

STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Stafford Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy for the period 2018 – 2040. Recommendations are drawn from the Needs Assessment Report, researched and prepared between July – November 2018 by Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP). The Assessment Report and Strategy have been prepared in accordance with Sport England's ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities - for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities - Guidance) and in consultation with Stafford Borough Council, Sport England, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), local sports clubs and key stakeholders.

Figure 1: Planning for Sport model



As illustrated, Sport England regards an assessment of need as core to the planning for sporting provision. This report reviews indoor and built sporting facility need in Stafford and provides a basis for future strategic planning.

1.1 Purpose

In response to anticipated population growth and a desire to plan effective provision that will aid community cohesion and improve health outcomes, Indoor Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch strategies have been commissioned by Stafford Borough Council (SBC).

They are needed to ensure that current and future demand for sport and recreation facilities is planned for holistically and the needs of the current and growing borough population can be fully met. They also provide evidence to support funding bids to/from national sports bodies like Sport England and national governing bodies (NGBs) of sport, regional funders such as WREN and supporting requests for developer contributions via new developments.

In addition, they will help focus internal revenue and capital spending in the medium term. This work will ensure that a planned approach to sport and physical activity facilities takes place in Stafford, ensuring that the community has access to high quality facilities. It is imperative that where the Council provides facilities, they are as efficient and effective as possible due to continuing financial pressures.

1.2 National strategic context

Sporting Future: A new strategy for an active nation (December 2015)

The Government's strategy for sport confirms its recognition and understanding that sport makes a positive difference and states its intention that the sector will deliver five simple

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but fundamental outcomes: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development.

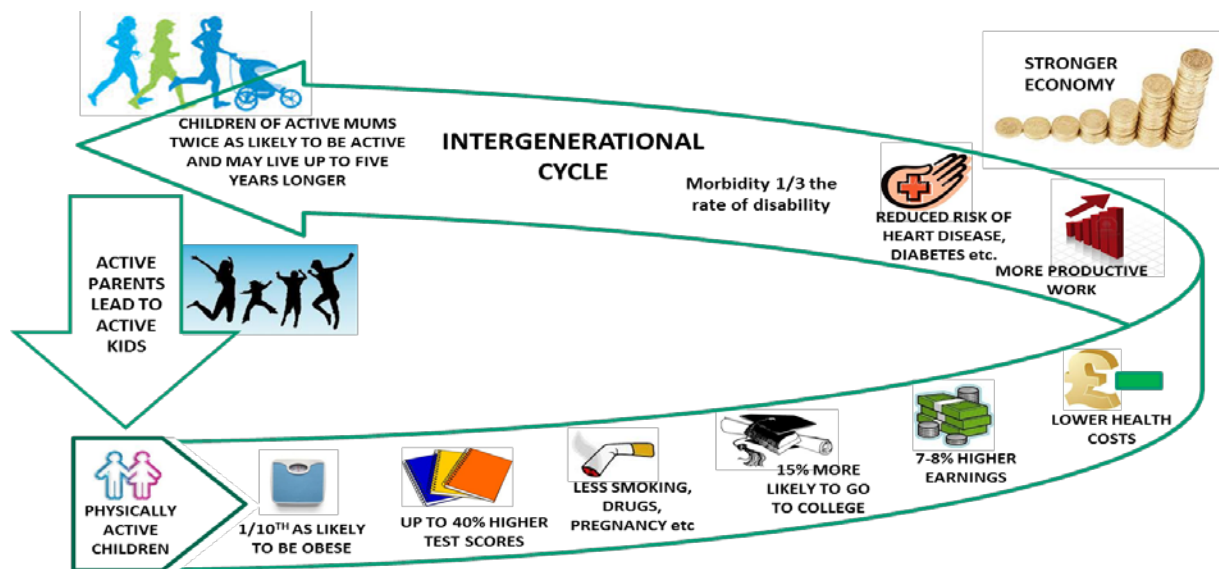
Sport England: Towards an Active Nation (2016)

In Sport England's strategic response to the Government it states that it will invest in:

- ◀ Tackling inactivity.
- ◀ Children and young people.
- ◀ Volunteering – a dual benefit.
- ◀ Taking sport and activity into the mass market
- ◀ Supporting sport's core market.
- ◀ Local delivery.
- ◀ Facilities.

Increasing participation in sport and physical activity and the health and wellbeing benefits delivered are key drivers for Sport England and partners. It places particular emphasis on getting the inactive active and targeting interventions at under-represented groups. The wider benefits that derive from having a more active population are highlighted in the following intergenerational cycle.

Figure 2: Intergenerational cycle



Based on 'Designed to move' © Nike Inc.

High quality, appropriate 'places to play sport and be physically active' are vital to increasing participation which is part of the foundation for maintaining and improving health and wellbeing to Stafford- residents. It is not, however, sufficient just to have the right facilities in the right places, they must also be programmed and priced appropriately to ensure the activities delivered therein are appropriate for specific target groups and that cost is not a barrier to access.

Sport England is committed to continue to invest in facilities but will, going forward, place greater focus on multi-sport and community hubs which bring together a range of services such as libraries and doctor's surgeries. Its Strategic Facilities Fund is part of a portfolio of support and tools designed to strategically support the sector (local authority provision in particular). The Fund has been re-positioned within the Sport England strategy in order to help the sector to be effective in its investment decision-making. The focus is centred

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on delivering locally specified outcomes informed by customer insight based upon interventions (capital and revenue) which effect behaviour change in the target audience.

1.3 Local strategic context:

Local Plan

The purpose of the Local Plan is to set Borough objectives to guide growth, and policies to make sure that new development meets local needs in line with national policy. Stafford's Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted; June 2014) and Part 2 of the Plan (adopted; January 2017) are supported by a range of other planning documents, such as supplementary planning documents, the Statement of Community Involvement and annual monitoring reports. The New Local Plan 2020-2040 is now being progressed by Stafford Borough. The minimum housing provision to be provided on an annual basis for the new plan will be based on the Governments Standard Methodology for Local Housing Need. As of the end of March 2019 the Local Housing Need figure for Stafford Borough is 408 per annum. Therefore, minimum delivery over the twenty year period is 8,160.

Stafford Borough Council Corporate Business Plan

Stafford Borough Council's Corporate Business Plan 2018 – 2021 vision is to create; '*A prosperous and attractive Borough with strong communities*'. Over the next three years SBC will focus on:

- ◀ Delivering sustainable economic and housing growth to provide income and jobs.
- ◀ Improving the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities that promote health and wellbeing.
- ◀ Being a well-run, financially sustainable and ambitious organisation, responsive to the needs of our customers and communities and focused on delivering our objectives'.

Health & Wellbeing 2015-2020

This is focused on prevention and primary interventions within community settings. Priorities for the next five years have been developed via the evaluation of local public health data and evidence (e.g., the Stafford Borough Locality Profile 2015, and the Stafford Borough Health and Wellbeing Profile 2015) and comparing this to community voice and partner feedback. The vision is: "*Building Stafford and Surrounds' Healthy Future by working together to support residents and communities take control of their own health and wellbeing.*"

Summary of local policy documentation

Local policies key messages include:

- ◀ The strategic priority to ensure that the health and wellbeing of residents is supported through all stages of life but that targeted interventions will also be required.
- ◀ The priority given to improving the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work.
- ◀ The need to increase levels of economic growth.

