

**Hartlepool Borough Council**  
**Indoor Leisure Facility Strategy**

**August 2007**



**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

**Amendment History**

Version No.	Date	File Reference	Author	Remarks/Changes
0.1	5Jan07	HrtlpFacStratv0.1	MP	initial report
0.2	25Jan07	HrtlpFacStratv0.2	MP	second version
0.9	30Mar07	HrtlpFacStrat,0.9	MP	final draft for QA
1.0	4Apr07	HrtlpFacStrat,1.0	MP	final draft to client
1.2	7Jun07	HrtlpFacStrat,1.2	MP	following SE comments
2.0	10Jul07	HrtlpFacStrat,2.0	MP	revised draft
2.1	13Jul07	HrtlpFacStrat,2.1	MP	revised draft
3.0	13Jul07	HrtlpFacStrat,3.0	MP	revised draft to client
4.0	13 Aug 07	HrtlpFacStrat,4.0	MP	revised following QA
5.0	20 Aug 07	HrtlpFacStrat,5.0	MP	final to client
5.1	5 Aug 07	HrtlpFacStrat,5.1	MP	minor corrections

**Sign-off List**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Capita Symonds Consulting has prepared a Borough-wide indoor sports facilities audit and strategy that incorporates future needs in the public, voluntary and private sectors which is complemented by a separate appraisal of open space (PPG17 study).
2. Many national policies recognise the importance and significance of sport and education in meeting the shared priorities of all government, particularly to encourage higher levels of activity, but local authorities alone cannot achieve service improvements.
3. The development and/or refurbishment of sporting and other cultural facilities in Hartlepool could contribute significantly to the achievement of the longer-term regional and sub-regional priorities.
4. The Borough's Sport and Recreation Strategy emphasised it was critical to consider any refurbishment of existing or development of new facilities within a strategic context.
5. A key approach to meeting the Vision of the Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy could see fewer centres providing higher quality services, located to reflect sustainable access principles.
6. An earlier Review concluded that there is an over-provision of poor quality pool facilities in the Borough and that, rather than expensive refurbishment, new better quality and more flexible water space would significantly benefit the community.
7. The Mill House Leisure Centre is only swimming complex open to the public throughout the day and, due to its poor quality, the Council has plans to replace this by the new H<sub>2</sub>O Centre – the other pools on school sites have limited community opening hours and are beyond their expected lifespan.
8. The majority of sports halls are located on school sites and so are not available during curriculum time – only those at Mill House, the Headland and Belle Vue Centres are available for community use during the school day.
9. The provision of other sports facilities appears to be generally in balance and, in view of the 'self-contained' nature of the Borough, it is not envisaged that any facilities in surrounding towns will have any impact on the provision of community sports and recreation buildings in Hartlepool.
10. Consultation with key Council departments has provided an appreciation of the main issues which need to be addressed in the Strategy including:
  - an acceptance that closures will be required
  - the value of the current BSF initiative
  - the demand for specific Youth space
  - an identification of areas where new homes will increase demand
  - a strong management commitment to maximising use of existing/new sports facilities.
11. Surveys of residents determined that almost half of those contacted never visited an indoor sports facility but that these are important to a substantial minority representing most age groups – accessibility is reflected by results showing higher usage by those with cars and those living closer to Mill House Leisure Centre.
12. Although Mill House was by far the most popular facility (it includes the only public access swimming pool), it is also the only site to record a negative satisfaction score while other sites scored 'good' towards 'excellent' – sports clubs were generally satisfied with provision but stated they had difficulty in booking facilities at peak times.

13. The poor quality and accessibility (in programme terms) of most of the facilities is also a concern if the Borough's residents are to participate in sport in an attractive and safe environment.
14. With more than adequate provision of facilities in Hartlepool, the issue is the extent to which it may be possible to optimise the number of indoor sports facilities.
15. The Council's response to the BSF initiative is being developed towards an agreed Strategy for Change in May 2008 and there is an opportunity to link the provision of new public and education facilities.
16. The population structure is not very different from the sub-regional or national profile and thus facilities are likely to be typical for a town of such a size – however, extensive development in the northern part of the town (equivalent to 10% of the current Borough population) will add significantly to the local need for sports and recreation facilities.
17. With the catchment population being characterised by relatively poor residents with limited disposable income, there is a likelihood of below average use of sports and recreation facilities and a preference for cheaper facilities and/or activities.
18. The results from Sport England's Active People Survey place Hartlepool in the bottom quartile with regard to those participating in regular physical activity – this is 2% lower than the average for England, 1% lower than most of the Borough's comparator authorities and over 5% below that for Stockton-on-Tees.
19. The Sport England demand model calculates that the Borough should aspire to provide up to 900m<sup>2</sup> of water space (equivalent to three six-lane 25 metre pools or two with teaching pools).
20. From an analysis of use patterns and the consultation, there is demand for more than the base sports hall provision as identified in the demand model but, with provision at twice the recommended level, investment in any new halls should be minimised until all capacity available in the existing stock is better utilised.
21. Rationalisation of other buildings suitable for sports use will depend on an overall approach to delivering community development and the asset plans for the Borough.
22. It is unlikely that co-location of other Council services (eg libraries or one-stop-shops) with sports centres on school sites will be appropriate in view of their locations away from the local shopping centres and other amenities important to such facilities.
23. To reflect past investment in existing buildings, it may not be possible to create an 'ideal' distribution of facilities but a number of different location mixes were tested in a series of Options.
24. Option One leaves existing facilities operating into the foreseeable future until closure is required due to essential repair or external factors (eg. site redevelopment) – such a route would not allow the authority to deliver its Vision for sport and leisure.
25. Option Two is focussed around a single Borough pool facility (Mill House or new H<sub>2</sub>O Centre) with present dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton) and new/refurbished school halls – as the quantity of water space provided will not deliver the outcomes envisaged, it is felt that this should not be taken forward.
26. Option Three combines an existing or new wet/dry Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O Centre) with new pool(s) at Brierton, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/ refurbished school halls - this Option is well aligned with the demand models for swimming but will perpetuate the surplus of dry side facilities.

27. Option Four adds a new wet/dry centre in North West Hartlepool to the existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O Centre), new pool(s) at Brierton, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/refurbished school halls – this will provide too much dry sports space.
28. Option Five replicates the established pattern of swimming pools at secondary school sites and adds these to an existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O Centre), existing dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton) and a new wet facility at Seaton Carew – this level of provision is far higher than necessary and will require greater capital and revenue expenditure.
29. The table below summarises the capital and revenue costs of each of the options.

	<i>Option One</i>	<i>Option Two</i>	<i>Option Three</i>	<i>Option Four</i>	<i>Option Five</i>
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Optimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Replace Existing</b>
Capital Costs	£4.5 to £5 million	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus schools additions for community use £625,000 <b>Total £26.63m</b>	As Option Two plus Brierton pool £4.5-5.2m <b>Total £31m to £32m</b>	As Option Three plus North Pool £3.4m <b>Total £34m to £35m</b>	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus new pools/ community use at schools £3.5m each <b>Total £43.5m</b>
Revenue Costs	Increasing as buildings age	H <sub>2</sub> O £500k pa plus school support	As Option Two plus Brierton £100k - total £600k pa plus school support	As Option Three plus North Pool £50-100k - total £650-700k pa plus school support	Up to £1 million pa

30. A review of facility and management procurement options has determined that a crucial initial decision will be whether to procure any new facilities separately or in conjunction with their on-going management.
31. If the Council is in a position to fund the capital cost itself through savings or other sources, a Design Build Operate and Maintain approach may be an appropriate route for the integration of building and management.
32. In testing the extent to which each option addresses the desired long term outcomes for the facility development process, Option Three performs best in most regards and will ensure that the residents of Hartlepool are provided with an affordable range of sports and recreation facilities which addresses their needs and aspirations.
33. In preparing the recommended Strategy, we have assumed that the newest facilities at The Headland and Brierton will be a key part of the Borough’s provision for 20/30 years – we have also assumed that the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre will be constructed within 2 to 3 years and that Mill House will remain in operation until such time as this opens.
34. It is concluded that the most appropriate approach to replacing the present school pools and enhancing public pool provision would be to add swimming facilities (a 25 metre and a teaching pool) to the existing Brierton Sports Centre.
35. The bulk of the existing primary school swimming teaching programme could be accommodated within two teaching pools (eg. Mill House/H<sub>2</sub>O Centre and new Brierton) at limited additional cost in terms of travel time/charges.

36. The development (or retention) of an additional teaching pool in the North West of the Borough would provide capacity for growing swimming as a sport, to meet Government aspirations for more physical activity in schools and to enable school-time use by secondary schools and the wider community.
37. The current provision of sports halls is well over that required if the parameters of the demand model are to be adopted – as a result, any investment in refurbishment of existing or building of new halls (including that proposed at the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre) should be carefully considered.
38. The Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre should remain a key partner but the operation of its sports facilities should be integrated with that of other sites in Hartlepool.
39. The recommendation regarding other sports halls owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council (eg. the Youth Service) is that they should be retained until significant investment is required, at which time consideration should be given to replacement by smaller built facilities with linked outdoor sports space.
40. The redevelopment and/or refurbishment of the school sports halls under the BSF programme is an opportunity to consolidate the service to the town's residents but investment in a separate entrances and reception/office space can facilitate use as a community sports centre outside school hours.
41. A Service Level or Community Use Agreement with the individual schools should be developed to ensure that the facilities are operated in a consistent and complementary manner – this could involve a Borough-wide organisation to coordinate overall operation.
42. To ensure appropriate performance measurement, it should be a priority to implement a common Management Information System across all leisure sites in the Borough.
43. With regard to specific areas of under-provision, Seaton Carew has no high quality public facility and there is potential for a small scale development to serve both young people and the wider community in a single hall, potentially linked to redevelopment of the Park and/or library.
44. There is not a shortfall in provision with regard to any of the other key sporting facilities which would normally be expected in a town of such a population.
45. With regard to integration with other service provision, the key issue is that the principal sports facilities on the five secondary schools are situated away from the larger local shopping parades which tend to be the most appropriate places for branch libraries and community facilities.
46. We have set out the key actions which we feel would help address issues and deliver the proposals we have set out this Strategy – it is considered that the following should be implemented in the short term (within a year):
  - further develop inter-departmental relationships
  - develop inter-agency links with potential partners
  - adopt the results of the concurrent Planning Policy Guidance 17 appraisal relating to open space and link this to the Facility Strategy
  - revise the Sport and Recreation Strategy as a working document
  - develop a basic monitoring scheme to record and analyse the use of all facilities
  - develop a community use agreement for the BSF sites and other venues
  - commission detailed feasibility studies into developments at Brierton Leisure Centre, Seaton Carew and the requirements for community access to BSF sites.

47. The following Action Plan elements should be carried out over the next 2 to 3 years:
- review the condition of the School Swimming Pools and Mill House Leisure Centre to ensure the safety of users and assist in asset management planning
  - procure appropriate enhanced facilities under the BSF initiative and establish cost-effective operational arrangements to benefit the whole community
  - review funding opportunities to deliver the overall strategy, including procurement of the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre at Victoria Harbour
  - procure the swimming pool(s) at the Brierton Leisure Centre to ensure the school swimming programme can be maintained should any existing pools be closed
  - review the long term operation of the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre to ensure that it continues its role in encouraging sport and physical activity
  - install a comprehensive Performance Monitoring Scheme to allow determination of the extent to which the service meets local and national targets for participation
  - install an integrated one-stop Facility Booking Package encompassing all indoor sports facilities which can be accessed through the web.
48. While it might be valuable to carry out the following actions earlier, it is acknowledged that these may need to be delayed until after year four:
- monitor the condition and use of all indoor sports, youth and community facilities and determine if it is possible to deliver the service through existing premises rather than provide additional new buildings which may be required
  - commission specific feasibility studies to address the development of shared service centres or community sporting hubs at locations such as
    - Mill House Leisure Centre, Indoor Bowling Centre and Hartlepool United FC
    - West Park/St Hild's School
    - Rossmere/Owton Manor
    - Dyke House School (potentially linked to Mill House project)
    - other appropriate sites.



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 Hartlepool Borough Council's stock of sports and leisure facilities, which provides huge potential for local and regional sports organisations, has evolved over a long period of time. However, some are coming towards the end of their lives and others are in need of significant investment. Some are not located in areas of greatest need. The current positioning and quality of facilities contributes to a relatively low level of penetration and usage particularly by communities from deprived wards.
- 1.1.2 The geographical spread, local requirements and quantity of facilities requires a fundamental review. Changing demographics and leisure and social trends may also result in a need for new facilities, a reduction in facilities or a change in the focus, management or operation of facilities. These factors, together with considerable local knowledge, can be used to establish a base level of facilities and analyse future options in detail.
- 1.1.3 The Council wishes to address issues regarding the future provision of indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool in order to guide and inform its Capital Programme and Asset Management Programme. In addition, there is an opportunity to influence local planning policy to enhance and protect sporting opportunities within the Borough.
- 1.1.4 Particular priority must be given to improving and developing school facilities, which benefits pupil education as well as community sport. These will also enable the delivery of the Government's Ten Year Youth Strategy which promises 5 hours of physical activity per week for all young people (July 2007). The Council's forthcoming investment in new schools through the BSF programme will create opportunities for school sports facilities to be made available to the community. To capitalise on these opportunities, it is critical that a coordinated and prioritised approach is developed.

### **1.2 Our Terms of Reference**

- 1.2.1 Capita Symonds Consulting has been appointed to prepare a Borough-wide indoor sports facilities audit and strategy that incorporates future needs in the public, voluntary and private sectors.
- 1.2.2 Specific objectives for the Facility Strategy are:
- to provide a firm foundation upon which policy decisions and funding for future development can be based
  - to support initiatives by voluntary and private sector groups to develop new or improved indoor sports facilities for the Borough that meet broader strategic aims
  - to develop co-ordinated opportunities for school and community sport through new and improved education facilities
  - to improve the quality and provision for the Council's indoor sports facilities to meet the expectations of local residents.
- 1.2.3 The Brief envisaged that the Strategy will encompass the following Asset Management options:

- the development of new facilities
- the re-development of existing facilities
- the closure or disposal of facilities
- the exploration and implementation of alternative management options.

It is acknowledged that any Strategy should be sustainable and affordable over the lifetime of the facilities examined or proposed.

1.2.4 This study complements work undertaken as part of the PPG 17 assessment for Open Spaces, Play and Outdoor sports provision (2007) and other strategies which have already been developed.

### 1.3 The Structure of our Report

1.3.1 We have structured the remaining sections of this document to meet the requirements of your brief while ensuring a concise and accessible report setting out our core findings.

**Table 1: Report Structure**

<i>Section</i>		<i>Key Content or Output</i>
<b>2</b>	Project Context	Background to project
<b>3</b>	Facility Audit	Structured appraisal of existing facilities
<b>4</b>	Facility Supply Analysis	What is available to Hartlepool residents?
<b>5</b>	Consultation	Summary of views regarding provision
<b>6</b>	Facility Demand Analysis	What do Hartlepool residents need?
<b>7</b>	Facility Development Options	Options for meeting demand
<b>8</b>	Option Review	Structured appraisal of options
<b>9</b>	Facility Development Strategy	Strategy for future provision and investment
<b>10</b>	Next Steps	Implementation plan

1.3.2 Supporting information is included in a series of Appendices.



## 2 STRATEGY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Prior to looking at the provision of sport, recreation and leisure facilities in Hartlepool, it is essential to gain an understanding of the policy, socio-economic and political context within which the service will need to operate. This section (and Appendix A) reviews a number of key policy documents and looks at general trends in the sport and recreation market.

### 2.2 National Policy and Strategies

2.2.1 The Government has issued many policy statements on sport, including

- *Investment in sport is “a health policy, an education policy, an anti-crime policy and an anti-drugs policy” (Tony Blair)*
- *“Increasing significantly levels of sport and physical activity with the target of achieving 70% of the population as reasonably active by 2020” (Game Plan 2003)*
- *“Sport England’s priority will be to turn this passion into sporting action and use the Olympics to make England a more active and successful sporting nation”.*

However, if these are to be achieved, the sector as a whole must be given the tools to deliver these policies through a series of simple initiatives.

2.2.2 Almost all of the national policies recognise the importance and significance of sport and education in meeting a number of different agendas, including:

- increasing participation in physical activity
- reducing obesity, particularly amongst children and young people
- tackling anti-social behaviour
- community safety
- educational attainment
- economic regeneration
- increasing access and targeting under-represented groups.

2.2.3 There is increasing recognition of the role sport and leisure plays in meeting the shared priorities of central and local government. Those agreed by government and local authorities include:

- raising standards across schools
- improving the quality of life for children, young people, families at risk and older people
- promoting healthier communities by targeting key local services, such as health and housing
- creating safer and stronger communities
- transforming the local environment
- meeting transport needs more effectively
- promoting the economic vitality of localities.

- 2.2.4 Along with other public sector bodies, local government is increasingly under pressure to demonstrate continuous service improvement throughout the services it delivers. Cultural Services is one area where local authorities have started to recognise that Gershon targets which require local authorities to identify annual efficiencies and re-investment of savings into front line services can be achieved by investing in new leisure, sports and community facilities. This ensures that modern standards are met while potentially reducing the overall cost of the service over the life of the facility.
- 2.2.5 However, local authorities alone cannot achieve service improvements, and government policy statements reinforce the need for partnership working to deliver against the shared priorities. Partnerships between leisure and the education sector have been in existence for many years and the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme provides local authorities with an opportunity to develop significant and lasting opportunities for community use on the back of unprecedented levels of investment in secondary school sites.
- 2.2.6 The Government's 'Extended Schools' agenda reinforces the role cultural services play in a wider school and community philosophy. They are at the heart of the delivery of Every Child Matters, improving outcomes and raising standards of achievement for children and young people. There is now clear evidence that children's experiences greatly influence their outcomes and life chances in later life and sport is a key factor here.
- 2.2.7 The Framework for Sport (Sport England 2004) sets out the commitment to create Specialist Sports Colleges such as that at Brierton School and a network of School Sports Partnerships, together with the drive to ensure that 75% of pupils aged 5-15 years have access to two hours PE and school sport a week. The Framework also sets out the challenge to ensure that the community capacity and infrastructure is put in place to provide opportunities post-school, and that school facilities and clubs work closely with the community.
- 2.2.8 At a national level, a number of access standards, based on the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 'The Harder Test', have been identified to inform the future planning and provision of sport and recreation facilities. As local authorities will be expected to report against these standards, they should be considered when developing sports facilities and opportunities. Key relevant standards are:
- percentage of 5-16 year olds engaged in 2 hours a week minimum on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum
  - the percentage of adults participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on three or more days a week
  - participation in local authority sport/recreation provision
  - percentage of population volunteering in sport and active recreation for at least one hour per week
  - percentage of population that is within 20 minutes walking time of a range of different sports facility types, of which one has achieved a quality assured standard.

2.2.9 It can be seen that there is significant Government interest in the development of sport and leisure as a means of encouraging the population to increase its level of activity, so contributing to enhanced health. This has been reinforced by London's successful bid to hold the Olympic Games in 2012. A variety of further initiatives are being launched with a view to increasing interest in sport and physical activity in the next six years and beyond. The project to transform sports facilities in Hartlepool should seek to take advantage of any assistance that is available.

### **2.3 Regional Policy and Strategies**

2.3.1 To contribute towards the key aims of Sport England's Framework for Sport, eleven main priorities were identified in the North East Regional Plan for Sport and Physical Activity (2004). Of particular interest and importance were:

- improving access for all to facilities and programmes
- developing sporting 'hubs' to increase participation
- working with local authorities to make sure that facilities are modern and fit for purpose
- improving facilities for sports science and medicine.

2.3.2 The Plan recognises that despite multi-million pound investment in sports in the region, participation rates have not increased – this remains the key focus. There is a relatively good supply of sports halls and pools in the region, including significant numbers on education sites – however, the stock is ageing. To ensure closer co-operation between the health and sports sectors, there is a need to improve access to sport in school. Future investment in schools such as through BSF and in tertiary facilities should also reflect the sporting requirements of the local communities. If there is to be support from the Regional Sports Board, any new/refurbished leisure facilities will have to ensure they meet the objectives for increased participation and sports development.

2.3.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy includes recommendations surrounding future housing development, which has an impact on leisure provision in an area. The Victoria Harbour development is mentioned and it is appropriate to note that the proposed housing allocation would be proportionately greater in relation to existing population than in any other Tees Valley authority. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) sets out some very broad aims and objectives to which leisure can contribute. Key issues include the involvement of deprived communities and under-represented groups, and the value of cultural assets for learning, participation and engaging people as volunteers. Clearly, development/refurbishment of sporting and other cultural facilities in Hartlepool could contribute significantly to achieving longer-term RES priorities.

2.3.4 The revised Cultural Strategy has ambitious aims but it is not made clear how these will be funded. From the point of view of the development of sports facilities, it is suggested that dialogue is established with Culture North East to establish the extent to which its development could contribute to the Strategy's objectives and any potential funding assistance.

## 2.4 Sub-Regional Policy and Strategies

- 2.4.1 The Tees Valley Urban Sport Position Statement of 2005 highlighted the importance that sport and leisure had in many of the sub region's key regeneration schemes. The Tees Valley Vision recognises that, whilst Hartlepool has achieved a significant transformation of its town centre and marina area as a centre for leisure, there is a major opportunity to build on what has been achieved.
- 2.4.2 The Coastal Arc, one of three key zones in the spatial strategy, devised a vision to help strengthen coastal economies. Complementing strategies in the region and sub-region, the vision is based around increasing visitor and tourist numbers and improving facilities, promotion and business support. To meet these two core themes, it highlights plans for a range of new leisure facilities based on the existing sports heritage of the area. It envisaged that these will range from swimming pools and extreme sports centres to performance facilities. The plans are geared at encouraging development of facilities for walkers, cyclists and watersports.

## 2.5 Hartlepool Policy and Strategies

- 2.5.1 The Sport and Recreation Strategy (May 2000) emphasised how critical it was that any refurbishment of existing or development of new facilities is seen within a strategic context. It is also important to ensure plans are assessed as to the extent they will contribute to the strategic sport and recreation priorities of social inclusion, public health, environmental regeneration, economic regeneration and young people. Of particular relevance is the importance of removing barriers to participation, helping the regeneration effort and providing sporting pathways for young people.
- 2.5.2 The Swimming Pool Assessment and Strategy (2002) provided an insight into the current swimming pool provision in the Borough. It concluded that, although there is a theoretical surplus of water area in the Borough, much of the provision is very outdated and in a dilapidated condition – there is local demand for better facilities. At the time of the study there were considerable technical difficulties associated with all existing pools and renovation costs were estimated to be about £3.7 million (2002 prices). It was also concluded that the inflexible physical layout of the only pool open to the community at large (Mill House) is not satisfactory.
- 2.5.3 Concentrating on publicly-accessible water, it was found that there was a shortfall roughly equivalent to a five-lane 25m pool. Various rationalisations and upgrades were recommended, key of which were:
- to refurbish Mill House
  - to close some facilities to leave two or three school/learner pools
  - to provide a new community accessible 25m and learner pool
  - to adopt different management arrangements.
- It is acknowledged that events have moved on but the Study's fundamental conclusion remains sound – there is an over provision of poor quality pool facilities in the Borough and that refurbishment would be expensive. Better quality facilities and rationalisation of current provision, coinciding with more flexible water space, would significantly benefit the community.
- 2.5.4 There are two Local Plan policies which may have an effect on any facility developments in the future. These are:

- **Policy Rec 6.** The Borough Council will seek, where appropriate, to make sports facilities within educational establishments available to the public out of schools hours.
- **Policy Rec 14.** Major leisure developments likely to attract large numbers of visitors should be located within the town centre. Where there are no suitable sites in the town centre, developments must accord with the following sequential approach which identifies major regeneration areas accessible by a choice of means of transport after edge of centre areas as preferable to other out of centre locations:
  - edge of centre sites including the Marina, then
  - Victoria Harbour, or
  - at the Headland, or
  - at Seaton Carew.

2.5.5 The requirements for other leisure facility developments are set out in the Hartlepool Town Centre Regeneration Strategy. Linkages with parts of the town are seen to be vital and the reduction of town centre separation will ensure strategic fit.

2.5.6 The Hartlepool Community Strategy is a key document that helps shape the future priorities of the Council on a number of fronts. It identifies the need to work with its local strategic partners and stakeholders. There is very clearly an opportunity for any new/refurbished sports facility to help deliver to this crucial local community agenda.

## 2.6 Neighbouring Authority Policy and Strategies

2.6.1 Contact with **Middlesbrough Borough Council** has determined that the initial draft Local Development Framework documents outline some key leisure developments:

- Middlesbrough Leisure Park – commercial leisure and hotel facilities
- Prissick Base – a major destination for sport and recreation, seeing a £500,000 skate park and, potentially, a velodrome and new support facilities
- Middlehaven – this flagship development area may be suitable for strategic leisure development opportunities.

2.6.2 The **District of Easington** Development Framework Core Strategy has a section on Strong Safe Healthy Communities which includes the regeneration planned for Seaham – this could potentially include water based activities. There are plans for commercial facilities at the Dalton Park Shopping Complex but developing tourism and recreational facilities is seen as a key way of developing the local economy and creating more jobs, so supporting the regeneration aims of the District.

2.6.3 The Local Plan for **Sedgefield** identifies that the Borough is well served with leisure and community facilities including five leisure and sport centres, two swimming pools and three community colleges. Currently, there is no significant leisure development planned within the Borough.

2.6.4 Discussions with officers at **Stockton** indicated that there were no significant leisure development projects planned for the Borough – it has recently opened a range of new public facilities.

## 2.7 Summary

2.7.1 Key issues which can be drawn out from this strategic review include the following:

- many national policies recognise the importance and significance of sport and education in meeting a number of different political, social and health agendas
- there is increasing recognition of the role sport and leisure plays in meeting the shared priorities of central and local government
- local authorities alone cannot achieve service improvements and government policy statements reinforce the need for partnership working to deliver against the shared priorities
- there is significant Government interest in the development of sport and leisure as a means of encouraging the population to increase its level of activity, so contributing to enhanced health
- the development/refurbishment of sporting and other cultural facilities in Hartlepool could contribute significantly to the achievement of the longer-term regional and sub-regional priorities
- the Borough's Sport and Recreation Strategy emphasised how critical it was that the any refurbishment of existing or development of new facilities is seen within a strategic context
- a Review in 2002 concluded that there is an over provision of poor quality pool facilities in the Borough and that refurbishment would be expensive - better quality facilities and rationalisation of current provision, coinciding with more flexible water space, would significantly benefit the community.

### 3 FACILITY AUDIT

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Given the significant investment over many years in existing sport and leisure facilities, it is important to gain an understanding of the location, quality, use and long term future of the current provision. The following paragraphs summarise the way in which key elements of the sport and leisure service are delivered in Hartlepool, providing a foundation upon which to build a new delivery model to meet future patterns of demand. Further details of key facilities are included in Appendix B.

#### 3.2 Overview of Facility Provision

3.2.1 Sports facilities in Hartlepool are provided by a variety of agencies including the Council itself (various departments), local Trusts, Community Associations, Clubs and the private sector. A key feature of the town is that there is only one stand-alone public wet/dry leisure centre (Mill House). The remaining public sector provision of swimming facilities and much of the 'large-scale' sports provision takes place on school sites. Particularly within a unitary authority such as Hartlepool which is responsible for both education and leisure services, this dual-use approach can be very cost-effective in maximising use of the facility given establishment of a true partnership between the school and the community. Other dry provision is through community or youth centres.

3.2.2 The following tables set out our key findings on the indoor sports facilities in and around Hartlepool. Full details of the sites and their provision are included as Appendix B, with the tables below setting out the key issues which will help steer the development of a comprehensive facility strategy for the Borough.

#### 3.3 Audit of Swimming Facilities

3.3.1 The future of swimming provision in Hartlepool is a key issue for this facility strategy in that all of the existing pools in the Borough are sub-standard in one way or another. A feature of the town is that there is only one swimming complex open to the public throughout the day, with other pools being prefabricated timber framed buildings with 'plastic tanks' located on school sites. These offer very limited (if any) community opening hours and then on a programmed rather than a casual basis.

