the District Council separately managed and operated Cromer Sports Centre, North Walsham Sports and Stalham Sports Centre can become part of the overall sports hall provision across the district.	Medium	Short	NNDC, Places for People	Nil
SH2 Consider the provision of a new sports halls (or a large flexible indoor sports space such as a studio) in both Sheringham and Wells	Low	Long	Schools, NNDC	1 court £855k 2 court £975k
<b>SWIMMING POOLS</b>				
SP1 Maintain a review on the existing supply of swimming pools to meet demand for community use up to 2026 and beyond.	High	Short	NNDC	Nil
SP2 investigate the scope to (re) provide a swimming pool in Fakenham by the re-opening of the Fakenham Academy swimming pool, to provide for learn to swim programmes and potentially wider community use.	High	Medium	Fakenham SPAG, NNDC, Places for People, ASA	Subject to feasibility but say £500k for improvement,

SP3 Maintain the provision of swimming in the Sheringham area by replacing or modernising the Splash Centre swimming pool	High	Short	NNDC. Places for People	New build £4.7m  Modernise subject to feasibility say £3m
<b>HEALTH AND FITNESS</b>				
HF1 Maintain the existing supply of health and fitness venues in the District and promote enhancement of the quality of the venues	Medium	Ongoing	Leisure operators, including NNDC	Nil
<b>STUDIOS</b>				
S1 Consider the scope for studios as part of new development projects at Alderman Peel School, and Sheringham High School/ Splash Centre.	Medium	Medium	Schools, NNDC	£135k each
<b>SQUASH</b>				
SQ1 Consider enhancement of the squash courts at Gresham's School and negotiate increased access for community use through North Norfolk Squash Club	Medium	Medium	Squash clubs/operators, Gresham's School	£50k
<b>INDOOR BOWLS</b>				
IB1 Protect the existing stock of indoor bowling centres, number and quantity from any loss, as there is a need to retain the existing quantity of supply across the district to meet demand up to 2026 and beyond.	Medium	Long	Private bowls clubs	Nil
<b>INDOOR TENNIS</b>				
IT1 Consider the provision of an indoor tennis centre of 2 courts, at Cromer Hub (this relates to recommendation G3) or Gresham's School	Medium	Medium	Cromer LTSC, NNDC, Cromer Academy/Gresham's School	£1.45m
<b>GYMNASTICS</b>				
GYM1 Consider the opportunities to provide a gymnastics venue. (This relates to recommendation SH1)	Medium	Medium	NW Gym Club, NNDC	Within range of £350k (Easton, Norfolk) to £1.8m (Phoenix), subject to feasibility

## INDOOR CRICKET

<b>CRIC1 Support the provision of indoor cricket nets and indoor cricket leagues in any enhancement or provision of sports hall</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Leisure providers, NCB</b>	<b>£10k</b>
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### Funding and Finance

- 7.3 Using assets innovatively will be a key feature of the next few years, as will working in partnership on a multi-agency approach.
- 7.4 The strategy has deliberately focused on;
- Applying the findings from the needs assessment to try and make more effective use of what already exists and doing this by greater partnership working across all providers. This is a very valid direction given the assessment findings and hence the focus on enhancement in the strategy recommendations.
- 7.5 The delivery of the provision requirements will, to a large extent, be dependent on the ability to first secure capital funding, whilst acknowledging delivery is much wider than just about capital funding. The capital funding picture for public leisure facilities is always changing. Local authority finances are under even more pressure and previous major national funding programmes, which supported indoor sports facilities, are no longer available.
- 7.6 Swimming pools are the biggest cost of the provision recommendations. The Council is the lead but NOT the only provider of swimming pools. The Council has ownership and contractual financial commitments to existing swimming pools. It is also facing a budget reduction and making savings of £1.9m up to 2018.
- 7.7 In meeting the strategy findings on need for swimming pools, there is a need but it is not the ONLY consideration. There has to be a viable and sustainable long term business case for any new provision or re-provision of an existing pool.
- 7.8 So it is need as the first part, with a long-term business case that can finance the costs of constructing and operating a swimming pool as the second part. Provision of a new swimming pool has to consider and integrate both parts and that can demonstrate viability and long term deliverability. In short, a developer or provider that can meet the costs of constructing the pool and an operator who can meet the costs of operation (these can be one of the same or more than one organisations). All parts of need, core business case and long term viability have to be achievable
- 7.9 The needs assessment has identified a need for a community pool in Fakenham. The strategy recommendation is to determine through a feasibility study the scope to re-open the Fakenham Academy pool for learn to swim programmes and possibly community use. The estimated costs to modernise the pool for this range of uses is £500,000. The feasibility study would have to develop these costs in detail as well as the operational business plan, funding partners and management operation. Potential sources of funding are set out overleaf.
- 7.10 In relation to the recommendation concerning the re-provision of a new swimming pool in Sheringham, the defined scale of project and facility mix is a 25m x 6 lanes main pool and a 100sq metre learner/teaching pool. Plus on the dry side a health and fitness suite with a 50 station gym and a dance studio.



