

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

General Introduction and Background

Central Bedfordshire Council appointed Neil Allen Associates to produce four of the five elements that will comprise the Leisure Strategy. Chapter 4, the Physical Activity Strategy is being produced in-house. The chapter headings are:

Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy
Chapter 2: Recreation & Open Space Strategy
Chapter 3: Playing Pitch Strategy
Chapter 4: Physical Activity Strategy*
Overarching Leisure Strategy

* Chapter 4 will be written in house and will be developed into a sign-posting and delivery programme for physical activity.

In line with emerging Government guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework, each chapter of the Leisure Strategy will carry out an assessment of the current provision of identified leisure facilities across Central Bedfordshire in 2012. Each chapter will further evaluate the respective leisure requirements which result from the growth in Central Bedfordshire's population up to 2031. Chapters 1 to 3 will each be developed into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will provide facility standards/future facility requirements to be met through the planning process and will form material evidence and policy to inform the Council's emerging Development Strategy.

The purpose of the Strategy is to support the securing of new and improved facility provision via the development management process. It does not include an evaluation of Central Bedfordshire Council's capital or management role in the delivery of some of the facilities in this chapter. A separate report on the Council's delivery role is also being prepared.

Structure of Chapters

The stages in the development of the Leisure Strategy are set out below.

Audit & Assessment

Stage 1 for each chapter comprises an audit and assessment which has gathered the evidence using the relevant methodology and research tools for each chapter, combined with facility inspections and stakeholder feedback, which details both the current and future provision required to meet the sport and recreation needs of Central Bedfordshire residents now and to 2031.

Issues & Options Report

Stage 2 is the Issues and Options Report whose main purpose is to present the key findings arising from the audit and assessment of each chapter, to identify the main issues affecting provision now and in the future and to present for consultation policy options to address these issues.

The issues and options identified are essentially a consensus of all the main findings, and owe their status equally to both the desk research and practical local comments on current facility adequacy.

The options are in effect draft standards and policies in the making, and will be further refined and developed as a result of ongoing consultation to inform the final strategy.

Draft Leisure Facilities Strategy

At stage 3, the options will be further refined and developed into standards/future requirements and policies which will be used in the creation of the final draft strategy.

Consultation

Throughout each stage of the process, a range of consultees, including national and local organizations, governing bodies of sport, leisure operators and contractors, sports clubs, town and parish councils and others have been invited to comment on current and future leisure requirements as set out in the Communications Plan.

The audit and assessment of built leisure facilities within the scope of Chapter 1 is now complete. The key findings for this chapter detailed in this Issues & Options Report result from a combination of site inspections, detailed desk-based research using Sport England and other planning tools and consultation with leisure operators and managers, together with initial contact with stakeholders.

Scope and Methodology

Sport England and other planning tools

Within the Leisure Facilities chapter, both swimming pools and sports halls have been evaluated using Sport England's Facilities Planning Model (FPM), which is currently the most detailed and comprehensive method available for calculating sports facility requirements in an area. The FPM utilizes population and facility data to model the need for, location and type of facilities required by the given population. Other sports rely on a range of other tools available.

The facilities considered in this chapter are:

- Swimming pools
- Sports halls
- Indoor tennis
- Indoor bowls
- Health and fitness centres
- Squash
- Specialist facilities where appropriate

The full list of facilities considered is set out in the appendix. Further work is being undertaken to evaluate the provision and need for dance/aerobics studios/fitness classes where they are not provided within the main facility types.

The final Strategy period will be 2013-2031 to conform to the emerging Development Strategy, although the Sport England modeling tool restricts the facility planning horizon to 2022.

Facility Size/Standard approach to standard setting to be added.

The following categories identify which facilities are included in the scope of this chapter, defined by their size and standard

National/regional – the scope specifically excludes facilities that have a national/regional/sub regional catchment or are intended to provide specialist facilities for elite athlete.

District – the scope specifically includes facilities which provide accessible sports facilities which can be reached generally within a travel time of about 20 minutes. This is recognized as the time that people would reasonably expect to travel by car, public transport or on foot to reach a sports facility, and it is accepted that most facilities at this level have such a catchment, though there is a distance decay factor which assumes that participation declines the further from the facility people live within this travel time.

Local – the scope specifically excludes facilities that are below a certain size criterion. Have a very local catchment or have limited public access.

Other evidence CBC to add

Housing growth

Population

Deprivation

Access

Public CBC health responsibilities

Health issues and targets

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim for indoor sports facilities is:

- To improve facility provision and meet overall need both now and in the future.

More detailed objectives include:

- To increase participation in indoor sports
- To enable the full range of sports activities to flourish, including recreational, teaching, coaching, club activity and the development of excellence.
- To enable the development of clubs
- To help reach hard to reach groups and those not currently taking part in sport
- To contribute towards the health agenda
- To ensure that future provision for indoor sport is made in accordance with available resources
- To guide the investment strategies of Central Beds Council and other potential providers
- To make provision for the increased demands brought about by new housing development
- To highlight the means of implementing new and enhanced provision
- To ensure good management and value for money

SPORTS HALLS

SCOPE

The halls included in the scope of this section are all those over 1 badminton court in size, with some degree of community use. These are located at 'public' leisure centres, schools with agreed community use and some other facilities. The more detailed assessment of current and future need undertaken with the use of the FPM concentrates on larger halls of 3 courts and above. The study area for all assessments includes halls in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results are analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for indoor sports set out above apply equally to sports halls.

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There are 46 main sports (of 1 court and above) and a further 13 ancillary halls on 42 sites within Central Bedfordshire, with an estimated 131 courts and floorspace of 20,000m². 10 halls are available on a pay and play basis, mainly on LA sites managed by a Trust or commercially, 47 are available on a mostly block booking system to clubs and others (mainly on school sites and therefore available only outside of school times) and 2 are only used privately. 16 of the existing halls are 4 courts or larger, including the main LA halls in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard (all 6 courts) and Flitwick, and a number of school halls. There is a large 8-court hall at Cranfield University primarily for students there but available for outside use, and other large halls at MOD and security establishments with varied amounts of community use. Many of the halls on school sites have smaller capacities, including single court facilities, which limits the range of activities that can take place.
- Total supply is the equivalent of about 70 courts. Total demand generated by the existing population taking into account participation rates and accessibility is for the equivalent of 72 courts including a comfort factor (a proportion of the theoretical capacity which is considered as being the limit where the facility starts to become uncomfortably busy). When comparing demand and supply solely within Central Beds (as a broad indication of adequacy of halls), there is an apparent shortfall of sports hall space of about 2-3 courts (or less than 1 hall).

Satisfied (SD) and unmet (UD) demand

- Demand is satisfied in the FPM where there is spare capacity at a sports hall, and residents live within a reasonable catchment of the facility. In an area like Central Bedfordshire, it is not possible for all demand to be satisfied, mainly because residents live outside the walking catchments of halls in towns or of driving distance in the more rural areas.
- 95% of the demand for sports hall provision in Central Bedfordshire is being satisfied by facilities within or outside the district. This is broadly consistent across the district and study area, and higher than the average. The level of satisfied demand is almost as much as is possible because it is not realistic for all demand to be satisfied because of capacity and/or accessibility restrictions of facility provision

- Central Bedfordshire exports a large proportion of its satisfied demand (27%) to neighbouring areas, almost all by those with access to a car. This is due mainly to the high levels of mobility and to the close proximity and good accessibility to facilities in areas that adjoin Central Bedfordshire e.g. Luton, Letchworth, Hitchin, Milton Keynes and St Albans.
- Unmet demand for sports hall provision represents 6% of the total demand and equates to approximately 4 courts (about one hall). The unmet demand is spread across the district, the highest concentrations being in Leighton Buzzard, Dunstable/HR and Biggleswade and Sandy. However even here they total a relatively small amount of provision and would not be sufficient to justify new sports hall provision being made at the present time for this reason alone.
- Almost all of the unmet demand is due to residents living outside the catchment of a sports hall and mostly from those who do not have access to a car. Many areas of the district fall outside the walking catchment of a hall and a significant amount of the unmet demand is considered to be due to the rural nature of the district and the lack of accessibility on foot, and in some cases by car.
- Central Bedfordshire is a net exporter of demand to LAs outside of about 1550 visits. It retains only 73% of its own SD and exports 27%, slightly mitigated by 16% of capacity imported from outside. In general therefore it relies on halls outside the district to meet some of its demand, and in particular Luton, Bedford, MK and North Herts.

Accessibility

- All residents of Central Bedfordshire currently can be considered to have good access to sports halls as almost all residents can access a hall within a 10-minute travel time.

Usage

- Used capacity is the proportion of total capacity of a sports hall that is taken up by current users. A used capacity figure of 80% is taken as an indication that a sports hall is 'comfortably full'. The district average is 68%, although this varies across the district. The 'public' halls at Flitwick, Tiddenfoot, Houghton Regis and Dunstable all exceed 'comfortable' capacity, the large halls at Sandy and Biggleswade also operate above this level and some other school halls are also at or reaching these similar levels. However some of the other facilities have a good deal of spare capacity to meet additional need, though these may not be located in the ideal position to meet this demand – Cranfield, Ampthill and Old Warden in particular.

Condition

- Although the main facilities are for the most part quite aged, the range of facilities available, disabled access, changing and the ancillary services such as parking are quite good.