**Table 2: Swimming Facilities**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Pool Provision</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Brierton School	20 x 7m	prefabricated pool, fully programmed throughout week, not linked to new sports centre
Brinkburn Youth Centre	20 x 7m	prefabricated pool, standalone location close to Sixth Form College, managed by caretaker, used by various schools, extensive refurbishment in 2006 following fire
Dyke House School	20 x 7m	prefabricated pool, not linked to public sports centre access point
English Martyrs School	20 x 7m	prefabricated pool, recent plant refurbishment, losing water so seeking to re-line summer 2007, linked to other sports facilities around common public access point

<i>Location</i>	<i>Pool Provision</i>	<i>Notes</i>
High Tunstall College	20 x 7m plus hydrotherapy pool	prefabricated pool, standalone but adjoining Life Centre (new fitness/dance building), regular refurbishment, lessons every night separate hydrotherapy pool – specialist facility, well used, higher temperature, associated support facilities
Manor College of Technology	20 x 7m	prefabricated pool, standalone building, not linked to any other sports facilities, used by various schools and sub-aqua diving
Mill House Leisure Centre	33.3 x 13m 12 x 10m (diving) 7 x 12m (learner)	public access swimming complex, ‘L-shaped’ pool with diving arm, learner pool with no viewing provision, substandard in type and condition of facilities available, replacement proposed in medium term (H <sub>2</sub> O Centre)
Springs Fitness Club	freeform	leisure pool in private members’ club within Marina Village

3.3.2 The school pools were constructed in the 1970s as design & build package deals and it is testament to the quality of the original building and the maintenance input from the schools that they are still operational after over 30 years. However, the 2002 repair cost estimate of £3.7 million will continue to rise as key components of the building and plant begin to fail – maintenance costs will also continue to increase. There will be a position when it will not be cost-effective to repair the facilities and they will need to be taken out of use.

3.3.3 The principal primary school swimming programme is managed by the Children’s Services Department and involves use of the pools listed in Table 3.

**Table 3: School Swimming Programme**

<i>Pool</i>	<i>School Sessions</i>	<i>Hours</i>
Brierton School Pool	17 half hour sessions	8.5
Brinkburn Youth Centre Pool	26 half hour sessions	13
Dyke House School Pool	17 half hour sessions	8.5
Mill House Leisure Centre	12 half hour sessions	6
	<b>72 half hour sessions</b>	<b>36</b>

In addition to the programme above, a number of other primary schools organise their own sessions. The pools are also used by their host schools and for out of hours lessons. Given the 20 hours per week available in each pool during school hours (10.00-12.00 and 13.00-15.00), it can be seen that the total primary school programme of 36 hours per week could be accommodated within 2 pools. However, this would provide little flexibility to cover curriculum issues or allow for use by other schools and 3 pools may be more appropriate – these pools could be paired up on some sites (eg a 25 metre and a teaching pool). An issue when considering the framework for school pool provision is the need to minimise the time and cost penalties of travel to a more distant site – the impact on the primary school swimming programme will be considered when reviewing strategy options.

3.3.4 Mill House Leisure Centre is now showing its age, with no major investment since the addition of the dryside facilities in 1987. The fabric of the building and the mechanical



and electrical services are now coming to the end of their life. While surveys show customer satisfaction of existing users is relatively good, the quality of some areas of the building (eg. the fitness suite, changing facilities, catering and reception) are not meeting customers' expectations or energy conservation standards. Due to the shape and size of the swimming pool, the resident swimming club and other competition hirers cannot host events or run their own club galas - they resort to hiring a facility out of the Borough.

3.3.5 Condition surveys completed at Mill House have identified a considerable number of issues with the present building fabric and finishes, in addition to any enhancements to the existing provision. In 2000, the estimated cost of the works required was £533,000 and in April 2004 it totalled £684,000. These costs do not include any access improvement works to meet DDA requirements although some have been completed.

3.3.6 As a result of these surveys and costings, the Council has prepared plans for a new wet/dry sports and leisure destination within the Victoria Harbour redevelopment. The £26 million H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (2005 costs) is proposed to include the following elements:

- eight lane 25 metre competition pool with booms/moveable floors and spectator seating, learner pool and fun pool with interactive features
- four court sports hall
- health and fitness centre
- indoor extreme sports area
- catering provision.

The innovative features within the development will be the outdoor and indoor extreme sports areas, including surf/flow riders and a wave generator out into open water. Built on land provided by PD Ports, the iconic design seeks to make the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre a part of the landscape and present opportunities for innovative energy solutions.

### 3.4 Audit of Indoor Sports Halls

3.4.1 There are a large number of sports halls in Hartlepool which, to a lesser or greater extent, are available for community use – these range in size from the six badminton court size hall at Mill House Leisure Centre to a large number of single court halls. As with pools, the majority of halls are located on school sites and so are not available during curriculum time – however, there are a number of standalone sites which can be used during the day in term-time. Table 4 sets out the key facilities in the town.

**Table 4: Sports Hall Facilities (public access)**

Location	Provision	Notes
Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre	4 court hall 2 court hall	charitable Trust with HBC support, wide range of in-house and out-reach activities, core service to young people, 150,000 users pa (all sports activities), full during all peak periods
Boys' Welfare, Throston	3 court hall	operated by Youth Service on long lease from Trustees
Brierton Leisure Centre	4 court hall	new standalone facility (2002), indoor links to school halls, public access after 16.30, increasing usage (potentially 80,000+ in year)

Location	Provision	Notes
Brinkburn Youth Centre	4 court hall	youth centre hall managed by Project Leader & care-taker, used by Sixth Form College and other schools
Brougham Primary Sch	1 court hall	Spaces for Sport and Arts grant
Dyke House School	4 court hall 1 court hall	commitment to community use, school self-invested in new community entrance, hall fully booked through year (3,000 adults/week), link to City Learning Centre
Eldon Grove Community Sports Centre	1 court hall	former school, principally local customers, Pay&Play and programmed activities – due to close July 07
English Martyrs School Sports Centre	4 court hall 1 court hall	used as part of public sports centre 18.00 to 22.00, mainly club use but some Pay&Play
Headland Sports Hall	4 court hall	new hall in heart of Headland (2006), principally Pay&Play with some bookings
High Tunstall College	4 court hall 1 court hall	large hall within school buildings and new Life Centre (1 court hall & fitness) in accessible location on public side
Manor College of Technology	3 court hall 2 x 2 court hall	smaller halls located within school buildings, large hall stands alone at rear of site, hall fully booked (Hartlepool United FC, basketball/football coaching, etc), no casual use, changing for large hall out of use
Mill House Leisure Centre	6 court hall	public access facility, principally Pay&Play, wide range of activities
Owton Manor Prim Sch	1 court hall	Spaces for Sport and Arts grant
Rossmere Youth Centre	4 court hall	well used site with public access during day and youth club evenings, associated spaces
St Hild's CofE School	3 court hall 2 x 1 court hall	new building, 3 court and both 1 court halls can be linked by folding back walls, climbing wall, table tennis 4 nights/week – centre of excellence
Seaton Community Centre	3 court hall	standalone hall within residential area, operated by Sport & Recreation Services but no public opening
Stranton Primary School	1 court hall	Spaces for Sport and Arts grant and NDC grants
West View School	1 court hall	Spaces for Sport and Arts grant

3.4.2 Of the larger sports halls listed, only those at Mill House, the Headland and Belle Vue Centres are available for community use during the school day. The other larger facilities (and most of the smaller one court halls) are on school sites and so have limited availability – there are also access and operational constraints which make community use difficult to arrange. In terms of age, the most modern facilities are those at Brierton School, St Hild’s School and The Headland – most of the other large halls are on sites which may be affected by the on-going BSF programme and, as a result, there is scope for refurbishment, replacement or closure.

### 3.5 Audit of Health and Fitness Facilities

3.5.1 Health and fitness facilities are of two key types:

- those associated with public-access leisure centres which can be used on both a Pay&Play and membership basis – these have the potential to generate significant revenue to offset the operational cost of other parts of the centre

- those which are operated on a fully commercial basis and charge a comparatively high membership fee.

Some fitness suites are targeted at specific users eg bodybuilding and these are often operated at low cost in poor quality premises – they tend to open and close on a regular basis.

**Table 5: Health and Fitness Facilities**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Provision</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre	18 machines dance studio	facilities used for wide range of classes
Brierton Community Sports Centre	33 stations	part of new sports centre, modern support facilities
Eldon Grove Community Sports Centre	n/a	closed July 2007, potential tennis centre of excellence
Ellwood World of Fitness	105 stations dance studio	fitness suites, exercise classes, small swimming pool, 'industrial' appearance
Fitness Connection, near Seaton Carew	120 stations dance studio	commercial fitness club – no swimming pool
Headland Sports Hall	12 stations	small gym, well used at peak times, range of classes
High Tunstall College	15 stations	small gym open to the community out of school hours and exercise classes
Jutland Road Community Centre	small	small gym within community centre
Mill House Leisure Centre	24 stations	small gym, well used at peak times
Springs, Marina Village	150 stations dance studio	private membership club, located alongside Marina, spa & beauty treatments, membership from approx £300 pa

3.5.2 Health and fitness is a growth area and one which suits the current trend towards more individual activities. Generally it would appear that the market for such facilities is probably in balance at Hartlepool in that there is no significant pressure from the commercial sector to open new facilities in the town. The commercial view of the market will no doubt also be influenced by the fact that at present this is a comparatively low wage economy and the number of potential members will be limited. The developments at Victoria Harbour may change this perception but this is also an opportunity for the authority to grow the market within its own sites and thus help to deliver other sporting opportunities which are not of interest to the commercial sector.

### **3.6 Audit of Other Indoor Sports Facilities**

3.6.1 There are a number of sport-specific indoor facilities within Hartlepool and the most significant of these are summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: Other Indoor Sports Facilities**

Location	Provision	Notes
Hartlepool Indoor Bowls Centre	8 lane indoor bowling rink with ancillary social facilities	membership club, £30 full and £25 seniors, leagues most afternoons and some evenings, 'try-it' open access sessions, 1100 members with over 66% retired, declining membership, some juniors but lost when reach c.20 years old, owned by HBC and leased to Bowls Consortium
UK Superbowl, Tees Bay Retail Park	tenpin indoor bowling centre	poor location on low quality retail park at edge of Hartlepool - open 10.00 to 24.00, 7 days/week

3.6.2 Other facilities include a number of boxing clubs which are generally membership based sites catering for a specific user group. Although not appearing in the participation analysis prepared as part of the consultation linked to this study, they can play a role in addressing social exclusion in areas such as Hartlepool Headland. There is no indoor tennis provision in Hartlepool – the nearest sites at Thornaby (private David Lloyd Club) and Tennis World Middlesbrough (club with casual access) are both some 10 miles away. A proposal has been made for a tennis Centre of Excellence at the former Eldon Grove Sports Centre.

### 3.7 Audit of Other Facilities

3.7.1 There are a number of other indoor community facilities within Hartlepool and these are listed in Table 7.

**Table 7: Other Facilities**

Location	Provision	Notes
Bridge Community Centre	gym and 'classrooms'	former town centre primary school used by Youth Service and Boxing Club – due to close 2007
Burbank Community House	small hall	small community centre – to be refurbished 2007
Jutland Road Community Centre	small hall	small community centre within residential area – IT suite
Owton Manor Community Centre	2 court hall, meeting rooms, etc	busy centre within shopping area, linked to library & adjoining police station, sports activities include carpet bowls, after-school club, exercise classes & martial arts
Throston Grange Community Centre	small hall	small community centre within residential area
West View Community Centre	2 court hall, meeting rooms, etc	part of a complex of buildings which also provides a library, OAP Club, IT suite, etc – with the West View Project nearby, the site is very busy and causes parking problems within what is a residential area

3.7.2 The principal activities at these sites are social or community development and there would appear to be limited sports use. However, there is potential to use the buildings for small scale developmental work with particular target groups eg. young people and the elderly. Exercise classes are one example and these locations, which

tend to be within large housing areas, could be used to deliver additional participation opportunities (as at Owton Manor).

### 3.8 Audit of Key Facilities in Neighbouring Authorities

3.8.1 We have considered current sports provision in surrounding authorities but, in doing so, have only reviewed that which would have an impact on the development of new facilities in Hartlepool. To that end, we have concentrated on any which the town’s residents are likely to be aware of and/or use for specific activities or at particular times. Thus, most people are unlikely to travel far to a fitness room, a standard sports hall or a simple 25 metre fitness swimming pool but will do so for a major event in a large sports hall, a larger competition pool, a leisure pool or other specialist sports facilities.

3.8.2 Table 8 lists those key facilities considered in the review of provision.

**Table 8: Key Sports and Recreation Facilities in Neighbouring Authorities**

Location	Authority	Provision	Notes
Billingham Forum Leisure Complex	Stockton	33m pool, teaching pool, 4 court hall, 39 station fitness, indoor bowls, ice rink	part of large town centre development including theatre, etc – aspiration to replace older sports facilities
Peterlee Leisure Centre	Peterlee	25m pool teaching pool, 8 court hall, 52 station fitness, functions rooms	comprehensive wet and dry sports centre built 1974 but requires modernisation
Neptune Centre	Middlesbrough	8 lane 25m pool, teaching pool, 33 station fitness, health suite	built 1998
Splash Leisure Pool	Stockton	25m pool, teaching pool, fun pool, 40 station fitness, health suite	built 2001 – proposed extension
Crowtree Leisure Centre	Sunderland	leisure pool, teaching pool, 8 court hall, fitness, health suite, indoor bowls, functions	major centre built 1974 and refurbished 2002 – to be augmented by new 50m pool at Stadium of Light
Dolphin Leisure Centre	Darlington	8 lane 25m pool, 2 teaching pools, 8 court hall, 120 station fitness	built 1982 – recent refurbishment

3.8.3 It is not envisaged that any of these sites between 20 and 30 minutes drive away will impact on the provision of new community facilities in Hartlepool as the Borough is a generally self-contained urban area.

### 3.9 Proposed Facilities

3.9.1 The sport and leisure market remains a key investment area, with both public and private bodies providing new facilities to meet market requirements and/or replace existing buildings which no longer meet appropriate standards or no longer sustainable in the long term.

3.9.2 Table 9 sets out major new developments which have been identified around Hartlepool and which could potentially impact upon the provision of public sports and recreation facilities in the town.

**Table 9: Proposed Facilities**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Billingham Sports and Leisure Centre	Billingham	Redevelopment of all/part of existing Billingham Forum	limited impact if present mix of elements replaced
Howletch Centre	Peterlee	new Sports Hall	very limited impact
Hardwick Hall Hotel	Sedgefield	Leisure Club	very limited impact
Ramside Hall Hotel & Golf Club	Durham	Private Health & Fitness Club	very limited impact
Riverside Northwest Development	Durham	8 lane 25m pool, teaching pool, 4 court hall, studio, large fitness room	complementary sub-regional facility
Springs Health Club /Tennis World	Middlesbrough	Private Health & Fitness Club	limited impact
Stadium Development	Sunderland	potential 50m pool	complementary regional facility
Woodham Golf & Country Club	Newton Aycliffe	Private Health & Fitness Club	very limited impact

3.9.3 It is not envisaged that any of the facilities listed above will have any impact on the provision of community sports and recreation buildings in Hartlepool unless their scope is enhanced significantly over and above that shown above. The competition is likely to be more significant in relation to the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre as this is intended to draw users from a far wider catchment area.

### 3.10 Summary

3.10.1 The facility audit has established the following key issues:

- a feature of Hartlepool is that there is only one swimming complex open to the public throughout the day – other pools are on school sites with limited (if any) community opening hours
- built in the 1970s, the school pools are well beyond their expected lifespan and it is likely that running costs will rise as key components fail – at some point it will not be cost-effective to repair the facilities and they will need to be closed
- the total primary school lesson programme could be accommodated within two pools but, as this would provide little flexibility, three pools may be more appropriate
- the design of the pools at Mill House is unsatisfactory for the current pattern of use and this complex also requires significant investment to bring it up to modern standards – it is considered more cost effective to build a new pool and the Council has commissioned designs for the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre at Victoria Harbour

- the majority of sports halls are located on school sites and so are not available during curriculum time – only those at Mill House, the Headland and Belle Vue Centres are available for community use during the school day
- health and fitness is a growth area and one which suits the current trend towards more individual activities – it would appear that the market for such facilities is probably in balance at Hartlepool
- there would appear to be limited sports use of community sites but there is potential to use these for developmental work with particular target groups
- in view of the ‘self-contained’ nature of the Borough, is not envisaged that any existing or proposed facilities in surrounding towns will have any impact on the provision of community sports and recreation buildings in Hartlepool.

## 4 CONSULTATION

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following section gathers together some of the key issues which emerged from the discussion of the future form of the Borough's sport and leisure provision with a series of internal and external stakeholders. This included extensive public consultation and reports of this work are included in Appendix C. Various points made by the key clients within the Borough Council have also been incorporated in the strategy and option development process and may not all be explicitly listed here.

4.1.2 Capita Symonds Consulting would like to thank all those officers, interested parties and members of the public who contributed to the consultation process.

### 4.2 Internal Stakeholder Consultation

4.2.1 Consultation has taken place face to face and in writing with a number of key stakeholders within Hartlepool Borough Council. The points made have been grouped under key departmental headings.

#### ***Community Services***

4.2.2 A number of conversations were held with officers of the Community Services Department including John Mennear, Pat Usher and Andrew Pearson. Key issues raised include the following:

- most indoor facilities are in relatively poor condition and there is a need to replace many of them if the need can be justified
- the Council organises Sports Action Groups and the need to invest in facilities is a key issue
- the on-going operation of the many school pools will be an issue, as was the closure of Eldon Grove in July 2007
- there are strong territorial loyalties in Hartlepool and indications that people will not travel outside their immediate neighbourhood
- subject to funding, there is a commitment to deliver the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre by 2012 – current plans see this providing a 25 metre pool, leisure/teaching pool, 4 court sports hall, fitness facilities, an extreme sports venue and a surfing pool
- there is demand for the development of athletics facilities to replace the old track that was lost as part of the Grayfields redevelopment – consideration has been given to the provision of facilities at High Tunstall College
- it is considered that clubs and the voluntary sector will need to be key partners with Hartlepool Borough Council in the provision of facilities
- Seaton Carew Sports Club is a partner in the south of the town and is seeking to enhance its facilities through a structured development plan – this could be integrated with other facility improvements planned by the Council at Seaton Park and redevelopment of the existing sports hall
- there is an issue with the qualification of sports coaches but an intensive programme has seen more of these being trained.



### **Children's Services**

4.2.3 We had extended consultations with Paul Briggs and Alan Kell with regard to the ways in which the Children's Services could contribute to the provision of facilities for community sport and leisure. The following key points were made:

- there is a departmental aspiration to open schools to the community through the Extended School programme and other initiatives
- the service is involved in asset planning across departments and sees the value of co-location when appropriate eg with libraries
- the department is open to the issue of community use of playing fields subject to appropriate levels of use and control of unauthorised access
- the BSF redevelopment programme is an opportunity to review completely the way in which people think about education
- the BSF consultation focussed on either a five or six school option for the delivery of 11 to 16 mainstream education – the route adopted by the Council's Cabinet in March 2007 would potentially see the closure of Brierton to leave five secondary schools and this has been used as the basis of the proposals set out in this Strategy
- should further consultation determine that Brierton remains open (or another mix of sites is adopted), this Strategy may need to be revised
- there is potential to relocate both Special Schools onto a single site
- as a small authority, the implementation of the Hartlepool BSF programme may require collaboration
- the provision of new swimming pools will not be covered within the BSF budget
- Manor School has aspirations to be a Sports College providing 'world class sporting facilities' but there are aspirations to provide good sports facilities at all schools
- although the approach has yet to be determined in line with the statutory consultation process and to reflect financial constraints, the following route is one option being discussed:
  - St Hilds: limited enhancement of what is a new school
  - High Tustall: new build or very heavy revitalisation
  - Dyke House: substantial refurbishment
  - English Martyrs: substantial refurbishment
  - Manor: new build or very heavy revitalisation.

4.2.4 The Youth Service provides a range of activities for young people in Hartlepool and a discussion with Brian Robinson identified a number of issues:

- the priority of the Youth Service is to provide for the 13 to 19 age group but the facilities are available to others on an hourly hire basis if not required by the core market – the objective is to provide youth activities on 6 evenings a week
- the Youth Service operates the Rossmere Centre and this is fully booked at peak times – it has also been asked to accommodate some specialist groups which need to be relocated from Eldon Grove
- the Brinkburn sports hall is used by the Sixth Form College during the day and by young people in the late afternoon and early evening, Monday to Friday – there are plans to open on Sundays
- the Brinkburn pool is within the Youth Service budget but is almost exclusively used by schools – there is a move to transfer this to an alternative budget within Children's Services
- the Youth Service has a long lease on the 3 court Boys' Welfare site in Throston and this is used to deliver a programme of activities

- the service also operates out of other facilities such as Bridge Community Centre (gymnasium), Seaton Carew Centre (2 evenings per week), Jutland Community Centre and Greatham Community Hall (active group)
- charges are generally in line with those at the public leisure centres and there is a central booking arrangement through the Youth Service office.

### ***Planning and Development***

- 4.2.5 A discussion with officers of the Planning Department covered the key aspects of the new Local Plan and the way in which its proposals could influence the distribution of sports and leisure facilities around the town. Key issues included:
- a major housing renewal programme will see the clearance of extensive areas of terraced housing in Central Hartlepool and their replacement by new properties
  - there are significant residential development sites at the north end of the town (Victoria Harbour, Hart Warren and Middle Warren) and these will increase demand for sports facilities in this part of Hartlepool
  - there is a presumption that the town centre will remain the focus for Borough-wide facilities in order to provide sustainable access to these developments
  - there is potential for the area around Mill House Leisure Centre, Hartlepool FC and the indoor bowling centre to be a focus for sporting activity.

### ***Workshop***

- 4.2.6 As part of the initial review of options, participants were asked to identify some of the key issues and drivers which should be borne in mind in determining the future pattern of facilities in Hartlepool. The following points were made:
- health – there is a need for targeted provision
  - holistic service delivery to be considered, not just service within facilities
  - capital and lifecycle costs – an ongoing revenue commitment is important and this a particular issue with schools provision
  - could a sports hall be located centrally to support the requirements of Hartlepool College (space is available near Bryan Hanson House)
  - consideration should be given to planning for a wider range of facility uses
    - community centres
    - facilities supported by New Deal for Communities finance eg. Belle Vue
    - long term requirements need to be a priority
    - link to voluntary and community strategy
  - Hartlepool Borough Council is supportive of community schemes
    - a key issue long term sustainability
    - Members influence on new schemes with ‘free money’ attached
  - impact of private sector
  - partnership with all providers is a priority for the future.

## **4.3 External Stakeholder Consultation**

- 4.3.1 Site visits were made to the principal sports facilities around the town and the opportunity was taken to discuss key issues with those responsible for their operation. The core facilities are at school sites and their approach to community use is set out below. There is also a note of discussions with the North East Region of Sport England.

***Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre***

- 4.3.2 In discussions with the management, it was determined that the Centre operates as a charitable company limited by guarantee and the £800,000 operational budget is met from charges made for use of the buildings (catering, conferences, community office space, etc) and from grants from a number of bodies. However, there may be an issue with long term sustainability should current grant regimes come to an end. The Centre's facilities are full at peak periods and a large number of room bookings have to be turned away. The Centre also operates a number of outreach projects including 'football for anti-social kids', Street Games UK and school programmes – it has aspirations to expand through use of nearby disused Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs) at Foggy Furze.

***Brierton Sports Centre***

- 4.3.3 The standalone sports centre, managed by the School, was opened in 2002 and is open to the public after 16.30 each day – according to the Manager James Deakin business is still building at the site but is running ahead of target levels. The public also has access to facilities within the school buildings but these are in very poor condition and are reached by long, difficult to supervise corridors.

***Dyke House School***

- 4.3.4 The Deputy Head John Taylor stated that the School is committed to community use of its existing facilities and has invested in a separate entrance to the 'public' elements so as to allow cost-effective operation. It is estimated that some 3,000 adults per week use the site and the sports hall and pool are fully booked throughout the week - most of the facilities require refurbishment. There is a strong Football in the Community programme and the 7 year old City Learning Centre on the site has a good dance studio used by other schools.

***English Martyrs School***

- 4.3.5 The school has a dedicated Community Sports Officer (Glen Pearce) and has invested in the provision of spaces for use out of hours – a separate 'public entrance' provides direct access to these areas from a car park. The Sports Centre is open from 18.00 to 22.00 and is mainly used by clubs – there is a Big Lottery Fund financed STP with associated changing facilities. The school has aspirations to open the 14 station fitness room to the public in due course. The swimming pool is linked to the sports centre but requires significant investment if it is to be retained – the school states that it is in use for curriculum purposes for 95% of the day.

***Hartlepool Sixth Form College***

- 4.3.6 The College currently uses the Brinkburn Youth Centre sports hall on an adjacent site but has aspirations to include sports facilities of its own within any redevelopment of its campus. This could lead to a reversal of roles in that the Youth Service could use any new hall provided by the College out of hours.

***Headland Sports Centre***

- 4.3.7 This excellent new facility alongside local shopping facilities and the Borough Hall opened in 2006 is still building its business. A crèche is due to open shortly.

***High Tunstall College***

- 4.3.8 Director of Services Bill White expressed the commitment of the College to community use. The College has extensive grounds including space for a grass athletics track and most indoor facilities are integrated into the main school buildings.

The National Lottery funded Life Centre is a 2 year old standalone fitness and exercise complex used 50/50 by the school and the local community.

#### **Manor College**

- 4.3.9 The College has benefited from investment in its sports facilities through the Football Foundation (new changing areas) and the campus is open after school hours for a variety of activities. There is a Community Sports manager on the door to control access but an issue is the need to allow users through the principal school buildings to reach some of the sports facilities.

#### **Mill House Leisure Centre**

- 4.3.10 The Centre is the only fully public facility in Hartlepool and a site tour with the Manager demonstrated the need for modernisation or replacement – having been extended a number of times, the site includes long corridors, a variety of floor levels and amenities which do not meet customer requirements. The H<sub>2</sub>O project described in paragraph 3.3.6 would replace this Centre

#### **Rossmere Youth Centre**

- 4.3.11 The Centre is used 7 days a week by a wide variety of groups in addition to the prime target of young people.

#### **St Hilds School**

- 4.3.12 The sports facilities within this new school are of a very high quality and the Bursar Bill Archbold has few complaints – the hall is booked out to clubs (principally table-tennis) at all peak periods.

#### **Sport England**

- 4.3.13 An initial conversation with David McGuire from the North East Region of Sport England determined general support for the approach being adopted in this Strategy. In his response to the draft, David stated that:

*I would like to congratulate Hartlepool on 'taking the bull by the horns' in respect of ageing facility provision and the impending BSF programme. Hartlepool will be the first Local Authority in the region to have to prepare a Strategy for Change document as part of its submission to the DfES for BSF. We will look for evidence that Local Authorities have the necessary evidence base (for sport) in place ready to respond to BSF so that there is a context for decisions that will need to be taken on community use, facility offer with the BSF developments and the Borough as a whole, and the potential to lever in additional funding. This Indoor Facilities Strategy, the Playing Pitch Strategy and the MUGA Strategy will together in our opinion provide a robust evidence base to properly plan for sport.*

- 4.3.14 Many detailed comments on the Strategy have been included in this final document but the following points are appropriate to include here:

- we accept Capita's conclusion on swimming provision in Hartlepool and we agree with Capita's assertion that notionally there should be around 900 square metres of water space in the Borough
- we agree there is a notional overprovision of sports halls
- all demand prediction analysis should allow for a 1% increase in participation in line with the Regional Plan for Sport and Physical Activity
- we accept the serious consideration should be given to omitting dry sports pace from the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre

- we support the strategic objectives for community use of school facilities.

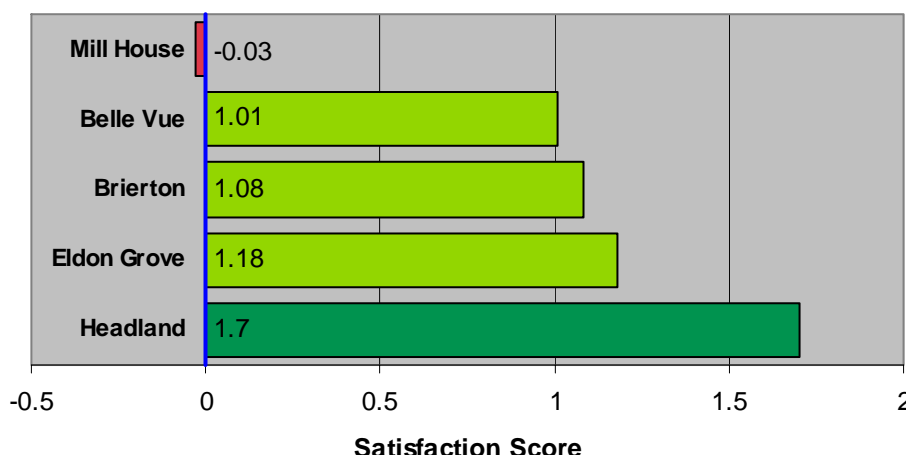
Notwithstanding a number of points of criticism which were addressed in the final revisions of this Strategy, Sport England accepted the key summary points set out at the end of Section 9 (paragraph 9.11).