7.11 To provide a financial context, the capital build cost of the facility scale described and based on the Sport England Affordable Swimming Pools model is £5m for the pools and changing, plus £1m for the gym and dry changing based on an additional 500-600sq.m of building. This is the building costs and does not account for site specific costs such as ground condition and access. There is a 15% allowance included for external works in the base Sport England figures. These costs are set out for guidance.

7.12 The main funding sources for delivering the strategy are:

- **Section 106 developer contributions** - this in association with new development to meet the costs of providing or improving community infrastructure. However this will be very limited in terms of the contributions that can be generated and the costs of providing the sports facilities identified in the strategy recommendation section (see below)
- **Capital Grant funding** from local and national agencies such as Sport England, including its major programmes of capital grant aid for provision and modernisation of sports facilities. The development of an evidence base, which is NPPF and Sport England ANOG compliant, certainly ensures there is a robust assessment in place to support grant aid investment. Experience has shown that an evidence base that is ANOG compliant and applies the Sport England strategic planning tools – along with extensive local consultation in the strategy - does secure capital investment. The Sport England capital funding programmes are reviewed regularly in terms of funding levels, criteria and possibly themed rounds/criteria for investment. Without a doubt investment from Sport England will require matched capital funding from other organisations and demonstrate a long term viable business case
- **Commercial sector funding** in return for a long-term leisure management contract of existing and new facilities. This is a very real opportunity given the Council does have an existing leisure management contractor in place and there is the opportunity to review the timing and coverage of future leisure management contracts. This appears to be the most realistic and major way of financing the new sports facility requirements identified in the strategy. It is however subject to detailed feasibility to determine the core business case for long term capital investment and meeting the whole life costs at any new or re-provided project
- **Education and Further Education sector:** while the previous sources of funding (including BSF and Primary Schools Programme) have changed and the scale of the education capital programmes have been reduced, the provision of sports facilities as new or improved projects on school sites is still a possible key funding stream. The Department of Education does have a Schools Improvement Programme. This funding programme is heavily subscribed to. Future funding rounds maybe themed. Provision for science and languages have been past themes and it maybe that sports provision is a future theme. This could provide substantial capital funding
- A traditional source for maintaining and modernising the schools provision has been the Norfolk County Council Capital Works Programme and the planned preventive maintenance works programme. However this also no longer exists and the capital works funding from the County Council budget is now focused on ensuring buildings are fit for purpose in meeting statutory health and safety requirements. There is little if any funding for improvements or modernisation of buildings.

7.13 It is recognised this is a short list of potential sources of funding for the initial provision or re-provision of existing sports facilities. The strategy has set out the needs assessment on

what is required. Development of these projects is subject to the next stages of work in matching the needs assessment to a long-term core and viable business case with a procurement route.

