



DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL
LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY**

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS..... 1

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....2

PART 2: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DACORUM?3

PART 3: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CURRENT FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES?5

PART 4: WHAT WILL DACORUM DO?9

PART 5: HOW WILL THE LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY BE MEASURED?.....21

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING GAIN CONTRIBUTION TOOLKIT22

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

ABBREVIATIONS

AHS	Abbots Hill School
ANOG	Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) Guidance
AS	Ashlyns School
ACS	Astley Cooper School
BGC	Berkhamsted Gymnastics Club
BLTSRC	Berkhamsted Lawn Tennis & Squash Racket Club
BS	Berkhamsted School
BPS	Beechwood Park School
BFTC	Bovingdon and Flaunden Tennis Club
CS	Cavendish School
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DBC	Dacorum Borough Council
DSN	Dacorum Sports Network
EIBA	English Indoor Bowls Association
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HGC	Hemel Garden Communities
HHS	Hemel Hempstead School
JFK	John F Kennedy Catholic School
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
KLSS	Kings Langley Secondary School
LP	Lockers Park
LS	Longdean School
LTA	Lawn Tennis Association
LTC	Langley Tennis Club
NGB	National Governing Body
ONS	Office for National Statistics
S106	Section 106
SE	Sport England
SFC	Sports Facility Calculator
TC	Tennis Club
TSC	Tring Squash Club
U	Under
VE	Volleyball England
WHS	Westbrook Hay School

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Leisure Facilities Strategy for Dacorum for the period 2018-2036. It has been prepared in partnership with input from key stakeholders, local clubs, national governing bodies (NGBs), the private sector and schools.

All bodies will have a role to play in taking the strategy forward. It is not the responsibility of Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) to deliver all the recommendations, or even necessarily co-ordinate them all, hence the need to work in partnership with local organisations. Recommendations are drawn from the Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment, researched and prepared between September 2018 and March 2019 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP).

Both the Assessment Report and this Strategy have been prepared in accordance with Sport England's ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities) Guidance.

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 leisure sporting facility need in Dacorum and provides a basis for future strategic planning. The need for outdoor sports is considered separately.

DBC's stated vision is: "working in partnership to create a borough which enables the communities of Dacorum to thrive and prosper." Its priorities and aims of the Corporate Plan 2015-2020 are:

- ◀ A clean, safe and enjoyable environment.
- ◀ Building strong and vibrant communities.
- ◀ Ensuring economic growth and prosperity.
- ◀ Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular, for those most in need.
- ◀ Delivering an efficient and modern council.

Within the 'building strong and vibrant communities' element DBC has a sports activation programme that has launched a range of initiatives, aimed at improving the health and well-being of residents in local communities.

The focus and purpose of this Strategy is to shape delivery, give clarity to residents and support partners so that together a more modern, efficient and sustainable range of community-based sport and leisure facilities can be planned and developed. This will ensure that residents have the opportunity to be physically active and healthier and, where appropriate, take forward their sporting ambitions within their local community. It will build on

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

the new Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2018, which will develop a one-year action plan early in 2019 leading to targeted interventions and support the measurable aims, many of which will necessitate the use of indoor sports halls plus other available venues.

PART 2: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DACORUM?

Dacorum borough covers 81 square miles (200 square kilometres) of west Hertfordshire extending almost from the outskirts of Watford, northwards to the Chilterns Hills. In 2017 it was home to approximately 153,000 people, making it the most populated district within Hertfordshire. The majority of residents live in the principal town of Hemel Hempstead which will continue to be the focus for development and change in the borough. In addition to Hemel Hempstead, there are two market towns (Berkhamsted and Tring) and a number of villages, each with their own distinctive character. All settlements are surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

As noted above, DBC is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of its residents and understands the relationship between physical activity and health and wellbeing. This commitment is underpinned in both its corporate and local plans.

Figure 2: Dacorum with main roads and main settlements/ towns



The rural nature of the area means that many residents need to travel to access services, including sport and leisure facilities. A higher proportion of the Dacorum population is more

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

active than in England and the Eastern Region and less people in Dacorum are considered to be fairly active and inactive.

The most popular sports are walking, structured instructor led programme classes and athletics. As outlined within the Indoor Needs Assessment, child obesity rates increase substantially between the ages of 4 and 11 years. This is line with national and other regional trends.