#### 4.4 Residents' Consultation

4.4.1 A postal survey of 1,500 residents was carried out in January 2007, with recipients selected randomly from the electoral roll - the response rate was some 34%. Full details are set out in Appendix C but the key points made are set out below:

- just under half of all residents (47%) never visit an indoor sports facility
- however, many do make frequent use of them – a third of all residents use them at least once a month
- these facilities are an important part of life for a substantial minority of local people
- older people are least likely to use the facilities and the most frequent users are aged under 44
- indoor facilities are much more popular with women than men, with men more likely to be occasional and irregular in their visiting
- people without access to a car are also less likely to attend, and less likely to attend frequently – this may reflect economic capacity as well as access
- the bias towards users living in the Central area may reflect the location of the Mill House Leisure Centre
- Mill House Leisure Centre is the most popular sports facility but it is the only pool open for casual use – Brierton, Belle Vue, Eldon Grove and Headland were the only other named venues to be used by over 10% of respondents
- Mill House was strongly criticised by users and achieved a low score in relation to user satisfaction with the facility (see Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Most Popular Facilities**



- the new Headland Sports Centre attracts a very strong positive score
- respondents offered a wide range of suggestions as to how these facilities could be improved – there was a strong consensus on modernisation and 7% felt Mill House should be replaced

- two thirds of residents think there are too few indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool – this is particularly strongly felt by younger residents and those with young children.

4.4.2 Indoor facilities were also explored in focus groups, one of which took place at Mill House itself. The comments at these groups largely endorse the results of the questionnaire:

- adverse comments on issues such as cleanliness and maintenance
- indications from some that they prefer to use facilities outside the Borough
- feedback from regular users that they would welcome improvement
- concern over the planned closure of Eldon Grove
- opinions of Headland Sports Centre were high among the few who had used it
- views of Belle Vue were rather more circumspect.

## 4.5 Sports Clubs Consultation

4.5.1 A separate questionnaire was sent to all registered sports clubs in Hartlepool and the following key results were obtained:

- 61% of sports clubs make use of indoor facilities, even if their main sport is played outside
- facilities used are well spread across the town, including sports centres, schools and halls
- relatively high scores given to opening hours, playing surfaces, markings, appearance, lighting and parking
- lower scores were given for availability, suggesting that existing facilities are under pressure at peak times
- areas for improvement were availability and on-site equipment
- there was a polarised view on the sufficiency of present facilities
- while most club could meet applicable facility standards, 30% said these were limiting their development
- although 70% of club respondents thought their facilities were easy to get to, a substantial minority of 17% (one in six) disagreed with this view.

## 4.6 Other Consultation

4.6.1 As they do not operate indoor spaces, the responses from the Parish Councils did not provide information of relevance to the consideration of indoor sports facilities.

4.6.2 As part of the work carried out on the H<sub>2</sub>O project in 2005, Capita Symonds consulted two groups with particular interest in swimming provision. Representatives of Hartlepool Swimming Club confirmed the constraints of the existing pool at Mill House for swimming development and particularly competition. Club competitions are currently held at venues out of the area. Discussions also took place with the Regional Director (Lara Lill) and the Regional Development Manager of the Amateur Swimming Association. The governing body is very supportive of a new short course pool development at Hartlepool – it would be recognised as a regional facility and would meet the requirements of the ASA's National Strategy (December 2002).

4.6.3 A survey of the Council's Citizens' Panel in 2003 (Tenth Viewpoint 1000) included questions on swimming and the key results are set out below:

- three quarters of Viewpoint 1000 members can swim but only 18 per cent swim once a month or more
- the majority of people who swim use the Mill House pool, with less than 3 per cent using one of the other pools across the town in the last year
- nearly half of those who swim use it as a form of exercise and four out of ten go for fun and recreation
- children are more likely to be regular swimmers than adults
- unsurprisingly children are more likely to have used the school pools compared to the adult Viewpoint 1000 members
- only 35 per cent of people are satisfied with Mill House swimming facilities and 41 per cent are satisfied with the other pools across the town
- a pool with fun leisure facilities such as a wave machines or slides was the most popular idea for a new build pool with 49% of the votes, while a traditional, rectangular pool only got 5 per cent of the votes – it should be noted that elsewhere leisure pools are going out of vogue.

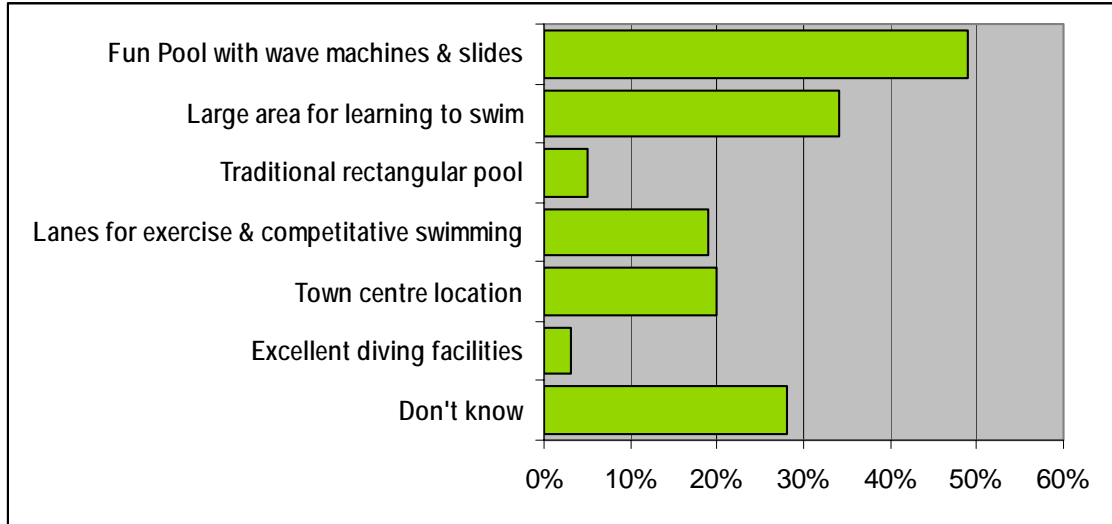
## 4.7 Summary

4.7.1 Key issues to arise from the consultation included:

- the Adult and Community Services Department acknowledged that many of the facilities in Hartlepool are in poor condition but there will be issues with their closure
- the Children's Services Department is committed to working with other Council departments to deliver community sport out of school hours – the current BSF initiative is a unique opportunity to implement such an approach
- the Youth Service operates three sites for its target group of the 13 to 19 age group and such users appreciate their own space
- the Planning Department has identified areas where there will be significant residential development and these should be reflected in any long term pattern of provision
- discussions with facility managers identified a strong commitment to maximising the use of sports facilities but also a concern about the quality of many of those that are provided
- a postal survey determined that almost half of residents contacted never visited an indoor sports facility but that these are important to a substantial minority representing most age groups
- the importance of accessibility is reflected by results showing higher usage by those with cars (although this might be a proxy for economic capacity) and those living closer to Mill House Leisure Centre
- Mill House was by far the most popular facility (reflecting the fact that it includes the only public access swimming pool) but it is also the only site to record a negative satisfaction score – other sites mentioned scored good towards excellent
- these views were supported by discussions at focus groups

- sports clubs were generally satisfied with provision but stated they had difficulty in booking facilities at peak times.

**Figure 2: Most Popular Features for a New Pool**





## 5 FACILITY SUPPLY ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following paragraphs summarise the key points which can be drawn from the facility audit and from the consultation exercises in order to obtain a picture of the present provision for indoor sports and activities in Hartlepool. We also review how this compares with similar authorities elsewhere. In view of the essential link between community access to sports facilities and the BSF programme, there is also a discussion of the way in which this and the Extended Schools initiative can help to deliver a supply of high quality indoor sports facilities for all residents out of school hours.

### 5.2 Review of Facility Quantity

5.2.1 The key point to be made with regard to the quantity of indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool is that there is a great deal available within the town. Over the years, provision has been made by a number of different services within Hartlepool Borough Council and by other public and voluntary sector bodies. There is very limited commercial interest in the development of indoor sports facilities in the town.

5.2.2 Looking at the provision of swimming pools, the key public facility at the Mill House Leisure Centre delivers just under 50% of the total water area in the town. The remainder is distributed amongst six pools on secondary school sites in the west of the Borough, making a total provision of just under 1,500m<sup>2</sup>. To this can be added the small swimming pool at the Springs Health and Fitness Club but this addresses a very different market to the public pools.

5.2.3 Similarly, the provision of indoor sports halls is dominated by those on education sites as each secondary school has its own large hall (generally 4 badminton court size). However, there is additional provision at three Leisure Service-run public access sites, three Youth Service venues and a large voluntary sector site. Considering only the larger halls, the spaces available are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Current Sports Hall Provision**

Size of hall	Number of halls	Total courts
Six badminton courts	1	6
Four badminton courts	8	32
Three badminton courts	4	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50</b>

5.2.4 There is what might be considered limited provision of Health and Fitness facilities in Hartlepool but as this is an element that can generally be funded on a commercial basis, the number of facilities usually meets market needs. There are a number of other specialist facilities in the town which cater for particular user groups and, of these, the one that is often considered from a quantitative point of view is indoor bowls – consultation with the users of the present facility shows that there is more than sufficient capacity in the present building due to the fall in user numbers. There

are no indoor tennis courts but these are available at Thornaby and Middlesbrough some 10 miles away.

5.2.5 Taking data from Active Places Plus, Table 11 shows the provision of key indoor facilities per 1,000 population and compares Hartlepool's level of provision against the national average. It also compares its provision against Local Authorities which the Office of National Statistics considers to be most similar to Hartlepool in terms of character and make-up.

**Table 11: Comparator Provision**

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Comparator Authorities</i>	<i>Facility/1,000</i>
Swimming Pools (total m <sup>2</sup> of all pools)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>22.37</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>17.45</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	11.30
	Sunderland	18.99
	Middlesbrough	11.67
	Barnsley	11.76
Sports Halls (total m <sup>2</sup> of all of halls)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>105.60</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>69.70</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	114.05
	Sunderland	120.94
	Middlesbrough	96.51
	Barnsley	63.94
Health and Fitness (stations)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>6.90</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>4.94</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	4.25
	Sunderland	5.00
	Middlesbrough	5.85
	Barnsley	4.26
Indoor Bowls (rinks)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>0.04</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>0.04</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	0.06
	Sunderland	0.05
	Middlesbrough	0
	Barnsley	0.02
Indoor Tennis (courts)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>0.02</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	0
	Sunderland	0.06
	Middlesbrough	0.06
	Barnsley	0

5.2.6 To summarise, as there is generally more than adequate provision, the issue in Hartlepool will be the extent to which it will be possible to reduce the present quantity of indoor sports facilities (both wet and dry) in order to minimise the long term cost of providing such spaces in the Borough.

### 5.3 Review of Facility Quality

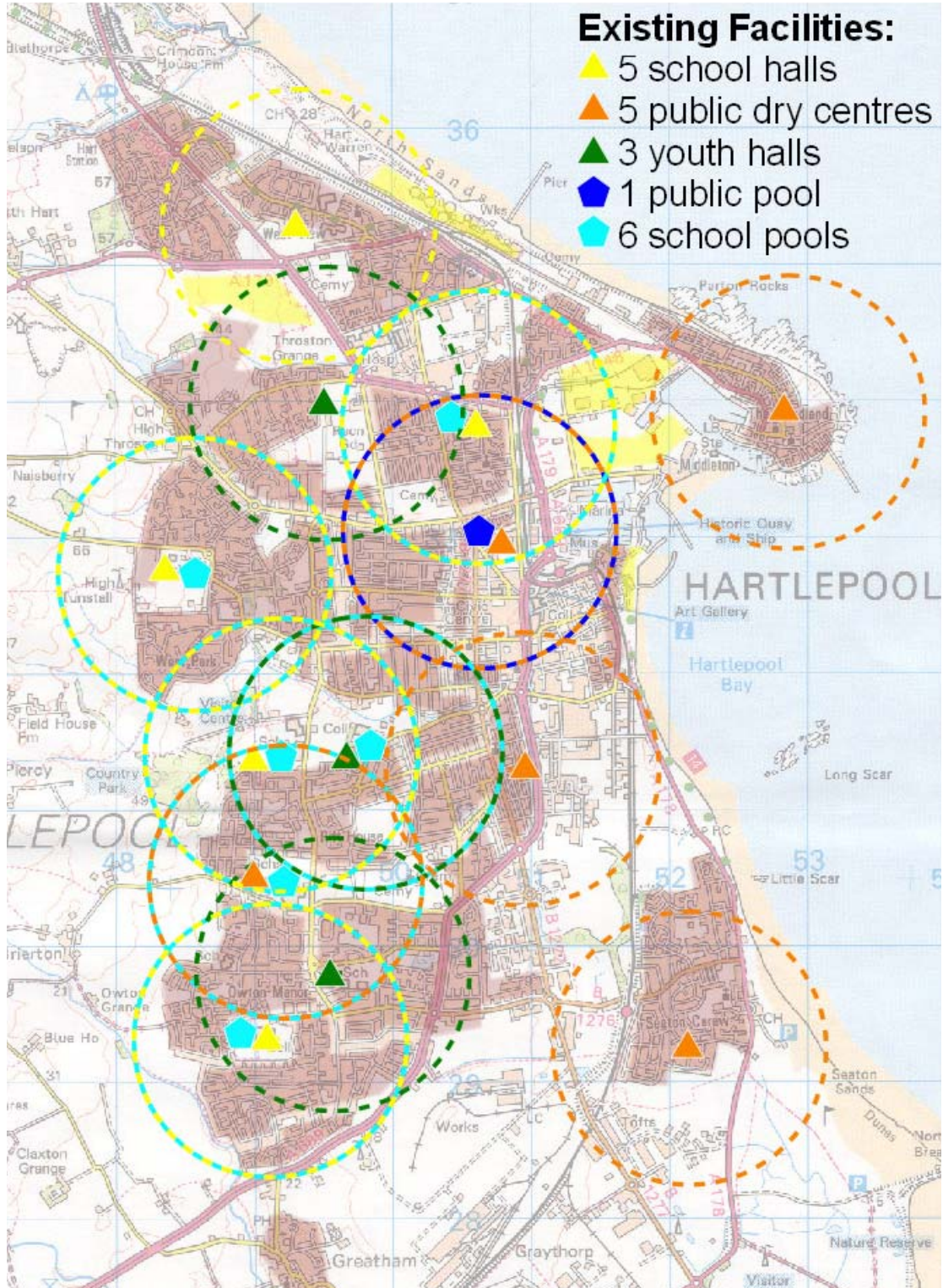
- 5.3.1 From our site visits, a variety of condition surveys and the consultation with stakeholders and the community, the poor quality of most of the present facilities is held up as a key issue.
- 5.3.2 This is particularly pertinent with regard to swimming facilities in that the main public facility at Mill House is over 30 years old and will require significant capital investment if it is to remain in operation for more than a few years – this has led to the proposal to relocate swimming to the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre. The remainder of the pools in the Borough are a 30 year old ‘package deal’ design utilising a timber framed structure over a ‘plastic’ tank and minimal changing facilities. It is testament to the care taken with maintaining these buildings that they are still open but a number will require major investment in new roofs, new plant and tank relining if they are to remain in operation. This is unlikely to be cost effective if other standards (eg energy, access, etc) are also to be addressed.
- 5.3.3 The quality of sports halls is less of an issue in that these are far simpler buildings and can be maintained at lower cost than pools. As a result, most of the larger sports halls (Youth Services and Schools) are in ‘adequate’ condition although some have specific structural and maintenance issues which will become more serious in time. A key feature is that the authority has invested in two new dry sports centres and these have been highlighted in the public consultation.
- 5.3.4 The public health and fitness provision is of a fair quality given that the two new sports centres have modern fitness rooms and that at Mill House has been refitted on a regular basis. The indoor bowls hall is a good quality facility but consideration will need to be given to its long term maintenance if usage levels continue to decline.
- 5.3.5 Drawing this together, it will be important to raise the quality of all the indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool to that of the best if the Council is to provide all the Borough’s residents with an opportunity to participate in sport in an attractive and safe environment – it is well documented that higher quality facilities both attract more users and engender greater respect and pride.

### 5.4 Review of Facility Accessibility

- 5.4.1 The accessibility of sites involves two parameters: availability to different user groups and physical location.
- 5.4.2 In terms of the first factor, there are a number of key issues concerning availability of indoor sports facilities and/or elements within them:
- many of them are on school sites and, as a result, are not available in curriculum time – they can also be ‘buried’ within the school campus and it may be difficult to provide easy and secure access out of school hours (especially for those who are not members of clubs)
  - however, this does mean that they could be available at peak public use periods in the evenings and, potentially, during the school holidays
  - many of the facilities are old and were designed at a time when access for all was not as important – while many have been adapted to allow use by people with disabilities and other target groups, in many cases this is not easy.

The only fully accessible indoor sports facilities are the Mill House Leisure Centre, the Headland Sports Centre and (out of school hours) the Brierton Leisure Centre.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Existing Indoor Sports Facilities**



5.4.3 In terms of physical location, as the majority of the indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool have been developed on secondary school sites, these are situated in an

arc through the principal residential areas on the western side of the town – here they are accessible to local residents and are generally reachable by a variety of bus services. The Mill House Leisure Centre is close to the town centre and so can be reached by public transport from all parts of the town while the Headland Sports Centre is well located to serve its specific catchment area in Old Hartlepool.

- 5.4.4 The overall distribution of facilities is illustrated on Figure 3 which shows the key sites in Hartlepool – they are named on the map in Appendix B. The 1 kilometre radius from each is a proxy for an easy 20 minute walk – this is the parameter used by the Audit Commission is assessing the accessibility of sports facilities for its CPA scores. It is acknowledged that the precise catchment will be influenced by physical barriers on the ground but in a well-developed urban area such as Hartlepool this is an appropriate average distance. When reviewing specific sites, we would utilise catchment area mapping software which can return the precise population numbers within 20 minutes walk or drive of any site. The drawing shows that if access were to be granted to all facilities, there would be few parts of Hartlepool that fall outside these catchment areas. In any redevelopment strategy, an objective should be to seek to maintain as high an accessibility level as possible.

## 5.5 Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

- 5.5.1 BSF is a Government initiative which will provide £80-90 million for rebuilding, remodelling and refurbishing Hartlepool's secondary schools. This will help to create new and exciting facilities to support new ways of teaching and learning. The Government has invited Hartlepool to join the national BSF programme from Autumn 2007 and to begin to prepare a "Strategy for Change", stating how learning opportunities will be transformed in Hartlepool through BSF investment.
- 5.5.2 The Council's BSF Project Board has prepared extensive consultation material to inform debate about the various options for the compulsory stage of secondary education for young people between the ages of 11 and 16 and for provision of schooling for children and young people with special educational needs. During the Stage One Consultation in Autumn 2006, the Council presented information on falling pupil numbers – Hartlepool's "Strategy for Change" must deal with this issue as otherwise the Borough will not receive its share of the BSF funding.
- 5.5.3 The consultation process has led to the selection of 'Option Three' as the route forward – this involves reducing the number of mainstream secondary schools from six to five by closing Brierton School. This has the following advantages:
- the surplus places issue will be addressed and BSF funding will be released
  - it will be possible to review the admission arrangements of the five remaining schools, moving to a partner primary school arrangement where each primary school is linked to a particular secondary school and most of the pupils at the primary school go there when they reach age 11
  - there will be minimum disruption to pupils and staff in the remaining schools.
- There are however a number of disadvantages:
- Brierton School would close – some parents, pupils and staff may have concerns and some staff will be concerned for their jobs
  - there is a risk that pupils and staff in Brierton School would face a period of disruption, unless the situation is carefully managed

- some pupils might have further to travel to their secondary school.

5.5.4 Notwithstanding these concerns, in March 2007 the Council’s Cabinet resolved:

- *“to authorise the formulation of a proposal to discontinue Brierton Community School with effect from 31 August 2009 and to ask the BSF Project Board to prepare the appropriate consultation and other arrangements, as required, prior to publication of a formal statutory notice”*
- *“to authorise further exploration of the possible co-location of Catcote Secondary Special School and Springwell Primary Special School on a single site with shared facilities, during the period of preparation of the BSF ‘Strategy for Change’.”*

5.5.5 As a result of this resolution, this Strategy has been developed around the five school model. However, almost certainly the new community sports hall at Brierton would be retained in any option chosen. This would leave a specialist sports facility able to serve any development on the Brierton site, as well as the wider community.

5.5.6 The timetable established for the BSF programme in Hartlepool is set out in Table 12.

**Table 12: BSF Programme**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Decision on statutory proposals (if agreed)	September 2007	If there are further objections at the end of the statutory process (end October), an independent adjudicator would be asked to intervene. This would inevitably mean a revision of target dates.
Hartlepool is formally engaged in BSF project	October 2007	Process begins with a formal meeting with Government officials.
Completion of “Strategy for Change”	May 2008	All aspects of the vision for secondary education in Hartlepool have to be decided by this time.
Development of “Outline Business Case”	Autumn / Winter 2008	This will involve detailed costings. Architects and other consultants will be involved at this stage.
First projects begin	Autumn / Winter 2009 or 2010	This will depend on how building work is to be procured.
All projects complete	Autumn 2012	Building work could be completed earlier, depending upon how building work is to be procured.

## 5.6 Extended Schools and Community Use of School Facilities

5.6.1 The Government expects that by the time any schools are re-built or re-modelled, all schools will be “extended schools”. This means that there will be opportunities to create new facilities that will benefit children, young people, their families and their communities. Consultation responses were in favour of schools being designed or re-designed to allow them to make a significant contribution to meeting the needs of the communities in which they are located.

- 5.6.2 Some examples of extended and community facilities include:
- high quality childcare from 08.00 to 18.00 and all year round
  - activities for children and young people, their families and the community, eg:
    - homework clubs and study support
    - sporting activities
    - music tuition, dance, drama, art and craft activities
    - adult and community learning facilities
  - access on site to a range of health-related support for families and the community, eg:
    - speech therapy
    - mental health services
    - baby clinics
    - smoking cessation clinics
  - other community based activities and facilities, eg:
    - information sessions
    - police offices
    - library services.
- 5.6.3 It is not expected that all schools will offer all services on their site. Further discussion over the next eighteen months will ensure that there is a good understanding of the needs of each community where a school is sited and that any opportunity to provide better facilities is taken.
- 5.6.4 The relationship between the Borough's Leisure Facility Investment Strategy and the BSF/Extended Schools agendas is crucial in the delivery of high quality sport and recreation participation opportunities for all Hartlepool's residents. The funding for education facilities is strictly reserved for that purpose and this has led to the development of facilities that are intended for use by the community but do not have the additional spaces that are required to make such management cost effective. For example, there is often no reception desk, no office for out-of-hours management, no staff facilities and, in some cases, no independent access without passing through the school buildings.
- 5.6.5 At Hartlepool, there is an opportunity to ensure that if the provision of some additional 'external' funding can transform a 'school facility' into one easily used by the community, this approach can be adopted as part of an holistic approach to the provision of facilities.

## 5.7 Summary

- 5.7.1 Key conclusions which can be drawn from the review of facility supply include:
- with more than adequate provision when compared with other similar authorities, the quantitative issue is the extent to which it may be possible to reduce the number of indoor sports facilities to minimise the long term cost of providing such spaces in the Borough
  - the poor quality of most of the present facilities is a key issue and investment will be needed if the Borough's residents are to be given an opportunity to participate in sport in an attractive and safe environment

- the accessibility of many of the existing facilities is poor in terms of programming and provision for people with disabilities – however, sites are well located around the town
- the Council's response to the BSF initiative is currently being developed but this Investment Strategy can be adjusted to reflect either the five or six school model of provision
- there is an opportunity to link the provision of new public and education facilities by appropriate investment in additional support facilities alongside those provided for pupils' use.



**6 FACILITY DEMAND ANALYSIS**

**6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 This section includes a review of the geo-demographic characteristics of the population living within Hartlepool, largely based on data prepared by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU). As the purpose of this review is to determine what facilities should be provided for Hartlepool residents, we have concentrated on appropriate key characteristics of the population within the town and its constituent wards. The analysis gives an understanding of the economic profile of the resident population and helps to appreciate the likely market and demand for sport and leisure facilities in the Borough. Additional background information is included in Appendix D.

**6.2 Population Analysis - Quantity**

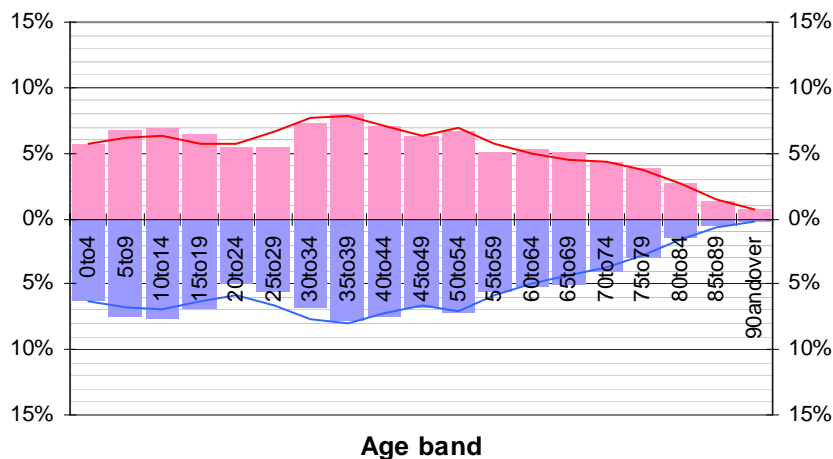
6.2.1 In order to obtain quantitative information on the Hartlepool’s population, we have used data prepared by the JSU, where available, to supersede that from the 2001 census.

**Table 13: Age of population (mid 2006 estimate TVJSU)**

Age Structure	Hartlepool	Tees Valley	England & Wales
<b>All People – Count</b>	<b>89,700</b>	<b>651,100</b>	<b>53,463,000</b>
People aged 0 - 15	20.3%	19.7%	19.1%
People aged 16 - 24	11.8%	11.8%	11.6%
People aged 25 – retirement age	48.8%	49.6%	50.4%
People over retirement age	19.1%	18.9%	18.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

6.2.2 Table 13 shows that the population structure is not very different from the sub-regional or national profile and that, as a result, the Borough is unlikely to require facilities which are very different from those in a typical town of such a size. The age structure used to generate the facility demand model is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Age Profile of Hartlepool (from Active Places Plus)**



- 6.2.3 The distribution of the population has been considered in relation to wards in view of the easy availability of data by such areas. Figure 5 identifies the principal residential areas in Hartlepool, so providing a simple visual representation of areas which will generate the highest demand for sport and recreation facilities. It also identifies those areas where there is planned to be significant residential development (yellow).
- 6.2.4 A report from the JSU sets out population and household projections for Hartlepool. The 2003-based figures indicate that over the period 2003 to 2021 the projected changes for Hartlepool are follows:
- total population: a small decrease from 90,200 in 2003 to 87,100 in 2021
  - children (0-15): a fall of 18% from 19,100 to 15,700
  - working age population (16-retirement): down 7% (54,100 to 50,100) by 2021
  - older people (over retirement): an increase of 25% (17,000 to 21,300) by 2021
  - number of households: a rise of 13% from 39,000 to 44,200
  - house vacancy rate: in line with the Regional Spatial Strategy, it has been assumed that vacancy rates for the Tees Valley will fall to 3% by 2011 – the rate for Hartlepool at the time of the 2001 Census was 4.9%.
- 6.2.5 The impact of these projections will be reflected in the changes that are proposed for the schools estate (potentially fewer secondary schools) but the significant fall in the numbers of young people will also have an impact on sports facility demand. Conversely, the increase in those over retirement age could lead to greater demand for exercise and fitness opportunities throughout the day – at present these are limited by the fact that the majority of facilities are on school sites.
- 6.2.6 This demand for daytime access to sports facilities will also be increased by the lower than average proportion of the population in employment. In the year to December 2005, 71.7% of the population of working age were economically active, a figure that is the lowest of all of the Tees Valley authorities – it is also significantly lower than the Tees valley average and the average for England and Wales.
- 6.2.7 There will also be additional demand from a number of large residential developments – these will affect overall catchment population and also the precise distribution of potential users. Key projects are included in Table 14.