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- ◀ The fact that more houses than the target figure of c.8,000 houses are likely to be delivered over the Local Plan period.
- ◀ Priority given to increasing physical activity among the inactive and the understanding that prevention and primary interventions can take place within community settings.

PART 2: LOCAL AREA CONTEXT

2.1 About Stafford

Stafford Borough covers 230 square miles and is centrally placed in the North Staffordshire area of the West Midlands. It is predominantly rural; Stafford and Stone are its key urban centres. It lies between Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle under Lyme, to the north and the Birmingham city region to the south. To the west it adjoins the Borough of Telford & Wrekin plus rural areas of Shropshire. It also adjoins the Staffordshire districts of Staffordshire Moorlands, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire.

It has a total population of 134,764 (2017 mid-year estimate), with a lower proportion of 0-24 year olds (26.2%) than the West Midlands (31.1%). There are, however, more people aged 65+ compared to the West Midlands. Going forward there will be a continuous increase in the number and proportion of persons aged 65+. This age group represented 2.18% of Stafford's population in 2016 and is projected to account for 29.0% of the total by 2040. The age and composition of the population is a key factor when considering and developing the sport and physical activity offer in the area.

Relative to other parts of the country Stafford experiences low levels of deprivation; In keeping with patterns seen alongside lower levels of health deprivation, life expectancy in Stafford is slightly higher than the national figure; the male rate is currently 80.2 compared to 79.6 for England, and the female equivalent is 83.6 compared to 83.2 nationally. Stafford's ethnic composition does not wholly reflect that of England as a whole; 95% of the local population classified its ethnicity as White; this is higher than the comparative England rate of 85.4%. The next largest population group (by self-classification) is Asian, at 2.5% this is markedly lower than the national equivalent (7.8%).

All these factors have an impact upon the pressure placed on differing types of sporting, educational and cultural provision (facility and services). There may be a specific need to consider how sport and physical activity are planned and provided for especially with regard to the different life-stages of local people both now and as this changes over the duration of the Strategy period.

Sport England Active Lives 2016-2017 illustrates that slightly fewer people are active in Stafford (24.6%) relative to the national figure (25.7%) but it is slightly more active (60.6%) than the West Midlands as a whole (57.6%).

It also illustrates that the most participated in activities (based upon adults who take part at least once per month) in the Authority are structured programme classes and cycling (both at 16.1%). The next most popular activities are athletics (12.4%), fitness (11.8%) and swimming (8.6%) all of which are slightly lower than regional averages. Badminton appears to be the most popular indoor sport; 3.0% of the population indicate that they have taken part, a figure which is above regional (2.2%) and national (2.0%) averages.

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2.2 Housing Strategy 2015-2019

The Council has an adopted Plan for Stafford Borough, setting out how market, affordable and specialist housing will be delivered over the next 15 years. This provides an essential tool to inform successful delivery of the Housing Strategy Vision.

Since adoption of the Plan for Stafford Borough many sites have been built out or have gained planning permission and are now considered to be "commitments". Since the start of the Plan period at least 11,600 houses have either been completed, committed to through planning permissions or have been allocated via Strategic Development Locations.

The proportional split of these commitments was as follows:

Table 2.1: Commitments as of 31 March 2018

Area	SP4 figure based on SP2 (500 per year)	Current position	% over SP4
Stafford	7,000	8,222	+17.50%
Stone	1,000	1,164	+16.40%
Key service villages	1,200	1,401	+16.80%
Rest of the Borough area	800	854	-6.80%
Total	10,000	11,641	+16.40%

As Table 2.1 shows, more houses are likely to be delivered than the target figure of 10,000 over the Plan period. As such a substantial proportion of the housing requirement was already determined, it was not necessary for Part 2 of the Plan to make specific allocations for additional housing sites. The figure of 10,000 does not represent a ceiling or a maximum but establishes a context against which necessary supporting infrastructure can be planned.

Stafford Borough Council – Statement of Five Year Housing Land Supply

The Council has recently released (July 2019) a new housing land supply statement which sets out its residential land supply position as of 31st March 2019 over a five year period (to 2024).

The Statement identifies a requirement for 433 dwellings a year to be provided, which equates to the total housing requirement plus a 5% buffer. Currently, 2,957 deliverable dwellings are identified, meaning the Council has a total supply of 6.83 years deliverable housing land available (2,957/433).

Table 1.2: Five year supply summary

Annualised housing requirement	Total annual housing requirement (2019 - 2024) including 5% buffer	433
Total five year supply breakdown	Small Sites with Planning Permission	229
	Large Sites with Planning Permission	621
	Sites with Planning Permission for C2	216

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	residential accommodation	
	Strategic Development Locations	1,891
	Total Deliverable sites (2019 - 2024)	2,957
Total five year supply	Supply / Requirement (2,957 / 433)	6.83

As identified above, The New Local Plan 2020-2040 is now being progressed by Stafford Borough and as of the end of March 2019 the Local Housing Need figure for Stafford Borough is 408 per annum. Therefore, minimum delivery over the twenty year period is 8,160.

In addition, and more importantly for the work of Part 2, the Plan for Stafford Borough also establishes a clear intent to promote patterns of development so that sustainable, growth should be distributed to reflect the percentage split established in Spatial Principle 4 (SP4). One of the ways in which the Plan established the direction of change is by establishing settlement boundaries for each settlement through the Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy.

The following key issues have been identified from the evidence base, responses to previous consultation, community views and the Borough's characteristics plus the social, economic and environmental challenges facing the area over the Plan period:

- ◀ Delivering and managing the Borough's growth.
- ◀ Providing affordable homes.
- ◀ Adapting to local demographic change.
- ◀ Sustaining the attractive and distinctive quality of the natural and built environment.:
- ◀ Ensuring that the Borough can prepare for and respond to climate change.
- ◀ Maximising access to services and reducing the need to travel.
- ◀ Providing additional employment opportunities that meet local needs, concerns and aspirations for a diverse local economy.
- ◀ Bringing necessary regeneration benefits to the Borough, including those that will contribute to the success of its towns and other settlements.

2.3 Planning policy

Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out planning policies for England. It details how changes are expected to be applied to the planning system. It also provides a framework for local people and their councils to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It identifies the need to focus on three themes of economic, social and environmental sustainable development.

A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making, the NPPF states that local plans should meet objectively assessed needs. It is clear about sport's role delivering sustainable communities via the promotion of health and well-being. Sport England,

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working within the provisions of the NPPF, wishes to see local planning policy protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need, as well as helping to realise the wider benefits that participation in sport can bring.

The *promoting healthy communities* theme identifies that planning policies should be based on robust, up-to-date assessment of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs, quantitative/qualitative deficiencies and surpluses should be identified and used to inform provision requirements in an area. In addition, the Government has recently consulted on developer contributions and although the outcomes are awaited, they have the potential to impact on the delivery mechanism.