Summary of 2012 situation

- **There is no justification for additional sports halls to satisfy the unmet needs of the existing (2012) population in the district.** Supply of halls is below the average and apparently insufficient to meet locally generated demand, when supply takes into account actual availability and demand reflects comfortable usage of halls without being crowded. However despite this, almost all demand from CB residents is met.
- **However, the main current issue for sports hall provision in Central Bedfordshire appears to be the apparent high use of the main centres at Flitwick, Tiddenfoot, Houghton Regis and Dunstable as well as the dual use halls at Biggleswade and Sandy, which the model estimates are operating well above comfortably full levels. So while there is insufficient demand to justify a new hall to meet unmet**

demand, consideration should be given to providing additional capacity in the peak period at (these or) other halls to reduce the pressure on these facilities.

- One exception might be Biggleswade, the only main town without a 'public' hall, although the provision of an additional hall here would need to consider the displacement of demand from other facilities, such as Stratton US, Sandy and Shuttleworth.
- There may be some possibility of increasing capacity by promoting additional 'public' access to other halls in the district, mainly the school halls, such as Alameda, Redborne, Manshead and Vandyke, and also at Cranfield and Shuttleworth, although the latter two facilities are not well located to accommodate additional use, being in smaller settlements remote from the main population. Otherwise it is difficult to see how capacity can be increased at the main public halls, except for major rebuild or significantly increased opening times (which are probably difficult to achieve).

Future situation 2022

In order to estimate future hall requirements to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire's population to 2022, the FPM was used to model the effect the 13% increase in population would have on meeting future demand.

Supply and demand

- The supply of sports hall space in Central Beds does not change in run 2, except for the attractiveness of halls, but Central Beds remains relatively poorly provided for halls compared with the average
- Total demand increases by 10%, compared with a population increase of 13%, reflecting an ageing population.
- The 2012 shortfall (when assessing supply against demand crudely) of 3 courts increases to 9 courts (i.e. threefold).

Satisfied and unmet demand

- Satisfied demand for sports halls increases overall within the district by 10% in terms of total visits though this remains at the same proportion (95%). This is still higher than the national average (91%). Accessibility and mode of transport to halls remain similar and continue to reflect high car ownership and relative rurality throughout Central Beds.
- With increased population UD levels also increase by 8% in terms of numbers of visits, though in percentage terms remain broadly similar. The actual number of visits remains the equivalent of about 1 additional hall over the whole district, none of which is in sufficient concentration to warrant additional halls still for this reason alone. The levels of unmet demand are still the result of lack of accessibility to halls mainly by those without access to a car.
- The district retains a larger amount but smaller proportion of its own SD, but at the same time becomes a larger net exporter of demand than in run 1, thus relying more on the availability of hall space outside the district

Accessibility

- All residents of Central Bedfordshire still have good access to a hall as nearly all residents can access a pools within a 10 minute travel time

Usage

- The used capacity figure overall of 68% in run 1 increases considerably to 73%, but still generally below the level when halls are considered 'uncomfortable', However, all the main halls are operating well over their comfortable capacity, and Dunstable, Flitwick and Tiddenfoot are almost at absolute capacity.

Tiddenfoot and Sandy actually lose some usage and throughput, probably as a result of reduced attractiveness and demand being met elsewhere.

Condition

- Without significant investment the condition of halls by 2022 will have deteriorated with corresponding effects on their attractiveness to users.

Summary of 2022 situation

- Future need is dependent on any increase in population, which is mitigated by the ageing of the population. Supply is still relatively low, and on a crude comparison is insufficient to meet locally generated demand within Central Beds, but a larger than average level of demand is satisfied in 2022 and what levels of unmet demand exist **are still not in sufficient concentrations to justify the provision of any additional halls in the district to meet this criterion alone**. New halls might be built but they would only succeed in displacing demand from other existing halls nearby. One possible exception might be the Biggleswade area, where there are no 'public' halls to serve one of the district's main towns.
- **The main concern by 2022 remains the high usage sports halls in the district, nine (of the 20) of which now exceed their comfortable capacity, and in particular the main 'public' halls in the larger towns, but also the dual use centres in Biggleswade, Sandy and Robert Bloomfield . So while there is insufficient demand to justify a new hall to meet unmet demand, consideration should be given to providing additional capacity in the peak period at (these or) other halls to reduce the pressure on these facilities. At the same time, some halls have reduced throughput, presumably as a result of decreased attractiveness, so significant refurbishment might be required.** As with run 1, there is a case for improved access to some halls with spare capacity, but again they may not be best located to absorb additional usage.

Possible scenarios 2022

In order to calculate the hall space required to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire's growing population to 2022, modelling of four future scenarios has been undertaken to test the impact of changes to hall provision and condition to assess the different impact these changes would have on meeting future demand.

The four scenarios were based around the 'public' halls and modelled new halls, refurbishment of halls, and closure of some facilities. The findings of these scenarios are set out below - all the scenarios have different impacts on levels of satisfied demand, usage and the need for additional facilities. The results have been used to develop some of the options set out below, and are summarized here.

Scenario 1 - major refurbishment to 5 public leisure centre halls

- The current quality of halls is good at present, but by 2022 the age and functionality of all halls will have declined. A short-term option therefore is that a programme of renewal and/or refurbishment be put in place to maintain all facilities to achieve a 'good' quality standard.
- Phased over 5 year between 2013 – 2017 and creates more widespread improvement across Central Beds.
- The main effect of this option is to increase the throughputs/used capacity of the 5 centres refurbished. All 5 centres are estimated to have used capacity at 100% because it modernises five centres increasing their attractiveness relative to the 15 centres unchanged.
- Refurbishment (as opposed to new build) will have a decreasing impact over time.

- This is the smallest scale of change of any of the new options and is probably the cheapest.

Scenario 2 – development of three new sports halls - Houghton Regis LC, Flitwick LC and Saxon LC, and three refurbished sports halls – Sandy CC, Dunstable LC and Tiddenfoot LCs

- Possibly the best option in terms of cost/sports effective terms, as it provides 6 new/refurbished centres which is when compared to option SH4 a more manageable programme and lower cost and a bit more extensive in scale than option SH2
- Still leaves some unmet demand but possibly this could be met by increasing the hours of community use at some of the 15 other centres which are not changed.

Scenario 3 - major refurbishments to all public leisure centres, new facility at Stofold (Etonbury middle school) and refurbishing and intensifying management at school halls

- Most effective run in providing a strategic approach to meeting the demand for sports halls across Central Beds up to 2022.
- Also the most extensive and expensive requiring management of 12 projects - although only half are provision changes, the rest are management changes.
- Does provide new centres in growth areas and so more opportunity to achieve developer contributions to meet capital cost but increased revenue costs and which are going to be extensive.
- The new/extensive modernisation of sports halls in Central Beds does retain more Central Beds demand but it also attracts users from the ROSA, so much so that the headroom of spare capacity is only 4% as used capacity is 76%. If participation in hall sports was to rise by (say) 1% this headroom would be eliminated and centres become uncomfortably full. Possible resolved/managed by priority use/bookings for Central Beds residents if practical.

Scenario 4– development of four new centres at Flitwick LC, Dunstable/Houghton Regis LC, Leighton Linlade LC, Stofold (Etonbury Middle School) and two major refurbishments at Sandy Sports & CC and Tiddenfoot LC. Plus closure of 2 existing centres Houghton Regis LC and Dunstable LC

- Probably the second best option in providing the most strategic assessment and provision of a modern supply of sports halls by 2022 to meet the demand from Central Beds residents.
- However, the closure of the 2 centres in the Dunstable/HR area and replacement with the new combined Dunstable and Houghton Regis centre looks too severe in terms of overall supply and demand balance. It is putting immediate “halls full” pressure on the new centre as well as on All Saints Academy
- Overall the one new combined Houghton Regis and Dunstable LC is not the right balance and the reduction of 6 courts in this area is too much.

CONSULTATIONS

Clubs, governing bodies and local councils replying highlighted the following:

- There are considered insufficient halls for community badminton clubs to be accommodated
- School halls do not meet the need for badminton particularly at exam times
- School facilities could be coordinated to accommodate badminton and other specialist facilities throughout the district
- An 8-court specialist centre for badminton in Bedfordshire could be justified, which could be of economical design and cost
- There is a reasonable justification for a ‘public’ hall in Biggleswade to meet local need for sports hall activities such as badminton

- Stratton School is very amenable to additional community usage, within the constraints of the existing management structure. There is potential to accommodate specialist facilities for particular sports (e.g. cricket)
- The need for local facilities for local people in smaller communities needs addressing.
- The school facilities at Harlington US are acknowledged to be inaccessible because of the nature of the school management

KEY ISSUES

- The assessment suggests that although there is relatively low provision, it is difficult to justify any more halls in the district to meet unmet demand. Evidence shows that the construction of new halls would not achieve a higher proportion of satisfied demand because existing halls are shown to be well located to serve the major settlements and identified growth areas. Equally, improving upon the 8% unmet demand is unlikely to be possible, due to the rural nature of much of Central Bedfordshire
- There is some evidence that the main 'public' sports halls in Flitwick, Tiddenfoot, Houghton Regis and Dunstable and others are at capacity already and will get more crowded by 2022, and that additional capacity may be required to meet this concern even now.
- Central Beds does rely on hall provision in neighbouring LA areas to meet much of its demand. Measures might be taken to redress this situation.
- School sports halls offer a good opportunity for community use. Many schools give good community access to their sports halls, but there are still some which do not. There is a need to improve community access to school halls in the evening and at weekends, and possibly a role for management of community time to be coordinated throughout the district, perhaps with the involvement of the Council. Schools also need to be supported in terms of managing community access to sports halls, including marketing, types of booking systems and management solutions to community use.
- There is the need for range of halls of various sizes and types to allow all different activities to take place, including competitions, and to permit the development of specialist facilities for particular sports. If all secondary schools have a main sports hall, which is available for public use, they could be developed with a different specialist facility in order to improve provision across the district.
- The role of village halls and smaller sports halls is crucial in meeting the needs of smaller communities in the outlying parts of the district, especially where they are suitable for sport, and where access to main halls is not available to local communities.
- It is clear that the majority of sports halls (mainly those on school sites but also the main 'public' halls) were built over 30 years ago, and only half of these have been refurbished. There has been very little sports hall construction in Central Bedfordshire in the last 30 years. It can be assumed from this data therefore that the sports hall stock overall is not in prime condition, and is unlikely to be fully fit for purpose far into the future.
- In the current financial climate, the best way of funding new halls or hall improvements needs to be considered.