- 7.14 Finally and to reiterate, recognition of the limited financing opportunities means the strategy has placed greater focus on making more effective use of the extensive range of existing facilities by partnership working across all providers to maximize the scope for greater community use of what already exists. This is the first priority and the assessment does reflect it as being first.

### **Developer Contributions**

- 7.15 For many years, local authorities have sought and secured developer contributions for local physical and social infrastructure through Section 106 (and other provisions) of the various Planning Acts. Strict regulations have controlled these contributions in order that they are reasonable and proportionate to the development, and in principle are necessary for the development to be acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.16 From April 2015 the legislation covering Section 106 developer contributions changed. Local authorities are no longer able to pool more than 5 secured S106 contributions to fund infrastructure projects. Projects which currently rely on funding from a wide number of tariff-based Planning Obligation contributions will instead need to be secured via the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). CIL is a new levy that local authorities can charge on developments in their area. The monies collected are used towards the delivery of infrastructure and services required as a result of growth - for example, school places, health facilities and provision of public open space.
- 7.17 North Norfolk District Council was considering whether to adopt a CIL levy. If introduced, it could apply to all new dwellings, and other types of additional development of 100 m<sup>2</sup> floor space or more, such as new commercial premises. Development for charitable purposes and affordable housing would be exempt.
- 7.18 CIL would largely replace the current system of securing contributions from developers via Section 106 agreements. However, Section 106 agreements would be likely to continue being used to secure local site-related infrastructure such as open space, access and habitat protection - and affordable housing. CIL would therefore operate in tandem with a scaled-back system of Section 106 agreements.
- 7.19 CIL would give the Council and local communities greater flexibility to help deliver infrastructure, as it is not ring-fenced and can be spent on any identified local or strategic infrastructure need. It would also give developers certainty on what they will have to pay towards infrastructure.
- 7.20 The Government announced in January 2012 that communities that have a neighbourhood development plan in place could receive 25% of the revenues received from CIL from development in their area, and those without can receive 15%. This money must be used to support the development of the area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.
- 7.21 However, further work on the possible introduction of CIL in North Norfolk was suspended following a decision by Cabinet at its meeting on 15 July 2013. In the foreseeable future therefore, developer contributions towards community infrastructure will be restricted to S106 agreements, and the opportunity to develop these for the benefit of sport will be curtailed. S106 agreements will remain available but in the main they may only be used to secure new or improved infrastructure which is either site specific or immediately available to the development, e.g. affordable housing, children's play facilities,

community centre and playing fields on larger developments.

7.22 The evidence gathered in the production of this strategy indicates that much of the investment in new and improved facilities is required to meet the needs of North Norfolk's existing population in 2014. It would not, therefore, be equitable to apportion the cost of delivering the new and improved facilities solely to new housing development. The total costs of implementing the investment should be apportioned to new development and therefore population on a pro rata basis i.e. the projected population increase to 2026 is 7100 people which will represent about 6% of the total populations by the two future dates. It follows therefore that 6% of the costs should be sought from new housing development. While this will significantly reduce the amount that could be secured, in the current planning and economic climate, it is more likely to stand up to scrutiny. Other sources will be required to help fund leisure projects as set out in previous pages.

7.23 A basic example of calculating S106 contributions is considered below, as a broad indication of calculating the cost of recommended provision (figures are illustrative only). The precise methodology needs to be worked up in greater detail and kept under constant review to ensure up to date information is included.

Cost of provision of new/modernised facilities in the strategy	say £8.7m
Whole life costs (20%)	<u>say £1.8m</u>
Total cost	say £10.5m

6.5% of total is £0.685m

Cost per house up to 2026= £0.685m/likely number of new houses eligible (say 3000) = £228 per house

An alternative method is to apply Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator. The additional sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls centres (the only facilities that are considered in the SFC) that the increased population of 7100 people of the appropriate age would generate in North Norfolk by 2026 are as follows:

Sports hall – 0.49 4-court halls, cost £1.25m  
Pools – 0.32 4-lane pools, cost £975k  
Indoor bowls – 0.12 6 rink centres, cost £204k  
Total cost £2.429m/say 3000 houses = £800 per house.