It is, essential that SBC, as the local planning authority, retains oversight of all potential facility developments. This includes policies and potential supplementary planning documents setting out the approach to securing sport and recreational facilities through new housing development. It also includes the Council's approach to ensuring that community use of new facilities is agreed at the outset so as to ensure that they contribute to the wider sport and physical activity aspirations of the Council and its partners. The approach taken to this is pivotal to strategy delivery over coming years.

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PART 3: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

3.1 General findings:

The following is an overview of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in Stafford Borough within the Needs Assessment March 2019.

Strengths

- ◀ Relative to many other parts of the country Stafford experiences lower level of deprivation, which generally points to a population which is more active than average.
- ◀ SBC has a strategic priority of ensuring that the health and wellbeing of residents is supported through all stages of life and that targeted interventions will be required amongst the most marginalised.
- ◀ Facilities, generally, meet the needs of the population, are of good quality and are well maintained.
- ◀ There is a positive supply demand balance of health and fitness provision; currently and up to 2040.
- ◀ There is good provision of squash courts in the area.
- ◀ There is a good spread of village halls across the Borough which offer opportunities to people living in more isolated communities and in rural areas.
- ◀ Facilities are well used and there are opportunities for sports to grow in the area.

Weaknesses

- ◀ There is significant under-supply of water space in the Authority; this currently equates to an 8-lane x 25m pool. Even without factoring in the impact of housing growth, ONS population projections would suggest that, by 2040, demand will increase to the point where the shortfall will equate to a 10-lane x 25m pool.
- ◀ Existing swimming pools in the Authority are operating significantly above Sport England benchmark figures placing strain on them and restricting programme development.
- ◀ Growth of swimming as a sport/physical activity is inhibited by lack of water space.
- ◀ Stafford Borough does not have anything larger than a 5-court indoor sports hall which can inhibit development of and local events capacity in specific sports.
- ◀ Linked to this issue is the fact that the majority of the better-quality sports halls in Stafford are presently operating at above the comfort (occupancy) threshold.
- ◀ A small number of residents in the West of the authority do not have access to indoor sports facilities (sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness, and squash).
- ◀ The projected increase in the size of the population in the Borough is likely to lead to an increase in the numbers of people wishing to take part in sport and physical activity (potential customers of leisure facilities).

Opportunities

- ◀ More houses are likely to be delivered than the target figure of 10,000 houses over the Local Plan period, which should lead to additional s.106 contributions to support facility developments.

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- ◀ There are several potential hub sites in Stafford including Rowley Park and Walton High School. Any new developments should be made fully available to the community and should go some way to addressing the present shortfall of water space and/or reducing pressure on existing swimming pools in the Authority.
- ◀ A number of sites may be suitable for the accommodation of new swimming provision in the Borough. This includes sites which currently host sports facilities and two new areas in strategic development locations (SDLs) which will also accommodate new housing growth. In particular, there is a need to consider sites in the North SDL, East SDL, Walton High School and Rowley Park. Due to the changing nature of the level of development in specific areas a feasibility study should consider exploring which will be the preferred site, in line with authority requirements.
- ◀ The opening of Stone Leisure Centre will increase swimming pool availability and quality (also allowing for day time use) but will not increase the net current level of water space because Alleynes Academy Pool will close when it opens.
- ◀ The proposed new sports hall (exact size yet to be determined) at the Beaconside School would enhance the scale and quality of indoor sports hall provision in the Authority – and could service an area(s) where housing growth is proposed. Ideally it should be a minimum of a 4-court hall so as to enable it to accommodate the majority of indoor sports and maximise its potential use.
- ◀ The English Indoor Bowls Association (EIBA) is keen to explore an option to develop an indoor bowls facility in the authority.
- ◀ Investment in refurbishing existing below average/poor quality school sports halls could be undertaken – in return for guaranteed long-term community access.
- ◀ The national/county drive to develop futsal means there is an opportunity to work with the FA to drive up participation and enhance the provision of suitable facilities in the area. Should a 6-court hall be included in any new development consideration should be given to marking it with futsal lines to enable the growth of the sport in the area.

Threats

- ◀ Two sports halls are in poor condition (King Edward VI High and The Weston Road Academy). Failure to invest could result in closure and loss of community use at these sites. They already report having low capacity levels.
- ◀ A linked threat is that the poor quality of some sports halls will exacerbate the pressure already being faced in respect of occupancy levels at the existing better-quality facilities.
- ◀ Lack of investment in additional water space is likely to inhibit the growth of the sport, (casual and club use) and restrict teaching programmes resulting in fewer people learning to swim.

The key strategic issues raised by the Needs Assessment include a requirement for:

- ◀ More swimming pools (increased water space) in the area. Given proposed housing development in Stafford Borough, an additional pool is required; preferably to the west of Stafford to address existing unmet demand in the west. Consideration should also be given to working jointly with neighbouring authorities to achieve this.
- ◀ The development of complementary facilities when planning new venues, to ensure financial viability. For example, there may be a requirement to provide a health and

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fitness suite of a specific size, even though the Needs Assessment 2018 identifies sufficient supply now and up to 2040 for such facilities.

- ◀ SBC owned facilities to make a progressively greater (and measured) contribution to the needs of all residents. It is also incumbent on SBC, through its leisure operator, to ensure that all facilities are fully available to all the Borough's communities through targeted initiatives, facilities, programming, pricing and training.
- ◀ To improve the cross-agency basis of strategic work undertaken across the Borough.
- ◀ Increasing the volume of activity provided in community/village halls to raise overall levels of physical activity.
- ◀ Action to secure the community use of Alleynes Sports Centre sports hall once it reverts back to school control.
- ◀ Consideration in respect of development of a larger sports hall (6 courts) such as that identified in the Walton High School feasibility study or at the Beaconside School.
- ◀ Ongoing awareness with regard to participation trends in sport and physical activity in more non-traditional sports, such as Futsal (which may also be bolstered by the national/county drive to develop the game).
- ◀ Any further sports provision to give priority to catering for residents in the west of the authority and /or take account of new housing developments; especially, those who are currently, or will not be, provided for within the 20 minutes' drive time of a sports hall or swimming pool. Consider joint working with neighbouring authorities.
- ◀ Further analysis of the bowls community to ascertain the likely demand for an indoor bowls centre. If such a development is deemed to be necessary, provision of an indoor bowls centre either within Stafford Borough or close to the Authority boundary (possibly provided/supported jointly with a neighbouring authority) would help meet the needs of what is an aging population. Co-location of the facility is the most likely way to ensure centre long-term financial viability.
- ◀ A continued focus on ensuring that all school sports facilities continue to accommodate for community use.
- ◀ Support for other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) which may assist in increasing sport and physical activity within the wider community.
- ◀ The identification and allocation of capital funds to protect and improve (via ongoing investment, maintenance and refurbishment) existing Borough sports facilities

It is fair to assume that there will be increased demand for sports facilities and physical activity opportunity in areas where housebuilding is planned.