- The additional population in the new housing areas will significantly increase the demand for sports halls in the future. New provision could take place within the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action, primarily from the scenario testing in the FPM. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

SH1 - DO LITTLE.

This option, which relies on retaining the current stock of halls with routine maintenance, is unlikely to be a realistic proposal given the issues set out above.

PLACE MAKING OPTIONS

DUNSTABLE/HOUGHTON REGIS AREA

SH2 – REFURBISH DUNSTABLE LEISURE CENTRE SPORTS HALL

- The impact of refurbishment of the main sports halls is normally felt in the increased attractiveness of these centres leading to higher used capacity and annual throughputs. However Dunstable Leisure Centre is already at capacity and there is no difference.
- This option has decreasing impact over time and is small-scale.
- This option still leaves facilities in the local area and overall at capacity and additional halls would be required to free this up.

SH3 – REFURBISH HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE SPORTS HALL

- This option does make the existing sports hall more attractive, with a short term impact on usage
- The outcome of this option is similar to above, with the exception that the nearly full Houghton Regis sports hall now reaches absolute capacity.
- This option has decreasing impact over time and is small-scale.
- This option also leaves facilities in the local area and overall at capacity and additional halls would be required to free up this.

SH4 – BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL AT HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE AND CLOSE EXISTING HALL

- This option results in a smaller supply of halls as the replacement Houghton Regis hall is only 4 courts in size (in this scenario).
- Satisfied demand remains the same as before as the hall is more attractive, albeit smaller, but less satisfied demand is retained in the area.
- Throughput decreases but there is still a very high utilised capacity (almost 100%)
- Although this is a longer term solution than refurbishment, the halls in the area are at capacity and additional courts are still required to meet local demand.

SH5 – BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL IN DUNSTABLE/HOUGHTON REGIS GROWTH AREA AND CLOSE HOUGHTON REGIS AND DUNSTABLE HALLS

- This option results in a drop in supply as two halls are replaced by one in a new location.
- There is no effect on satisfied demand as more visits are exported outside.
- Throughput in the area declines but utilised capacity increases to almost 100%
- The closure of the 2 centres and replacement with the new combined Dunstable and Houghton Regis centre is too severe in terms of overall supply and demand

balance, and puts immediate “hall full” pressure on the new centre as well as on All Saints Academy.

LEIGHTON BUZZARD/RURAL SOUTH AREA

SH6 – REFURBISH TIDDENFOOT SPORTS HALL

- The impact of refurbishment of the main sports halls is normally felt in the increased attractiveness of these centres leading to higher used capacity and annual throughputs, and this applies here.
- This option has decreasing impact over time and is small-scale.
- There remains some spare capacity overall, but the main centres are almost at absolute capacity.

SH7 – BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL IN LEIGHTON BUZZARD/LINSLADE GROWTH AREA AND REFURBISH TIDDENFOOT HALL

- This option results in an increase in supply as the existing hall at Tiddenfoot is retained and refurbished. This results in an increase in 6 courts overall in the area.
- There is no effect on satisfied demand as levels are already high, but demand retained in the area increases, and the area is a net importer
- Throughput in the area increases by about 20% but utilised capacity decreases by 9% to comfortable levels. However the main halls are at over 90% capacity.
- The retention of 2 main centres in this area gives the area a good supply of facilities, and a range of different venues. This option is however relatively expensive.

WEST AREA

SH8 – REFURBISH FLITWICK LEISURE CENTRE SPORTS HALL

- This option does make the existing sports hall more attractive, with a short term impact on usage
- There is no significant change to levels of supply and satisfied demand, and throughput and utilised capacity are similar. However the existing sports hall does reach absolute capacity.
- This option has decreasing impact over time and is small-scale.
- This option leaves the main centre at capacity and spare capacity needs to be taken up at other centres in the area.

SH9 - BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL IN FLITWICK AND CLOSE EXISTING HALL

- This option is very little different from the above where the Flitwick hall is refurbished.
- The main impact is that the new hall is more attractive, but when tested with other refurbishments, this makes little difference.
- This option retains the local area as a net exporter, but throughput and utilised capacity are very similar to SH8 above,
- The advantage of this option is as a longer term solution to the main issues, at an additional expense.

SH10 - MORE COMMUNITY USE OF CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY SPORTS HALL

- This option was not tested specifically, but increased community availability in an area of the district not well provided with sports halls would meet a local need.
- This hall is the biggest in the district and is capable of use for a range of activities requiring a larger space, including competitions and tournaments
- This option requires negotiation with the university on the availability of community time.

EAST AREA

SH11 – BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL AT SAXON POOL BIGGLESWADE

- This option increases supply in the local area, but because of the high existing levels, there is no impact on satisfied demand. Instead a new hall gives more choice to local residents.
- Throughput in the area increases significantly and utilised capacity drops from just below comfortable levels to 70%.
- The new hall drags back demand from outside but the area remains a net exporter.
- This option increases choice of sports halls in the east area

SH12 – BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL AT ETONBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL, STOTFOLD

- This option increases supply in the east area, but has no impact on satisfied demand in the area, because of the already high levels. More demand is retained, though the area continues as a net exporter.
- Throughput increases by 20% but utilised capacity remains just below comfort levels.
- Etonbury sports hall immediately reaches absolute capacity
- This option therefore makes little difference to the overall supply and demand equation, but offers more choice to local residents, and in particular this part of the district. It is likely that some demand is diverted from centres outside Central Beds.

SH13 BUILD NEW SPORTS HALL ELSEWHERE IN STOTFOLD

Although this option was not tested, it is likely that the outcome would be similar to SH11 above.

SH14 – UNDERTAKE MAJOR REFURBISHMENT OF SANDY SPORTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

- This option is difficult to assess given that major refurbishment of Sandy sports hall was part of a wider scenario.
- It is likely however that the outcome would be similar to other refurbishments – i.e. it makes the existing sports hall more attractive, with a short term impact on usage, makes little difference to levels of satisfied demand and has decreasing impact over time and is small-scale.
- However the refurbishment does increase throughput at Sandy and raises utilised capacity to absolute maximum.

SH15 – MORE COMMUNITY USE OF SHUTTLEWORTH COLLEGE SPORTS HALL

- This option was not tested specifically, but increased community availability in an area of the district not well provided with sports halls would meet a local need.
- This hall is only 3 courts in size and is capable of use for a range of (probably) specialist activities requiring a smaller space, subject to greater public access.

Some of the above options would be affected by facility provision, replacement or improvement in neighbouring LA areas, not tested in the scenarios.

GENERAL OPTIONS

SH16 - REFURBISH EXISTING SPORTS HALLS ACROSS THE DISTRICT AS A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME

- This option means the comparatively modern stock in Central Beds will be much more attractive to users, which will draw in more demand from residents outside Central Beds but who live within the drive time catchment area of a sports hall in Central Beds.

- It is a very beneficial programme of improvement of sports halls and creates a very modern stock across the area benefiting Central Beds residents.
- But it is a very extensive and costly programme of investment in sports halls which does create significant changes in supply with an overall 12% increase in sports hall capacity in visit number. Also there is now a very modern and extensive supply of sports halls which meets most of the demand for sports halls.
- It could however be a victim of its own success in drawing in more users from outside the area and creating almost "over full" sports halls as there is little spare capacity across Central Beds.
- If hall sports participation rates rises, by say 1% - 2% then the sports halls will become very full very quickly. Possibly a more modest and targeted programme of sports hall modernisation of some of the other runs than run 5 is more cost and sports effective.

SH17 – IMPROVE ACCESS TO EXISTING SCHOOL HALLS BY NEGOTIATION AND AGREEMENT

- Access to schools and college sports halls is often restricted to clubs and regular bookings only and as such these facilities have limited impact upon the supply of sports halls for wider community use. However, their ability to assist in meeting the local demand for indoor sport should be considered.
- This option alone is unlikely to meet the overall needs of Central Beds for sports halls but would meet some local demand. It should be considered in conjunction with the major options set out above.

SH18 - CONSIDER COMMUNITY ACCESS TO OTHER CURRENTLY UNUSED HALLS e.g. HENLOW CAMP – this option would have limited impact on demand, but would absorb some usage in a more local part of the district.