The population of Dacorum is projected to grow due to the significant pressure for new housing from Central Government and the need to accommodate this within the emerging Local Plan.

The Government's proposed Standard Method for assessing housing need in local authorities across England is predominantly informed by household projections produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). There are three ONS projections year sets for Dacorum which determine alternate housing requirements. These are detailed in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Accumulative housing figures to 2036 based on ONS projections

ONS Projection year	Accumulative housing	Per annum
2016	14,161	833
2014	17,425	1,025
2014 + 15%	20,043	1,179

DBC is exploring whether some of this growth could be accommodated in a large northern and eastern urban expansion of Hemel Hempstead known as Hemel Garden Communities. This expansion would straddle the Dacorum and St Albans district boundary and could bring forward over 10,000 homes in total.

It is highly likely that additional sport and leisure facilities will be required in order to accommodate such a level of growth. The extent of need for additional facilities will be predicated on the findings of the Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment Report, this emerging Leisure Facilities Strategy and developments in St Albans City & District Council, to ensure appropriate and comprehensive coverage.

The 2016 ONS projections forecasted a need for 14,161 new homes by 2036, which would generate an additional population of 33,986 residents¹. Over the same period the proportion of the population represented by the over 65 age group is expected to increase from 16.9% to 22.2%. This needs to be taken into account within both any new facilities and when considering the programming and pricing of existing venues.

A key challenge is not to think of sport and leisure facilities as settings for 'sporty types' but as community assets that are relevant, and which make a contribution to the wellbeing of all borough residents, alongside other community assets such as village halls and community centres.

¹ Government consultation (August 2020) on a revised standard method for calculating housing need suggests Dacorum would need 922 homes pa (i.e. 16,596 homes over the period 2020-2038, a population increase of 39,830).

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

PART 3: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CURRENT FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES?

Dacorum's Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment 2020 identifies the key sports and leisure facilities within the borough, regardless of whether they are local authority, education or commercially owned and operated. The key findings from the report are identified below but essentially, currently there is an undersupply of two lanes of swimming pool space, sufficient indoor sports hall space, and sufficient access to health and fitness equipment and classes. This is likely to change significantly with the projected growth in housing.

Sports halls

There are 15 sports halls with 3+ (badminton) courts across 15 sites. Most are located on education sites which inevitably limits daytime availability; this means that just two sports hall venues (Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead leisure centres) are accessible during the day. Developments currently planned include a new 4-court hall at Hemel Hempstead School and a replacement hall at Tring Sports Centre (the current 5-court facility will be replaced by a 4-court hall, reducing provision by 1-court).

The quality of sports halls varies; Ashlyns and Kings Langley secondary schools are rated good, and Tring and Longdean sports centres are considered to be poor quality and in need of improvement. Tring sports hall is identified above as being replaced. The quality of the remaining sports halls varies between above and below average, while five were unavailable for assessment. Berkhamsted Leisure Centre sports hall is in need of investment. Three sites are not made available to the community and are used privately only, one is a prison (HMP The Mount) and the other two are schools (Abbots Hill School and Westbrook Hay School).

Residents of Tring do not have day time access to sports hall facilities although Green Park Training & Conference Centre in Aylesbury Vale is located within two miles of the town boundary. It reports limited availability due to it being used by the outdoor activity centre and for events/ functions such as weddings.

A good range of activity/sport is on offer in the borough. This includes, for example, badminton, basketball, netball, volleyball, and martial arts. Netball is particularly strong in the locality and its further development is currently constrained by lack of access to quality indoor courts. England Netball indicates that training sessions should be accommodated indoors, where possible, to meet clubs' training demand. Badminton England identifies Dacorum as a priority area with a focus on increasing junior activity. Demand at peak times is, thus, likely to increase in the near future.

It is generally accepted that older people prefer (or should have the option) to use facilities during the day so the rising number of older people needs to be catered for via a variety of means including use of village halls/community centres and innovative programming. The Assessment Report found that the current level of sports hall provision is adequate for the existing population. There is further capacity within the sports hall stock should demand increase in the short term.