Although levels of deprivation (health and IMD) are relatively limited within the Borough, it is still important to ensure that the proportion of the population which is currently active remains so and that more of the presently inactive become active (sustaining and improving the general health of the local population). Programmes of activity, within facilities, also need to be capable of adapting to changing needs and trends within the local population.

The principal opportunity/challenge for Stafford Borough is to ensure that its stock of facilities is fit for the future. There is a need to balance the needs of the core market for sport and physical activity; people already taking part, while assisting and encouraging the growth of existing or new activities to meet the needs of a more diverse and ageing population.

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PART 4: VISION AND OBJECTIVES

This is Stafford Borough's vision for sport and leisure provision in the area for the period 2018-2040. It considers the community sport and leisure assets required to ensure the Council and its partners serve the residents of Stafford Borough:

Stafford Borough's vision is:

To create accessible, high quality and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling the inactive to become active, increase participation in targeted group and help improve health and wellbeing of its residents.

It builds upon the conclusions identified in the Needs Assessment Report (January 2019) and Sport England's five-year strategy 'Towards an Active Nation', which aims to target the 28% of people who take part in fewer than 30 minutes of exercise each week and focuses on the least active groups; typically, women, the disabled and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

This strategy provides a framework within which a clear, coherent way forward for the management and delivery of leisure and sports facilities in Stafford can be identified. The primary focus is to enable residents to gain access to leisure facilities of which they can be proud. It is also vital to ensure that facilities support sport and physical activity programmes for the whole population, leading to increases in regular participation, taking account of the projected changes in age profile of the population and its increase in the Borough up until 2040.

4.1 Facility hierarchy and core principles

SBC and partners will consider how to ensure that the Borough's network of leisure and sports facilities works to maximum benefit and that, where possible, each facility performs a specific role and function in the drive to increase participation in sport and physical activity and contribute to wider community health and wellbeing.

As such there is a need to clarify the sports facility hierarchy in Stafford Borough establishing which specific venues have distinct roles and functions; the extent to which they carry differing levels of community importance, operational weight and related staffing.

It is important that facilities have a defined function from a user perspective. Borough wide and key community facilities deliver orchestrated physical activity geared to extended participation and improving health whilst key neighbourhood facilities offer accredited clubs opportunities to develop their sports.

It is worth noting that facilities identified in local provision are generally smaller than those identified within the scope of this commission. They are, however, often valuable assets for a specific local area or community offering either a range of recreation/participation opportunities or, in some instances, offering beginner to performance opportunities.

Broad principles are illustrated in Figure 3 overleaf, whilst key principles are as shown in the Table 1.

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Figure 3: Facility hierarchy – core principles

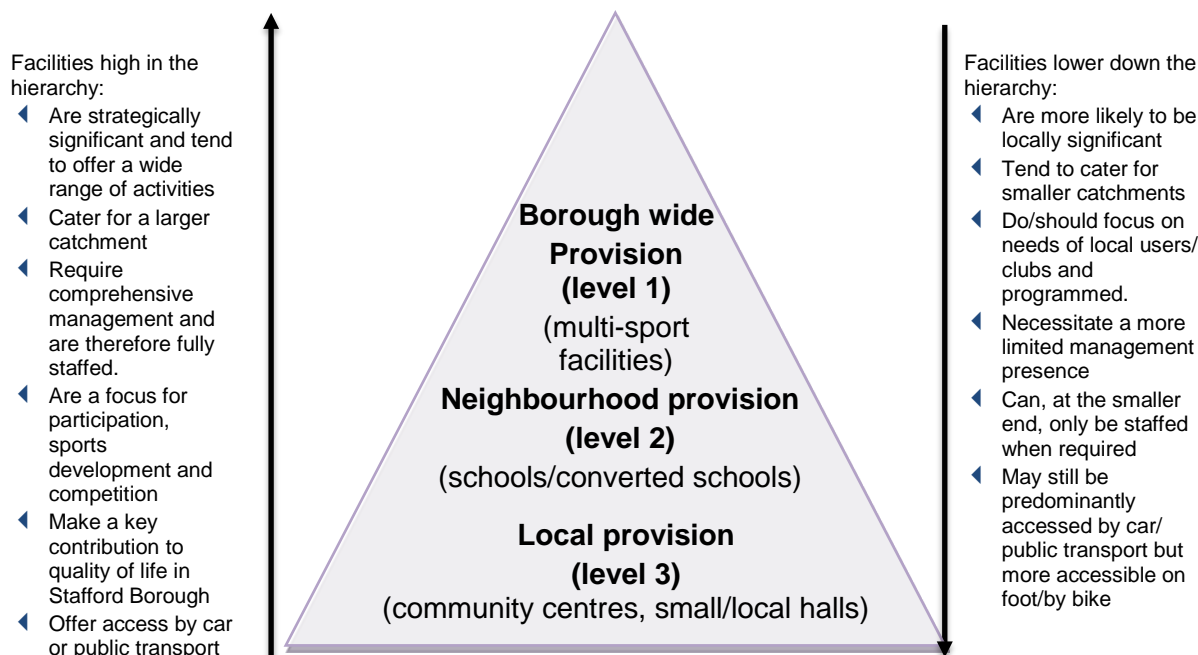


Table 1: Proposed facility hierarchy – site designation and definition

Designation	Role and function
Borough wide provision: Borough or county or sub-county significance Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A borough or sub-county area significant facility and the primary performance venue for a single or select number of priority sports. • Can host county/borough/local events drawing people from surrounding areas. • Provides a wide a range of opportunity for residents/visitors to participate, contributing significantly to the quality of life of borough residents. • Provides and programmes opportunities for local people to try new activities, develop their skills and progress to a higher performance level. • A core venue for training and development of teachers, coaches, volunteers, officials and others in key sports. • (An example of which would include Stafford Leisure Centre)
Neighbourhood provision: Education or multi sports hubs Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to quality of life of residents within the community and provides a range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. • Generally, a combination of stand-alone community facilities and dual use sports facilities on school sites. • Venues with potential to host borough or town-wide and local events. • Provides a base for provision of opportunity (delivered by a range of providers) for local people to develop their skills and try new activities. • Core venue for health and fitness activity in/across Stafford. • Core venue to accommodate Learn to Swim (where pools are available). • Provides options for a range of sports organisations to develop skills, participate and compete within their chosen activity. • Supports the voluntary sector to raise standards with respect to coaching, coach education, administration and volunteer development in chosen sport. • Use reflects demographic profile of the local community and draws in people from the more immediately adjacent rural areas. • Improves quality of PE and school sport opportunity for young people attending

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Designation	Role and function
	the school upon whose site it is based. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (An example of which includes King Edward VI High School)
Local provision: Community centres and village halls Level 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When within the vicinity of a 'community sports facility' they can complement the programming and opportunities offered to the locality. • Tend to be stand-alone small informal/sports facilities which operate independently and are found in villages or distinct urban community settings. • Contribute to quality of life of the locality, accommodating a small range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. • Provides opportunity – often for just for one or two dedicated sports organisations to participate, train and compete (e.g. boxing, martial arts). • Programming can be set out, or have evolved to, appeal to a specific demographic e.g. older people or community groups. • (An example of which is North End Community Centre)

4.2 Strategic objectives

The above vision is based upon a clear, achievable framework of strategic objectives to **protect, enhance and provide** and are summarised below.