SH19 – REVIEW THE PROGRAMMING OF EXISTING HALLS TO PROVIDE MORE CAPACITY AT PEAK TIMES FOR USERS WITH THE GREATEST DEMAND - again this can be considered in conjunction with other options, but by itself would be unlikely to make a major impact overall

SH20 – ENCOURAGE THE GREATER UTILISATION OF VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HALLS FOR SPORT, PARTICULARLY WHERE THESE ARE SUITABLE TO ACCOMMODATE ORGANISED ACTIVITY

Improvements where possible and feasible to the structure, management and programming of village and community halls, particularly in the main villages but also in the main towns where smaller scale activities could take place, would make a significant impact on overall availability, particularly where a full sports specification is not required (e.g. for recreational play). This is likely to be a local solution which supplements the other options above.

SH21 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision, or a schedule of future sports hall requirements, will need to be considered.

SWIMMING POOLS

SCOPE

The pools included in the scope of this section are indoor swimming pools of over 20m in length and 400m² and above in water area, with some degree of community access and use. This includes pools in leisure centres and commercial gyms which are aimed at meeting the needs of local community, and is in accordance with the methodology for the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) used in much of the assessment. The study area includes pools in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results were analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

The strategy does not include consideration of specialist swimming pools and facilities that may have a national/regional/sub-regional catchment e.g. 50m pools for elite athletes, and leisure pools.

School, private and outdoor pools point do not form a significant part of the assessment although there are school pools just outside of the district that formed part of the main assessment (e.g. Lealands High School), and small/private/outdoor pools within and around Central Beds which may have a local role to play in helping meet needs albeit on a limited basis.

OBJECTIVES

The additional objectives for swimming pools are:

- To increase participation in swimming
- To enable the full range of swimming activities to flourish, including recreational, teaching, coaching, club activity and the development of excellence.
- To enable the development of clubs and swimming squads
- To provide a balanced approach to the provision of swimming for all ages and abilities
- To improve levels of safety through teaching more people to swim

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There are currently 15 indoor pools (11 main and 4 learner, teaching or smaller pools) on 11 sites throughout Central Bedfordshire. Eight of these are fully accessible to the public on a pay and play basis, including the main 'public' pools at Dunstable Leisure Centre, Flitwick Leisure Centre, Tiddenfoot in Houghton Regis and Saxon Pool & Leisure Centre in Biggleswade, 4 pools at commercial health and fitness clubs which are mainly available to registered members, and 3 on other sites mainly with restricted access. A number of other pools have either recently closed, are solely in private use or are outdoors, and therefore are mainly outside the scope of this section as they make limited contribution to meeting community need.
- The overall supply of water space in Central Bedfordshire per 1000 people is 8m², which is lower than the national average of 13m². In contrast, five of the surrounding local authorities have high to very high levels of water space, while two have very low levels of water space.
- When comparing supply of pools and local demand, there appears to be a shortfall in water space across Central Bedfordshire of about 600m².

Satisfied and unmet demand

- In fact, very high levels of demand for swimming are met in the district (demand is met if there is spare capacity in a pool and residents live within the driving or walking catchment of a pool). 92% of demand for pool space is met (slightly higher than the national average of 91%), either within Central Bedfordshire or at surrounding local authority pools
- The 8% of demand unmet is generally demand created by people living in rural areas outside the driving catchment of a pool or those in the main towns without a car. This is considered to be an acceptable and expected level of unmet demand, which is unlikely to fall in an area like this.
- Of the 92% of satisfied demand, 69% is retained within facilities in Central Bedfordshire, while the remainder (31%) is met by facilities in the surrounding local authority areas. As such, other local authorities are meeting some of Central Bedfordshire's demand for swimming
- Central Bedfordshire is a net exporter of demand to LAs outside of about 2100 visits per week, and in general therefore it relies on pools outside the district to meet its demand.

Accessibility

- All residents of Central Bedfordshire currently can be considered to have good access to a pool as all residents can access a pools within a 20 minute travel time

Usage

- Pools are considered to be at comfortable levels of use if they are used at no more than 70% of their capacity. The average result for pools in Central Bedfordshire is 71%, which suggests that overall pools in Central Beds are above their comfortable capacity.
- Individual results show that the main pools in the district are mainly operating above their comfortable capacity at peak times - Flitwick 87%, Tiddenfoot 80%, Dunstable 100% considerably exceed comfortable usage levels, although Saxon Poll is at 61%.

Condition

- Currently the main public pools are considered to be in fair to good condition, but the main 'public' swimming pools are not in prime condition, and are unlikely to be fully fit for purpose far into the future unless there is significant investment.

Summary of 2012 situation

Unmet demand in Central Beds is the equivalent in total of about one additional pool over the whole district, **but this is spread too thinly to warrant a new pool in any one location that would significantly reduce the unmet demand levels.** The location of pools on the edge of and outside CB fulfils an important role in meeting CB's needs, through good accessibility of local residents, and CB residents therefore have ample access to pools. CB therefore currently relies on neighbouring LA areas to meet much of its demand for swimming.

The main current conclusion for swimming pool provision in Central Bedfordshire appears to be the apparent high use of the Flitwick, Tiddenfoot and Dunstable Leisure Centre pools, which the model estimates are operating well above comfortably full levels. **So while there is insufficient demand to justify a new pool to meet unmet demand, additional capacity in the peak period is required at (these or) other pools to reduce the pressure on these facilities.**

Future situation 2022

In order to estimate future pool requirements to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire's population to 2022, the FPM was used to model the effect the 13% increase in population would have on meeting future demand.

Supply and demand

- The supply of pools and water space remains unchanged in Central Bedfordshire, overall water space per 1000 people is reduced to 7m², which is lower than the national average of 12m².
- Four of the surrounding local authorities are assumed to continue to have high levels of water space, while two have very low levels of water space.
- The effect of the 13% increase in population is an increased apparent shortfall in water space across Central Bedfordshire of 900m².

Satisfied and unmet demand

- With an increase in population of 13%, there is a corresponding rise in demand for pool space of 11%. However, 92% of demand for pool space continues to be met. Unmet demand stays at 8% overall, although the number of visits increases accordingly.
- A smaller proportion of this (67%) is retained within facilities in Central Bedfordshire. 33% is now met by facilities in the surrounding local authority areas as such other local authorities are meeting an increasing amount of Central Bedfordshire's demand for swimming.
- Central Beds becomes an even higher exporter of demand to neighbouring areas.

Accessibility

- All residents of Central Bedfordshire still have good access to a pool as all residents can access a pools within a 20 minute travel time

Usage

- The average usage of pools in Central Bedfordshire increases to 75%, well above comfort levels, and individual pools at Flitwick 92%, Tiddenfoot 98%, Dunstable 80% and Saxon 74% all now exceed comfortable usage levels

Condition

- Without significant investment the condition of pools by 2022 will have deteriorated with corresponding effects on their attractiveness to users.

Summary of 2022 situation

- Future need is dependent on any increase in population, which is mitigated by the ageing of the population. **However unmet demand is still not in sufficient concentrations to justify the provision of any additional pools in the district to meet this criterion alone. New pools might be built but they would only succeed in displacing demand from other existing pools nearby.**
- **The main concern by 2022 remains the high usage of now all 4 main 'public' pools in the four main towns.** Despite a reduction in the usage of the Dunstable LC pool in the face of competition from the relatively increasing attractiveness of the 'new' Luton Sports Village pools, the 4 main pools are all operating at or near absolute capacity, although there is still some spare capacity at the commercial pools, which meet less community use because of their membership policies and availability. **Additional capacity is therefore required for this purpose**

Possible scenarios 2022

In order to calculate the pool space required to meet the needs of Central Bedfordshire's growing population to 2022, modeling of three future scenarios has been undertaken to test the impact of changes to pool provision and condition to assess the different impact these changes would have on meeting future demand.

The three scenarios were based around the 'public' pools and modeled new pools, refurbishment of pools, and closure of some facilities. The findings of these scenarios are set out below - all the scenarios have different impacts on levels of satisfied demand, usage and the need for additional facilities. The results have been used to develop some of the options set out below, and are summarized here.

Scenario 1 - reopen and refurbish Houghton Regis pool and make major refurbishments to all other main 'public' pools

- The current quality of pools is good at present, but by 2022 the age and functionality of all pools will have declined. One option therefore is that a programme of renewal and/or refurbishment be put in place to maintain all facilities to achieve a 'good' quality standard.
- Reopening of Houghton Regis pool would achieve additional water space, meet local demand in this part of the district and drag back in demand from outside the district.
- Major refurbishment of 4 pools will provide a short term improvement in the attractiveness of the pools, but this is likely to exacerbate the used capacity which are all already at uncomfortable levels. All main pools will operate above comfort levels.
- A refurbishment (as opposed to new) will have a decreasing impact over time.
- The main effect of this option is to increase throughputs and re-import demand from outside Central Bedfordshire, although it still remains a net exporter. Additional pools may still be required to overcome capacity issues.
- This is a relatively cheap option, as it results in the least additional water space.

Scenario 2 - build new Flitwick pool and new Houghton Regis LC pool and major refurbishment of all other 'public' pools

- Construction of new pools at Flitwick and Houghton Regis would comprehensively address demand and increase throughput of users at these new facilities. In Houghton Regis in particular this is the best option for meeting demand from residents without cars as the new larger HR pool on the existing site, has a large walking catchment.
- Used capacity at the other pools still remains over comfort levels and the main pools are all operating over capacity. Refurbishments will increase attractiveness which will continue to exacerbate the used capacity levels.
- This is probably the best option in terms of meeting demand and improving throughput, although it is relatively expensive.