Further assessment will need to take account of the Hemel Garden Communities development if the proposed new homes become a reality.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Swimming pools

There are 20 swimming pools at 15 individual sites within the borough meaning that there are currently high levels of satisfied demand. There is a small hotspot of unmet demand in Hemel Hempstead. This is the equivalent of a learner pool and would not currently warrant additional provision. There is currently enough provision to accommodate some immediate population growth but additional supply will need to be considered in the future. By 2026 it is predicted that there will be an undersupply of 2.42 lanes (0.61 pools) and a further 1.74 lanes (0.43 pools) by 2036.

Accessibility to swimming pools remains good with the majority of Dacorum's population living within a 20-minute drive of a swimming pool. When swimming pool facilities within a 2 mile catchment zone of the borough are included, then all residents have good access to swimming pool facilities.

Investment is required in the pool stock to ensure that it remains attractive to users and fit for purpose. The recent investment in Tring Sports Centre should lead to improved quality of swimming provision. Berkhamsted Leisure Centre, in particular, is ageing and becoming unattractive to users. Dacorum Borough Council is currently exploring options to improve this leisure centre. More modern facilities should help grow swimming and other aquatic sports by retaining current, and attracting new, users.

Prior to considering additional water space in the area, consideration should be given to whether additional capacity could be released at school sites, for instance Astley Cooper School, in order to improve the current supply of pools for the local population. A borough wide approach to swimming provision is necessary given the recent investment and the need for future investment at Berkhamsted Leisure Centre. It is unlikely that demand from the proposed significant growth around Hemel Garden Communities can be met by current facilities so additional supply will need to be considered (dependent upon the chosen HGC development).

Health and fitness facilities

There are 22 'main' health and fitness gyms in Dacorum (the majority being health and fitness gyms with 20+ stations). Generally, such facilities tend to be located in more densely populated areas. The popularity of health and fitness facilities and demand for dance studios for class-based programmes is continuing to rise

Additional health and fitness provision may be required to accommodate the increased demand caused by projected population growth especially if the popularity of fitness continues to increase. There will also be a need to maintain quality and, where possible, improve the condition of the borough's below average and poor rated gyms.

There is a need to ensure that harder to reach groups and people with specific health needs, as well as other sections of the general public, can access facilities and relevant programmes of activity. Health and fitness facilities should cater fully for all market segments within the Dacorum community.

Whilst there is no current under-supply of health and fitness facilities, it is important to note the financial contribution they make to the viability of (and to enable) other publicly accessible

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

facilities, such as swimming pools, to be financially sustainable. This needs to be part of the consideration for new or improvements to existing facilities. It is highly likely that increased health and fitness provision will be required if future levels of growth are realised.

Other sports

Gymnastics Participation in gymnastics across the country is reported to be increasing rapidly. There are four gymnastics clubs in Dacorum. Gymnastics operates from either dedicated or non-permanent facilities; Dacorum has three dedicated gymnastics venues, these are located in Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead.

Current facilities are full, and clubs reported having substantial waiting lists. There is a need to encourage development of additional recreational provision across the authority based on demand. There will also be a supplementary need to support workforce development to underpin existing provision and ensure it keeps pace with future growth and demand.

Indoor bowls: There are currently no indoor bowls facilities in Dacorum. There are eight indoor bowls venues within 30 minutes' drive of Dacorum. Consultation did not highlight any additional demand for indoor bowls.

Indoor tennis: There are two indoor tennis centres each with two good quality courts. The lease at Langley Tennis Club is reported to be due to expire in six years' time. It may require the facility to be re-located, in which case replacement space for three outdoor courts and an air dome will be required. There is a need to secure a long-term solution for the Club. There is also an aspiration for an air hall at Bovingdon and Flaunden Tennis Club to cover two outdoor courts over the winter months.

Squash: There are 19 squash courts in Dacorum. Provision is well distributed across the borough. Clubs are reported to be working hard to make squash and racketball available to the wider community and increase participation. There is no requirement to build additional courts but there is a need to maintain/improve the condition of existing courts.

Village halls and community centres

The report identifies 20 village halls and community centres in Dacorum, most of which offer opportunities for people to take part in physical and sporting activity in a local facility. Facility condition does not necessarily impact programmes of activity but they all, to a greater or lesser degree, rely on the goodwill of volunteers to operate. These sites can play an important role in ensuring older people and/or all people in more rural areas, have access to facilities/programmes of activity and can contribute to getting the inactive active or retaining those already involved.