Strategic Objective 1:

Protect the current stock of facilities in order to meet the sport and physical activity needs of local residents, by introducing a hierarchy of use with defined roles and functions for different facility types which will be supported by appropriate investment.

SBC needs to protect the current stock of facilities. With partners it will consider how to ensure that the Borough network of venues works to maximum benefit and that, where possible, each facility performs a specific role and function in the drive to increase participation in sport and physical activity thus contributing to wider community health and wellbeing.

Strategic Objective 2:

Enhance the borough-wide approach to programming and management at all sites with a view to improving sports development aspirations and increasing physical activity outcomes, based on identified strategic need

In delivering the above SBC needs to consider how it will work with partners to:

- ◀ Ensure that the current stock of facilities (for which there is a proven need), remains open and accessible to the general public.
- ◀ Work through SBC's leisure operator (Freedom Leisure) and other partners to develop a process that brings together as many operators of local sports facilities as possible.
- ◀ Develop an agreed approach and a Stafford Borough definition of community use of school sports facilities to which all partners sign up and agree to implement. This will recognise the importance of well programmed community use attracting people from older age groups into facilities.

In delivering this SBC and partners will need to consider:

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- ◀ How partners might engineer a holistic approach to strategic programming across sites, including smaller but strategically placed community/village halls in order to increase and improve provision.
- ◀ How (reflecting the proposed community use standard cited above) relationships are developed and maintained with schools across the Borough.
- ◀ How housing developments can complement current and projected future demand for sport and physical activity.
- ◀ The development of strategic plans that take account of the increasing demand from the ageing population will affect facilities in the area and how those facilities in the more rural locations can be accessed.

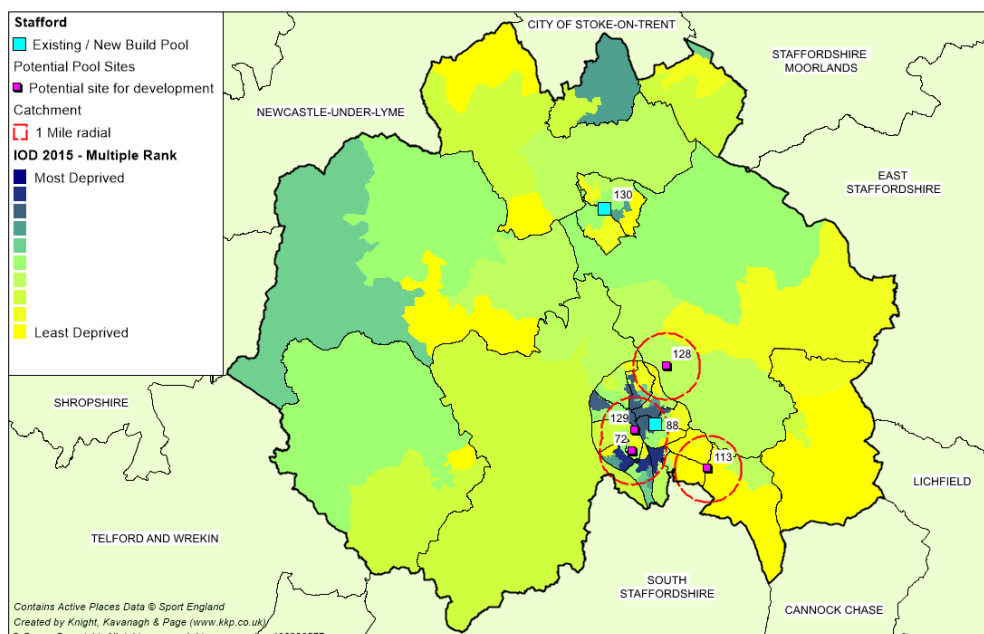
Strategic Objective 3:

Provide a coherent range of good quality, accessible facilities reflecting the hierarchy illustrated, and serving key current and future communities, across Stafford Borough.

The following section identifies major investment requirements over the life of this Strategy. It describes what is needed in order to 'protect', 'enhance' and 'provide' sport and leisure facilities for current and future residents of the borough of Stafford and enable the Council to meet its wider objectives. It considers Stafford Leisure Centre and the new Stone Leisure Centre (opening in Spring 2019) as key facilities in the Borough.

There is a current deficit of a minimum of an 8 lane 25 m pool which is likely to grow to 10 lanes given the planned growth within the Borough. Both Stafford Leisure Centre and Stone Swimming Pool are likely to remain usable and fit for purpose for the lifetime of the Local Plan, given their relative modernity (Stone is yet to open). The key issue is where the best location is to locate additional water space based on current demand, new build housing and ownership of land. Figure 4 identifies four potential sites for swimming pool development in and around the town of Stafford (in addition to pool water at Stafford and Stone leisure centres).

Figure 4: Potential sites for new swimming pool water in Stafford



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Table 2 Existing swimming pools in Stafford Borough

KKP Ref	Site	Postcode
68	Stafford Leisure Centre	ST16 3TA
130	Stone Leisure Centre	ST15 8QW

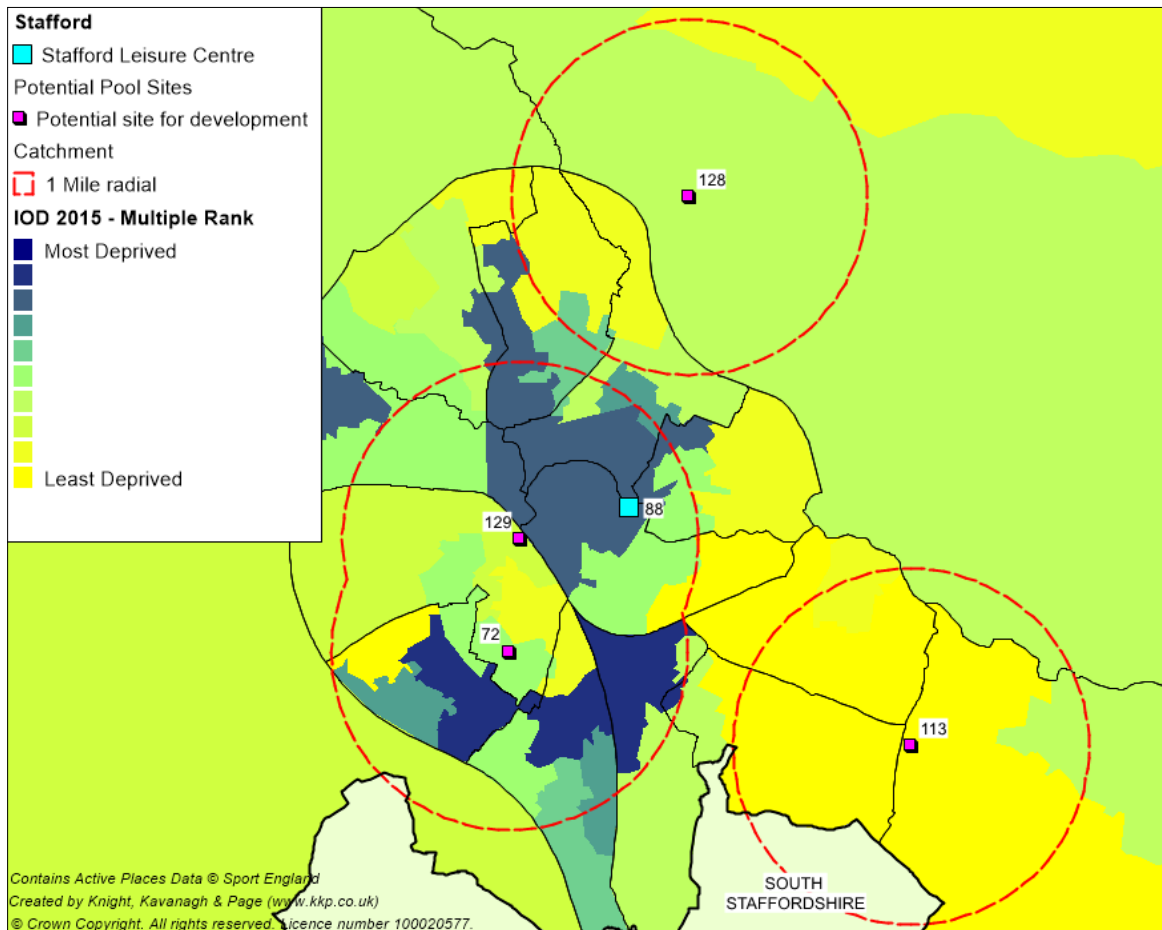
Table 2: Proposed sites for a new pool in and around the town of Stafford