Scenario 3 - build new larger Flitwick pool and new pools within the growth areas of Leighton/Linslade and Houghton Regis/Dunstable, close Flitwick, Tiddenfoot and Dunstable pools, and major refurbishment to Saxon pool

- This scenario produces the most additional water space, but levels of satisfied demand actually fall because of the lack of walking access to the new HR and Dunstable pool.
- This scenario has higher throughput but overall utilised capacity is below comfortable levels of use, although the HR and Dunstable pool operates at absolute capacity.
- This scenario still results in net export of demand. The new Leighton Linslade pool operates at relatively low capacity because of the attractiveness of the nearby

HR and Dunstable pool and the slightly worse location of the new LB pool compared with Tiddenfoot

- This is probably the most expensive option, though the opportunity exists to relate better to the growth areas and seek developer contributions.

CONSULTATIONS

The Amateur Swimming Association (the governing body for swimming) did not respond to the initial consultation, but the development of new pools or improvement of existing comply with the current strategic aims of the association and the target for swimming facilities up to 2013.

Clubs and local councils replying did highlight the following:

- Tiddenfoot is considered inadequate to meet all the demands on it, and in particular during the day when there is no community use (the assessments above tend to consider only the peak hours which do not necessarily correspond)
- There is a local desire/aspiration for an additional pool in Leighton Buzzard
- The recent closure of the pool at Houghton Regis is considered to have had a serious impact on local swimming, particularly on daytime school activity.

KEY ISSUES

- Taking into account location, size and availability, the existing pools meet a wide demand for recreational swimming, teaching and/or club activities. Swim clubs and others still experience difficulty of gaining access at their preferred times, particularly in Leighton Buzzard.
- The assessment suggests that although there is relatively low provision, it is difficult to justify any more pools in the district to meet unmet demand. Evidence shows that the construction of new pools would not achieve a higher proportion of satisfied demand because existing pools are shown to be well located to serve the major settlements and identified growth areas. Equally, improving upon the 8% unmet demand is unlikely to be possible, due to the rural nature of much of Central Bedfordshire
- There is some evidence that the main leisure centre pools in Flitwick, Tiddenfoot and Dunstable are at capacity already and will get more crowded by 2022, and that additional capacity may be required to meet this concern.
- Central Beds does rely on pool provision in neighbouring LA areas to meet much of its demand. This includes the 'new' 50m pool at Luton Sports Village. Measures might be taken to redress this situation.
- The recent closure of Houghton Regis pool highlights a need for additional swimming pool space in this part of the district.
- There is clearly some concern in Leighton Buzzard about the adequacy of swimming provision in the town.
- The role of commercial pools at health clubs in meeting the local demand for swimming has significant potential and should be considered.

- The current quality of pools is considered good at present, but unlikely to be fit for purpose after 2020. There is an issue of age and functionality with some pools, many of which were built before 1990, although some refurbishment has taken place. Quality improvements will differ according to whether pools are replaced or renewed. By 2022 the existing pools will in some instances be in excess of 40 years old, and without significant investment their condition will have deteriorated to a degree where they are significantly less fit for purpose. This will have a corresponding effect on their attractiveness to users.
- The decline in the used capacity at Dunstable by 2022 (from 100% to 80%) shows that the pool's age and condition mean it has become less attractive to users who will choose to swim elsewhere. Without investment a similar effect may be expected on the other pools.
- In the current financial climate, the best way of funding new pools or pool enhancements needs to be considered.
- The additional population in the new housing areas will significantly increase the demand for swimming in the future. New provision could take place within the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action, primarily from the scenario testing in the FPM. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

SW1 - DO LITTLE.

This option, which relies on retaining the current stock of pools with routine maintenance, is unlikely to be a realistic proposal given the issues set out above

PLACE MAKING OPTIONS

DUNSTABLE/HOUGHTON REGIS AREA

SW2 – REFURBISH DUNSTABLE LEISURE CENTRE POOL

- This option has a limited impact on satisfied demand and this diminishes over time as the relative attractiveness of the refurbished pool decreases
- Throughputs increase in the short term, and some exported demand outside is drawn back, but the area remains a net exporter
- Capacity issues remain, and pools are mainly full.
- This is a relatively cheap option

SW3 – REOPEN AND REFURBISH HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE SPORTS HALL

- The increase in supply results in a higher level of satisfied demand, and in particular better access on foot than at present.
- The local area retains a larger proportion of its own demand and effectively draws back demand from outside the area and district
- Utilised capacity increases in the area from 76-88% and all local pools are at capacity
- This option improves local accessibility to pools but still means that additional water space is necessary because all pools in the area are full

SW4 – BUILD NEW SWIMMING POOL AT HOUGHTON REGIS LEISURE CENTRE AND CLOSE EXISTING POOL

- A new larger pool in Houghton Regis increases water space in the local area by two-fold
- Unmet demand in the area increases to 96%, about as high as is possible
- Walking access improves compared with at present and represents a much higher proportion of total access
- Throughput in the local area doubles and the area becomes a major importer of demand from outside
- Utilised capacity at the new pool is at 80% above comfort levels, so additional water space might still be necessary to overcome this

SW5 – BUILD NEW SWIMMING POOL IN DUNSTABLE/HOUGHTON REGIS GROWTH AREA AND CLOSE HOUGHTON REGIS AND DUNSTABLE POOLS

- Satisfied demand declines compared with the existing as the new pool is further away for those without cars
- Utilised capacity is still above comfortable levels of use
- The local area becomes a major importer of demand from outside
- There are still capacity issues as the new pool is at absolute capacity
- This an expensive option but it is more closely related to development in terms of developer contributions

LEIGHTON BUZZARD/RURAL SOUTH AREA

SW6 – REFURBISH TIDDENFOOT SWIMMING POOL

- This option has a limited impact on satisfied demand and this diminishes over time as the relative attractiveness of the refurbished pool decreases
- Throughputs increase in the short term
- Capacity issues remain, and the existing pool remains mainly full.
- This is a relatively cheap option

SW7 – BUILD NEW SWIMMING POOL IN LEIGHTON BUZZARD/LINSLADE GROWTH AREA AND CLOSE TIDDENFOOT POOL

- Satisfied demand increases only slightly compared with the existing as the new pool is further for those without access to a car
- Throughput is likely to increase but utilised capacity reduces significantly (the scenario only tested a number of new pools altogether and the Dunstable option affects the Leighton Buzzard area disproportionately)
- This an expensive option but it is more closely related to development in terms of developer contributions
- It is difficult to assess the benefits of this option alone because of the impact of other new pools in the scenarios

WEST AREA

SW8 – REFURBISH FLITWICK LEISURE CENTRE SWIMMING POOL

- This option achieves more throughput than at present, because there is a short term increase in attractiveness.
- It draws back some demand from outside the area but remains a net exporter
- Throughput increases but utilised capacity overall in the local area and Flitwick now reaches 100%
- This is a short term option with little impact on long term satisfaction of need

SW9 - BUILD NEW 6 LANE SWIMMING POOL IN FLITWICK AND CLOSE EXISTING POOL

- This option achieves an increase in supply in the local area, increased attractiveness and therefore throughput and reduces the overall shortfall in pool space
- However the Flitwick pool is still operating above comfortable levels of use.
- This is a relatively expensive option

SW10 - BUILD NEW 8 LANE SWIMMING POOL IN FLITWICK AND CLOSE EXISTING POOL

- This option achieves a reduced shortfall in water space by doubling the water area compared with now. The pool is more attractive and throughput increases by one third.
- The utilised capacity is reduced to below 70% (the comfort level).
- The new pool reduces the reliance on pools outside the area
- This is an expensive option.

EAST AREA

SW11 – REFURBISH EXISTING SAXON POOL

- This option addresses a declining attractiveness at Saxon Pool although this would only be in the short term.
- It would increase throughput at the pool and in the local area and draw back some demand from outside
- This is a relatively cheap option.

SW12 – BULD NEW POOL IN SANDY

- This option was not tested as part of the scenarios but it is unlikely to be justified in view of the relative proximity of Saxon Pool and the likelihood that usage from the latter would merely be displaced to Sandy.
- There is unlikely to be a significant increase in satisfied demand except for those without use of a car near to any pool in Sandy.
- It would release some pressure on Saxon Pool which without any improvement is at 75% capacity

Some of the above options would be affected by facility provision, replacement or improvement in neighbouring areas, not tested in the scenarios.

GENERAL OPTIONS

SW13 - NEGOTIATE BETTER ACCESS WITH COMMERCIAL PROVIDERS OF GYMS AND HEALTH CLUB POOLS

- Access to commercial pools at health clubs is restricted to members only and as such these facilities have limited impact upon the supply of water space,. However, their ability to assist in meeting the local demand for swimming should be considered.
- This option is unlikely to meet the overall needs of Central Beds for swimming but would meet some local demand. It should be considered in conjunction with the major options set out above.

SW14 - CONSIDER COMMUNITY ACCESS TO OTHER CURRENTLY UNUSED POOLS e.g. HENLOW CAMP – this option would have limited impact on demand, but would absorb some usage in more local areas of the district.

SW15 – REVIEW THE PROGRAMMING OF EXISTING POOLS TO PROVIDE MORE CAPACITY AT PEAK TIMES FOR USERS WITH THE GREATEST DEMAND – the evidence shows that there is no justification for the provision of an additional pool in any one location to meet additional unmet demand. However, additional capacity could be gained by increasing the usage of the main existing pools. Again this can be considered in conjunction with other options but by itself would be unlikely to make a major impact overall.