**Table 14: Key Residential Development Sites**

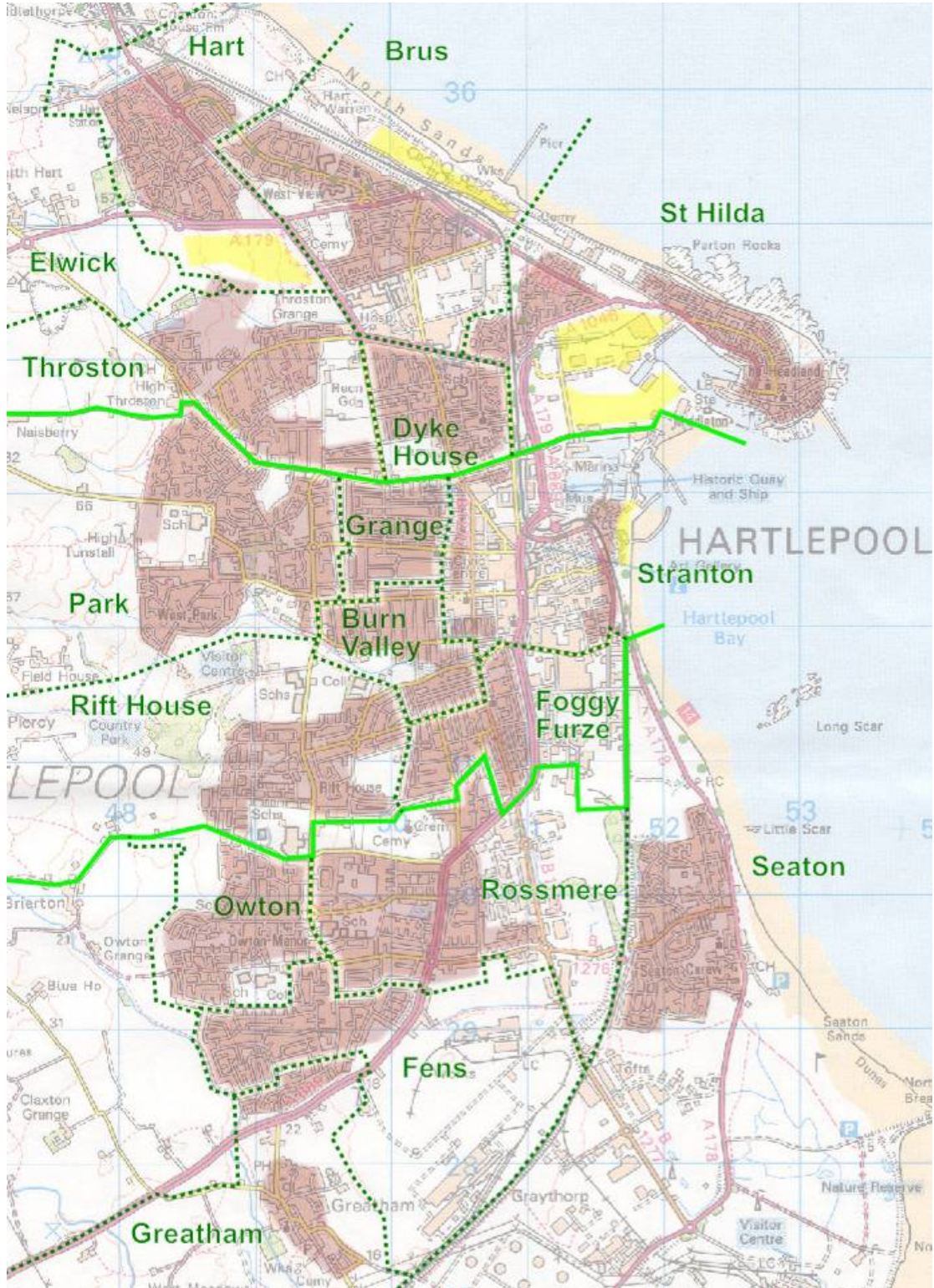
<b>Zone</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Residential Units</b>	<b>Residents #</b>
North	Victoria Harbour	3,400	7,800
North	Hart Warren	480	960
North	Middle Warren	1,000	2,000
Central	South Harbour	900	1,800
South	Other sites	170	340
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,950</b>	<b>11,900</b>

# 2 persons/dwelling (based on a forecast smaller household size)

- 6.2.8 The impact of this will be to add significantly to the requirement for easily accessible sports and recreation facilities in the town centre, albeit many of the likely purchasers

of these dockland flats are potential members of private sports clubs such as Springs.

**Figure 5: Wards and Existing/Proposed Residential Areas**



### 6.3 Population Analysis - Characteristics

- 6.3.1 To inform the Leisure Facility study, Capita Symonds has used information commissioned from The Leisure Database Company (LDCo) in 2005 as part of the feasibility study for the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre. This analysed the population within a 10, 20 and 60 minute drivetime using a MOSAIC Profile approach. It is considered that there will have been no fundamental structural changes in the population characteristics since this work was carried out.
- 6.3.2 The significant point to draw out of this appraisal is that the principal MOSAIC groups in Hartlepool are those summarised below:
- Municipal Dependency*
- a. Mostly families on lower incomes who live on large, often isolated Council estates where people have low aspirations and low incomes – they watch a lot of television and buy trusted mainstream brands from shops that focus on price rather than range or service.
- Ties of Community*
- b. Living mostly in close knit communities of older houses, most of this group own their homes, drive their own cars and hold down responsible jobs - community norms rather than individual ambitions shape the pattern of most consumption.
- Twilight Subsistence*
- c. These are generally elderly people who are mostly reliant on state benefits and live in social housing – most spend money only on the basic necessities of life.
- Blue Collar Enterprise*
- d. These people are practical and enterprising in their orientation, living in what were once council estates, owning their cars and providing a reliable source of labour – tastes focus on providing comfort and value to family members.
- 6.3.3 This information is significant in that both local and sub regional areas are characterised by relatively poor residents with limited disposable income. It is supported by other data which shows that Hartlepool exhibits multiple symptoms of social and economic decline – unemployment, poor housing, crime, major health issues and a degraded environment. These problems are being tackled through comprehensive regeneration initiatives that aim to address the considerable needs of the town, realise development and other opportunities and create a sustainable community.
- 6.3.4 However, the immediate impact is that there is likely to be below average use of sports and recreation facilities and that those that are used will tend to be those which require lower investment by participants. It is unlikely that a major private sector operator (eg David Lloyd) would be interested in opening in the town (even if there was not a Club at Stockton) as the disposable income available is limited. If the Council is to meet its aspirations of a more active community, it will need to develop facilities which are attractive to the resident population such as football, rugby union and boxing. Swimming, although exhibiting below average participation rates in Hartlepool, is one that does tend to attract a wide range of users when there is good access to pools in the town.

**6.4 Participation in Sport and Physical Activity**

6.4.1 Sport England, the body charged with sustaining and increasing participation in sport, commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out an Active People Survey in order to gauge how active people in England really are. Inactivity costs the UK an estimated £8.2 billion each year and the results of the survey will help to identify where resources should be targeted to improve community sport. The 2006 survey of 363,724 people questioned in all 354 English local authorities highlighted a number of issues:

- 0.6% did not take part in any moderate intensity sport or active recreation (for 30 minutes or more) in the previous four weeks
- 28.4% have built some moderate intensive sport or exercise into their lives
- 21% are hitting the recommended target of 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport or active recreation on at least three days a week, including 6.3% who do exercise every day
- 69.5 % of adults are satisfied with the sports provision in their local area
- one in four adults (10.2 million people) belong to a health or sports club (up from one in six in 2002)
- six million people have taken part in competitive sport over the last year.

Further information is provided in Appendix D.

6.4.2 Table 15 summarises the results from the Active People Survey in the North East of England and shows that Hartlepool is in the bottom 25% of local authorities with regard to regular participation in physical activity. With an average in England of 21%, the Borough will need to work hard to reach this figure let alone those of the best authorities. It is interesting to note that the participation level is high in Stockton-on-Tees where there has been significant investment in a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities – the public consultation discovered that Hartlepool residents did travel to the new pool in Stockton.

**Table 15: Active People Survey – North East Region**

Local Authority	Regular participation (3 days a week 30 mins moderate intensity)	Volunteering to support sport (at least 1 hour a week)	Local Authority	Regular participation (3 days a week 30 mins moderate intensity)	Volunteering to support sport (at least 1 hour a week)
Durham	26.8	7.3	Berwick-upon-Tweed	19.8	5.7
Alnwick	25.9	6.0	Derwentside	19.5	5.2
Stockton-on-Tees UA	24.4	4.0	Wansbeck	19.3	3.7
Castle Morpeth	24.2	5.2	Middlesbrough UA	19.1	3.8
Tynedale	23.2	4.9	Hartlepool UA	18.8	4.3
Teesdale	22.1	4.2	Wear Valley	17.9	5.1
Chester-le-Street	21.7	5.7	Gateshead	17.7	2.5
Blyth Valley	21.5	4.8	Easington	16.8	4.8
Darlington UA	21.0	4.3	Sedgefield	16.8	5.5
Newcastle upon Tyne	20.7	4.2			
North Tyneside	20.7	3.6			
South Tyneside	20.2	3.6			
Redcar & Cleveland UA	20.2	5.3			
Sunderland	20.0	3.1			

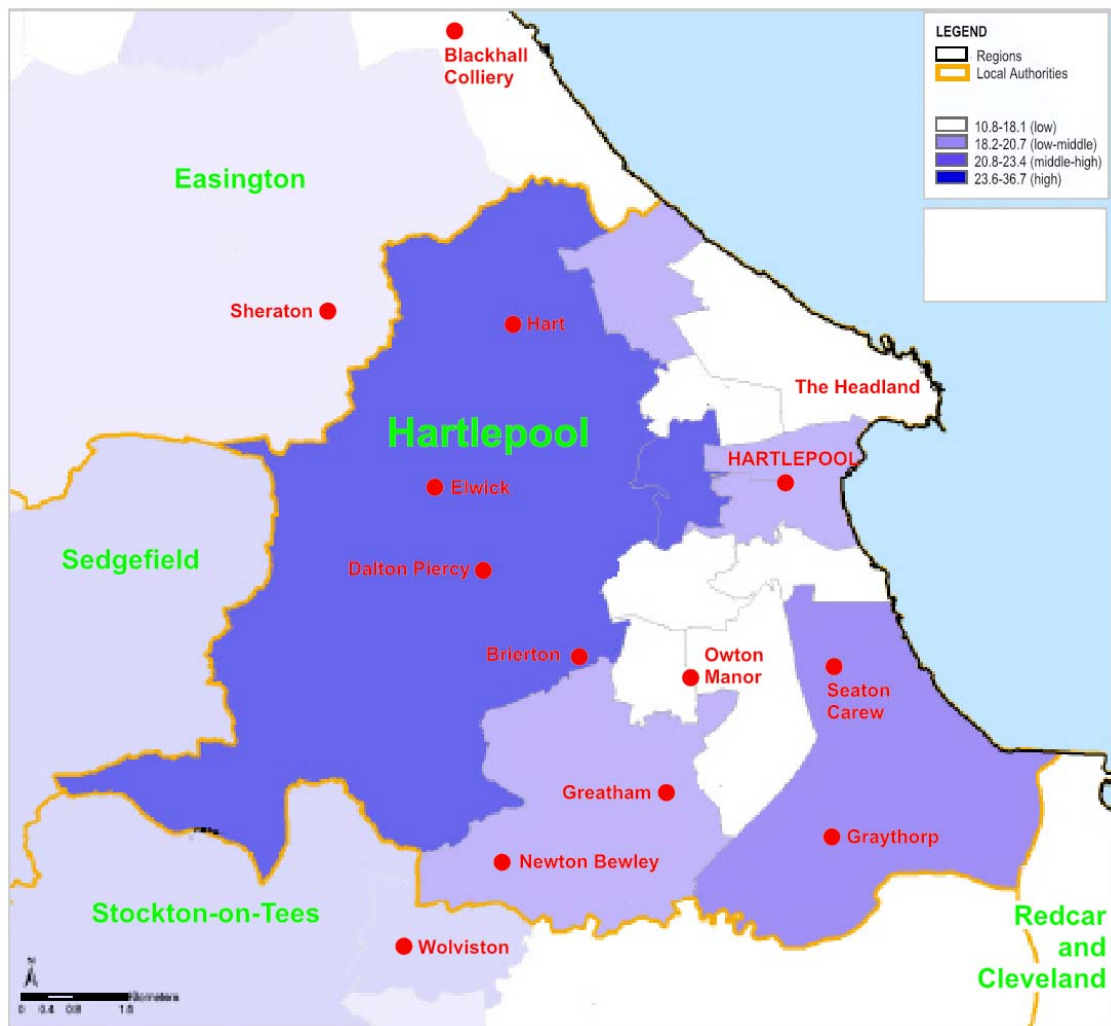
  

	Bottom 25 Percent
	Middle 50 Percent
	Top 25 Percent

6.4.3 Turning to the detail within Hartlepool itself, participation is in the lower quartile throughout most of the inner urban area although it is noticeable that the area

immediately around the Mill House Leisure Centre has slightly higher participation rates. However, it can also be seen that rates are higher in Seaton Carew and the rural areas where there are no public facilities. It is suggested that this higher figure can be explained by the socio-economic characteristics of the local residents who will have a greater propensity to participate in sports activities.

**Figure 6: Active Places – Participation by Ward in Hartlepool**



6.4.4 The pattern of participation is an additional factor which can be used to justify the provision of opportunities for physical activity in specific target areas.

**6.5 Facility Demand Analysis**

6.5.1 Sport England North East has commenced the preparation of a strategy for the provision of sports facilities in the region but this is not available at present. As a result, we have examined demand with reference to a number of sources:

- previous reports carried out on the subject of facility demand
- an analysis of potential demand utilising Sport England’s Active Places Plus model (APP)
- a review of the way in which the present facilities are used.

The appraisal is carried out separately for the principal types of indoor sports facility and also bears in mind the requirement to accommodate growth in participation.

## 6.6 Demand for Swimming Pools

6.6.1 A study of Hartlepool's public pools by the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM) in 2002 came to the following conclusions with regard to the quantity of water space:

- the total water provision at the time was some 1,940m<sup>2</sup>
- none of the pools meet modern standards in terms of length/width, accessibility, energy efficiency, etc and some are in poor condition – the overall view is that all should be replaced in the short to medium term as refurbishment is unlikely to be cost-effective
- since then, pools at St Hilds and Rossmere have been closed to leave a pool water area of some 1,477 m<sup>2</sup> in public and school pools
- the ISRM stated that, based on generally accepted standards for the size of the Borough's population, provision should be some 900m<sup>2</sup>
- this is mirrored by the current Sport England APP model which suggests that a total water area of 908m<sup>2</sup> should be provided in Hartlepool
- Mill House provides 637m<sup>2</sup>, leaving a shortfall of only 270m<sup>2</sup> were this to be the only site retained – this is roughly equivalent to one 5-lane 25 metre pool (rather than the five school pools now available).

6.6.2 Events have moved on since this study was carried out and the plan is now to replace Mill House (the only pool open for casual swimming) by the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre. Excluding its shallow leisure pool which is not suitable for any more than fun play, it is envisaged the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre will provide 523m<sup>2</sup> of water space, leaving a shortfall of some 377m<sup>2</sup> if the APP/ISRM figure is to be adopted as the requirement. A new 6-lane 25 m pool elsewhere in Hartlepool would provide 325m<sup>2</sup>, slightly less than the requirement. The addition of a teaching pool would provide more flexibility for lessons and take the provision only slightly above the target figure – it will also provide capacity for growth in participation in line with Government and Sport England objectives.

6.6.3 An alternative scenario might be to install a floating floor in any 25 metre community pool and relocate the associated teaching pool to a different site (existing or new) in order to distribute the facilities around the town. This would increase local accessibility and reduce travel times for schools using the teaching pool but lead to additional capital and operational costs.

6.6.4 Looking at the present programmes of use for all those pools, it is apparent that the closure of all pools other than Mill House (or its replacement) would have a significant impact on the delivery of the Swimming Strategy and the school swimming curriculum. There would be insufficient water space available to meet the needs of current user groups. Such an approach would also not address Government aspirations for greater physical activity or for the specific requirements of localities such as Hartlepool where the ability to swim is essential in a coastal and dockland environment.

- 6.6.5 To that end, we recommend that the Borough should aspire to provide some 900m<sup>2</sup> of water space, generally in line with the conclusions of the APP model and ISRM report, and the practical review of present pool timetables. This is equivalent to 18 twenty five metre swimming lanes which could be provided in different ways:
- three six-lane pools
  - an eight lane-pool and a six-lane pool, with each having a teaching pool
  - an eight lane-pool (with teaching pool), a six-lane pool and an additional community pool.

## 6.7 Demand for Sport Halls

- 6.7.1 With regard to the demand for sports halls, we have carried out an analysis of the current use of what is at present a large stock of sports halls and supplemented this by use of the Sport England APP model. The model shows that, allowing for the demand expected from the increased usage required to meet the aspirations set out in Game Plan, the Borough should provide the equivalent of 25 badminton courts to cater for local needs. This is, in effect, six or seven large sports halls.
- 6.7.2 Looking at the use of the existing 50 badminton court provision, it is difficult to identify where the timetabling efficiencies could be made to accommodate all current users in what would be half of the present provision. However, there are a number of specific issues which could require the provision of more than this base level of supply:
- the five secondary schools (existing and/or proposed under the BSF programme) will each require a 3 or 4 court hall to meet curriculum demands
  - there is additional voluntary sector provision (Belle Vue) which also plays a key role in delivering activities for young people through a sports hall
  - there is an issue with Youth Service provision in that many young people like to 'take ownership' of their own facilities and do not find it as attractive to visit a public leisure centre.
- 6.7.3 The present public provision of halls at The Headland, Brierton and Mill House (total of 14 courts) plus Belle Vue (4 courts) will meet a large proportion of the demand. If the existing/new schools are added (up to 20 courts), there is a significant surplus. The Borough would have a total of 38 courts, excluding those operated by the Youth Service. The 'running total' is illustrated in Table 16.

**Table 16: Provision of Sports Halls**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>Cum. Total</i>	<i>Deficit/ Surplus</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Headland & Brierton	8	8	- 17	New public facilities to be retained
Mill House LC	6	14	- 11	Large public facility to be retained in interim
Belle Vue	4	18	- 7	Voluntary sector facility with public access
Five other Secondary Schools ( <i>Brierton is above</i> )	20	38	+ 13	Maximum 20 courts – could be lower subject to curriculum & funding constraints



<i>Location</i>	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>Cum. Total</i>	<i>Deficit/ Surplus</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Youth Service Sites	11	49	+ 24	Separate provision for target market but some public access
Seaton Carew Hall	3	52	+ 27	Limited public access
H <sub>2</sub> O Centre	4	50	+ 25	Replacement for Mill House ( <i>net reduction by 2 courts</i> )
H <sub>2</sub> O Centre without sports hall	4	46	+ 21	Omission of sports hall from proposed H <sub>2</sub> O Centre ( <i>net reduction by 4 courts</i> )

- 6.7.4 The conclusion is that while there is potentially a requirement for more than the base provision as identified by the demand model, there would be a surplus of provision if all sites are taken into consideration – even without any dry facilities at H<sub>2</sub>O, provision would be 180% of projected demand. There should certainly be no further provision of dry sports halls in the Borough and careful consideration should be given to any major investment in existing halls until all slots available in the existing public and proposed school halls have been taken up.
- 6.7.5 The one area where an exception may be valid could be in Seaton Carew where the present public indoor sports facility is of a very poor quality and often out of action due to water ingress. There may be potential for a smaller scale facility which would target both young people and the wider community in a single space, perhaps linked to the redevelopment of the park at the heart of the resort. This would enable closure and demolition of the present sports hall in Elizabeth Way.
- 6.7.6 In the longer term, should maintenance or repair costs increase and it be resolved to redevelop the Youth Service facilities at Brinkburn, Rossmere and the Boys' Welfare, consideration could be given to providing floodlit outdoor Multi-Use Games Areas and a series of smaller flexible indoor spaces rather than a traditional sports hall. Such facilities could be linked to other service buildings (eg library or advice centre) within a community hub.

**6.8 Demand for Health and Fitness Facilities**

- 6.8.1 The present supply is dominated by a limited number of large private sector facilities which target specific market sectors ranging from the more social, top-end Springs site to the more basic fitness-focussed Ellwood's Fitness World. However, most of the public centres have also opened fitness rooms as an adjunct to their principal facilities and as a mechanism for increasing participation – they also generate positive income streams.
- 6.8.2 The present supply of over 500 individual health and fitness stations or machines is more than double the demand expected from the application of the appraisal model and in relation to Sport England comparators. Although demand for such facilities is increasing, it is not likely to reach as high as 500. In Hartlepool, the supply of machines per 1,000 population is 50% higher than the English average.

6.8.3 As a result, care should be taken to ensure that there is not overprovision of fitness suites in Hartlepool although, as far as the Council is concerned, investment in these spaces within multi-activity sites can still be cost-effective if it takes trade from what is a competitive industry. With comparatively low disposable income in the Borough, good public facilities have potential to draw users from more costly commercial sites if the same ambience can be obtained at a lower rate – such income can cross-subsidise activities which cost more to deliver than they generate in income eg. swimming.

## **6.9 Demand for Other Facilities**

6.9.1 From a review of the other indoor facilities, the Indoor Bowls Hall is more than sufficient to meet current demand but it would not be cost-effective to reduce its size unless there is an initiative to relocate it to another site in Hartlepool as part of any redevelopment of the Mill House Leisure Centre and the adjoining land. In view of the declining user base, a smaller facility may suffice but this should be the subject of a separate study at the time in view of the changing demographics which project an increase in the elderly population which traditionally provides most users.

6.9.2 There is no indoor tennis provision in Hartlepool but there are two sites within 10 miles of the town and two others within 15 miles. As a result, while provision is below the national average there is unlikely to be the demand for an additional indoor facility in the Borough. However, the Council has resolved to allow the established Eldon Grove Tennis Club an opportunity to prepare a bid for the development of a tennis centre of excellence on the site. The ambition is to demolish the present building, create new outdoor courts and, in due course, examine the potential for a 'bubble' to provide an element of indoor provision.

6.9.3 There is limited sports use of the wide range of community facilities provided in Hartlepool but those activities that do take place (eg carpet bowls or exercise classes) are appreciated by local residents. While it may be more appropriate to accommodate these in purpose-built sports facilities, there is an argument that the target groups these are aimed at prefer facilities which are smaller in scale, closer to home and within community hubs providing other amenities such as shops and libraries.

6.9.4 The rationalisation of this stock of other buildings will depend as much on an overall approach to delivering community development opportunities and the asset plans for the Borough as the specific issue of sports facilities being considered in this review. Location will be a key issue as it is unlikely that co-location with sports facilities on school sites will be appropriate in view of the links to other amenities which are important to such sites.

## **6.10 Supply/Demand Balance**

6.10.1 Table 17 examines the degree to which the demand to use a particular sports facility is satisfied by the available supply. This shows that Hartlepool is particularly well supplied with swimming pools (with far higher provision than its comparator authorities) and that sports halls and indoor bowls rinks are also oversupplied.

**Table 17: Supply/Demand Balance Comparator**

Facility	Comparator Authorities	Supply/Demand
Swimming Pools (target 130%)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>202%</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>173%</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	130%
	Sunderland	165%
	Middlesbrough	151%
Sports Halls (target 110%)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>154%</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>116%</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	177%
	Sunderland	157%
	Middlesbrough	198%
Indoor Bowls (target 100%)	<b>Hartlepool</b>	<b>144%</b>
	<b>England</b>	<b>58%</b>
	Redcar & Cleveland	80%
	Sunderland	71%
	Middlesbrough	0%
	Barnsley	30%

## 6.11 Summary

6.11.1 This section of the Facility Strategy examines the demand for key indoor facilities and the following conclusions have emerged:

- the population structure is not very different from the sub-regional or national profile and thus facilities are likely to be typical for a town of such a size
- extensive residential development in the northern part of the town may add significantly to the need for easily accessible sports and recreation facilities
- both local and sub regional areas are characterised by relatively poor residents, leading to the likelihood of below average use of sports and recreation facilities but a preference for those which require lower investment by participants
- results from the Active People Survey place Hartlepool in the bottom quartile with regard to those participating in regular physical activity
- to meet demand from the community, schools and clubs, it is recommended that the Borough should aspire to provide up to 900m<sup>2</sup> of water space – this is equivalent to 18 25-metre swimming lanes or three six-lane pools
- there is demand at present for more than the base provision as identified by the sports hall demand model but there is significant over-provision – careful consideration should be given to any investment in halls until all slots available in the existing stock are taken up
- investment in fitness suites within multi-activity sites can still be cost-effective if it addresses a specific target market
- rationalisation of other buildings will depend on an overall approach to delivering community development and the asset plans for the Borough – it is unlikely that co-location with sports facilities on school sites will be appropriate in view of the links to the other amenities important to such facilities.

## 7 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The following section sets out a number of options for the provision of indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool, building upon the facility audit and the demand assessment discussed previously. However, this is considered in the context of the overall Vision for Leisure in Hartlepool which is expressed in the published policies and strategies of the Borough Council. We have tested these in the consultation associated with this project and the key findings from discussions with key stakeholders and the wider community have also been incorporated in the development of the options.

### 7.2 A Vision for Leisure in Hartlepool

7.2.1 The priorities of the local Strategic Partnership and Hartlepool's Community Strategy are closely aligned, with a 20 year vision of

*“a prosperous, caring, confident and outward looking community, realising its potential in an attractive environment.”*

Leisure, sport and recreation can play a crucial role in addressing this vision.

7.2.2 The overall aim of the Council is to

*“take direct action and work in partnership with others, to continue the revitalisation of Hartlepool life and secure a better future for Hartlepool people”*

The key themes for the authority are:

- Jobs and the Economy
- Health and Care
- Environment and Housing
- Strengthening Communities.
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Community Safety
- Culture and Leisure

7.2.3 Many of these are of direct relevance to the development of a strategic view as to the provision of sport and recreation facilities but the most important is the section on Culture and Leisure. The key aim is:

*‘to ensure a wide range of good quality affordable and accessible leisure and cultural opportunities’, with specific plans (amongst others) to:*

- *increase participation in exercise particularly from disadvantaged groups*
- *develop major new cultural sports and leisure facilities, making significant progress with development schemes*
- *increase opportunities for participation in a wide range of cultural and leisure activities*
- *provide knowledge, information and contact points for the community through the network of libraries.’*

7.2.4 This is mirrored in the Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy (May 2000) which included the specific vision

*‘to ensure, through effective partnerships, access to a wide range of affordable, high quality sporting and recreational opportunities which satisfy the needs of the Hartlepool community’.*

A number of strategic priorities were identified:

- Social Inclusion – removing the barriers to participation in sport and leisure
- Public Health – promoting a healthy lifestyle through sport and recreation
- Environmental Issues – developing a comprehensive and sustainable framework of sports and recreation facilities
- Economic Regeneration – regenerating the economy and community through sport and recreation
- Young People – developing lifelong sporting pathways from schools to community.

7.2.5 It is critical that the development of any refurbishment of existing facilities, or the development of new facilities, is seen within this strategic context, and assessed as to the extent it will contribute to the strategic sport and recreation priorities outlined above. Of particular relevance is the importance of building on the existing sporting heritage and in removing barriers to participation, helping the regeneration effort and providing sporting pathways for young people.

**7.3 SWOT Analysis of Leisure Services in Hartlepool**

7.3.1 We have prepared an analysis of the present leisure and associated services which has identified the issues set out in Table 18 – this was discussed with officers at an options review workshop.