These different methodologies result in different contributions, but it would be for the Council to develop these in more detail in its Local Infrastructure Plan in the future.

### **Planning Policy**

7.24 For many years, certainly since before PPG17 was first produced in 1991, the 'standards' approach has been a fundamental part of planning and delivering future facility provision, on the basis of a per head level of provision e.g. 6 acres of recreational open space per 1000 people and more recently x m<sup>2</sup> of sports hall space per 1000. This enabled an easy-to-calculate method of delivery, but was inflexible, difficult to manage and implement and generally ineffective in securing larger facilities other than recreational open space. More recent advice contained in the NPPF and from Sport England is leading towards a new system based on actual needs as identified by robust assessments such as that carried out in this strategy.

7.25 This new system requires the development of sound planning policies, which are derived from evidence of need, thorough assessment and consultation with stakeholders. This current study should be used in conjunction with the emerging Local Plan (draft plan

anticipated 2017) to ensure the appropriate provision of sport and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the North Norfolk population now and to 2026, ensure new housing development makes appropriate sports provision for new residents, and addresses health issues by early intervention and preventative measures in line with the Council's greater collaborative role in public health. The local plan will need to include policies which:

- Highlight the need for essential sporting infrastructure to be provided as identified in this strategy
- Protect existing sports facilities unless they can be replaced or replicated in appropriate locations nearby
- Secure developer contributions towards their provision by the means set out here.

### **Investment Strategy**

7.24 The strategy action plan sets out the projects that need to be developed to deliver the strategy over the period up to 2026 and where there is a capital cost. It sets out a timescale and the key partners in delivering the strategy recommendations.

7.25 An investment strategy looks to deliver these projects and requires criteria to determine the priorities. This is for the District Council and its partners to determine. For guidance, and based on the assessment of need and strategy recommendations, some suggested criteria to apply and the recommendations which follow from each one are set out below

- investment in projects which deliver sustained increase in participation and contribute to the wider objectives in North Norfolk to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. On this criterion the priorities would be to improve swimming provision and so recommendations SP 3 and SP 2 in that order would be the priorities;
- investment that secures more cost effective provision and savings from changing the way facilities are currently provided and operated - in effect making better and more use of the existing stock. This could result in savings from current management and operation to be reinvested in enhancement of the facilities. On this criterion recommendations G3 and G2 in that order would be the priorities;
- investment in facilities where there is an identified need and which are identified in National Governing Bodies facility strategies or consistent with delivering the objectives of Sport England capital programmes. On this criterion recommendations IT1 and S1 are the priorities, especially with schools and colleges applying for funding for S1 under Sport England's Inspired Facilities Fund; and
- investment that does not require money and can form some "quick wins". This applies to getting a more cohesive approach to overall management of the facility stock. This investment requires time, not money but could result in savings by more shared use of facilities across the different providers. On this criterion recommendations G1 and G2 would be the priorities.

7.26 So an investment strategy is linked to first defining the criteria for investment and outcomes required, then reviewing the criteria to determine which strategy recommendations this applies to. The actual investment strategy will be determined by the District Council and its partners in taking the strategy and action plan into delivery.

## 8: Monitoring and Review

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- 8.1 It is recognised the strategy is a series of recommendations for the District Council to consider and then decide how it wished to consult, adopt and deliver the strategy. Given the current status then the monitoring and review section focuses on the key evidence base requirements that need to be reviewed and updated.
- 8.2 Monitoring and review of the indoor strategy is as important as the creation of the initial strategy. Monitoring is essential if the strategy is to successfully deliver improved provision of indoor sports and recreational facilities over the longer term. Monitoring and review represents the final stage in the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance produced by Sport England.
- 8.3 The needs assessment reports that underpin the strategy are from data compiled and analysed in 2014/15. This does provide a robust evidence basis on which to evaluate current and future supply, demand, access and availability of the sports and recreational facility stock. It is however essential to keep this under review and to monitor changes, and the implications of these changes.
- 8.4 Priorities will change over time as the strategy is delivered and new issues and challenges emerge. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate the implications of actions taken and the knock-on effect on the overall strategy and its associated priorities. While the strategy vision should therefore remain consistent over the defined period, the action plans should be dynamic and responsive to change.
- 8.5 Monitoring and review of this strategy should be undertaken as follows;