SW16 – CONSIDER BETTER UTILISATION OF ANY SMALL POOLS WHERE APPROPRIATE

The main pools have been considered in the assessment and the main options above are likely to have the greatest impact on future swimming provision. There are a few

smaller pools, on health club and some school sites, which could be utilised to meet a more local demand, but these are likely to have a limited impact overall.

SW17 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision, or a schedule of future swimming pool requirements, will need to be considered.

HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTRES

SCOPE

The health and fitness facilities included in the scope of this section are those facilities providing fitness stations for both cardiovascular and strength training, more commonly known as gym, and exclude spaces for aerobics and dance activities. These are located at 'public' leisure centres, schools with agreed community use and at commercial/private leisure and health clubs. The study area for all assessments includes centres in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results were analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for indoor sports set out above apply equally to health and fitness centres

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There are 19 health and fitness venues providing a total of 844 health and fitness stations across the district. Of these nine are available on a pay and play basis, six are for registered members and four are for private use only. Two venues comprising 57 stations are understood to have recently closed. In terms of availability for the wider community, 494 stations are there for pay and play use (59%) either in LA, education or commercial management, 268 are for registered members (32%) on education and commercial sites, and, 82 (10%) are privately used. Members' clubs and those used by local sports clubs are not necessarily available to the wider community (and therefore weighted down 50%), so the effective number of 'public' stations in the district is 628.
- The relative supply of fitness stations in Central Bedfordshire is less than 2/3 of the regional and national averages, lower than other LAs in the county and the county average and about 25% of the best provided LA in the region.
- On this basis of a calculation using industry criteria, it is estimated that a total of 1210 stations are required during the peak time period to accommodate current levels of demand. There is an apparent significant deficit of 350-600 stations
- Over the wider area (comprising the LA areas immediately surrounding Central Beds) however, there is an apparent surplus of 1400 stations, and all except Luton has sufficient stations to meet estimated local demand. The total surplus easily exceeds the CB shortfall, though the shortfall in Luton means that CB residents in the south of the district might not be able to access gyms so easily in Luton itself

Accessibility

- As with most other facilities, accessibility to health and fitness centres is determined by the location of the facility, and the distribution of the population. Car access is good, with all residents able to access a centre within 20 minutes. 85% of local residents are also within a 20-minute public transport journey. However a significant proportion of those living outside the main towns cannot gain ready access to centres, and walking access is only good in the main towns where the centres exist.

Condition

- Overall the quality of health and fitness centres can be said to be good, only one centre has not been built or refurbished since 2000, and the condition and range of main and ancillary facilities meets current requirements.

Summary of 2012 situation

There appears to be a significant shortfall of health and fitness stations within Central Beds of up to 600 stations.

This general conclusion is mitigated by several factors however:

- ROSA has a major surplus of stations when comparing estimated demand with supply, of 1400 stations.
- The supply of stations in Luton, the LA most closely linked to Central Beds, has increased recently with additional facilities at Luton Sports Village and Lewsey Park, and average provision here is higher than in CB, although there is a small deficit in provision on the above analysis.
- As with other types of sports facilities, there is an evident export of demand from Central Beds to neighbouring LA area.

It is much more likely therefore that if any shortfalls exist in Central Beds, these are localised, and indeed the operators of the main 'public' leisure centres have highlighted some shortfalls in Leighton Buzzard, Flitwick and maybe Biggleswade. Commercial clubs are likely to be meeting the members' only demand.

There is therefore some justification for limited additional health and fitness provision in Flitwick and Leighton Buzzard. Additional capacity might also be able to be released at private clubs who might be encouraged to open up their own facilities for wider community use where necessary.

Future situation 2022

As with other facilities, future need is dependent on any increase in population, which may be mitigated by the ageing of the population. Even if increased participation in accordance with local and SE targets is not achieved, it is likely that additional stations will be required in the next 10-15 years over and above any planned increases at the present. Positive provision for health and fitness should be made particularly in conjunction with new housing development throughout the district.

Furthermore, with the provision of other new sporting facilities a new health and fitness suite can provide great opportunities for cross-selling and marketing and help to increase participation in other sports and activities and therefore should always be considered as an 'add-on' when considering other new sporting provision.

CONSULTATIONS

Clubs, governing bodies, operators and local councils replying did highlight the following:

- Provision for health and fitness needs to account for participation by young people
- There is a clearly identified need among some public sector operators that additional stations are required (commercial managers were reluctant to provide data, and it must be assumed that there is a balance in commercial provision because of market factors). Flitwick LC already demonstrates a need for more stations at peak times, while Tiddenfoot managers suggest capacity has been reached here. Houghton Regis LC has recently upgraded its gym from 15-65 stations as part of the modernisation process recently undertaken (although take

up at the time of visit was still very low) and Saxon Pool gym has also been updated but the free weights section is known to be inadequate.

KEY ISSUES

- The assessment has found that health and fitness provision in the district is well below average. Central Beds does rely on fitness provision in neighbouring LA areas to meet much of its demand. Measures might be taken to redress this situation.
- The scale and size of new health and fitness centres will be determined by demand, and the need to make other provision sustainable. Therefore, a new facility is only likely to be built if it is economically viable and sustainable to do so as part of other provision e.g. in conjunction with a new sports hall, swimming pool or AGP.
- The optimum size of health and fitness centres may depend on a range of factors, and there is no ideal number of stations per centre.
- It is clear that most health and fitness centres are in good condition, only one centre has not been built or refurbished since 2000, and the condition and range of main and ancillary facilities meets current requirements. Quality and condition need to be maintained to keep facilities fit for purpose over the period of the strategy.
- The additional population in the new housing areas will significantly increase the demand for health and fitness centres in the future. New provision could take place within the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

HF1 - DO LITTLE.

This option, which relies on retaining the current stock of centres with routine maintenance, is unlikely to be a realistic proposal given the issues set out above, and the fact that trends and fashions are constantly evolving.

HF2 - PROVIDE ADDITIONAL STATIONS AT CENTRES WITH EXISTING SHORTFALLS

These include Flitwick LC, and Leighton Buzzard

HF3 - IMPROVE CAPACITY BY NEGOTIATING ADDITIONAL ACCESS BY THE WIDER COMMUNITY TO COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE FACILITIES

It is likely that there is some spare capacity at commercial health and fitness gyms which might be available to the wider community by negotiation, or by some form of public subsidy, to meet unmet demand

HF4 - MAKE ADDITIONAL PROVISION IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE INCREASED NEEDS OF THE NEW HOUSING AREAS, PARTICULARLY NEAR HOUGHTON REGIS AND LEIGHTON BUZZARD

Health and fitness centres are smaller in scale than sports halls and swimming pools, and consideration should be given to direct provision as part of new housing development on a local basis.

HF5 - MAKE BETTER USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES AT SCHOOLS AND OTHER LOCAL FACILITIES

This option alone is unlikely to meet the overall needs of Central Beds for health and fitness stations, but would meet some local demand. It should be considered in conjunction with the major options set out above.

HF6 – ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS TO INCORPORATE HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES AS PART OF SCHOOL SPORTS HALL PROVISION

Health and fitness facilities are complementary to sports halls and other sports facilities, and should be considered in conjunction with planned improvements to these facilities as considered elsewhere in this report

HF7- CONSIDER COMMUNITY ACCESS TO OTHER CURRENTLY UNUSED HALLS e.g. HENLOW CAMP, CHICKSANDS – this option would have limited impact on demand, but would absorb some usage in a more local part of the district.

HF8 – ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF HEALTH AND FITNESS FACILITIES WITHIN VILLAGE HALLS

Small scale health and fitness facilities can be considered as part of the usage of smaller facilities such as village halls, to meet a local on-the-doorstep amenity in smaller settlements distant from purpose provided centres. This can include the conversion of ancillary rooms and other smaller spaces. It is likely that this will comprise a local solution with limited overall impact

HF9 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision, or a schedule of future health and fitness requirements, will need to be considered.

SQUASH

SCOPE

The squash facilities included in the scope of this section are at 'public' leisure centres, schools (where appropriate), colleges and local clubs, where there is some availability for community use. The study area for all assessments includes facilities in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results were analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for indoor sports set out above apply equally to squash

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There are 9 squash clubs and centres in the district, with a total of 21 courts, 5 of which are glass backed, allowing for viewing and coaching. Three courts are on 2 private sites, so the effective availability for wider community use is 18 courts, of which 4 are mainly club based, and the remainder are at the main leisure centres.
- There are 48 venues in the surrounding LA areas, with a total of 134 courts.
- It is also known that a number of squash venues have closed in recent months, including Luton Regional Sports Centre and Putteridge Recreation Central (both in Luton).
- Relative provision in Central Beds (0.08 courts per 1000) is similar to the overall average for the study area, and higher than the average for Bedfordshire. The lack of courts in Luton (with a relatively large population) deflates the county figure. Best provision is in Huntingdonshire, Dacorum and Aylesbury Vale, where the main squash centres are some distance from Central Beds itself. By comparison, it is estimated that there are 4500 squash courts in England overall, which gives a relative supply of 0.08 courts per 1000 people. Central Beds provision is therefore about the national average.
- Based on participation data collected from the Active People Surveys by Sport England, it is assumed that the demand for squash courts in Central Beds is about 10-20% above the national average, but this will fluctuate and may well not increase significantly given the most recent trends in participation.