Projected housing development is likely to lead to additional demand for indoor sport and leisure activity. Community spaces which can enhance physical, cultural and sporting activity need to be considered by planners when developing new neighbourhoods and other large scale developments. This can help alleviate demand for more traditional leisure centres.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

SUMMARY AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal opportunity/challenge for Dacorum is to ensure that its facilities are fit for the future. There is a need to balance the needs of the core market of sports people already taking part via local clubs whilst ensuring the growth of existing or new activities, which meet the needs of a more diverse and ageing population.

As identified in the Needs Assessment (March 2019) the key strategic recommendations therefore include:

- ◀ Decide on the future role of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre and Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre. Given the age of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre, in particular, consider where and when replacement facilities would lead to the greatest impact on physical activity and provide financially viable and sustainable facilities which meet the needs of local populations.
- ◀ Working to the principles identified in the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2018), ensure that DBC owned facilities make a progressively greater (and measured) contribution to the needs of all residents and are fully available to all the borough's communities through targeted initiatives, facilities, programming and training.
- ◀ Improve the breadth, depth and quality of performance management data collected (and shared) and the associated analysis of facility usage to inform future marketing, promotion, programming and pricing etc.
- ◀ Ensure that all school sports facilities accommodate community use. In particular, ensure that new school sports buildings (Hemel Hempstead and Tring schools) have appropriate and robust community use agreements in place.
- ◀ Ensure that the swimming programme at Tring Sports Centre complements the wider swimming programme requirements for the borough, when it re-opens.
- ◀ Investigate whether additional swim availability can be secured at Astley Cooper School.
- ◀ Support gymnastics clubs to identify where and how additional recreational gymnastics can be accommodated, leading to an overall increase in levels of participation in the sport.
- ◀ Support Langley Tennis Club to either secure a long-term lease or develop suitable alternative facilities.
- ◀ Where possible, support coordination of community access to, and the programming and pricing of, facilities (including schools) across the borough within the public estate.
- ◀ On confirmation of the proposed housing development for the borough, paying particular regard to the development of Hemel Garden Communities, and in close association with St Albans City & District Council, re-evaluate the sporting needs of the community, using this needs assessment as the start point.
- ◀ Support other developments (via planning, developer contributions and officer expertise) which may assist in increasing sport and physical activity within the wider community.
- ◀ Work with local sports clubs (via Everyone Active and Dacorum Sports Network) to ensure facilities and workforce development programmes and the health and wellbeing offer, continue to meet the needs of all clubs and residents.
- ◀ Identify ongoing investment, maintenance and refurbishment requirements to protect and improve existing sports facilities.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

PART 4: WHAT WILL DACORUM DO?

The vision below outlines what we want to achieve.

To support and sustain accessible, high quality sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling the inactive to become active, increasing participation, particularly in target groups and improving the health and well-being of all of our residents.

The following strategic priorities and actions relate to the overall management and programming of key facilities in Dacorum. All actions identified below should take account of accessibility issues (hearing, visual and wheelchair access). The strategic priorities are commensurate with Sport England's priorities identified in Figure 1.1 above.

(Short term- 1-2 years; medium 3-5 years; long-term 5-10 years).

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
Planning Protect, Enhance, and Provide	To recognise the importance of this Strategy and ensure that recommendations are acted upon.	To adopt Strategy recommendations and ensure that they are encapsulated in corporate policy documents and other relevant DBC strategies as appropriate. Put into policy a requirement to seek planning contributions, where appropriate, from housing developments to help fund the required actions of this plan.	Medium (High)	DBC	Report adopted by Council Action plan recommendations incorporated in relevant DBC policy documents Policy in place with clear unambiguous process of gathering appropriate contributions.
Health and Fitness Protect and enhance	Continue to monitor quantity and quality of health and fitness offer across the borough.	Monitor the usage of health and fitness facilities by age, gender, location etc. in order to drive increases in specific market segments (impacting positively on health and wellbeing of residents).	Medium (Medium)	Everyone Active, DBC	Increased participation in general; also by