**Table 18: SWOT Analysis**

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large number of dry facilities</li> <li>• good distribution of wet &amp; dry facilities around Borough – linked to schools</li> <li>• two new high quality public dry facilities</li> <li>• commitment to major new wet/dry facility (H<sub>2</sub>O Centre)</li> <li>• strong independent community operation (Belle Vue)</li> <li>• number of Youth Service sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• poor quality of the key public sports facility at Mill House</li> <li>• limited public access to swimming facilities</li> <li>• significant investment required to retain all wet facilities</li> <li>• limited access to dry facilities</li> <li>• uncoordinated management – different service areas</li> </ul>
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investment in proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre</li> <li>• renewal of school stock through BSF</li> <li>• major residential developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dwindling customer base in older, more tired facilities</li> <li>• competition is taking customers away (eg Stockton)</li> <li>• schools used to current provision and may be unwilling to lose pools</li> <li>• parochialism associated with specific sites</li> <li>• keeping up with customers’ needs</li> <li>• insufficient funding to deliver vision</li> <li>• ad hoc approach to development in the past</li> </ul>

7.3.2 From this review and earlier work, the following key drivers have been identified:

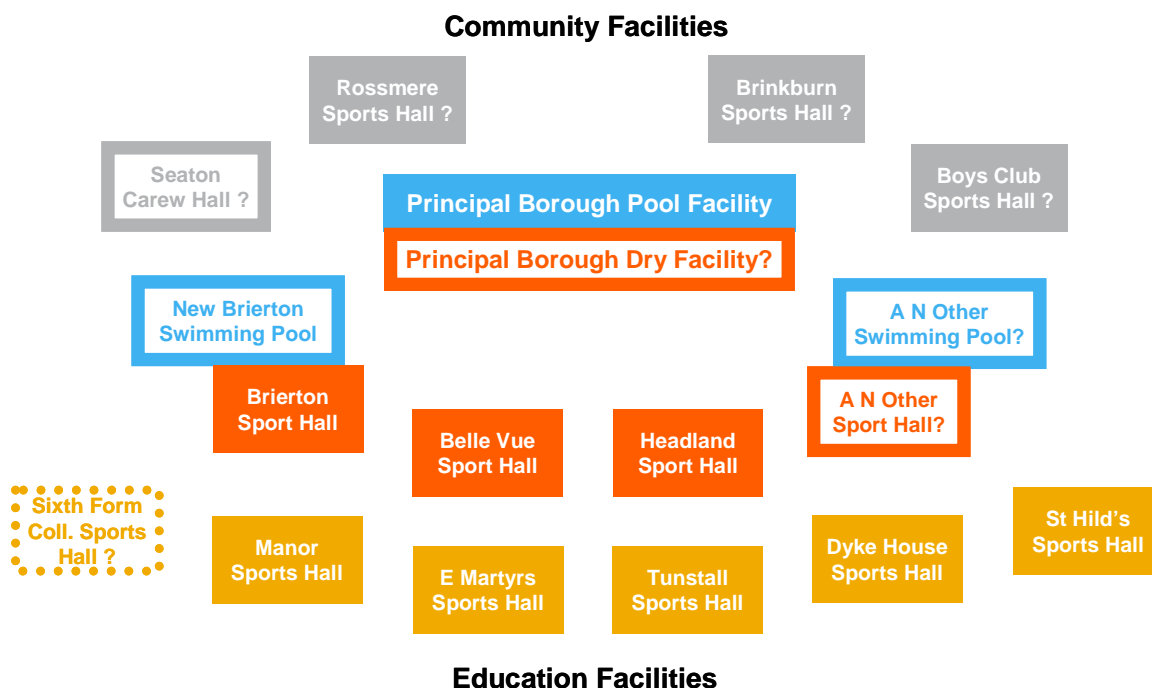
- move towards holistic health & fitness embracing a wide range of activities, not just sport
- fewer centres but with these providing better, higher quality facilities and/or services
- shared service provision in the future – linking together a wide range of service providers within a single building
- centres located to reflect sustainability – many users should be able to reach facilities by walking, cycling and using frequent public transport routes
- health & fitness on doorstep – use of the outdoors and countryside as well as indoor facilities
- families will travel further for some activities but most users still use their ‘local facility’ if it provides the majority of the opportunities they require
- withdrawal from some facilities has potential to enhance the sustainability of those that remain eg closure of Eldon Grove.

These have been borne in mind in developing the Options set out below.

## 7.4 Structure for Delivery of Leisure Services

7.4.1 Advice from Government and agencies such as Sport England, and best practice, is such as to suggest that the most appropriate mix of facilities would be structured on a ‘hub and satellite’ approach. The generic way in which this could be applied in Hartlepool is shown in Figure 7 – this does not relate to any of the specific options discussed below.

**Figure 7: Notional Structure for Facility Provision**



**7.5 Distribution of Facilities**

7.5.1 Notwithstanding the fact that the various types of facility have been analysed separately, there are strong links between different activities – fitness rooms and/or gyms are found on both wet and dry sites, and a comprehensive wet and dry centre will draw in more users and operate more cost effectively than a series of separate sites. However, the way in which facilities are provided in response to the Sport and Recreation Strategy is influenced by two potentially conflicting pressures.

7.5.2 Aims to increase participation and promote sports equity are best served by a dispersed pattern of provision through facilities which can be built and operated at a comparatively low cost. In contrast, raising the level of achievement tends to require the provision of more specialist, higher quality and probably more expensive facilities in a limited number of locations. Reaching higher levels of achievement usually involves exclusive use of facilities and thus a lower number of participants per hour. However, while individual facility costs are lower, the larger number of small sites can require a higher proportion of the total sport and recreation budget, generating a larger number of participation opportunities – these forces are summarised in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Facility Development Factors**



7.5.3 These conflicts can be minimised through a number of initiatives:

- larger, more centralised facilities in prominent and accessible ‘visitor’ locations
- including local scale facilities within more comprehensive sites in order to encourage users to see the wider opportunities and generate a critical mass
- placing local sport and recreation provision within facilities which attract high usage levels (schools and community centres)
- reducing the capital and revenue cost of smaller sites by linking these to facilities funded from other sources to benefit both parties (for example, one-stop-shops, libraries and schools).

7.5.4 While it may be possible to determine an ‘ideal’ structure of facilities linked to population density, catchment area characteristics and movement barriers/corridors, we are not operating on a blank sheet of paper. An element of pragmatism must enter into the Strategy:

- some existing facilities are of high quality and it would not be viable to replace them within an appropriate timescale – this fixes the location
- development funding may be available in one area and not another, so leading to the choice of a less than optimal location
- facilities may be provided by other agencies and their location and/or form may be fixed by 'non-sporting' parameters.

## 7.6 Retention of Existing Facilities

7.6.1 In Section 3, it was determined that the overall quality of the existing indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool was not generally very high and that significant investment will be required if all the present buildings were to be retained in the long term. However, there are some newer facilities which it is felt it would be inappropriate to replace unless this were to be in the overall best interest of the delivery of sports and recreation opportunities in the town.

7.6.2 The existing facilities which should be included within any long term facility strategy include the following:

### *Headland Sports Centre*

- a. opened in 2006, this significant extension to the Borough Hall provides excellent sport and recreation facilities at the heart of what would otherwise be a comparatively isolated community – operated by the Council's Sport and Recreation team, the site is still establishing itself fully as a key part of the leisure stock in the town

### *Brierton Sports Centre*

- b. opened in October 2002, the sports hall and fitness suite is connected to Brierton School but has its own access for after-school use

### *St Hild's School*

- c. this newly refurbished School has comprehensive sports facilities within the school buildings, including a 3 court hall, a 1 court hall and two linked 1 court halls that are principally used for general activities and dining – the School also has an STP but the value is limited by the lack of floodlighting (due to impact on residential amenity)

### *Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre*

- d. based around a 4 court sports hall, the Centre has expanded significantly to offer a range of sports and community activities, both within the building and through an outreach programme – well located in the town, as a charity, the Trust management is reliant on external funding support which could reduce at any time in the future.

7.6.3 In addition to these larger, more comprehensive facilities, there has been significant investment in specific smaller sports developments at a number of other sites:

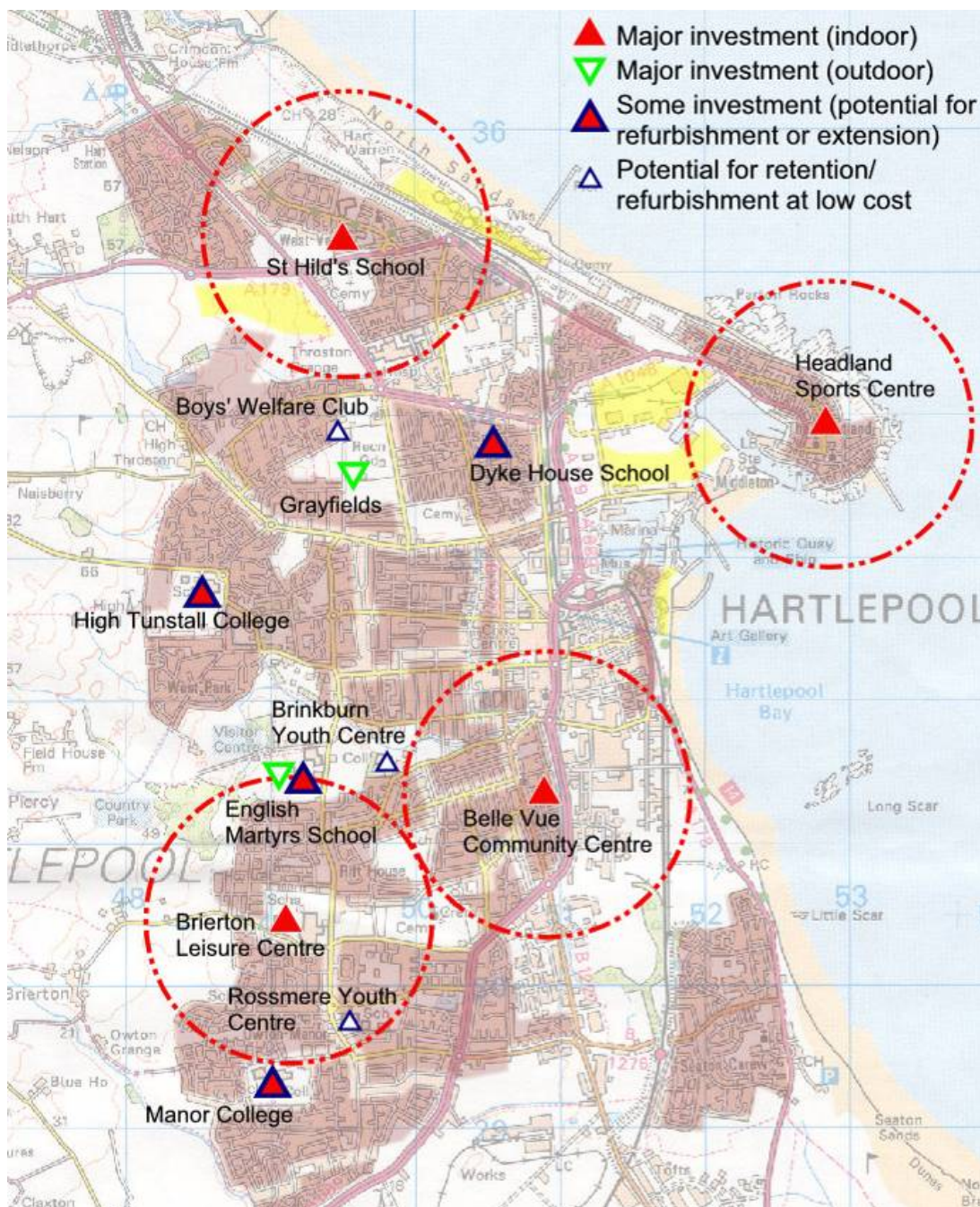
- changing rooms and outdoor facilities at Manor College (Football Foundation)
- changing rooms and outdoor facilities at English Martyrs School
- Life Centre with new fitness room and studio at High Tunstall College (National Lottery)
- comprehensive outdoor facilities and pavilion at Grayfields.



An objective should be to keep these elements where possible, unless their retention would lead to significant additional cost to the overall school development scheme.

7.6.4 The distribution of the facilities discussed above is shown in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Existing Indoor Sports Facilities for Retention/Development**



## 7.7 Overview of Options

7.7.1 In reviewing the different ways in which leisure and recreation services are delivered in Hartlepool, we have developed five different options as to the mix of facilities

provided. These are set out in Table 19 and in the subsections and plans which follow.

**Table 19: Development Options**

Option	Title	Description
<b>One</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>	Leave existing facilities until closure is required due to essential repair or external factors (eg site redevelopment).
<b>Two</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	Existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H <sub>2</sub> O) with existing dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton) and new/refurbished school halls.
<b>Three</b>	<b>Optimum</b>	Existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H <sub>2</sub> O) with new pool(s) at Brierton, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/refurbished school halls.
<b>Four</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	Existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H <sub>2</sub> O) with new pool(s) at Brierton, refurbished/new wet/dry centre in NW Hartlepool, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/refurbished school halls.
<b>Five</b>	<b>Replace Existing</b>	Existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H <sub>2</sub> O) with existing dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton), refurbished/new wet/dry facilities at five school sites and new wet/dry facility at Seaton Carew.

7.7.2 The capital and revenue cost reviews in this section relate to the new wet and dry sports facilities in Hartlepool and assume that existing facilities such as the Headland and Belle Vue Sports Centre continue to operate on the same basis as at present.

## 7.8 Option One

7.8.1 The first Option to be considered avoids any further significant investment in leisure facilities in the Borough and simply leaves the present facilities to continue in operation until it becomes unsafe to do or totally uneconomical to carry out the ‘running repairs’ required to keep them open. Due consideration would need to be given to placing a limit on the repair costs that could be incurred before the decision is made to close the site. For example, the swimming pool at English Martyrs requires relining to contain water leaks and it may be considered that this cost would be too much given other issues with the building. On other sites, the sum required could be significantly lower and the investment may be considered to be acceptable for say a five year extension in the facility’s life. If a low limit of expenditure is set, this could be an economically advantageous approach in the short term while other more long term initiatives are pursued.

7.8.2 The key objections to this approach include the following:

- the declining quality will lead to even greater customer dissatisfaction
- there will be no potential to really target participation opportunities
- the limited availability of public swimming pools will continue to be an issue in this coastal authority
- any expenditure on substandard facilities could be considered to be a waste in the long term

- many of the present facilities are not fully accessible and to make them so could involve significant costs
- the potential conflict with the BSF programme when seeking to retain provision on school sites
- the current mixture of facility providers is not particularly easy to understand and users can be confused as to where and when to play – this is often considered to be a disincentive to participation.

7.8.3 In view of the objections set out above, there has been no detailed assessment of capita and revenue costs for this option. However, in the ISRM Report carried out in 2002, renovation costs were estimated at £3.7 million. Although two pools have closed, the impact of building cost inflation (over 30%) and the on-going degradation of the buildings will have increased the sum significantly – the figure now could be between £4.5 and £5 million. On the revenue side, the poor quality of the buildings will mean that it will be impossible to avoid increases in energy costs and the poor design will impact on general operational costs – there will be little opportunity to build the market so revenue deficits will increase.

7.8.4 In view of these objections to this 'standstill' approach and what is probably the only advantage (limited capital cost), it is considered that this route is not one which should be adopted by the Borough Council. It would certainly not allow the authority to deliver its Vision for sport and leisure.

## 7.9 Option Two

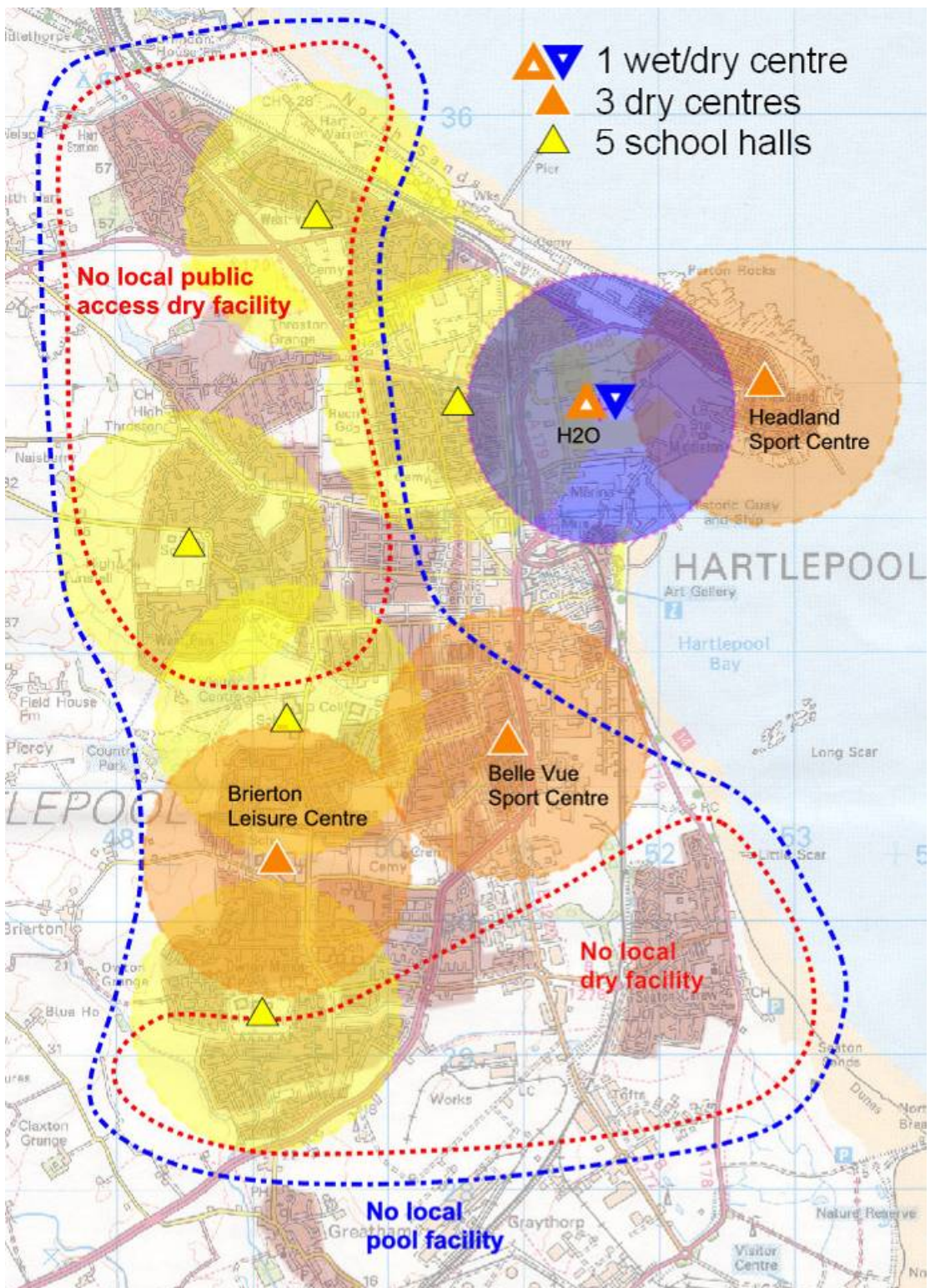
7.9.1 This is what we would envisage being the Minimum Option which would meet most of the demand identified earlier while building on current high quality provision and the Council's BSF programme.

7.9.2 Key features of this approach include the following:

- either retention of the existing Mill House Leisure Centre (as is or redeveloped on site) and/or construction of the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre – with the closure of the present school pools, this would be the only swimming facility in the town
- retention of the existing new dry facilities at The Headland and Brierton – there may be justification for limited enhancement of the fitness offering at these sites
- retention and potentially additional support of the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre to provide high quality facilities and outreach programmes in the centre of the town
- new and/or refurbished school halls linked to BSF investments at St Hild's, Dyke House, High Tunstall, English Martyrs and Manor – these should be designed in such a way as to facilitate out-of-hours community use even though this might require limited additional investment from the Leisure Services budget.

7.9.3 The pattern of provision is illustrated on Figure 10 and the 1 kilometre shaded radii show a notional 20 minute walk time – to test the Audit Commission standard accurately would require the commissioning of specific isochrones but it is considered that in such urban areas a simple radius is a good proxy at this stage. It can be seen that there are a number of issues regarding the distribution of facilities under this option.

**Figure 10: Option Two – Potential Facility Locations**



- a. There is no swimming pool in the western and southern parts of the Borough and all users will need to travel to the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre. While this is located close to the centre of town, it is not as convenient to reach by public transport as the present Mill House Leisure Centre - it is assumed that bus services will be

improved to the area but it will never have the same choice of journeys as the town centre.

- b. There is no 'public access' dry facility in the northwest of the town, an area that will be experiencing significant population growth – however, careful design and programming of school facilities at High Tunstall and Dyke House could minimise any problems which this might cause.
- c. There is no public access dry facility across the south of the Borough and, more specifically, there is no hall in Seaton Carew (assuming the present building is closed). While residents in Fens have access to Brierton, those in Seaton Carew would need to travel to H<sub>2</sub>O or Belle Vue.

7.9.4 However, rather than the issues of distribution outlined above, the key point which will determine the viability of this Option is the limited extent of water space available. The 523m<sup>2</sup> of pool space proposed at the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre falls significantly short of the total recommended by the ISRM study and determined from the Sport England FPM. More pragmatically, the concentration of all swimming on a single site will have a significant impact on the current pattern of use and two pools (25 metre and teaching) would not be able to accommodate the established programmes of use – there would also be significant time and financial costs incurred by schools in delivering the national curriculum.

7.9.5 In terms of capital costs, the only major leisure capital development in this option is the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre at Victoria Harbour and this was estimated to cost some £26 million (2006 prices). In addition, as the new/refurbished school sports halls will form an essential element of the Borough's public provision, it is recommended that some additional 'community access' elements should be provided. A space of some 60 m<sup>2</sup> could accommodate an enlarged foyer, a reception desk, an office and a dedicated storeroom – at £1,600/m<sup>2</sup>, such an area could cost some £125,000 (including fees) for each school, a total of £625,000 for the five BSF schools proposed.

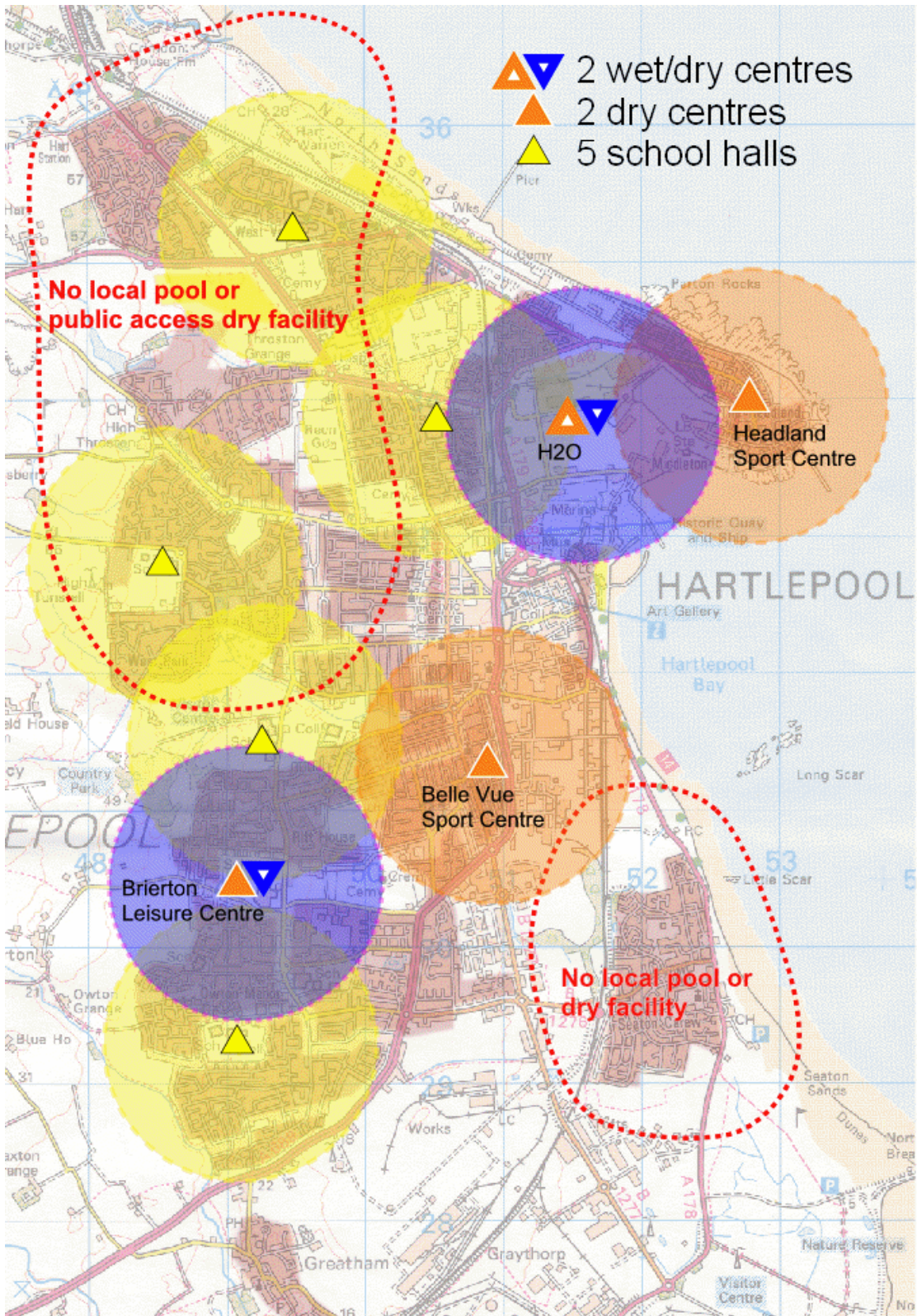
7.9.6 Looking at revenue costs, it was estimated that H<sub>2</sub>O could require an annual subsidy of over £500,000 – however, this is lower than that currently expended on the Mill House Leisure Centre and so any savings could be transferred to support initiatives at other sites in the Borough. The revenue cost of maintaining the community sports facilities at each of the school sites will depend on the precise form of the agreement with the school as the management approach to be adopted but the objective should be to operate these dry facilities without a subsidy from the local authority.

7.9.7 In view of the inability to accommodate the demand for swimming in a single pool complex (and its poor accessibility in terms of catchment population), it is felt that this Option should not be taken forward – as with Option One, it would not deliver the outcomes envisaged by the authority in its adopted strategies.

## 7.10 Option Three

7.10.1 This Option can be described as the Optimum route to the delivery of leisure facilities in Hartlepool in that the total provision (particularly with regard to the swimming pools which are perhaps the most contentious element) is most closely aligned to the requirements established from the review of demand, both through use of modelling techniques and an analysis of current use. The distribution of facilities is shown in Figure 11.

**Figure 11: Option Three – Potential Facility Locations**



7.10.2 The main elements included are as follows:

- a. either retention of the existing Mill House Leisure Centre (as is or redeveloped on site) or construction of the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre to provide a 'Borough-wide' public facility for community use – it would also provide for larger events
- b. retention of the existing new dry facility at The Headland
- c. retention and extension of the Brierton Leisure Centre to provide a community swimming pool and improved fitness facilities – the minimum would be a six lane 25 metre pool (which would address the demand model) but to enhance teaching opportunities, one of two options could be considered:
  - a floating floor in the main pool to provide different depths for specific training programmes
  - a separate teaching pool to provide additional programming flexibility and greater safety for beginners
- d. retention and potentially additional support of the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre to provide high quality facilities and outreach programmes in the centre of the town
- e. new and/or refurbished school halls linked to BSF investments at St Hild's, Dyke House, High Tunstall, English Martyrs and Manor designed to facilitate out-of-hours community use.

7.10.3 As illustrated on Figure 11, this pattern of provision does generate a number of issues which require appropriate consideration:

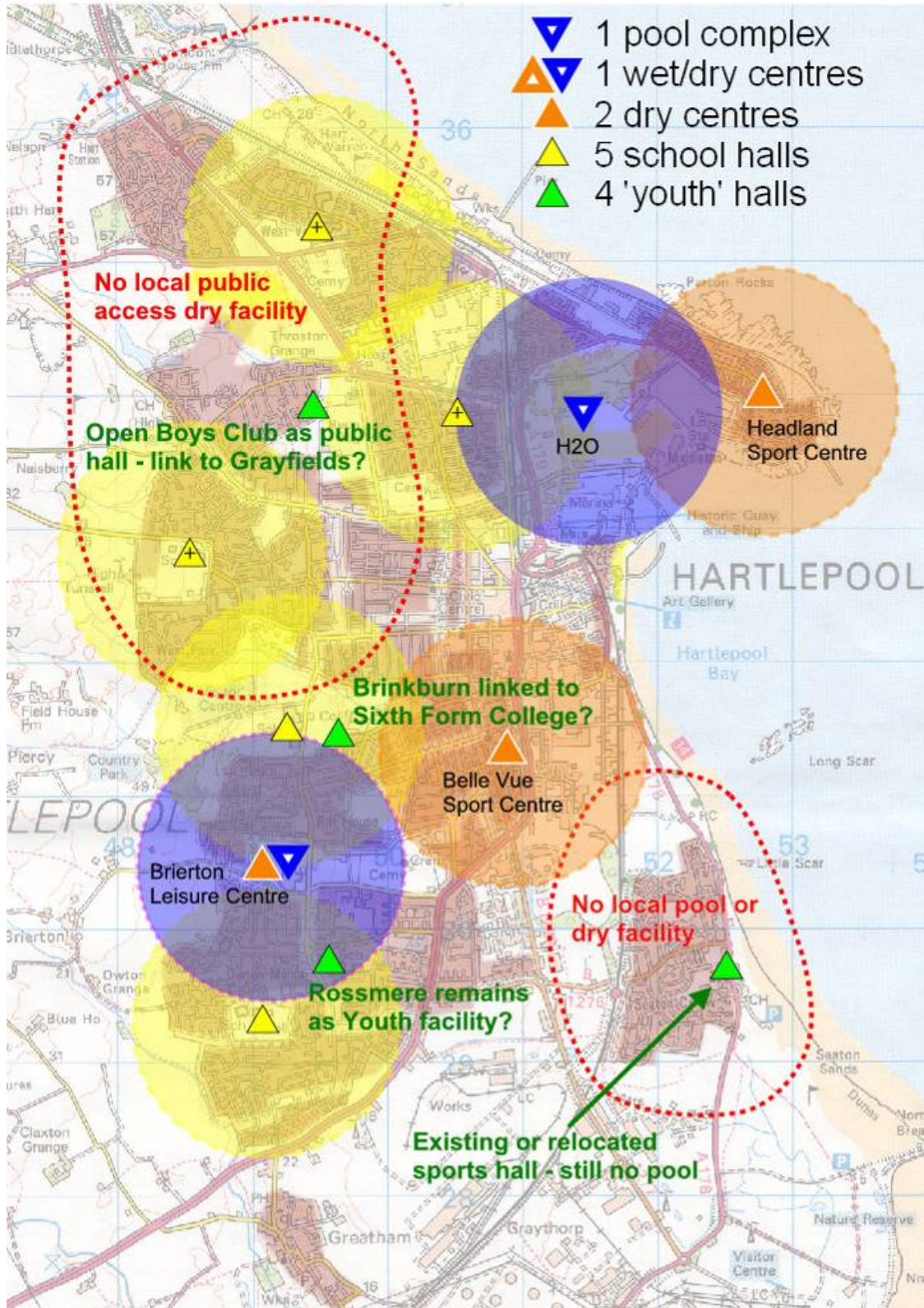
- there is no local pool in what is the fastest-growing part of the town, the North West – while it could be considered that this area has good links to Mill House Leisure Centre or H<sub>2</sub>O, the potential for additional facilities is tested in Option 4
- similarly, there is no dry facility in the area which could accommodate public access in the day time – the school halls at St Hild's, High Tunstall and Dyke House could provide facilities for evening use
- it could be considered that the provision of additional sports hall space as part of the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre could not be justified given the proximity of the newly opened Headland Sports Centre and the potential for improved facilities at Dyke House School – savings on the dry elements at H<sub>2</sub>O could be diverted to enhanced provision elsewhere in the town
- there is still no specific provision for the residents of Seaton Carew.