Accessibility

- No detailed assessment of accessibility was undertaken (and accessibility mapping is not available from Active Places), but the distribution of centres around Central Beds and in locations close to the district boundary suggest that a very high proportion of local residents live within a 20 minute drive of a squash facility.

Condition

- No detailed quality assessments were undertaken, but hearsay evidence suggests that facilities are generally in a fair condition, although some 'public' courts require better maintenance and management.

Summary of 2012 situation

Existing provision per capita overall for squash is almost the average for England, while demand is estimated from national participation rates at about 10-20% above the average.

Some evidence exists that courts and centres are already under some pressure, particularly in the south of the county and district.

Comparing supply with estimated demand, it is suggested that there is an existing shortfall of about 3-5 courts to meet current demand. In particular there is a need for venues with at least three courts.

Quality is generally fair and overall accessibility to existing courts good.

Additional squash provision (minimum 3 courts) should therefore be considered either as free standing centres in 1-2 locations or more probably as part of the development of any multi use leisure centres arising from other sections of this assessment.

Future provision

As with other facilities, future need is dependent on any increase in population, which is mitigated by the ageing of the population. It is likely that additional squash courts might be required in the next 10-15 years over and above current increased requirement.

CONSULTATIONS

The governing bodies of squash were consulted and highlighted the following:

- There is a lack of squash facilities particularly in the south of the county, and three court venues would be supported. In public venues, clubs should be encouraged to prosper.
- There is a need to consider the provision of larger venues with at least 3 courts primarily to satisfy the requirements of the governing body for development programmes for young people and others.

KEY ISSUES

- The assessment has found that squash provision in the district is at about the national average, although it is likely that demand is higher. There is some evidence from the governing bodies of a shortfall of courts to meet local demand, including in the adjacent area of Luton, where courts have recently closed
- The 'public' leisure centres tend not to fully permit the development of clubs based there, with an impact on club development, coaching and junior participation.
- There is almost a separate need to develop courts on leisure centre sites and clubs, which cater for a slightly different user type.
- Quality and condition are considered to be fair/good, but need to be maintained to keep facilities fit for purpose over the period of the strategy.
- The additional population in the new housing areas will significantly increase the demand for squash centres in the future. New provision could take place within

the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

SQ1 - DO LITTLE.

This option, which relies on retaining the current stock of courts with routine maintenance, is unlikely to be a realistic proposal given the issues set out above, and the fact that trends and fashions are constantly evolving.

SQ2 - PROVIDE ADDITIONAL 3 COURT SQUASH CENTRES IN LEIGHTON BUZZARD, FLITWICK AND DUNSTABLE

This may be achieved in conjunction with any new leisure centre development.

SQ3 – DEVELOP NEW SQUASH COURTS AT NEW PROPOSED LEISURE CENTRES UP TO 2022/MAKE ADDITIONAL PROVISION IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE INCREASED NEEDS OF THE NEW HOUSING AREAS, PARTICULARLY NEAR HOUGHTON REGIS AND LEIGHTON BUZZARD

SQ4 – REFURBISH AND ENHANCE EXISTING CENTRES TO ENSURE FITNESS FOR PURPOSE TO 2022 AND BEYOND

SQ5 – IMPROVE BY NEGOTIATION COMMUNITY ACCESS TO OTHER CURRENTLY UNUSED COURTS e.g. HENLOW CAMP, CHICKSANDS – this option would have limited impact on demand, but would absorb some usage in a more local part of the district.

SQ6 – DEVELOP BETTER COMMUNITY USE OF CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY COURTS

SQ7 - ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF FULLY FUNCTIONING CLUBS AT THE MAIN LEISURE CENTRE COURTS

SQ8 – WORK WITH BIGGLESWADE SC TO DEVELOP BETTER DEVELOPMENT AND COACHING PROGRAMMES

SQ9 – ENCOURAGE THE INCREASED USE OF EXISTING COURTS WHERE THERE IS SPARE CAPACITY, BY IMPROVED MANAGEMENT AND PROMOTION

SQ10 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision, or a schedule of future squash requirements, will need to be considered.

INDOOR BOWLS

SCOPE

The facilities included in the scope of this section are those providing indoor bowls, either as free standing centres or as part of wider leisure centres. The study area for all assessments includes centres in Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results were analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for indoor sports set out above apply equally to bowls centres

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There is only one pay and play indoor bowls facility within Central Bedfordshire providing 6 rinks. However there are a further 10 centres within a 30-40 minute drive of the middle of the district in the surrounding areas, all of which may contribute to local need in Central Beds.
- Local provision per capita is the 8th lowest in the region (and actually the lowest where bowls centres actually exist) and 2nd in the county. Provision is lower than the national average and less than half the regional average (where bowls is well provided for compared with other regions). The best provided LA in the region actually has about nine times the relative supply of indoor bowls rinks.
- A comparison between local supply and demand suggests that the balance in Central Bedfordshire is much lower than the regional and county average, and also below the regional average. Bowls provision in the region is higher than average, and a greater proportion of demand is therefore met. The county ratio is skewed by the relatively high supply of bowls rinks in Bedford. The proportion of local demand met in Central Beds is only about 12% of the best provided LA in the region.
- Despite the poor provision of indoor bowls rinks in the district, Central Bedfordshire's 'personal share' (a more refined method of assessing supply and demand) is relatively high, above the national average. This is due to the abundance of centres in Bedford and other surrounding LA areas, good accessibility by Central Beds residents to these and the relatively small population sharing these facilities in the wider area.
- Based on existing participation rates and local demographics, it is estimated that there is sufficient demand in Central Bedfordshire at normal participation rates for 2.75 centres, or about 16.5 rinks in community use.

Condition

- The existing bowls centre was built in 1975 and has been refurbished in 2002, and quality is considered to be good, although there is the need to bring the centre up to more modern standards. At this stage, the centre is therefore considered to be in relatively good condition, albeit that it is very much a 1970s building, and likely to remain fit for purpose over the duration of the study only so long as it is maintained well.

Accessibility

- Accessibility to indoor bowls is not as good as for other facilities, due to the relative lack of indoor bowls centres in the district itself. However over 80% of the local population can still access a bowls centre within a 20-minute drive

CONSULTATIONS

The governing body and local operators were consulted and responded as follows:

- There is no endorsement from the NGB for additional indoor bowls in Central Beds at the present, though population changes should be monitored to take into account the future situation up to 2021.
- If Dunstable Leisure Centre were to be relocated there is merit in considering a more central location for indoor bowls in the district
- There is a need to improve the quality of the existing centre (if retained) to ensure fitness for purpose
- Two clubs had significant spare capacity for additional member, although they suggested that the future of each facility was not in jeopardy. Membership had dropped over the years as the result of an ageing clientele, the lack of spare leisure time and the inability to attract new younger members. Three other clubs were operating at or about capacity, and there was little opportunity to accommodate significant additional usage. The position locally therefore is varied and maybe usage depends as much on management and promotion as underlying strategic issues.

Summary of 2012 situation

There is one indoor bowls centre in the district with 6 rinks, but a large number of other centres within a 30-minute drive in adjacent LA areas.

Existing provision for indoor bowls in the district is very low compared with the county, regional and national averages. The supply/demand balance is also very low, although personal share is above the national average and in line with the local situation, because of the existence of the other local centres outside the district.

Almost two thirds of local residents can access a bowls centre within a 20-minute drive. Accessibility by car is good in the south of the district, but poorer in the northern part where indoor bowls is only available in adjacent LA areas.

Quality is broadly good,

The SFC estimates that at present there is sufficient demand in Central Bedfordshire at normal participation rates for 2.75 centres, or about 16.5 rinks in community use. This compares with current provision of one 6-rink centre. There appears to be a significant shortfall for indoor bowls from this assessment.

Because of the poor local provision for indoor bowls in the district, a case can be made for the provision of an additional centre in the central, east or west part of the district at the present time.

However the governing body considers that local provision is acceptable and that the existing club is being encouraged to increase its membership. At the same time there is some spare capacity at existing clubs and centres, particularly in Luton and Bedford. Nevertheless the location of the existing centre does not meet the needs of the whole district, which relies on neighbouring areas to meet much of its demand. Further research is required to assess whether any of the usage of neighbouring

centres might be displaced if an additional or replacement centre is built in Central Beds.

Future provision

As with other facilities, future need is dependent on any increase in population, which is mitigated by the ageing of the population. Conversely an ageing population might offer an opportunity to increase bowls provision. It is likely that additional rink space might be required in the next 10-15 years over and above current increased requirement.

KEY ISSUES

- There is a shortage of indoor bowls in Central Beds, but local residents have good access to centres in nearby LA areas. The need for an additional centre or more in Central Bedfordshire needs careful consideration to ensure that usage is not displaced from other centres, some of which are not well used
- The existing centre in Dunstable does not cater for residents from a large part of the district wishing to play bowls, and locations for new centres elsewhere in the district should be considered, if additional provision is made.
- Indoor bowls is very specialist facility and does not easily allow other sporting usage. However the feasibility of combining additional bowls provision in the future with other new sports facility development (short mat bowls, outdoor bowls or other sports) should be considered.
- Overall quality of the existing centre is considered to be good, but the strategy extends into the future when the current facility will be 15 years older. The existing indoor centre needs to be refurbished to ensure that it remains fit for purpose into the future.
- There is a need to explore participation rates and facts relating to the ageing population, in view of the current declining membership of some of the local outdoor bowls centres and clubs.
- The additional population in the new housing areas may significantly increase the demand for indoor bowls in the future. New provision could take place within the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

IB1 - DO NOTHING.