KKP Ref	Site	Postcode
72	Rowley Park Sport Stadium	ST17 9XX
113	Walton High School	ST17 0LJ
128	North SDL*	ST18 9TH
129	East SDL*	ST18 0EE

SDL = Strategic Development Location

*postcodes are approximate only

Figure 5: Potential sites for a new pool (including + Stafford Leisure Centre



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Clearly, the one mile catchment surrounding Rowley Park (Map ID: 72) incorporates areas of higher deprivation within compared with the other sites. The East SDL is located closest to Stafford Leisure Centre compared with the other proposed locations. The scale of development and layout at North SDL and East SDL is not fully known. Any development at Walton High School (Map Ref:113) and Rowley Park could pull in users from South Staffordshire. Consultation with officers in South Staffordshire suggests that there is likely to be housing growth in the north of the borough (South Staffordshire).

Consultation with officers indicates that South Staffordshire also has a deficit of pool water in the Borough. Consideration is currently being given to investing in Penkridge Leisure Centre (new pool water up to a 6 lane 25m pool) located approximately 6 miles south of Stafford. Any feasibility will need to take account of growth in both boroughs and the potential investment in Penkridge.

4.3: Modern leisure centre development

To provide Stafford Borough with a reference point in respect of what other local authorities are developing by way of sports facility networks, it is accurate to state that the majority are developing fewer, better quality facilities and are placing greater importance on the location of, and travel connections to/from, facilities. Furthermore, many are looking to enhance the quality and affordability of the offer made by developing a more 'commercial' range of facilities alongside a wider range of health and wellbeing service providers.

The majority of new leisure centre developments are undertaken on the basis of rationalising one or more existing facilities and developing new larger, better quality venues which are more economic to operate. A new facility mix also normally enables operators to deliver revenue efficiencies (i.e. run facility at zero subsidy or better) which enables partial or full repayment of debt incurred related to the capital costs. A similar approach is often taken to facility refurbishment where increased income can offset the annualised repayment cost associated with the refurbishment.

Recent developments of new community leisure facilities throughout the UK have followed three key themes within their design and offering, namely:

- ◀ Core facilities which meet local need and demand for sport and physical activity and enable the operator to deliver a cost effective service with minimal subsidy.
- ◀ Additional activity areas which provide a financial return by addressing a gap in the market or enhancing the core offer.
- ◀ Co-location with other service providers designed to enhance working relationships across 'civic' partners and improve service delivery to the community.

This Strategy does not address in detail how proposals and recommendations will be funded. It is anticipated that a mix of sources and solutions will be required to deliver the stated vision and ambitions; these may include:

- ◀ Further development and implementation of SBC's developer contributions process.
- ◀ Use of capital receipts from land disposal, where applicable.
- ◀ Asset rationalisation and use of revenue saving and/or future liabilities to pay back borrowing aligned to capital investment in other sites.
- ◀ Prudential borrowing where an 'invest to save' justification can be made, particularly for longer-term proposals considered in light of SBC's future borrowing strategy.

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- ◀ Securing funds from external sources aligned to specific facilities and/or sports (e.g. Sport England, other charitable grant awards and funding streams).
- ◀ Third party borrowing where a suitable, robust business case exists (although this is normally more expensive than prudential borrowing).
- ◀ Partner funding; for example, with Public Health.

It is likely that a combination of the above approaches will need to be developed for the wide range of projects identified in Stafford Borough. This will necessitate a robust approach to business planning to ensure that all investment is financially sound. The following table identifies the types of facilities and activity areas typically considered and the wider benefits that developments of this type can deliver for the community.

Table 2: Modern leisure facility considerations

Core facilities	Additional activity areas	Co-located services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (6) lane 25 metre pool • Teaching pool • Sports hall (size depends on demand and programming) • 80 - 150 station fitness suite • 1 x large group fitness studio • 1 x small group fitness studio • Catering hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodlit 3G pitch • 5-a-side pitches. • Soft play • Spa facilities • Youth play facility (e.g. clip n' climb, interactive activity zones). • High ropes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a school campus • Library • Health centre / GP surgery • Pharmacy • Police office • Council contact point • Meeting rooms
Benefits	Benefits	Benefits
<p>Enables operators to provide services at minimal subsidy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising income from health and fitness equipment. • Maximising learn to swim income. • Offering a range of community-based activities. <p>Enables operators to contribute to the wider wellbeing agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering health-based programmes within fitness suites & swimming pools • Being a meeting point/social venue for outdoor activities. 	<p>Enables operators to maximise income to underpin the cost of the operation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a more commercial approach to programming activity areas. • Capturing data on users (e.g. parents) and using this as a way of cross selling core services (e.g. learn to swim). • Providing a return on investment. 	<p>Creation of a leisure/community hub which enables operators to link with other services to contribute to wider physical activity and wellbeing agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering a wider range of services under one roof. • Reaching people who may not otherwise use a sports facility. • Run programmes/interventions for key client groups with health/other partners. • Cross marketing/information sharing to address local need.

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PART 5: STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN:

5.1 Management and programming

The following actions are relative to the overall management and programming of key facilities in the Borough of Stafford. All actions identified below should take account of accessibility issues (hearing, visual and wheelchair access). Short term- 1-2 years; medium 3-5 years; Long term 5-10 years.