7.10.4 However, in addition to the facilities identified above which would be new or heavily refurbished, there are a number of sports halls which are operated by the Leisure and Youth Services in order to target particular user groups. These are shown on Figure 12 and could be considered as part of the overall stock of facilities within the Borough:

- a. the Boys' Club in Throston is operated as a Youth Service facility but there could be potential to use it to address any need for daytime activities in this part of the Borough – in order to minimise staffing costs, for operational purposes it could be linked to the nearby Grayfields outdoor sports complex
- b. the Brinkburn site is used by the Sixth Form College during the day and this is a valuable synergy of activities – were the College to go ahead with plans to construct its own facilities, it will be necessary to examine the viability of this

site and perhaps arrange for the Youth Service to operate out of any College hall

**Figure 12: Option Three – Potential Facility Locations (amended)**





- c. Rossmere is a popular and well-located facility and as such it is envisaged that this will remain a key site for the delivery of youth services, complementing the public sports use of the Brierton Leisure Centre and the club activities which tend to dominate the school halls in the evenings
- d. it is understood that the existing hall at Seaton Carew is in poor condition and thus, if an appropriate service is to be delivered in this part of the Borough, alternative provision will be required – options could include a ‘one-stop-shop’ development in Seaton Park or an enhancement of the facilities provided at Seaton Carew Sports and Social Club.

7.10.5 While it may be considered that this Youth Services stock should be incorporated into a wider package of facilities, it has been pointed out that many young people would be less interested in using sites which they feel are not theirs (and particularly not in returning to school for evening activities!). There is also the matter of accessibility in that Rossmere is in an excellent location for evening access by public transport. To that end, it is suggested that while greater use could be made of these sites in the day (subject to staffing requirements) it is unlikely that all duplication of facilities can be eliminated.

7.10.6 In considering the capital costs for Option Three, there are three major elements in the principal option:

**Table 20: Option Three – Capital Costs**

Ref.	Site	Cost
1	H <sub>2</sub> O Centre	£26 million
2	New Pool at Brierton Leisure Centre	£4.5-5.2 million
3	Community Facilities on School sites	£0.63 million
	<b>TOTAL OPTION THREE</b>	<b>£31.13-£31.83 million</b>

In addition to these costs, there is the potential for both savings through omission of the sports hall at the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (reduction by approximately £1.2 million) and the provision of enhanced Youth facilities as part of an on-going transformation process (addition of £200,000 to £1 million depending on scope).

7.10.7 The revenue costs of this option is significantly higher than that for Option Two in that there is an additional swimming facility and these generally require an on-going subsidy. Thus in addition to the £500,000 estimated support for the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre, funding will need to be found to cover any deficit at Brierton – depending on the final mix of facilities to be provided and the management approach adopted, this could be in the region of £100,000 pa.

7.10.8 As intimated throughout this subsection, it is considered that this Option is well aligned with the demand models for swimming (and will have the overall capacity to accommodate actual user programmes). With regard to dry side activities, there is likely to be a surplus of hall space and, as a result, consideration could be given to omitting this element from the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre project.

## 7.11 Option Four

7.11.1 This Maximum Option is generally similar to Option Three but includes an additional pool in the northwest of the town. This adds a further wet/dry centre in the north of the Borough to the principal facility at Mill House/H<sub>2</sub>O, the new wet/dry centre at Brierton, the existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and the new/refurbished school halls. The key justification for this extra facility is that it will allow more effective delivery of the school swimming programme and potentially increase the opportunities for community swimming in this expanding part of Hartlepool.

7.11.2 The main features of this Option are shown on Figure 13 and described below:

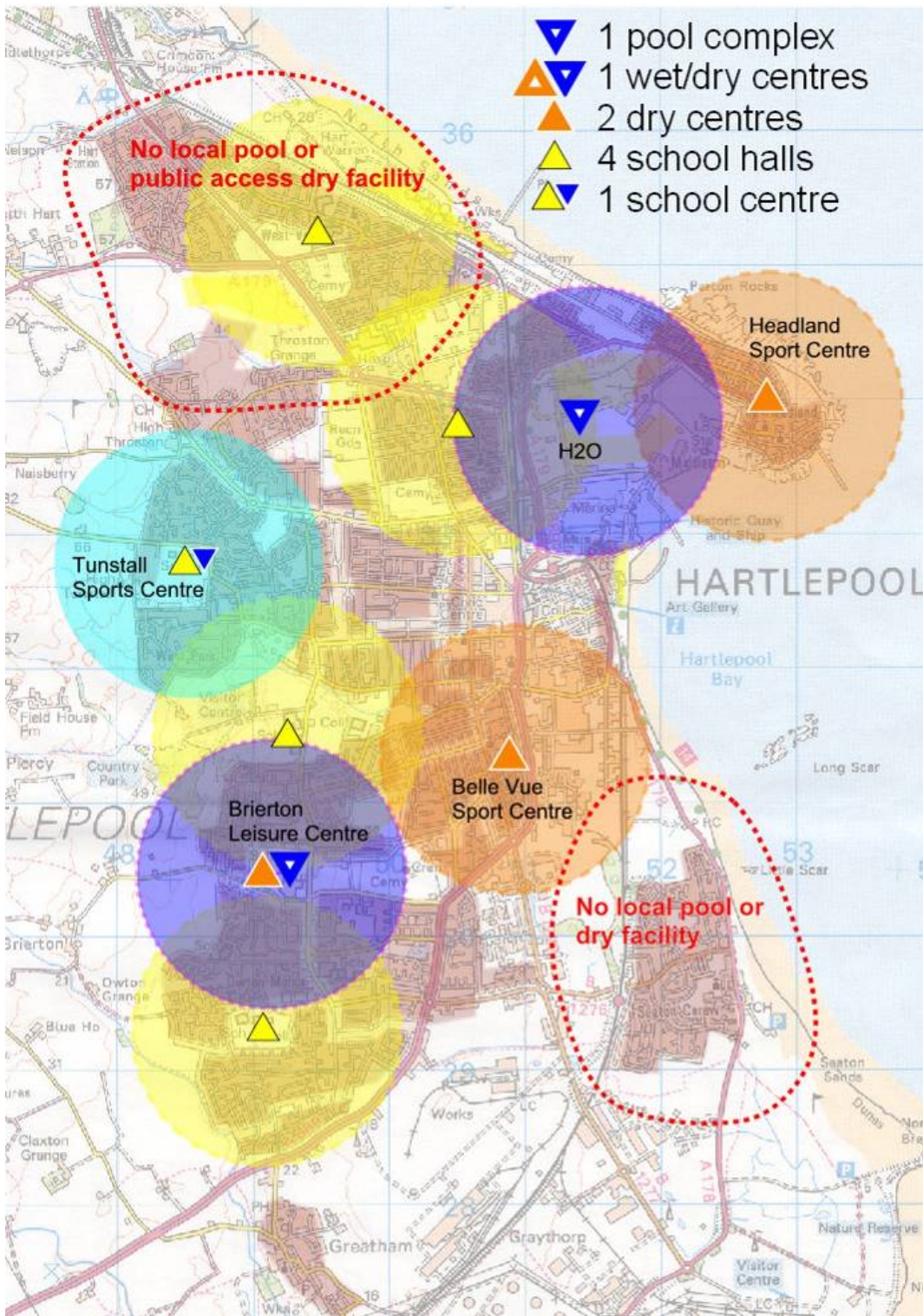
- either retention of the existing Mill House Leisure Centre (as is or redeveloped on site) or construction of the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre to provide a 'Borough-wide' public facility for community use
- retention of the existing new dry facility at The Headland
- expansion of the Brierton Leisure Centre to provide a community swimming pool and improved fitness facilities – in this option the recommendation for the pool would be a six lane 25 metre tank with a floating floor
- a refurbished or new teaching pool (ideally four lane 25 metres but alternatively 20 metres long if there are budget constraints) included as part of the redevelopment of the High Tunstall College – this would build on the expertise developed at this site and the foundations established by the Life Centre and the potential athletics track to create a sports hub, parts of which could be accessible within the school day
- retention and potentially additional support of the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre to provide high quality facilities and outreach programmes in the centre of the town
- new and/or refurbished school halls linked to BSF investments at St Hild's, Dyke House, English Martyrs and Manor designed to facilitate out-of-hours community use.

7.11.3 Option Four provides a comprehensive network of indoor sports facilities around the town but there is significant additional capital cost in the provision of an extra swimming pool. While some revenue costs will be lower (eg school transport) this will be more than offset by the running costs of an additional pool – three sites will always cost more to run than two. However, revenue expenditure could be limited by opening the High Tunstall Pool for school, teaching and club use only – there would be no public casual swimming with all the costs that this incurs.

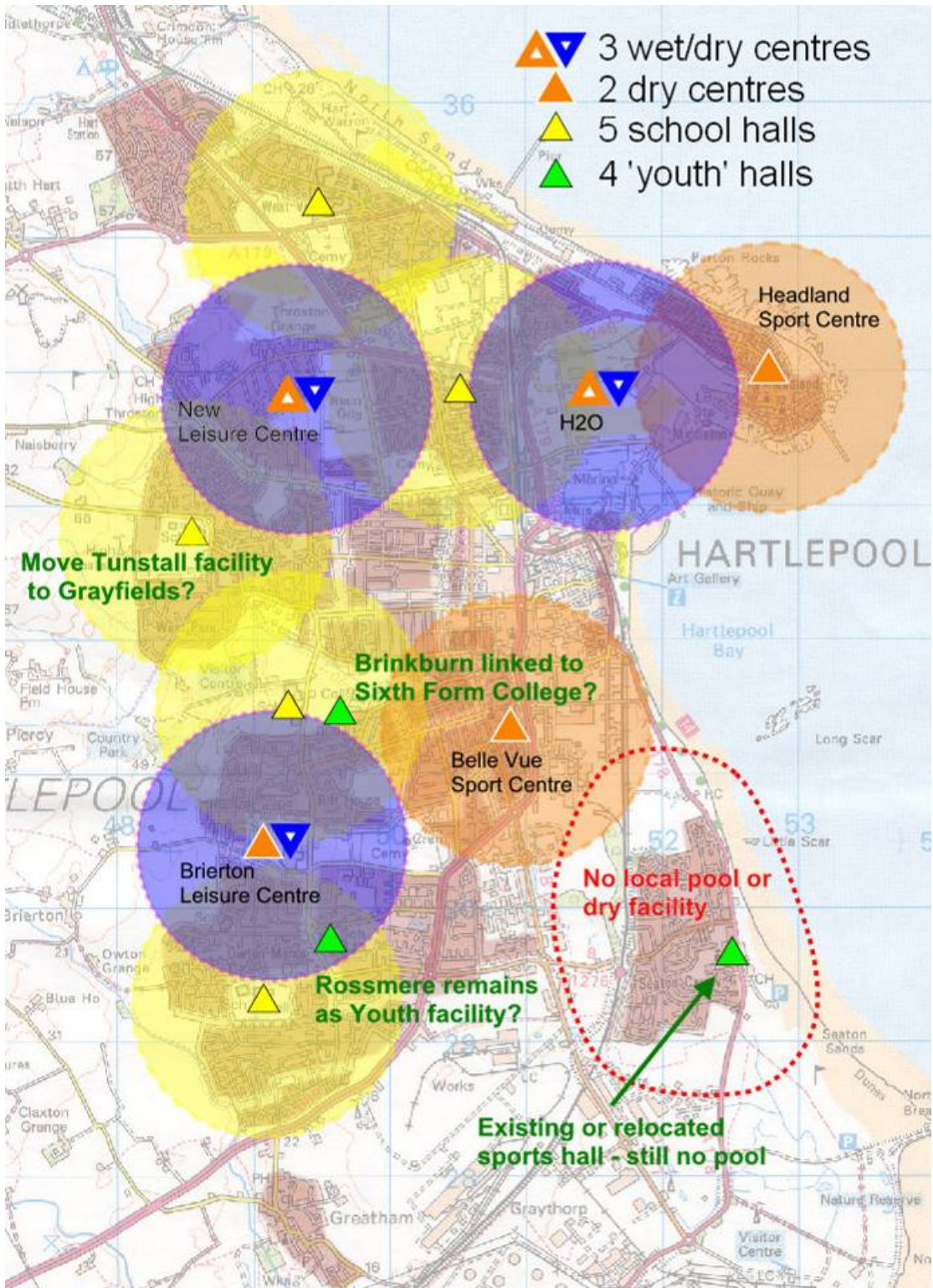
7.11.4 However, notwithstanding the greater spread of facilities, there are still issues regarding access to public facilities (see also Figure 14):

- the 20 minute catchment from High Tunstall College includes significant rural areas which will not be developed – this will drive down the number of people who live within 20 minutes walk of the site
- public transport at High Tunstall is not good at any time and is particularly poor in the evenings and at weekends
- residents of Clavering, Middle Warren and Throston will need to travel out of the area to participate in indoor sports activities
- Seaton Carew remains poorly supplied.

**Figure 13: Option Four – Potential Facility Locations**



**Figure 14: Option Four – Potential Facility Locations (amended)**



7.11.5 In order to address the issue of accessibility at the north western end of the town and to maximise the 'walk-in' catchment of the proposed sport facility to serve this area, consideration could be given to relocating the new centre from High Tunstall to a more central site (see Figure 14). One option would be to build upon the investment

already made at Grayfields through adding indoor elements to the excellent outdoor facilities – this could help ensure the sustainability of the site. It is appreciated that there will need to be some rearrangement of the newly constructed pitches and, potentially, one of the pitches could be lost – this might have implications on the grant funding agreements if alternative provision cannot be made locally.

7.11.6 The facilities on site could include the following:

- a small swim training pool as described in paragraph 7.11.2 and/or
- a public access sports hall to serve the North West of the Borough.

Key issues which will determine the final form of the project will include a detailed analysis of design options, a decision as to the extent of the intervention that can be allowed in the present outdoor sports facility and whether there is potential to enhance provision at the nearby Boys' Welfare facility as a cost-effective alternative. The most appropriate route might be the addition of a teaching pool to the Grayfields complex and providing additional daytime community access to the Boys' Welfare. Moving the new public facilities off the High Tunstall campus would provide the daytime access opportunities which can be difficult to resolve with a full teaching programme.

7.11.7 As with Option Three, there is potential to provide additional facilities for the more isolated population in Seaton Carew and to integrate Youth Service buildings around the town into the wider sport and recreation offering.

7.11.8 The capital cost implications of such an approach are set out in Table 21.

**Table 21: Option Four – Capital Costs**

Ref.	Site	Cost
1	H <sub>2</sub> O Centre	£26 million
2	New Pool at Brierton Leisure Centre	£4.5-5.2 million
3	New North Hartlepool Swimming Pool	£3.4 million
4	Community Facilities on School sites	£0.63 million
	<b>TOTAL OPTION FOUR</b>	<b>£34.53-£35.23 million</b>

In addition to these base costs for the principal option, there is the potential for both savings through omission of the sports hall at the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (reduction by approximately £1.2 million), the refurbishment of High Tunstall pool rather than new build (reduction by £3.1 million) and the provision of enhanced Youth facilities as part of an on-going transformation process (addition of £200,000 to £1 million depending on scope). The impact of making all these changes would be to give a total cost of between £30.43 million and £31.93 million – an additional allowance would need to be made for any new community facilities at Seaton Carew.

7.11.9 The revenue cost of this option will be higher than that for Option Three as the additional pool in North Hartlepool is likely to operate at a revenue deficit. Given sound management, links to existing facilities and a programme targeted at schools, lessons and clubs, this can be contained to a low figure. The total deficit of £600,000 pa for Option Three would be higher for this pattern of facilities – it is estimated that the extra cost could be between £50,000 and £100,000 pa.

7.11.10 Option Four would provide all the indoor facilities which the Borough requires to deliver its Vision for sports and physical activity, making the best use of those that exist and the new elements to be provided under the BSF programme. However, there is an issue regarding the overall quantity of the provision – the water area and hall space is greater than the theoretical demand established by the planning models and this will require extra capital and revenue funding.

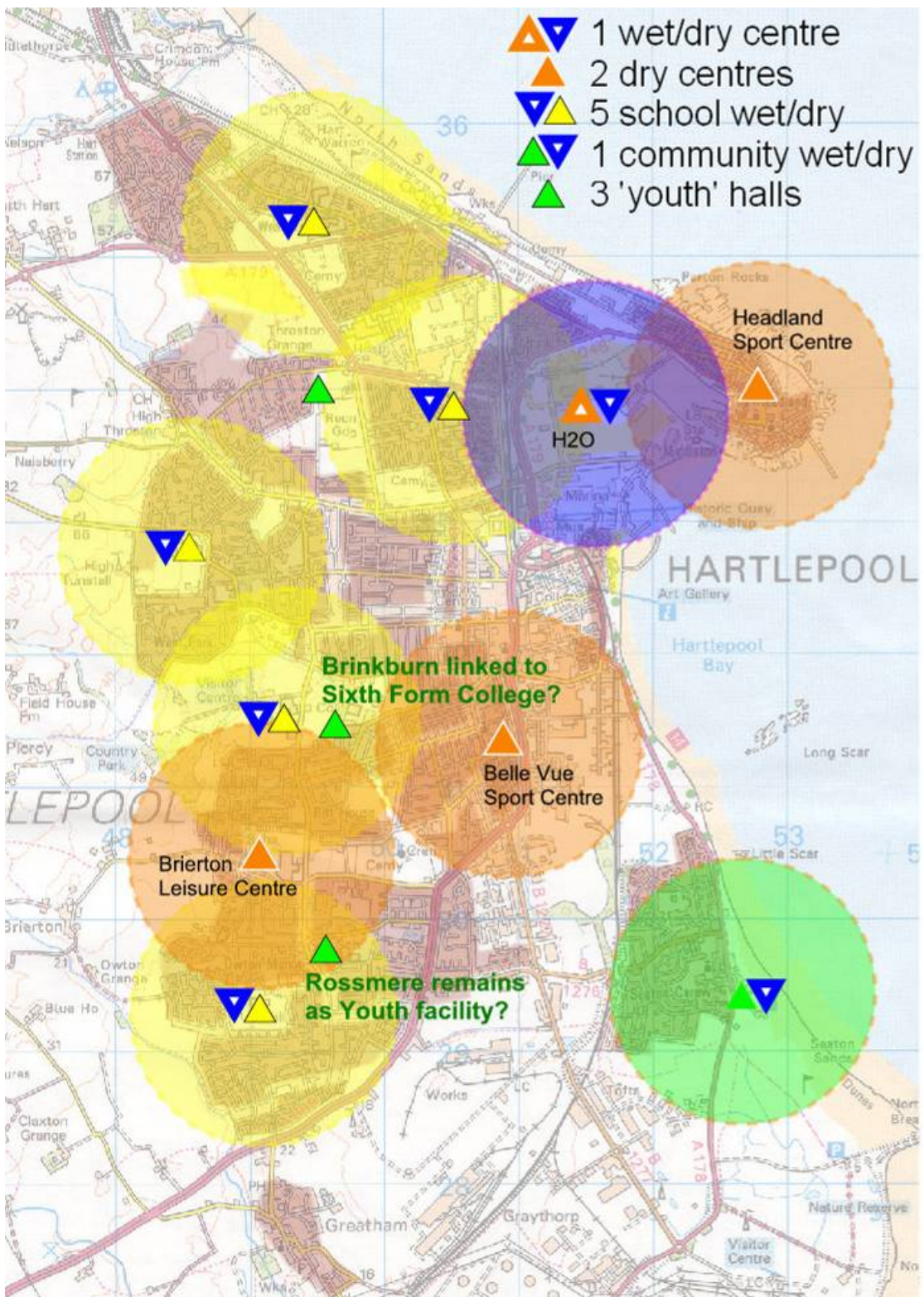
## **7.12 Option Five**

7.12.1 In carrying out the consultation exercise with schools and other key stakeholders, there has been pressure for the retention of swimming pools at the new secondary schools. In effect, this would be a like for like replacement of the present facilities which would allow the schools to maintain their current programmes. Option Five is intended to test this potential pattern of delivery.

7.12.2 The main features of this Option are shown on Figure 15 and described below:

- either retention of the existing Mill House Leisure Centre (as is or redeveloped on site) or construction of the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre to provide a 'Borough-wide' public facility for community use (wet and potentially dry elements)
- retention of the existing new dry facilities at The Headland and Brierton
- retention and potentially additional support of the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre to provide high quality facilities and outreach programmes in the centre of the town
- new and/or refurbished school halls linked to BSF investments at St Hild's, Dyke House, English Martyrs and Manor designed to facilitate out-of-hours community use
- heavily refurbished (if cost effective) or new teaching pools at each of the five secondary schools which it is envisaged will remain in Hartlepool – these would be open as now for programmed activities rather than casual use
- a new wet/dry facility at Seaton Carew which would both meet the needs of the local resident population and, given some additional investment, support the development of the local visitor market
- the Brinkburn swimming pool would not be replaced and the sports hall on the site would be linked to the redevelopment of the Sixth Form College
- the Boys' Welfare and Rossmere Youth Service sites would remain available for programmed public use when not required by the core user group.

**Figure 15: Option Five - Potential Facility Locations**



7.12.3 The capital cost of this option will be high given the extensive water area that is to be refurbished or constructed. An initial estimate of the cost of delivering this option is given in Table 22.

**Table 22: Option Five – Capital Costs**

Ref.	Site	Cost
1	H <sub>2</sub> O Centre	£26 million
2	New Pools at 5 Secondary Schools (£3.5m each)	£17.5 million
3	Community Facilities on School sites	included above
	<b>TOTAL OPTION FIVE</b>	<b>£43.5 million</b>

This base cost can be reduced through the following savings:

- omission of the sports hall at the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (reduction by some £1.2 million)
- the refurbishment of the better school pools rather than new build (reduction by up to £10 million).

The provision of enhanced youth facilities as part of an on-going transformation process (addition of £200,000 to £1 million depending on scope) could be an additional cost. The impact of making all these changes would be to give a total cost of some £32 million – an additional allowance would need to be made for any new community facilities at Seaton Carew.

7.12.4 The revenue cost to the public sector as a whole will be higher than that for the other options in that the five swimming pools will operate at a revenue deficit. However, if these are taken on by the secondary schools and managed as facilities for school and programmed use only, the cost can be contained to a reasonable level. This will be easier in new build facilities than in refurbished buildings as the energy costs will be lower in view of the higher insulation levels now required. The total deficit would include some £500,000 pa for the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre Option and between £50,000 and £100,000 pa for each of the school pools (depending on management approach) the total deficit could be up to £1 million pa.

7.12.5 While replicating the established pattern, this provision of indoor sports facilities will require significant capital and revenue expenditure. It may be considered to be required to allow the delivery of current programmes but it has been determined that there is significant slack within the present user programmes – fewer higher quality facilities would be a more cost effective route. Given the constraints on local government finance, it is felt that this Option is not appropriate for Hartlepool.

### 7.13 Facility Procurement Options

7.13.1 The longer-term procurement route with regard to incorporating major investment is complex, with a number of variables that could have a major impact on the future delivery of leisure services. Variables such as planning, funding and investment issues, affordability, market interest and capacity and other commercial opportunities on the existing sites could have an impact. Our understanding is that there are no significant capital reserves within the authority and that, in order to deliver the potential development programme, it will be essential for the Council to build upon the BSF investment to provide a more viable long term solution.

7.13.2 A key decision will be whether to procure the building separately from the future management of the facility. The routes generally considered appropriate for the independent procurement of leisure buildings are set out below:



- traditional: the Council commissions to prepare designs and specifications for works that are tendered separately
- design & build: the Council enters into a contract for both design and construction of a building
- management: a contractor will be paid an agreed fee to finish the detailed design and manage the construction through a series of sub-contractors
- construction management: the Council takes on the management of the sub-contractors itself.

A full description of these alternatives is set out in Appendix E, together with an assessment of their advantages and disadvantages.

7.13.3 For any non-school sites, a long term partnership with an organisation that could provide design, construction and management expertise could be appropriate. This could be a form of a partnership with an operator that could provide the capability to deliver an integrated design, build, operate and maintain service (see section 7.15).

7.13.4 We have not considered procurement options for the BSF sites as this is outside our project brief but Appendix E includes a discussion of options for leisure elements.

## **7.14 Facility Management Options**

7.14.1 At present, there is a mixed economy in terms of facility provision with management being delivered through a number of agencies:

- Adult and Community Services, Hartlepool Borough Council – public access facilities and smaller community centres (latter with limited sports use)
- Youth Service, Hartlepool Borough Council – sports halls attached to youth centres (limited other public use)
- individual schools – operation of various wet/dry facilities out of school hours but limited casual access
- voluntary sector – organisations such as the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre and Hartlepool Indoor Bowling Centre.

A key feature of the consultation and the site visits was that, to some extent, the operators manage the buildings to site-specific parameters or to address the needs of specific target groups rather than as a holistic service.

7.14.2 The detailed consideration of potential management options is not within the scope of this Facility Strategy but, in view of the close relationship between facility provision and on-going management, we have carried out a high level review of options which the Council could find of value in taking the procurement process forward. This is included in Appendix E.

## **7.15 Integrated Facility Procurement and Management**

7.15.1 In the leisure context, a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain contract (DBOM) is one where a client (the local authority) procures a consortium consisting of an architect (and cost consultant), build contractor and leisure operator to design, build, operate and maintain a leisure facility on a long-term contract (usually at least 15 years, but up to 25-30 years). It is typically employed where a Council requires a significant

capital investment in its leisure facilities and, more often than not, the development of a new facility.

- 7.15.2 The DBOM approach emerged from the DBFO structure of the early leisure PPP and PFI projects, where as well as the design, construction and operation, a consortium would include a bank to provide the finance for the development. However, with the advent of the Prudential Code for capital finance in April 2004, local authorities were allowed far greater freedom in borrowing to fund capital investment, particularly where this borrowing would generate revenue savings (ie. through reduced management fee/improved operational position for leisure facilities). These revenue savings could then be used to finance the debt. In addition, the rate at which local authorities could borrow was more advantageous than the private sector.
- 7.15.3 For this reason, local authorities started to explore the possibility of their providing the finance for new facility developments, with the private sector providing the architectural, construction and management expertise. In addition, with the private sector being responsible for the design and construction of the facility, a significant element of the risk associated with facility development was transferred to them. The £12 million Elmbridge Excel Centre was delivered by this method with S&P Architects providing the design input, Willmott Dixon the construction and DC Leisure the management of the new facility for 15 years.
- 7.15.4 The more traditional public/private partnerships through the PPP and PFI routes may still be appropriate if an authority is unable to raise the funds to build a new leisure facility it wishes to procure. However, there are issues with obtaining appropriate credits from Central Government and in the long term nature of such contracts which can be difficult to specify in a changing leisure market.