This option, which relies on retaining the current centre with routine maintenance, is unlikely to be a realistic proposal, given its current age and condition.

IB2 – REFURBISH EXISTING CENTRE

This is a realistic option if it is considered that additional centres would displace existing use from other local centres

IB3 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW 6/8 RINK CENTRE IN THE EAST, WEST OR CENTRE OF THE DISTRICT

A location in Flitwick, Leighton Buzzard or Biggleswade might be considered for any new centre

IB4 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW 6/8 RINK CENTRE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NEW HOUSING GROWTH AREAS

A location in either the new Houghton Regis/Dunstable or Leighton Buzzard/Linslade, in conjunction with any new leisure centre might be considered, though the former might require the closure of the existing centre.

IB5 – ENCOURAGE INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN INDOOR BOWLS BY THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARPET AND SHORT MAT BOWLS IN VILLAGE HALLS

This option would enable a pathway to develop local opportunities in the outlying areas and improve links with indoor bowls clubs

IB6 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision , or a schedule of future indoor bowls requirements, will need to be considered.

INDOOR TENNIS

SCOPE

The facilities included in the scope of this section are those providing indoor tennis, usually free-standing centres. The study area for all assessments includes Central Bedfordshire and the surrounding local authority areas, and results were analysed both on a Central Bedfordshire-wide basis and on a Placemaking Area basis.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for indoor sports set out above apply equally to tennis centres

SUMMARY OF AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Current situation 2012

Supply and demand

- There are no indoor tennis centres in Central Bedfordshire. However there are 5 centres within a 30-minute drive of the centre of the district in the surrounding areas, all of which may contribute to local need in Central Beds.
- Although there are no indoor courts in Central Bedfordshire, there is indoor tennis provision in 31/47 LAs in the region and in 2 LAs in the county.
- The LTA states that one indoor court can serve 200 regular tennis players. On the basis of current participation figures, taken from Active People Surveys, applied to the district's current adult population (205,100), there is potential for $205,100 \times 0.8$ (adult population) $\times 1.27\%$ divided by 200 = 13 courts for the whole district.
- There are currently no courts available in Central Bedfordshire, and on the basis of this calculation, there is some justification to suggest that there is a local demand for a new centre, in the first instance for the provision of 3-6 courts.

Accessibility

- Despite the occurrence of tennis centres on the edge of the district, very few local residents live within a 10-minute drive of a centre, and over 40% outside a 20-minute drive. This is significantly outside the (historic) Comprehensive Performance Assessment recommendation that all residents should be able to travel to a facility within 20 minutes. The best accessibility is by those residents who live near to the centres in Bedford, Luton and North Herts.

CONSULTATIONS

The governing body and local operators were consulted and responded as follows:

- There is a strong case for indoor tennis facilities in Central Beds, and the LTA is keen to work with the Local Authority and other NGB's to try and get some indoor facilities within the county.
- There are two possible locations based on existing clubs, in Leighton Buzzard or Flitwick
- Joint use sites with other sports are acceptable as long as there is a dedicated tennis element on the site. It would make sense to work with the existing outdoor clubs to bring existing players to any potential new centre
- Any type of structure or surface is acceptable dependent upon budget.
- Consultation with other local operators and clubs confirms that additional indoor courts are required both for casual play and for coaching and teaching of juniors, but that Central Beds is not necessarily the best location for a new facility in the county.

Summary of 2012 situation

There are no indoor tennis courts in Central Bedfordshire although there are 5 centres with 13 courts within 30 minutes from the centre of the district. Potential players in part of the district particularly around Leighton Buzzard are not accommodated.

On the basis of the average provision in the county/region, there is shortfall of 2-9 courts (compared with the national average the shortfall is 7 courts). Using LTA data on the average court provision required to accommodate demand, there is a shortfall of up to 13 courts

Despite the abundance of other centres outside the district, there is some justification for the provision of indoor tennis at the present time in Central Bedfordshire, in the first instance on one site with 3 courts. Additional feasibility is required to ascertain the total number of new courts required over the strategy period and the best locations within the whole county.

Future provision

As with other facilities, future need is dependent on any increase in population, which is mitigated by the ageing of the population. However, if increased participation in accordance with local and SE targets is achieved, it is likely that additional indoor tennis court space will be required in the next 10-15 years.

KEY ISSUES

- There are no indoor tennis facilities in the district, but local residents can gain access to centres in neighbouring districts, albeit that these centres are not as convenient as other indoor sports facilities. The need to accommodate indoor tennis demands within the district is a paramount issue.
- There is an undoubted need for an indoor tennis centre with at least 3 courts in the county, but preferred locations at other existing clubs, where there is a more developed coaching and teaching infrastructure, outside Central Beds need consideration
- If a new centre is justified in Central Beds, the clubs with the best infrastructure are in Flitwick and Leighton Buzzard. It is preferable to link any new such provision with existing outdoor provision for tennis.
- The feasibility of combining limited indoor tennis provision in the future with other new sports facility development on a joint site must be considered. There may be a need for large halls for other sports e.g. netball, and these could be combined.
- The types of surface or structure, which might be appropriate in any new centres, should be considered.
- The additional population in the new housing areas may significantly increase the demand for indoor tennis in the future. New provision could take place within the new housing areas, or be more centrally located to meet the demand from both these and existing built up areas.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

A number of options have been developed for future action. These are not comprehensive or in any way exclusive and consultees are asked to consider these and any others that may present themselves.

IT1 - DO NOTHING.

This option, which relies on continued use by Central Beds residents of centres outside the district, may well be a realistic option.

IT2 – DEVELOPMENT OF NEW 3 COURT CENTRE IN THE EAST, WEST OR CENTRE OF THE DISTRICT

A location in Flitwick, Leighton Buzzard or Biggleswade might be considered for any new centre

IT3 – CONSIDERATION OF AN ADDITIONAL CENTRE IN CENTRAL BEDS IN THE LONGER TERM TO MEET FUTURE DEMAND

IT4 – DEVELOPMENT OF SMALLER SCALE COVERED FACILITIES (EG AIR HALLS) OVER EXISTING COURTS ON EXISTING CLUB SITES

IT5 - CONSIDER POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

These will include developer contributions, LA capital spending, borrowing, grant aid and public private partnerships. The development of a standard for future provision, or a schedule of future indoor tennis requirements, will need to be considered.

SPECIALIST FACILITIES

While it was not the prime intention of the study to consider specialist facilities for sport, as the brief concentrated on community provision, nevertheless the initial consultation with governing bodies and others identified some specialist facility requirements, which might be able to be incorporated in existing or proposed new community sports halls and the like. The results of these consultations, are set out below, and feed in to the subsequent section on issues and options.

- There is a clear need for specialist facilities for gymnastics, but a realisation that this is not always feasible
- Need to consider the precise requirements of specialist gymnastics provision, either free standing or in conjunction with school or public sports hall,
- The design of new sports halls should consider incorporating gymnastics pit, additional storage and other requirements
- Need to consider the specialist needs of particular sports such as archery in future sports hall provision
- Sports halls in particular on school sites, may be appropriate locations for specialist use for indoor cricket and other activities

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

SF1 - CONSIDER THE SPECIALIST NEEDS OF OTHER INDOOR SPORTS WHEN DEVELOPING AND DESIGNING NEW SPORTS HALLS OF SOME SPECIALIST FACILITIES

SF2 – CONSIDER INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO THE ENABLING OF SPECIALIST FACILITIES

These can include gymnastics centres with pit etc at existing unused industrial premises

NEXT STAGES

Consultees are invited to comment on these and any other options by *(date)* to *NAA*. The final strategy will be based on the preferred option and will include detailed proposals for leisure provision both now and up to the end of the strategy's timescale of 2031.

Appendix A

Chapter 1: Leisure Facilities Strategy Scope: detailed analysis of current and future facility requirements for the facilities identified within Sport England's Active Places Database & Facilities Planning Model (FPM), specifically:

1. Sports halls with >3 badminton courts
2. Astroturf pitches (ATP) covered in Chapter 3
3. Indoor swimming pools 20m+ (400sqm & above with community use)

Facility types 1 to 3 above are the specific facilities modeled by the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM). This is the most detailed level of facility modeling currently available, it provides a ward by ward analysis of current and future provision.

Locally Accessible Facility: within 10-15 mins travel time

4. Sports halls below 3 badminton court size
5. Swimming pools below 20m
6. Fitness suites including outdoor gyms
7. Dance/aerobic studios Considered in Chapter 3
8. Squash courts

District Accessible Facility: 15-30 mins travel time

9. Outdoor running tracks considered in Chapter 3
10. Golf courses considered in Chapter 3

Regional Accessible Facility: 30+ mins travel time

11. Indoor bowls considered in Chapter 3
12. Indoor tennis courts Considered in Chapter 3
13. Ski slopes NOT INCLUDED HERE
14. Water sports including canoeing NOT INCLUDED HERE

Facilities have been grouped to indicate their respective accepted travel times.

The depth of facility analysis will be relevant to its accessibility to CBC residents, i.e. the regional facilities will receive the lightest analysis (desk based) and so on.