Objective	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Maintain and extend community use of school facilities Enhance	Market and promote the availability of the current stock of sports halls to more sections of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Continue to review sports activity programmes being run in school sports halls across the Borough. ◀ Develop an action plan to improve the quality of the two education sites which are considered poor leading to extended use. Also work to extend the use at those facilities which offer private use only. 	Short	Schools, SBC, SASSOT, NGBs	High
Swimming pools Provide	Commit to expand the volume of water space available in the Borough to cater for current and demand. Strategically programme water time for all residents (given the opportunity when Stone Leisure Centre opens later in 2019).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Strategically programme water time for all residents to ensure the public have as much time as possible whilst ensuring facility financial viability. ◀ Commission a feasibility study to assess potential sites at which to develop a new swimming pool and complementary facilities. Consideration needs to be taken of the amount of water and potential sites available (including North SDL, East SDL, Walton High School and Rowley Park). Determine viability and a preferred option for SBC to take forward. ◀ Work with the clubs on pools programming to maximise (efficient) access and use. Consider proposing amalgamation of the two clubs. 	Medium	SBC, Swim England Sport England, Freedom Leisure. Swimming clubs.	High

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Objective	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Health and fitness Enhance	Continue to monitor quantity and quality of health and fitness offer across the Borough. Ensure that the provision of health and fitness facilities are appropriate to an ageing population in the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Continue to invest in SBC owned leisure centres to ensure that quality and attractiveness remains high. ◀ Develop incentives to drive retention in membership especially from GP and Active referral classes. ◀ Improve reporting mechanisms for use of H&F facilities by different market segments, ensuring that feedback is acted upon to drive reduced inactivity across hard to reach groups in particular. 	Medium	Freedom Leisure SBC	High
Squash Courts Protect	Maintain quality and retain current number of courts. Assist clubs which are actively trying to recruit new members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Monitor and continue to invest in the quality of squash courts ensuring they remain high quality, fit for purpose and continue to service local demand for the sport. 	Short	SBC, England Squash & Racketball, clubs	High
Dedicated specialist sports facilities Provide	Indoor bowls – not currently applicable Support gymnastics to expand provision with officer expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Further analysis of the needs and scale of the local bowls community is needed to establish the likely demand for an indoor centre. Should this exist the provision of indoor bowls centre within Stafford or close to the Authority boundary – provided jointly with a neighbouring authority would help meet the needs of a population in which the number of older people is increasing. Co-location may be the best way to ensure centre long-term financial viability. ◀ Bring together representatives of gymnastics clubs (which all have waiting lists) to help develop a plan for expansion across the Borough. Concurrently prepare a workforce development plan. ◀ Work with Stafford Gymnastics Club to identify suitable premises and develop Club capacity and workforce to help it to move to larger premises. ◀ Offer officer support and expertise to enable the Club to move premises. 	Medium Medium Medium Short	SBC, EIBA, clubs BG, SE, SBC, Gymnastics Clubs	Medium Medium Medium Short

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Objective	Recommendation	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Importance
Incorporate village halls/ community centres into the facility portfolio Protect and Enhance	Develop an improved understanding of the importance of Level 3 facilities with regard to the physical activity offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Review Level 3 facilities to see which could realistically accommodate increased physical activity in the context of scale, configuration, management arrangements and existing commitments. ◀ Consider their fit in the wider programming offer. ◀ Monitor increases in participation as part of a wider commitment to improving data collection and analysis across the Borough 	Medium	Parish councils, community groups, private facilities, SBC	Medium
Planning Protect, Enhance, and Provide	To recognise the importance of this study and ensure recommendations are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ To adopt the recommendations in this Study and ensure that they are encapsulated in planning policy documents (Local Plan) and other relevant SBC strategies as/where appropriate. ◀ Develop priorities to assist SBC to identify projects that could be funded via developer contributions. 	Medium	Planning & Leisure Team	High
Monitor and review	Keeping the Facilities Strategy relevant and up to date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Complete a light touch review of the study annually. ◀ Undertake a complete review within 5 years of its implementation. 	Medium	SBC	High
Borough wide programming Enhance	Ensure holistic approach to programming across all facilities leading to improved access for all sections of the community. Establish a workforce development plan to build capacity in sports clubs across the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Consider current programming across the Borough. ◀ Define the role of each facility within the wider community use offer across Borough. ◀ Develop a site by site action plan for improving programming across the Borough. ◀ Establish a working group to develop coaches and volunteers in the Borough in a range of sports. ◀ Consider how to deploy volunteers/coaches to best effect linking to increased sporting opportunities across the Borough. 	Short	Freedom Leisure, SBC, schools, village halls / community centres SBC, SASSOT, NGBs and local schools	High

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5.2 Indoor built facilities

The following actions relative to each of the Borough's key facilities is identified below:

Facility	Management	Overview and challenge	Action	Lead agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Stafford Leisure Centre Level 1 Protect	Freedom Leisure	Maintain quality of provision. Ensure that harder to reach groups have access to this quality facility. Incentivise GP referrals and other health related programmes to drive increases in sport and physical activity in line with SBC priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Ongoing maintenance programme in place. ◀ At agreed times, using the latest data, set more challenging targets for health- related programmes and to get the inactive active. ◀ Work with partners to increase community use where possible. 	Freedom Leisure, SBC	Medium	Medium
Stone Leisure Centre Level 2 Protect	Local Authority- In house	Ensure the programme complements that at Stafford Leisure Centre. Utilise the increases in day time availability to drive increases in swimming participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Set challenging targets to get residents from hard to reach groups to learn to swim. ◀ Ensure programme of activity complements current programmes. ◀ Work with partners to increase community use where possible. 	Freedom Leisure	Short High	Medium High
Alleyes Sports Centre Level 2 Protect	School-In house	Swimming pool is being converted to a multi-purpose hall for use as dining hall, assembly area and dance space in curriculum time - leaving sports hall and squash courts available for community use, Management is also reverting to the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Work with the School to retain community use and ensure that activity programmes complement the wider Stafford offer. ◀ Ensure that dry side activity complements wider sport and physical activity offer. Monitor activity and usage data to ensure ongoing match to wider programming 	Alleyes School, SBC	Short	Medium
Beacon Sports and Fitness Level 2 Protect	Commercial	Opened in 2000 and refurbished in 2018, this facility is in good condition and offers a range of sports. It is open for over 40 hours community use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Ensure that the programme delivered at the facility continues to complement the wider Stafford programming. 	Beacon Sports and Fitness	Medium	Medium
Blessed William	School Private use	This designated as private use only. It was refurbished in 2012 so is likely to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Engage with school management to gauge current level of community use (if any). If 	School Management	Medium	Medium