- **Ongoing monitoring of changes to the database.** This is usually regarded as an onerous and tedious task. However for all 7 facility types included in the strategy Sport England does update the database regularly and this is available on line to the District Council. In effect therefore it is not about reviewing and updating data but much more about ensuring that an officer in the Council is: aware of the Sport England Active Places Power (APP) database, has access to it (which is organised through Sport England and set out in the APP section of their web site); understands how the database works and can interrogate the data

In effect, it is an electronically updated source of data for the facility types in the strategy (and other facility types), which can be accessed and manipulated for any particular purpose from now on. Should the District Council wish to undertake a refresh of any findings for any facility type then it will be important to use the latest database but also do a bespoke review of the data at that time. This is not onerous

- **Assessing the impact of demographic changes and new population estimates.** The needs assessment and strategy is based on the 2014 population and its distribution across North Norfolk. It then projects forward to 2021/2026 based on the projected population growth. Should the population projections change significantly – a very unlikely occurrence - then the assumptions about demand changes from assumptions about the active population would need to be reviewed
- **Reviewing participation/frequency of participation rates.** The needs assessment is based on Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport participation and frequency of participation rates. The assumption in the strategy is that these participation/frequency rates do not change. It is possible to monitor participation trends for specific sports and for specific facility types for each local authority area through the Sport England Active People Survey. It is also possible to monitor

changes by age and gender across all sports for 14 +, also at each local authority area level. So changes in participation can be reviewed and can be compared in trend terms to participation rates since October 2006. It is acknowledged and as reported in the strategy that participation data at the North Norfolk level is only available for a few facility types and for age and gender participation. The geographical area applied to the North Norfolk assessment is set out in the strategy for each facility type

Overall though it is possible to put annual change into a longer time perspective. The findings in the strategy on facility needs are valid within a 5% change in participation up or down. It is unlikely that there will be this magnitude of change between 2014 – 2026. In effect this is almost a 0.5% annual change in participation up to 2026. It will still be important however to monitor the changes in the rates and frequencies of participation as there can be specific changes caused by the popularity of particular activities or the promoting of particular activities, for example the growth of spinning classes. This can create pressure for more access and facility time at venues. These changes can usually be absorbed by programming changes and not require additional provision of facilities

- **Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action.** This is the most important part of monitoring and, in effect, it is monitoring the delivery of the strategy. It is assumed that North Norfolk District Council will take the responsibility for doing this. It should be an annual review, set against the generic and facility specific recommendations. The life span of the strategy is to 2026 (we consider although the brief does say 2036) and the projects reflect that timescale. That does not mean that it is an 11 year work programme to work through - as given - but the needs and projects are not for just the next 1- 2 years either. An annual review against progress and delivery of projects, set alongside changes, which have arisen, is the suggested approach. A refresh of the major findings, delivery and directions set in the strategy could be undertaken in 5 years' time, or, in line with any local planning reviews and the need to update local planning policies. **The North Norfolk District Council decision to establish the providers and operators group could be constituted to be a standing working group of all stakeholders to monitor the strategy?**
- **Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities.** The needs assessment reports do provide a profile of adult participation in sport and physical activity. This can be used as the evidence base to support grant aid applications – as much as the facility needs assessments. They are adaptable reports and which can be used to support not only local authority major bids for new projects but also to support individual schools and clubs for grant aid to upgrade changing accommodation. Familiarity with the content of these needs assessment reports does provide the evidence base to support grant aid bids. The hard work is done; the application is now s for officers and sports clubs/organisations to use the data.