## 7.16 Summary

- 7.16.1 A number of options have been developed for the delivery of indoor sports participation opportunities in Hartlepool and these are described and reviewed below:
- the Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy included the specific vision *'to ensure, through effective partnerships, access to a wide range of affordable, high quality sporting and recreational opportunities which satisfy the needs of the Hartlepool community'*.
  - a key approach could see fewer centres providing higher quality services, located to reflect sustainable access principles -- best practice is such as to suggest that the most appropriate mix of facilities would be structured on a 'hub and satellite' approach
  - as there is significant investment in existing facilities, it may not be possible to implement an 'ideal' structure linked to population density, catchment area characteristics and movement barriers/corridors – an element of pragmatism must enter into the Strategy
  - the first of five options as to the mix of facilities, Option One leaves existing facilities until closure is required due to essential repair or external factors (eg site redevelopment) – such a route would not allow the authority to deliver its Vision for sport and leisure
  - Option Two sees a Borough facility (Mill House or new H<sub>2</sub>O Centre) with present dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton) and new/refurbished

school halls – as this will not deliver the outcomes envisaged by the authority in its adopted strategies, it is felt that this should not be taken forward

- Option Three combines an existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O) with new pool(s) at Brierton, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/refurbished school halls – this Option is well aligned with the demand models for swimming but could perpetuate the surplus of dry side facilities
- Option Four adds a new wet/dry centre in NW Hartlepool to the existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O), new pool(s) at Brierton, existing dry facilities (Headland and Belle Vue) and new/refurbished school halls – this will allow the Borough to deliver its Vision for sports and physical activity but there is an issue regarding the overall quantity of the provision
- Option Five replicates the established pattern of swimming pools at secondary school sites and adds these to an existing or new Borough facility (Mill House or H<sub>2</sub>O), existing dry facilities (Headland, Belle Vue and Brierton) and a new wet facility at Seaton Carew – this level of provision is more than can be justified and will require significant capital and revenue expenditure
- a high level review of the capital and revenue costs of each of the principal options is set out in Table 23

**Table 23: Capital and Revenue Cost Summary**

	<i>Option One</i>	<i>Option Two</i>	<i>Option Three</i>	<i>Option Four</i>	<i>Option Five</i>
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Optimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Replace Existing</b>
Capital Costs	£4.5 to £5 million	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus schools additions for community use £625,000  Total £26.63m	As Option Two plus Brierton pool £4.5-5.2m  Total £31m to £32m	As Option Three plus North Pool £3.4m  Total £34m to £35m	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus new pools/ community use at schools £3.5m each Total £43.5m
Revenue Costs	Increasing as buildings age	H <sub>2</sub> O £500k pa plus school support	As Option Two plus Brierton £100k Total £600k pa plus school support	As Option Three plus North Pool £50-100k Total £650-700k pa plus school support	Up to £1 million pa

- a review of facility and management procurement options has determined that a crucial initial decision will be whether to procure any new facilities separately or in conjunction with their on-going management
- if the Council is in a position to fund the capital cost itself through savings or other sources, a DBOM may be an appropriate route for the integration of building and management.

**8 OPTIONS REVIEW**

**8.1 Introduction**

8.1.1 This section examines the extent to which the various options set out above address the parameters which the Borough Council will need to address in determining a way forward for the provision of indoor sports facilities in the town. Following an examination of the criteria adopted, there is a report of a workshop held with leading stakeholders within the Council. The full option appraisal is set out in tabular form in Appendix F.

**8.2 Option Appraisal Parameters**

8.2.1 In examining the options outlined above, we have examined the extent to which each addresses the desired long term outcomes for the facility development process. In doing this, we have tested them against the general criteria set out in Table 24.

**Table 24: General Option Appraisal Criteria**

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Corporate priorities?	Does the option allow the Council to deliver its Corporate priorities?
Revenue finance?	Is the option one that can be delivered without higher levels of revenue support from the Council or other public agencies?
Capital finance?	Is the option one that can be delivered given constraints on capital funding?
Primary focus of sport & leisure services?	Does the option focus on the key objectives of the sport & leisure service to provide high quality indoor facilities?
Pressure group influence?	Does the option reflect the needs of the local community rather the views of specific interested parties?
Physical provision?	Is there space to allow the delivery of the existing activity programmes and provide potential to expand participation opportunities in line with Government objectives?
Geographic spread?	Are the proposed sites well distributed around the town in order to give residents easy access to local facilities?
Social factors?	Does the option reflect the inevitable social factors which can limit the extent to which some groups use sports facilities?
Links to schools?	Does the option make best use of the BSF programme now being finalised to deliver sports facilities for the whole community?
Partnerships?	Does the option provide opportunities for the introduction of partners in the capital/revenue funding or direct delivery of indoor sports facilities?

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Procurement processes?	Can the option be procured in a number of different ways in response to changing circumstances with regard to timescale and funding?
Management?	Can the mix of facilities be managed in an integrated and cost-effective way which makes it easy for the whole community to access the services on offer?
Performance?	Will the option provide a range of facilities which will ensure that the authority can meet its performance objectives?
Sports development?	Does the range of facilities on offer provide opportunities for a structured programme of sports development?
Risk and sustainability?	Is the strategy sustainable given potential risks and lifestyle changes which may be required to address climate/energy issues?

8.2.2 In addition to the criteria set out above, we have carried out a high level review of the capital costs which might be incurred in delivering some of the proposed new build development.

### 8.3 Options Review Workshop

8.3.1 Held in March 2007, the Options Review Workshop was an opportunity to examine work carried out up to that date and for key stakeholders to make an input to the selection of the most appropriate option for improvement of sports and recreation services in Hartlepool. Those involved in the workshop are set out in Table 25.

**Table 25: Workshop Participants**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Initials</i>	<i>Role</i>
John Mennear	JM	Assistant Director, Community Services
Pat Usher	PU	Sport and Recreation Manager
Andrew Pearson	AP	Parks and Countryside Manager
Brian Robinson	BR	Operations Manager, Youth Services
Alan Kell	AK	Asset Manager, Children’s Services
Matthew King	MK	Principal Planning Officer
John Potts	JP	Principal Community Strategy Officer
Andy Steel	AS	Hartlepool College
Mike Piet	MP	Capita Symonds
Chris Spargo	CS	Capita Symonds

8.3.2 The wide-ranging discussion brought out a number of issues which have been borne in mind in refining the options set out in Section 7 and in populating the Option Review schedule (Table 26 and Appendix F).

8.3.3 However, a number of the specific points made in the discussion are listed below:

- BSF funding is just for schools and not for community facility provision (JM)
- the BSF programme is likely to see 6 secondary schools reduced to 5 (AK):
  - new St Hild's remain as now
  - of other four, two new builds and two major refurbishments
  - the large site at Brierton has potential for a new build Special School but sports centre will remain
  - Cabinet decision 19 March 2007
- is there an opportunity to link to existing clubs for a wider sporting offer eg. rugby club in the north of the town (JM)
- is there opportunity for a community stadium with associated provision – there is no provision for athletics in town (JP)
- opportunity for a development in Seaton Carew – new sports hall and/or indoor bowling provision (PU)
- the maximum option (Option 5) is not sustainable or realistic (PU & JM)
- there is a need to look at opportunities in the north of the town as there is a gap with current suggested options - associated housing development could make it more attractive (JM)
- Eldon Grove Sports Centre is to close (JM)
  - current 3 month stay of execution
  - existing user groups re-housed
  - open for offers for quasi public/private organisations to operate
- Grayfields has potential for hall space but a pool may be difficult (PU)
- facility developments need to link to BSF as a priority (AS).

## 8.4 Option Appraisal

8.4.1 The option appraisal included in Appendix F sets out a high level review of each of the facility mixes described in Section 7 of this document. At this stage we have sought to examine the options in relation to each other rather than as a specific more arbitrary numerical assessment within which it is more difficult to score the more general criteria which tend to influence leisure and recreation choices. For example, we have demonstrated that use of a facility planning model approach shows demand for far fewer sports halls than are at present fully occupied by those participating in sporting activity.

8.4.2 Table 26 shows some of the key differentiators between the options we have explored. These are described fully in Table 19.

**Table 26: Summary Option Appraisal**

	<i>Option One</i>	<i>Option Two</i>	<i>Option Three</i>	<i>Option Four</i>	<i>Option Five</i>
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Optimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Replace Existing</b>
Supports corporate & sports priorities?	no – does not provide affordable, high quality facilities	partial – higher quality facilities and opportunities for partnership	yes – high quality facilities and partnership opportunities to deliver higher participation	yes – high quality facilities and partnership opportunities to deliver higher participation	yes – high quality facilities and partnership opportunities to deliver higher participation
Capital cost of non-BSF works?	Refurbish existing pools  Total £4.5 to £5 million	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus schools additions for community use £625,000 Total £26.63m	As Option Two plus Brierton pool £4.5-5.2m Total £31m to £32m	As Option Three plus North Pool £3.4m Total £34m to £35m	H <sub>2</sub> O £26m plus new pools at schools £3.5m each Total £43.5m
Capital cost risk?	very high – impossible to determine costs in life-expired buildings	some – complex building proposed at H <sub>2</sub> O	limited – simpler building at Brierton although H <sub>2</sub> O complex	limited – simpler buildings at Brierton/other site but H <sub>2</sub> O complex	some – potential for new 'package deal' pools
On-going revenue costs?	high and increasing due to staffing, energy costs and maintenance/repairs	H <sub>2</sub> O £500k pa plus school support – lower than at present as no school pools and more cost-effective principal facility	As Option Two plus Brierton £100k is total £600k pa plus school support - potentially lower than or similar to existing but better quality of delivery	As Option Three plus North Pool £50-100k is total £650-700k pa plus school support – similar to existing but better quality of delivery	Up to £1 million pa – higher than existing due to large number of pools
Net revenue cost risks?	high – lower usage levels as quality of buildings falls	medium – unable to accommodate demand and higher cost to deliver school swimming programme	low – good match of supply and demand with cost-effective to run facilities	some – over-provision but potential to increase participation in cost-effective to run facilities	high – significant over-provision with limited potential to increase participation in school-based facilities
Overall provision?	as existing until facilities closed due to breakdown or building failure	as existing for dry sites but significantly less water-space through closure of school pools	dry as existing but slightly less water-space (new pool at Brierton partially offsets closure of school pools)	dry as existing but same water-space (new pools at Brierton & High Tunstall? to offset closure of school pools)	more than existing
Pool provision?	577m <sup>2</sup> surplus	263m <sup>2</sup> shortfall (equiv to 5-lane 25m pool)	162m <sup>2</sup> surplus (equiv to teaching pool)	287m <sup>2</sup> surplus (equiv to large teaching pool)	697m <sup>2</sup> surplus (equiv to two 6-lane 25m pools)

	<i>Option One</i>	<i>Option Two</i>	<i>Option Three</i>	<i>Option Four</i>	<i>Option Five</i>
<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Do nothing</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Optimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Replace Existing</b>
Sports hall provision?	significant surplus calculated but limited capacity	potential to reduce capacity by not replacing some halls & better utilisation	potential to reduce capacity by not replacing some halls & better utilisation	potential to reduce capacity by not replacing some halls & better utilisation	potential to reduce capacity by not replacing some halls & better utilisation
Other provision?	no significant issues	no significant issues	no significant issues	no significant issues	no significant issues
Geographic spread?	as existing – fair	poor – single pool site & no public dry in north & south of town	good – two pool sites but no public dry in north & south of town	very good – three pool sites but no public access dry facility at Seaton Carew	excellent – good distribution of wet and dry facilities
Link to schools?	good – current established pattern adjusted to reflect BSF closure	poor for pools – difficult to deliver swimming programme from one site (excellent on dry side)	fair for pools – some difficulties in delivering swimming programme from two sites (excellent on dry side)	good on wet side and excellent on dry side	excellent with enhanced facilities on all secondary school sites
Partnership opportunities?	limited – no opportunities for investment	fair – potential for development and/or management partner for new wet/dry site	good – potential for development and/or management partner for new wet/dry sites	wide range of options to deliver new facilities off school sites	limited – difficult to integrate with school site facilities
Sports development potential?	poor – sub-standard pool facilities but improving dry provision	limited for swimming due to shortfall in water space - good on dry side	good for swim training and on dry side	excellent – good opportunity for swim training and teaching	good – good opportunity for swim training
Sustainability?	very poor	excellent if Mill House replaced	excellent balance between supply & demand in modern energy-efficient buildings	good – modern energy-efficient buildings	fair – modern energy-efficient buildings but not fully utilised

8.4.3 While no formal scoring exercise was undertaken, it can be seen that in general terms, Option Three performs well in most regards and will ensure that the residents of Hartlepool are provided with a range of sports and recreation facilities which address their needs and aspirations.

8.4.4 The only issue which would arise in adopting this approach would be that relating to the provision of an additional swimming pool for lessons/training at the north western end of the town. While it would be more cost-effective in capital and operational



terms to develop a main pool and a teaching pool at Brierton, the option of providing a teaching pool to another site (eg High Tunstall College) could be considered if this would help in the delivery of the school swimming programme and provide additional opportunities for structured sports development. This extra pool could either replace the teaching pool at Brierton (a floating floor in the 25 metre pool at Brierton would allow for lessons but there could be a conflict of use at peak lesson times) or be an additional facility (potentially with a smaller teaching pool at Brierton).

## 8.5 School Swimming Programme

- 8.5.1 The provision of adequate facilities for the cost effective delivery of a curriculum swimming programme is particularly important in a coastal location such as Hartlepool. Table 27 sets out the current primary school swimming programme and the impact were either two or three teaching pools to be provided in the Borough.
- 8.5.2 The number of half hour sessions per week has been determined from a programme provided by Hartlepool Children's Services but it is accepted that there may be minor variations from that shown here. Where the school does not feature in the programme, we have inserted an estimate based on pool use by schools with similar pupil numbers (shown in red italic on the table). It can be seen that there are a total of 89 half hour sessions per week.
- 8.5.3 If a teaching pool is used by schools from 10.00 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 15.00 on 5 days a week, each pool could deliver 8 sessions per day or 40 per week – the key to this level of use will be the provision of well-designed changing facilities. Two pools could thus just deliver the current primary school swimming programme, given that some schools may be able to attend before 10.00 and others may wish to use the main pool for their lessons. The issue of secondary school use will need to be addressed separately but it is anticipated that such pupils should be improvers using the main pools rather than learners.
- 8.5.4 In terms of distributing schools between the pools, we have sought to leave them at their present site if at all possible – those using Brierton or Mill House are generally not affected. Other schools, highlighted on the table, will need to re-locate. However, in all but three cases (Brougham, Eldon Grove and Grange – highlighted red), the schools involved are already using bus transport to reach the pool. In most cases the travel time and distance will be similar but at four sites it will be slightly further (highlighted orange) – at three sites, the distance will be shorter (highlighted green). The distribution between the two pools will be similar.
- 8.5.5 If a three site option is to be adopted, we have sought to direct each school to its nearest pool in order to save travel time and cost – as a result the busiest pool will be that at Brierton as it has a large number of schools in its catchment area. The impact on travel mode and time is generally as for the two-site model but only two schools will need to travel further – one of these (Barnard Grove) does not at present offer regular swimming lessons.
- 8.5.6 This option provides more flexibility in the programme, giving opportunities for use of the teaching pools by secondary schools and/or the wider community at certain times during the school day. To that end, for this specific reason, a three pool strategy would be preferable.

**Table 27: Amendments to Primary School Swimming Programme**

School	Ssns	Present Pool		Proposed (2 pools)		Proposed (3 pools)	
Barnard Grove	2	No lessons	-	Mill House/H2O	Bus +	NW Pool	Bus +
Brougham	3	Dyke House	Walk	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Catcote	4	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Clavering	3	Mill House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Eldon Grove	5	Brinkburn	Walk	Mill House/H2O	Bus	NW Pool	Bus
Elwick	1	Brinkburn	Bus	Brierton	Bus	NW Pool	Bus -
Fens	3	Manor	Bus	Brierton	Bus +	Brierton	Bus +
Golden Flatts	2	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Grange	3	Manor	Walk	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Greatham	2	Manor	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Hart	1	Brinkburn	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus +	NW Pool	Bus
Holy Trinity	2	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Jesmond Road	4	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	NW Pool	Bus
Kingsley	5	Mill Hse/Brierton	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Lynnfield	3	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
Owton Manor	2	Brierton	Walk	Brierton	Walk	Brierton	Walk
Rift House	2	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Rossmere	3	Brierton/Manor	Walk	Brierton	Walk	Brierton	Walk
Sacred Heart	4	Brinkburn	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	NW Pool	Bus
St. Aidan's	4	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
St. Bega's	1	Brinkburn	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus -	Mill House/H2O	Bus -
St. Cuthbert's	3	Brinkburn	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
St. Helen's	2	Brinkburn	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus -	Mill House/H2O	Bus -
St. John Vianney	2	Brinkburn	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus -	NW Pool	Bus -
St. Joseph's	2	Mill House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
St. Teresa's	3	Brinkburn	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Springwell	6	Brierton/Brinkburn	Bus	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus
Stranton	3	Brierton	Bus	Brierton	Bus	NW Pool	Bus
Throston	2	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus +	NW Pool	Bus
Ward Jackson	1	Dyke House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
West Park	3	Mill House	Bus	Brierton	Bus	NW Pool	Bus
West View	3	Mill House	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus	Mill House/H2O	Bus
				Mill House/H2O	47	Mill House/H2O	27
				Brierton	42	Brierton	35
						NW Pool	27
Total sessions	89			Total sessions	89	Total sessions	89

**Key:**

- change of pool
- Bus change of mode of travel (walk to bus)
- Bus + longer bus trip
- Bus - shorter bus trip
- 2 session numbers interpolated from size of school or other data

## 8.6 Summary

### 8.6.1 The following points have emerged from the Option Review:

- we have tested the extent to which each option addresses the desired long term outcomes for the facility development process

- the Options Review Workshop brought out issues which we have borne in mind in refining the options and in populating the Option Review schedule
- we have sought to examine the options in relation to each other rather than as a specific more arbitrary numerical assessment – we have demonstrated that use of a facility planning model approach shows demand for far fewer sports halls than are at present fully occupied by those participating in sporting activity
- we have carried out a high level review of the capital costs which might be incurred in delivering some of the proposed new build development
- in general terms, Option Three performs well in most regards and will ensure that the residents of Hartlepool are provided with a range of sports and recreation facilities which address their needs and aspirations
- the bulk of the primary school teaching programme could be accommodated within two teaching pools with limited additional cost in terms of travel time/charges – the 25 metre pools could accommodate the additional time required
- the development of an additional teaching pool in the northwest of the Borough would provide capacity for growing swimming as a sport and to enable school-time use by secondary schools and the wider community.

## 9 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 The following paragraphs develop the recommended option set out above into a strategy for the provision of sports and recreation facilities, looking at each of the potential service areas in turn to set out the way in which it considered that these should be developed in the medium to long term.

9.1.2 It is clear that the current position is not sustainable in the long-term. Whilst new facilities have opened recently and will open as part of the BSF project, it is evident that the older sites (particularly the swimming pools) are in a spiral of decline, suffering from a lack of long-term maintenance and investment. This has led to decreasing utilisation levels and precarious financial viability, which in turn does not support increased maintenance, therefore making major investment harder to justify.

### 9.2 Proposals

9.2.1 In the following paragraphs, we examine a number of capital and revenue projects that will deliver benefits to Hartlepool in terms of increased opportunities for participation in high quality facilities which, in time, will have the potential to reduce the overall cost of delivering the sport and recreation service in the Borough.

9.2.2 The proposals included in the Indoor Facilities Strategy are considered under the following generic headings:

- making best use of existing new facilities
- a new Borough sports facility
- swimming pool provision in the Borough
- community use of school facilities
- a strategy for sports hall provision
- a strategy for other indoor sports facilities
- a strategy for community facilities
- management and operational strategy.

All of the project proposals would require the completion of detailed, site-specific business planning, design and affordability exercise to assess viability.

9.2.3 We have sought to ensure that best use is made of any past or proposed facility investment projects in order to ensure the deliverability of the overall strategy. The days of large scale funding grants from organisations such as Sport England are over and there is a widely held view that this is unlikely to change until well beyond the 2012 Olympics. Therefore, new facilities are most likely to be funded via one or more of the following options:

- Council capital funding (direct or indirect)
- prudential borrowing
- Section 106 agreements or Developer Contributions
- enabling development – residential, commercial or mixed-use
- capital receipt and/or asset optimisation

- Public-Private Partnership (PPP) potentially including operation
- Private Finance Initiative schemes (PFI).

### 9.3 Making Best Use of Existing New Facilities

9.3.1 In recent years, the Council and the Lottery Fund distributors have invested in two new dry sports centres in Hartlepool.

#### ***Headland Sports Hall***

- a. Opened in 2006, this provides excellent facilities for active participation in what would otherwise be a relatively isolated part of the Borough. The 4 court sports hall, small but popular fitness room, crèche and social facilities are operated on a pay & play basis and so are accessible to the whole community – the hall is generally available during the day. It is not envisaged that there would be any changes to this site.

#### ***Brierton Sports Centre***

- b. While it has been proposed that under the BSF programme Brierton School would close in summer 2009, the modern high quality leisure centre has the potential to be the focus of a community sports and recreation complex catering for the south west sector of the town. Without immediate school use, the hall would be fully available for public use during the day and so increase opportunities for participation by key target groups such as older people, the unemployed and mothers with young children. There is sufficient land to expand the range of facilities available here – without access to the school buildings, consideration should be given to providing additional exercise/dance studios within the complex. The subject of swimming pool provision is discussed in section 9.5.

Both of these facilities have the potential to be a key part of the Borough's provision for many years and so should be retained and, ideally, built upon to deliver an enhanced service.

9.3.2 Further consideration is given to the strategy for other dry facilities later in this section.

### 9.4 A New Borough Sports Facility

9.4.1 As part of the project brief, we have borne in mind the Council's aspiration for a major wet and dry visitor attraction to be built as part of the Victoria Harbour development. As well as drawing more visitors to what would be a unique mix of facilities (swimming, dry sports, health & fitness and extreme sports) in an iconic building, the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre would provide a high quality replacement for the substandard and increasingly costly to maintain Mill House Leisure Centre. In a previous feasibility study, the H<sub>2</sub>O project was estimated to cost some £26 million in capital terms (requiring significant external funding) and will require a large annual revenue subsidy (over £500,000 pa for Council operation and some £350,000 for commercial management).

9.4.2 In determining a future pattern of wet and dry sports provision in Hartlepool, it has been assumed that the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre (in some form) will be constructed in the medium term and that Mill House will remain in operation until such time as the new facility

opens. However, there are three alternative scenarios which have been considered for the development of the principal facility in the Borough.

***reduced dry-side provision at H<sub>2</sub>O Centre***

- a. In view of the potential need to contain the capital costs and the overall surplus of sports hall space in the Borough, consideration could be given to omitting the new 4 court hall from the development – local residents would have access to the Headland and any new/refurbished facilities at Dyke House School.

***reduced scale development at Victoria Harbour***

- b. If sufficient funding cannot be generated to provide the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre on the scale currently envisaged, consideration could be given to a simpler swimming pool development targeted at the needs of local residents, Borough schools and the swimming clubs. It is appreciated that this will not address the regeneration objectives of H<sub>2</sub>O but it could still include an extreme sport venue and the surf pool in a simpler and cheaper structure.

***relocated replacement Borough facility***

- c. If funding is further constrained and it is impossible to develop the extreme sports elements of the H<sub>2</sub>O project, consideration could be given to the relocation of what would be a far smaller facility to a site which would be more accessible to the town's population as a whole. There could be an argument for building a new swimming complex alongside the existing dry side provision at Mill House and integrating this with the Indoor Bowls Centre to provide a new sports hub for Hartlepool.

- 9.4.3 It is recommended that the plans for the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre should be revised to exclude the proposed sports hall. However, it is assumed that a new eight lane 25 metre pool with teaching pool will be developed on the northern edge of the town centre (either at Victoria Harbour or new Mill House) as this has a significant impact on the overall strategy for pool provision discussed in the following paragraphs.

## **9.5 Swimming Pool Provision in the Borough**

- 9.5.1 As highlighted earlier, the provision of public access swimming facilities in Hartlepool is poor and the other pools which are used to deliver the school swimming programme are all well beyond their expected life. They are substandard in terms of accessibility, energy, health & safety, etc, albeit the host schools have put commendable effort into keeping them going.

- 9.5.2 It is not considered that there is a rationale for the replacement of all these swimming pools as part of the BSF redevelopment of secondary schools in the Borough. While there might be pressure from individual schools, there is not the capital available to replace them and a more sustainable asset management approach would significantly increase the revenue cost of any new buildings. Given that H<sub>2</sub>O or another Mill House replacement is made available, the analysis of demand has shown that there is a requirement for at least one additional swimming pool in Hartlepool.

- 9.5.3 The Option Appraisal has highlighted that the most appropriate approach would be to add swimming facilities to the existing Brierton Sport Centre – here they would be well located for both school and community use, with the potential to build upon the operation which already exists at the site. There is space to accommodate a new

pool complex and, subject to the requirement for other land uses (eg new Special School), also for any outdoor elements which may be considered appropriate.

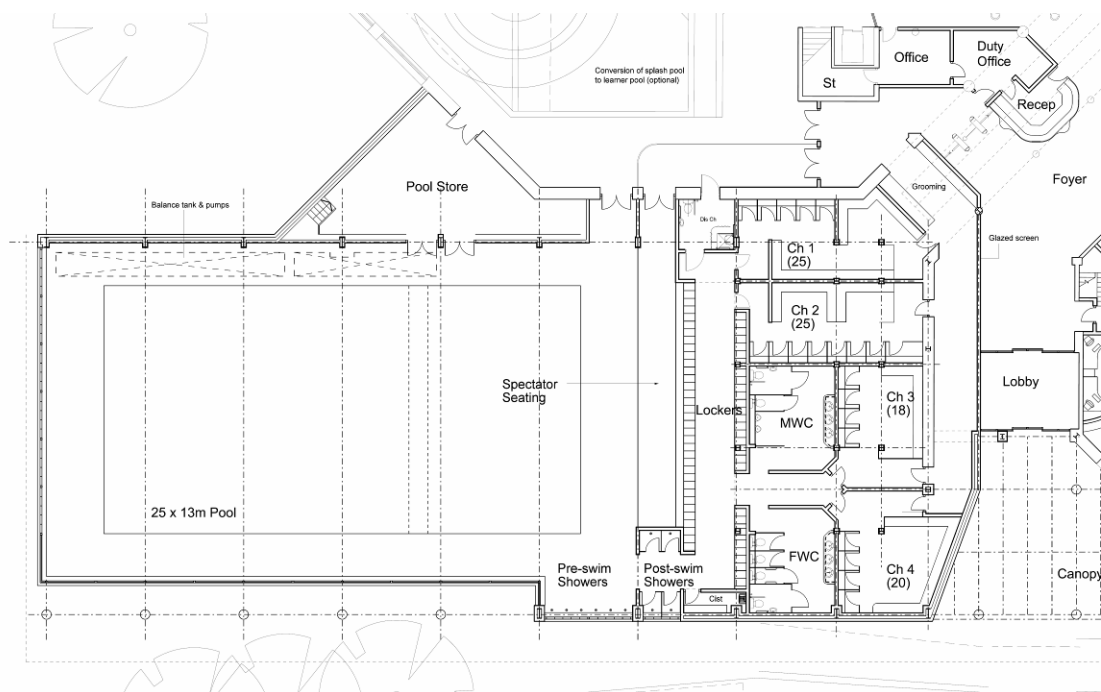
9.5.4 The recommended strategy would see the addition of the following elements to the Brierton Sport Centre:

- enlarged entrance, catering space and administration areas to accommodate a greater throughput
- a six lane 25 metre swimming pool with limited space for spectator viewing
- a 10 by 8 metre teaching pool with viewing space for carers
- appropriate wet changing rooms to meet Sport England guidance
- adequate space for pool water treatment and air handling plant
- additional car parking.

Our high level cost estimate for such a development would be between £4.5 and £5.5 million based upon current (1Q07) prices and a typical good quality building specification to meet local authority requirements.

9.5.5 For comparison, Capita Symonds is currently managing a similar project to add a 25 metre pool and associated changing rooms to a leisure pool in South East London at a price of £4.13 million (design by Wm Saunders Partnership, Nottingham for the London Borough of Lewisham and Parkwood Leisure). Notwithstanding the higher cost of labour in London, the overall cost is lower as the site does not include a teaching pool and plant room space is limited due to the reuse of some unused equipment in the existing building.