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Facility	Management	Overview and challenge	Action	Lead agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
CHS Level 2 Protect		be in good of above average condition. Acquire more information to gauge the potential facilities offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not, clarify the reasons. ◀ If it is open to it, support the School to make its facilities available to the public. 	t, SBC		
King Edward VI High School Level 2 Protect	School	Despite being in poor condition, this sports hall accommodates a range of sports, including county netball. There is potential to extend opening hours as it is not at capacity. It is unlikely to attract new users due to its condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Support School to maintain and, if possible, improve facilities. ◀ Work with School to retain current and add to community use via investment in quality. ◀ Develop a process of data collection which will fit into wider SBC data analysis. 	School Management , SBC	Medium	High
Sir Graham Balfour High School Level 2 Protect	PFI Contractor	Refurbished in 2001, it is in above average condition and offers 40+ hours of community use per week. There is a concentration on badminton and football.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Ensure that the programme continues to complement wider Stafford programming. ◀ Work to persuade 'outdoor sports' to play outdoors to release sports hall time. ◀ Develop a process of data collection which will fit into wider SBC data analysis. 	School Management , SBC	Medium	Medium
Stafford College Level 2 Protect & Enhance	College Inhouse	Built in 2004, this 3-court sports hall is available for private use only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Engage with the College to ascertain whether it offers any community use. If not, clarify the reasons. ◀ Consider what support can be offered to encourage it to make its facilities available to the public. 	SBC, College	Medium	Medium
Stafford Grammar School Level 2 Protect	School - inhouse	This above average quality sports hall offers a range of sports including: netball, archery, indoor cricket and badminton. It has the potential to offer longer opening hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Support School to maintain and, if possible, improve volume of community use time made available. ◀ Ensure the programme complements wider Stafford venue programming 	School	Medium	Medium
Stafford Manor High School Level 2	School inhouse	Refurbished in 2005, this above average facility offers a range of sports including: netball, badminton, disability football, football, rugby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Maintain current sports hall quality. ◀ Ensure that the programme continues to complement wider Stafford programming. ◀ Develop a process of data collection which 	School, SBC	Medium	Medium

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Facility	Management	Overview and challenge	Action	Lead agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Protect			will fit into wider data analysis.			
The Weston Road Academy Level 2 Protect	School, inhouse	In poor condition, this facility is in need of refurbishment. It still, however, offers badminton and football for community use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Work with the School to identify whether funding can be sourced to invest in refurbishing the sports hall. ◀ Develop a process of data collection which will fit into wider data analysis. 	School, SBC	Medium	Medium
Yarnfield Park Sports Centre Level 2 Protect	School, inhouse	Potentially an opportunity facility as it is the only other facility (apart from Alleyne's) located in the north of the Borough available during the day. It mainly offers facilities for conference use so the volume of sport/physical activity available is very limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Keep a watching brief on activities at the site to see whether it can be of greater use for physical activity and sports programmes in the future. 	SBC, YPSC	Long	Low

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PART 6: STRATEGY DELIVERY

The Strategy should be regarded as the start of the strategic planning process with a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review in order to ensure that a strategic approach is adopted throughout its life. Delivery will be reliant upon close partnership work to collectively protect, enhance and provide quality indoor sports facilities in the Borough.

6.1 Feasibility and master planning

It is recognised that in order to deliver the above proposals SBC will need to commission/ implement an overall Borough master planning exercise possibly followed by specific existing site and new venue feasibility studies. The process will not start with a blank canvas and this needs to be taken into account when considering each development.

The master-planning process and any feasibility study needs to be tested on the basis of the following:

- ◀ Changing local and strategic need.
- ◀ The current community infrastructure within the area.
- ◀ Anticipated changes in local demographics and population growth.
- ◀ Opportunity and site suitability for co-location.
- ◀ The ability to link indoor and outdoor 'active places'.
- ◀ SBC financial challenges; in effect utilising capita investment to both eliminate revenue subsidy and build in capacity to cater for the hard to reach and inactive.
- ◀ The capital cost of developments.
- ◀ The revenue implications of the proposed infrastructure.
- ◀ The potential to secure external funding.
- ◀ The affordability and business case for the development.

The key driver for the Strategy is to ensure that the Council does not consider the provision of leisure facilities in isolation and that the potential to include a wider range of community facilities is also considered as is the requirement for additional water-space in the Borough.

6.2 Funding

The Strategy does not address in detail how proposals and recommendations will be funded. A single funding source is unlikely; a mix of sources and solutions will be required to deliver Strategy vision and ambitions. These will include:

- ◀ Further development and implementation of the SBC developer contributions process.
- ◀ Use of capital receipts from land disposal, where applicable.
- ◀ Asset rationalisation and use of revenue saving and/or future liabilities to pay back borrowing aligned to capital investment in other sites.
- ◀ Prudential borrowing where an 'invest to save' justification can be made, particularly for longer-term proposals which may be considered in light of the Council's future borrowing strategy.
- ◀ External funding sources aligned to specific facilities and/or sports (e.g. Sport England funding, other charitable grant awards and funding streams).

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- ◀ 3rd party borrowing where a suitable, robust business case exists (although this will be more expensive than prudential borrowing).

6.3 Developer contributions

The latest legislation covering Section 106 development contributions states that local authorities will only be able to pool a maximum of five secured Section 106 contributions to fund one specific infrastructure project. Legislation re S106 and pooling is due to change as the technical document, published December 2018, by Ministry for Housing, Local Government and Communities indicates. The regulatory changes the Government are bringing forward relate to:

- ◀ Ensuring that consultation is proportionate.
- ◀ Removing the restriction which prevent local authorities from using more than five section 106 obligations to fund a single infrastructure project (the pooling restriction).
- ◀ Improvements to the operation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- ◀ A more proportionate approach to administering exemptions.
- ◀ Extending abatement provisions to phased planning permissions secured before the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- ◀ Applying indexation where a planning permission is amended.
- ◀ Indexing Community Infrastructure Levy rates to more closely track the value of development.
- ◀ Removing Regulation 123 restrictions and introducing Infrastructure Funding Statements.
- ◀ Clarifying that local planning authorities can seek a sum as part of a section 106 planning obligation for monitoring planning obligations;.
- ◀ Delivering Starter Homes.

Both CIL and S.106 mechanisms allow local Government to secure new or improved infrastructure which is either site-specific or immediately related to the development, as a condition of any planning consent.

6.4 Monitoring and review

The Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy identifies the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain high quality-built facilities infrastructure for Stafford Borough for the period up until 2040.

It is based on the current known and planned facilities and will need to be reviewed periodically especially when there are significant changes in facility provision. It is important that it is used to prioritise investment and develop key work programmes and partnerships. The strategy will inform the planning process in order to gain development related investment through CIL and S106 where need can be clearly evidenced...

It will be important for SBC and its partners to develop a 3-5 year action plan which will be monitored and reviewed annually to review progress against the original action plan, as well as make adjustments to the supply and demand equation for facilities in the area. This is, in part, proposed on the basis that the Strategy is about how facilities are used as well as to ensuring that the infrastructure is of a good quality. In particular, the annual review process should include:

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- ◀ A review of annual progress on the recommendations and the 3-5 year action plan; taking into account any changes to the priority of each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- ◀ Lessons learnt throughout the year.
- ◀ New or upgraded facilities that may need to be taken into account.
- ◀ Any specific changes of use of key sites in the Borough (e.g. sport specific specialisms of sites, changes in availability, etc.).
- ◀ Any specific changes in demand at particular facilities and/or clubs in the area (e.g. reduction or increase in club numbers, new housing growth).
- ◀ New formats of traditional sports that may need to be taken into account.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.