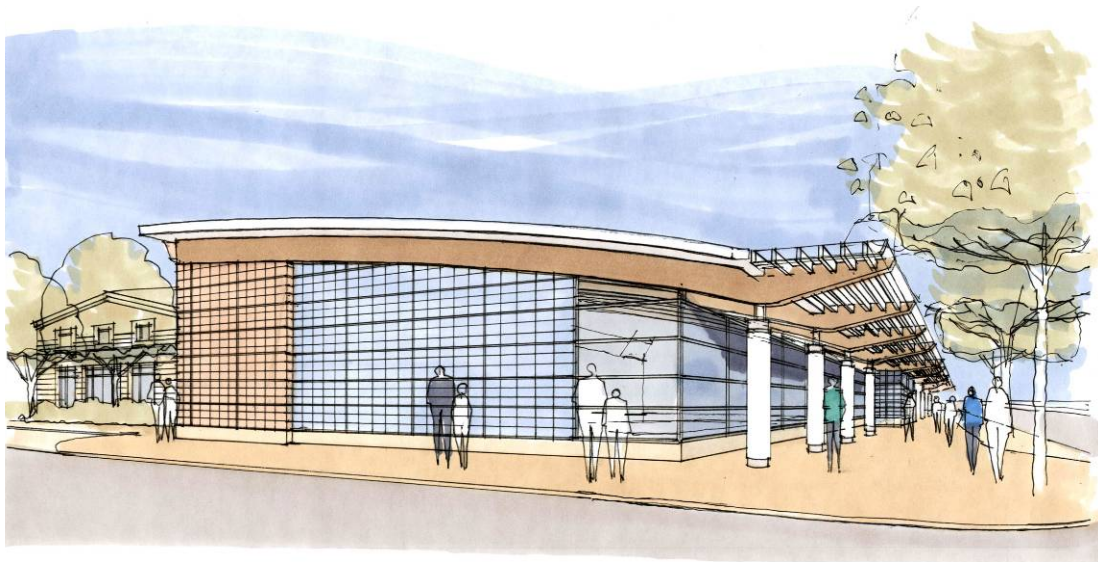
**Figure 16: Floor Plan (Wavelengths, Lewisham)**



9.5.6 Figure 16 shows the ground floor layout at Wavelengths which, in view of the fact that village changing is available around the adjoining and linked leisure pool, features group changing and a common locker area. Figure 17 gives an impression of the overall quality of the development which includes a 'brise-solaire' to screen south-

facing windows from direct sunlight and attractive curved timber beams to introduce warmth into the building. The project is now on site for completion in Spring 2008.

**Figure 17: Perspective Sketch** (*Wavelengths, Lewisham*)



- 9.5.7 The provision of a 25 metre pool and teaching pool at Brierton would address the key issue of a public access facility in the south of the Borough and, with the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre would provide a slight surplus in terms of water space. However, there could be an issue with regard to accessibility to swimming pools in North Hartlepool. This is likely to be of particular interest to primary schools seeking to deliver the swimming lesson programme.
- 9.5.8 To that end, an alternative approach was explored within Option Four and it is considered that it may be appropriate to further test variants of this route as part of any detailed feasibility study.

**Table 28: Alternative Pool Provision Patterns**

Alternative	Description
1	6 lane 25m pool and teaching pool at Brierton
2	6 lane 25m pool and teaching pool at Brierton, with additional 4 lane 25m teaching pool in the north of the Borough
3	6 lane 25m pool at Brierton (with floating floor) and standalone teaching pool in the north of the Borough
4	6 lane 25m pool and teaching pool at Brierton with refurbished existing pool High Tunstall College

- 9.5.9 Subject to further investigation, sites for an additional pool in the north of the town could include High Tunstall College (refurbishment or new build), Grayfields Recreation Ground or alongside the Boys' Welfare hall. Any additional pool facility should be constructed close to good transport links and in the heart of extensive residential areas to help to increase the local catchment population. A site identification exercise will be required as part of any detailed feasibility study, linked to any plans to regenerate housing estates, schools and other Council or privately



owned land or facilities. Even though it is anticipated that the additional pool would be designed for programmed use only and so would require limited support spaces, this strategy would involve greater capital and revenue expenditure.

- 9.5.10 With regard to building costs, the alternatives are summarised in Table 29 although it should be appreciated that at such an early stage the total costs shown should be taken as the mid point of a +/- 20% range. The cost shown for the refurbishment of High Tunstall Pool is based on the ISRM estimate of £153,000 (2002) with an addition for inflation, further dilapidation allowance and additional project fees – it should be appreciated that this sum will need to be confirmed by a detailed site survey.

**Table 29: Capital Costs for Alternative Swimming Pool Provision**

	<i>Alternative 1</i>	<i>Alternative 2</i>	<i>Alternative 3</i>	<i>Alternative 4</i>
Total Water Area incl.H2O (m2)	1,042	1,267	1,187	1,182
Surplus in Water Area (m2)	142	367	287	282
<b>6 lane 25m pool + teaching pool at Brierton</b>	£5,117,000	£5,117,000		£5,117,000
<b>6 lane 25m pool at Brierton</b>			£4,528,000	
<b>New standalone teaching pool (4 lane 25m)</b>		£3,440,000	£3,440,000	
<b>Refurbished Tunstall Pool</b>				£300,000
<b>Total Capital Cost</b>	<b>£5,117,000</b>	<b>£8,557,000</b>	<b>£7,968,000</b>	<b>£5,417,000</b>

- 9.5.11 With a view to long-term flexibility but also bearing in mind the likely availability of capital and revenue finance, it is recommended that the immediate strategy should see the development of a 25 metre pool and teaching pool at Brierton Leisure Centre. The provision of a further teaching pool elsewhere in the Borough would be a desirable element for the longer term – one option would be to carry out short-term ‘heavy maintenance’ of High Tunstall with a view to its replacement in due course.

## 9.6 Community Use of School Facilities

- 9.6.1 As highlighted previously, the secondary schools in Hartlepool are crucial to the supply of sport and recreation activity opportunities in the Borough, and particularly in the delivery of the swim teaching programme. There is a long track-record of some school facilities being opened up to the community in the evenings and at weekends, but different schools manage their centres on different bases. Some schools have greater commitment to public access than others while others only accommodate club bookings (ie. there is no opportunity for users to turn up and play as individuals on a casual basis).
- 9.6.2 The redevelopment and/or refurbishment of these key facilities is an opportunity to consolidate the service to the town’s residents, working as a whole and with the other public facilities to offer a complementary package – each site can both build on its strengths and ensure that the whole range of interests can be addressed in the town. Increasing use of existing facilities is a far more cost effective means of raising participation than the construction of a parallel set of buildings. There would be enhanced opportunities to participate and a reduction in the need to travel.

- 9.6.3 The new schools to be built as part of BSF will be of great importance in delivering new sports halls and other facilities across Hartlepool. The first step in the development of a more co-ordinated approach should be establishment of a senior-level group involving the Children's Services and Community Services Directorates to ensure that principles of good design are adopted and to explore fully examples of operational best practice. Sport and Leisure Service involvement in the design of new schools should ensure that community use needs, such as an office, separate entrance, internal security and reception have been considered. In return for a relatively small investment in such areas (say £125,000 for each site), the sports halls and associated facilities can be used effectively as a community sports centre outside school hours.
- 9.6.4 With regard to on-going management, the objective should be to develop a Service Level or Community Use Agreement with the individual schools in order to ensure that the facilities are operated in a consistent and complementary manner. This should reflect the practical situation of each site and, as such, should be capable of variation within a standard template. The Council will need to accept that should it wish to have additional influence in the way in which the individual school facilities are used, there may be financial implications – the key issue is to establish these up front and before making a commitment to the design and construction of the proposed facilities.
- 9.6.5 The agreements that should be implemented under the BSF programme should set out the principles of community use of school sports facilities and should be an integral element of the Extended Schools and community use management arrangements. The following key issues can arise in the consideration of management options and should be taken through into the individual school agreements:
- effective curriculum and extra-curriculum use by the school is at the heart of the operation but the wider health and sport objectives of the Borough must also be addressed
  - any management organisation must be capable of understanding the constraints of a school facility and still deliver a cost effective programme of community use at an appropriate cost
  - the management and operation of the sports facilities for the community should be self-funding but be priced at a level which will offer participation opportunities to all members of the community, including disadvantaged groups
  - while, ideally, casual use should be offered in as many locations as possible, it is acknowledged that on some sites income is unlikely to cover staffing costs and hourly hire is likely to be the most appropriate route
  - an integrated management approach throughout the day and the week should be used to ensure the best and most coordinated use of the facilities.
- 9.6.6 While the exact form of the agreements will vary across each facility, some of the guiding principles which reflect the strategic objectives for Hartlepool are set out below:
- to maximise use of sports facilities by school and community users
  - to facilitate wider community access to school sports facilities outside school hours (curricular and extra curricular)

- to operate the facilities to a high quality in line with industry standards
- to implement an appropriate management structure, capable of delivering a strategic approach to the delivery of sporting opportunities and the operational management of facilities for school and community use
- to establish clear areas of responsibility and lines of reporting and/or communication between all parties to the agreement
- to support the delivery of sports development activity undertaken by the Council and/or partner organisations, including governing bodies of sport and sports development agencies
- to work with other Borough Directorates to market and promote the facilities and opportunities appropriately
- to ensure all relevant regulations are complied with, including equal opportunities, health & safety and child protection
- to implement a consistent approach to monitoring, evaluation and performance management.

9.6.7 There are in effect two different approaches to the opening of school facilities to the community:

- provision of a 'full-service' staffed sports centre offering a wide range of programmed and casual participation opportunities or
- through a more simple, hourly hire basis where the facilities are less extensive and the income is unlikely to cover the staff costs which would be incurred in continual supervision.

The expectation is that some sites will justify the full opening option, particularly where facilities are more extensive, while others would be made available on a more restricted basis.

9.6.8 As schools are unlikely to have the professional sports management skills required to operate community facilities effectively, it may be appropriate to provide support from an external management partner. It is recommended that a Borough-wide organisation should be established to coordinate the overall operation of the school facilities.

9.6.9 It is considered that the most effective route would be to establish a central operational management support organisation. The Council's Sport and Recreation Service could potentially have a significant role to play in the delivery of sporting opportunities within the facilities being provided as part of the BSF programme (and in associated programmes) and could have a role to play here as facilitator or direct manager. Alternatively, an external body could be employed to provide the essential specialist skills which will be required to operate the facilities safely. As a minimum, this organisation should be responsible for the marketing and pricing of facilities and activities on a complementary basis.

## **9.7 A Strategy for Sports Hall Provision**

9.7.1 With the retention of the new sports halls at The Headland and Brierton, and the availability (albeit on a restricted basis) of the new and/or enhanced sports halls at five secondary school sites in Hartlepool, the provision would be close to that

required if the parameters of the facility planning model are to be adopted. As discussed earlier, the existing programmes of use demonstrate that there is actual expressed demand for more than the minimum number of badminton court equivalents that the model would suggest.

9.7.2 However, a number of key issues should be considered:

- no additional indoor sports facilities should be constructed without a further review of the detailed local requirement for such space
- no investment should be made in the remaining sports halls (generally Youth Service provision) without a full cost/benefit analysis of their viability and an examination as to whether the use currently taking place could be accommodated within one of the other halls in the town
- if new halls are proposed for curriculum purposes at Hartlepool College or the Sixth Form College, consideration should be given to closing down other nearby substandard facilities if these cannot be upgraded to suit the requirements of the colleges
- in view of the nearby presence of The Headland and Dyke House facilities, consideration could be given to omitting dry sports space from the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre in order to reduce its capital cost
- the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre should remain a key partner as it provides more than just a sports hall – however, the operation of the core sports facilities should be integrated with that of other sites in Hartlepool to offer a comprehensive service to all residents.

9.7.3 Turning to a site by site review of other halls owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council, it is recommended that the approach set out in the following paragraphs should be adopted.

***Seaton Carew Sport Hall***

- a. It is understood that the existing sports hall at Seaton Carew requires significant expenditure to bring it up to modern standards and, as such, it may be more cost-effective to demolish it and construct a replacement facility on an alternative site in the area – this is one location in Hartlepool where there is specific demand for improved sports or community facilities. There are at present a number of options for the delivery of enhanced sports facilities in Seaton Carew, either in partnership with the Sports and Social Club or as a new public facility in the Park, and these should be the subject of a separate feasibility study. Given the current provision of halls in the town, it is considered that a smaller hall would be sufficient to accommodate some sports activities and a range of other community events.

***Rossmere Youth Centre***

- b. The Centre is well located at the heart of the community and, although it is not far from Brierton Leisure Centre and a number of school sites, it has a complementary role in providing activities for young people in the early evening. It is also available for hire to other groups when not in use by the Youth Service. This day-time use should be seen alongside a facility mix which sees the majority of dry sports facilities provided on school sites which are only available in the evening peaks – Rossmere provides some space for daytime activities.

***Brinkburn Youth Centre***

- c. This standalone facility is located close to the Sixth Form College and as a result is used by students in curriculum time. However, the College has aspirations to build its own sports hall and, if that is the case, the viability of the Brinkburn site would be threatened. It is suggested that either the present hall is passed over to the College or any new hall on the campus is made available for use by young people as part of a comprehensive after-hours initiative. A MUGA alongside the present Youth Centre would provide young people with a dedicated activity space.

***Boys' Welfare Centre***

- d. Located close to the Grayfields Recreation Ground but approached from a different direction, this hall is managed by the Youth Service on behalf of the Trustees. To that end, it is envisaged that it will continue in operation until there is a requirement for significant investment in the building, at which time there will need to be a review of its viability. However, as with Rossmere, the site could provide capacity for daytime public activities at the North end of the town if the matter of supervision and management could be addressed. One option might be to link the site to the Grayfields operation, with staff there responsible for opening, closing and remote supervision. Should a further teaching pool to be provided at this end of the Borough, one of the sites that could be considered is alongside the Boys' Welfare, so creating a small wet/dry sports centre with a specific remit – links to the Grayfields complex would create a small sports hub.

***Mill House Leisure Centre***

- e. The Centre currently provides a six court sports hall (the largest in the town) but it is envisaged that the complex would be replaced by the proposed H<sub>2</sub>O Centre. While present plans for H<sub>2</sub>O include a four court hall, we have suggested that this could be omitted in order to reduce the capital cost and avoid increasing the surplus of hall space in this part of the Borough (see paragraph 9.4.2). If this were to be the case and the value of the land were not to be a consideration, the dry side at Mill House could be retained and offered to another user. Although the site is some distance from the main campus, Hartlepool College could be a potential occupier, as could Hartlepool United Football Club.

- 9.7.4 This strategy would provide a good range of indoor multi-purpose sports facilities but, in order to maximise their value in the development of sport and physical activity, a key issue will be the delivery of a coordinated programme of participation opportunities, both targeted at specific user groups and available to the general resident and visitor population.

**9.8 A Strategy for Other Indoor Sports Facilities**

- 9.8.1 Our assessment of other indoor sports facilities in Hartlepool has revealed that there is not a shortfall in provision with regard to any of the key facilities which would normally be expected in a town of such a population.

- 9.8.2 Health and fitness is catered for by a mixed economy of commercial, local authority, education and voluntary sector facilities and the way in which commercial facilities come and go implies that the market is close to balance. However, in view of the positive contribution such facilities can make to both the well-being of the local

community and to the financial performance of individual centres, it is considered that the Council should continue to invest in these if a positive return on capital can be demonstrated.

- 9.8.3 Other specialist facilities include the Indoor Bowling Centre. It has been noted that its use is declining but this has not yet reached that stage that the Centre is not viable. It also is popular with a specific user group (older people) which is growing in numbers and is a target for various sports development initiatives. However, the situation should be monitored in the medium term and, should use of the building decline to a position where the number of rinks could be reduced, consideration could be given to accommodating other activities in part of the building – alternatively, if the land were to be more valuable as a development site, a smaller facility could be built elsewhere.
- 9.8.4 The provision of squash courts is an issue in many towns as the demand has declined since the peak of the 1970s. The only permanent courts in Hartlepool are the two at Mill House Leisure Centre which are reasonably well used during the weekday evening peaks – a number of the school halls have demountable courts but in most cases these have rarely if ever been used. There was no plan to provide replacement squash courts in the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre and so players would have no venue in Hartlepool. In view of the decline in the sport this might be acceptable but consideration could be given to the inclusion of a pair of courts with moveable dividing wall in one of the dry centres or within the Indoor Bowling Centre – such a space could also be used for general exercise classes or social activities.
- 9.8.5 There is no indoor tennis provision in Hartlepool but there are existing facilities on Teesside (commercial club and pay & play club) and at Sunderland. It is unlikely that a major indoor tennis complex could be justified but, as envisaged at Eldon Grove (see paragraph 6.9.2), the provision of a ‘bubble’ over an outdoor court would be appropriate as part of a wider initiative to develop the sport.

## **9.9 Strategy for Other Community Facilities**

- 9.9.1 As part of this overall review, we have examined the potential for integrating other services provided by Hartlepool Borough Council into the strategy for the provision of indoor sport and recreation facilities. For example, could library, community or one-stop-shop services be co-located with sports buildings?
- 9.9.2 However, the key issue here is that the principal sports facilities will not be located on sites which are easy to integrate with other service provision. While the secondary schools which will be the focus for dry sports provision are in the centre of extensive residential areas, they are situated away from the larger local shopping parades which, due to their accessibility, tend to be the most appropriate places for branch libraries and community facilities.
- 9.9.3 For example, the Owton Manor Community Centre and Library is in the centre of a shopping parade and close to other public services and it would not be appropriate to relocate these to sit alongside either Manor College or Brierton Leisure Centre. However, a long term strategy to integrate these with the nearby Rossmere complex could be considered.
- 9.9.4 Other sites where co-location might be appropriate could be Seaton Carew (where there is potential for a comprehensive review of provision), West View (where a

community hub around St Hild's School might be an appropriate replacement for the congested complex at West View) and Dyke House (where the nearby Resource Centre could be linked into the redevelopment of the school). All these sites would need to be the subject of further specific feasibility studies.

## **9.10 Management and Operational Strategy**

9.10.1 In common with many authorities, the Borough is hampered by a lack of basic data on users of its own and other providers' facilities. The development of a common recording and reporting system is hampered by the many different parties involved in the service (indoor and outdoor) but such data is vital if the authority is to test the extent to which its investment on sport and recreation is meeting the needs of its residents. It should be a priority to develop a common Management Information System to be implemented across all sites in the Borough, bringing together data from different departments and outside bodies.

9.10.2 It is appreciated that although such an approach could provide the most valuable data, it would be costly to implement a computer-based system across all sites in Hartlepool. However, in the short term, it would be possible to identify a number of key indicators which would be collected on a structured basis through sample surveys if not through a check of every admission – this could use paper-based as well as electronic systems. Typical indicators which could be collected for activities or activity groups include:

- number of participants
- numbers by age
- numbers by ethnic group
- numbers of males/females
- numbers by place of residence
- frequency of participation.

This basic data should be supported by additional surveys to determine why people start or stop activities, their views as to the range of activities on offer, their views on the service provided and similar qualitative issues. All this information can be used to inform decisions on specific initiatives which will have an impact on revenue (for example, improved arrangements for specific target groups).

9.10.3 However, the Audit Commission reports that access to services in Hartlepool is already improving. The Council is implementing well founded plans for a co-ordinated approach to customer service, including a new contact centre and a customer charter. ICT is being used effectively to provide many e-enabled services, although the Council's website, which is a portal for the whole of Hartlepool, is not always easy to navigate. The website is currently being developed as a vehicle for booking time in sports facilities.

9.10.4 In order to deliver the Strategy, there will need to be ever closer working between Directorates within the Council and external partners. The drivers for such a transition could include:

- making best use of all available facilities in the town
- determining a consistent mechanism for measuring service outputs encompassing both indoor and outdoor facilities
- ensuring appropriate leisure and recreation facilities are included within comprehensive development projects
- introducing a policy to generate capital/revenue contributions from developers
- acknowledging of the value of sport and leisure in regeneration plans

- appreciating the value of open spaces to improving levels of activity
- preparing Sport Development Plans which involve the use of both indoor and outdoor facilities.

The education estate plays a crucial role in delivering sport and recreation activities but it is noted that the move to local management has led to individual schools having a greater control over the use of their buildings – this will require greater long term commitment from individual establishments supported by a clear strategic steer from the Borough.

## 9.11 Summary

9.11.1 The following key points have emerged from the Facility Strategy:

- the current position regarding facilities is not sustainable in the long-term as many key sites are in a spiral of decline due to a lack of recent investment – in particular, the school swimming pools are life expired
- however, the newest facilities at The Headland and Brierton have the potential to be a key part of the Borough's provision for many years
- we have assumed that a new Borough swimming facility will be constructed in the medium term and that Mill House will remain in operation until such time as this opens – the capital cost would range from the £26 million for the H<sub>2</sub>O Centre as presently envisaged to £24.8m for excluding the sports hall at Victoria Harbour or a significantly greater reduction for a new pool alongside the present sports hall at Mill House Leisure Centre (further study required)
- the options review has highlighted that the most appropriate approach to replacing the present school pools would be to add swimming facilities (25 metre and teaching pools) to the existing Brierton Sport Centre at a capital cost of between £4.5 and £5.5 million
- while this would provide a slight surplus in terms of water space, there could be an issue with regard to access to swimming in North Hartlepool – this could be addressed by the refurbishment of an existing pool such as that at High Tunstall (minimum of £300,000) or construction of an additional standalone teaching pool (some £3.5 million)
- the redevelopment and/or refurbishment of the school sports halls under the BSF programme is an opportunity to consolidate the service to the town's residents but investment in a separate entrance and reception/office can facilitate use as a community sports centre outside school hours – this could amount to some £125,000 for each site
- a Service Level or Community Use Agreement with individual schools should be developed to ensure that the facilities are operated in a consistent and complementary manner
- to assist schools to manage community facilities effectively, it is recommended that a Borough-wide organisation should be established to coordinate their overall operation
- the current provision of sports halls is well over that required if the parameters of the facility planning model are to be adopted but current programmes of use demonstrate that there is actual demand for more than the minimum suggested



- the Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre should remain a key partner but the operation of the core sports facilities should be integrated with that of other sites in Hartlepool
- we have made site by site recommendations regarding the halls owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council
- there is not a shortfall in provision with regard to any of the key facilities which would normally be expected in a town of such a population
- with regard to integration with other service provision, the key issue is that the principal sports facilities on the secondary school sites are situated away from the larger local shopping parades which, due to their accessibility, tend to be the most appropriate places for branch libraries and community facilities
- to ensure appropriate performance measurement, it should be a priority to implement a common Management Information System across all leisure sites in the Borough.

## 10 NEXT STEPS

### 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Following an overview of the Strategy, the paragraphs in this section set out the key actions that it is felt should be implemented in order to deliver the Indoor Facilities Strategy for Hartlepool. This will help ensure that the facilities provided are of high quality, designed to address local community needs and cost-effective in use.

### 10.2 Strategy Overview

10.2.1 A key element of the commission is to review the overall strategy of the Council with regard to the provision of leisure facilities and services. Over recent years, these have been delivered through a variety of mechanisms, both internal to the Council (within a number of different departments) and external. There is a commitment to improving service delivery in both qualitative and, where necessary, quantitative terms but the use of third party partners or providers makes it more difficult for the authority to maintain an overall view of provision. It is essential that in moving forward with this agenda, the authority establishes sound and cost-effective agreements and processes to enable stakeholders and the wider community to appreciate the value of the service as a whole.

10.2.2 It is considered that a key to improving the delivery of sport and physical activity opportunities in Hartlepool is to bring all existing and potential providers of indoor (and outdoor) facilities together to agree an over-arching vision for the 'service' as perceived by the community. Most users are not concerned with regard to the provider so long as the facility meets their needs in functional, locational and financial terms. The Vision set out in the Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy (paragraph 7.2.4) should be supported by a series of more targeted Aims and Objectives which will guide the way in which each agency involved will contribute to the process and measure the outputs achieved. The present Sport and Recreation Strategy can be used as the basis of this document but its revision and extension will require a wider input from potential partners both within the authority (for example Children's Services) and outside (such as the Primary Health Trust, voluntary organisations, commercial providers and neighbouring authorities).

### 10.3 Next Steps

10.3.1 The following section sets out the key actions which we feel would help address issues and deliver the proposals we have set out this Strategy. The intention is to highlight those which can be carried out quickly and economically as well as others which will demand a longer implementation timescale.

### 10.4 Short Term Actions

10.4.1 The elements of the Action Plan set out below are those which it is considered are essential to improving the delivery of sport and recreation services in the Borough and could be carried out within a year.

- a. Further develop ***inter-departmental relationships*** between teams which have an impact on the development or management of facilities and/or activities (for

example, Planning, Highways, Children's Services and Adult Services). This will assist in developing a common Vision for sport, recreation and physical activity.

- b. Develop **inter-agency links** which will ensure that potential partners such as the Primary Health Trust, regeneration bodies, voluntary organisations and the private sector are given the opportunity to contribute to this common Vision.
- c. Adopt the results of the appraisal of the quantity and quality of the Borough's parks and open spaces which is being carried out in line with the guidelines set out in **Planning Policy Guidance 17** and its supporting documentation. This will enable the authority to determine a detailed strategy for its outdoor sports and informal activities, with the conclusions contributing to the Sport and Recreation Strategy.
- d. Revise the **Sport and Recreation Strategy** as a working document to guide future investment in facilities, personnel and activities. The Strategy should be informed by the documents above and this Facility Strategy.
- e. Following adoption of the Facility Strategy as an appropriate route forward and on finalisation of the structure of the education estate, to **confirm the initial financial analysis** of the capital and revenue costs within this document.
- f. Develop a **basic monitoring scheme** to record and analyse the use of all indoor (and ideally outdoor) sports and recreation facilities in Hartlepool. This should be capable of being carried out at a variety of levels in order to be applicable to a single use community building with limited staffing as well as the most complex multi-element indoor facility fitted with a comprehensive management information system.
- g. Develop an **output monitoring strategy and community use agreement** for the school BSF sites, and other venues, in order to ensure appropriate public access to any sport and recreation facilities which may be provided.
- h. Commission detailed feasibility studies into the funding and delivery of the following key indoor sports developments:
  - the extension of **Brierton Leisure Centre** to provide a 25m community swimming pool, teaching pool and/or enhanced fitness/exercise facilities – this should incorporate a detailed capital and revenue cost review of the option to locate an additional teaching pool on a site in North West Hartlepool
  - the provision of new indoor sports and other community facilities at **Seaton Carew** (potentially in association with the local Sports Club)
  - the basic **design and spatial requirements** to ensure that any sports facilities constructed under the BSF programme can provide cost-effective community access out of hours – this should include an assessment of the likely additional capital costs for any community elements and potential sources for the funding required.

## 10.5 Medium Term Actions

- 10.5.1 It is considered that the following Action Plan elements should be carried out over the new two to three years in order to continue improving the delivery of sport and

recreation services in the Borough – given the availability of appropriate budgets, some of these elements could be brought forward.

- a. Keep a careful watching brief on the condition of the **School Swimming Pools** to ensure that the safety of users is not compromised. As the buildings do not have a cost-effective long term future, it would be inappropriate to spend significant sums on their repair should major elements fail.
- b. Monitor the condition of the **Mill House Leisure Centre** to ensure that the safety of users is not compromised.
- c. Seek the procurement of the proposed **H<sub>2</sub>O Centre** at Victoria Harbour and, if this cannot be delivered in the form envisaged, review the outline design brief and business case for the project in order to ensure that high quality Borough level sport and recreation facilities (especially swimming pools) are retained in or close to the town centre.
- d. Procure any agreed swimming pool developments at the **Brierton Leisure Centre** in order to ensure that it is possible to maintain the school swimming programme and offer enhanced participation opportunities should any of the existing school teaching pools be closed.
- e. Procure the enhanced **School Sports Facilities** to be constructed under the BSF initiative and establish operational arrangements which will deliver cost-effective sports and recreation opportunities to the whole community.
- f. In conjunction with the present Trust, review the long term operation and revenue funding of the **Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre** in order to ensure that the facility can further develop its role in encouraging sport and physical activity in the area.
- g. Install a comprehensive **Performance Monitoring Scheme** which ensures that all facility users are recorded in order to determine the extent to which the service meets local and national targets for participation.
- h. Develop an integrated web-based **Facility Booking Package** encompassing all indoor sports facilities (public, school, voluntary sector and commercial) in order to provide a one-stop location which can be accessed in homes, sports centres, schools or other public buildings.

## 10.6 Long Term Actions

10.6.1 While it might be valuable to carry out the following actions earlier, it is acknowledged that budget and officer time limits mean that some will need to be delayed – the following elements would be implemented at any time but principally after year four.

- a. Monitor the condition of all indoor **sports, youth and community facilities** to ensure that the safety of users is not compromised through structural failure and, if the buildings do not have a cost-effective long term future, determine if it is possible to deliver the service through existing premises rather than provide additional new buildings.
- b. Commission **specific feasibility studies** to address the development of shared service centres or community hubs at potential locations such as
  - area encompassing Mill House Leisure Centre, the Indoor Bowling Centre and Hartlepool United FC (potentially also former Odeon Cinema)

- West Park and St Hild's,
- Rossmere and Owton Manor,
- Dyke House
- any other appropriate sites.