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
	Ensure that provision of H&F facilities is appropriate to an ageing population.	Ensure future development contributes towards increasing the quantity of health and fitness provision in Hemel Hempstead to meet the needs of new residents.	Medium (High)		specific groups including older people and harder to reach groups.
Swimming pools Provide and Enhance	Ensure sufficient water space is available to current and future residents.	Decide on the future of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre due to its current condition. Continue to invest in Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre. For Berkhamsted, consider where and when replacement facilities would lead to the greatest benefits to provide financially viable and sustainable facilities which meet the needs of local populations.	Short (High)	DBC, NGB, Everyone Active, aquatic clubs, Swim England	New swimming pool built in Berkhamsted
	Strategically programme water time for all residents.	Continue to maintain and invest in Tring and Hemel to ensure the stock remains attractive and fit for purpose.	Short (High)	DBC, NGB, Everyone Active	Increased participation
		Monitor swimming participation at Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre and Tring Sports Centre following recent investment.	Short (High)	DBC, Everyone Active	Increased participation
		Ensure that the swimming programme at Tring School complements wider borough swimming programme requirements when it re-opens.	Short (High)	Everyone Active	Increased participation
		Work with Astley Cooper School to identify whether additional swimming time can be offered to the wider public.	Short (High)	DBC, Astley Cooper School	Maximised use of facilities

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
		Consider additional facilities need generated by Hemel Garden Communities once the detail of development has been agreed.	Medium (High)	DBC, Swim England	Feasibility commissioned and acted upon for new swimming facilities
		Establish a swimming development group to increase partnership working and assess the potential for club amalgamation to maximise resources and provide the best possible swimming opportunities for the borough.	Medium (Medium)	DBC, DSN, Everyone Active Swimming clubs	Swimming development plan developed and agreed for the borough. Increase in swimming.
Sports halls: community use of education facilities Enhance	Maintain and increase community use of education facilities for sport and physical activity (especially among harder to reach groups)	Continue to support schools to manage their facilities with a view to ensuring continued community use.	Medium (High)	Schools, HCC, DBC, NGBs)	More schools opening for increased number of community hours.
		Work with the schools providing 1-30 community hours per week to increase the number of hours available where demand exists, given that several sports halls are at capacity. (These include Ashlyns School, Beechwood Park and Astley Cooper schools)	Ongoing (Medium)	Schools, HCC, DBC, NGBs)	Increased participation as a result of improved quality of/access to schools-based facilities including targeted groups in particular
		Support Lockers Park School to address the issues identified in the audit, with specific regard to accessing squash courts.	Short (High)	Lockers Park School, HCC, DBC	
		Ensure that any new or replacement provision on school sites has community use incorporated.	Medium (High)	HCC, DBC, Sport England	Increased availability of facilities
		Where possible, support coordination of community access to, and the programming and pricing of, facilities (including schools) across the borough within the public estate.	Long (High)	Schools, HCC, DBC	
		Ensure that any new or replacement provision on school sites have volleyball fittings which will allow development of the sport.	Long (Low)	Schools, VE	Increased availability of facilities

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
Protect	Retain and where possible increase provision of indoor courts	Support Langley Tennis Club, stakeholders and partners to secure a long-term future for the Club	Medium (High)	Langley Tennis Club, Abbots Hill School, Sport England, Lawn Tennis Association, DBC	Long term solution found for the Club. Increased participation.
	Increase the number of indoor courts over the winter months	Support Bovington and Flaunden Tennis Club in its aspiration to seasonally cover two courts with an air hall.	Long (Medium)	BFTC, SE, LTA, DBC	Increased number of covered courts and participation in Dacorum over the winter months.
Enhance	Address the latent demand for gymnastics	Larger dedicated facilities are required in the authority. Support improved gymnastics provision across the borough.	Short (Medium)	SE British Gymnastics Everyone Active, Gymnastics clubs , DBC	Increased recreational gymnastics provision available across the authority based on current demand.
		Consider making additional provision available at the refurbished sports centre in Tring.	Short (Medium)		
		Consider options to work with neighbouring authorities e.g. St Albans where provision could potentially cater for clubs serving both authorities.	Medium (High)		
		Maintain the quality of existing dedicated provision.	Medium (High)		
		Coordinate the approach to workforce development to ensure that the number and quality of coaches keeps pace with demand for the sport.	Long (Medium)		
Enhance	Maintain status quo.	Retain and support provision of other formats of the game such as carpet and outdoor bowls.	Long (Low)	Bowls clubs, EIBA, DBC	Monitor Increased participation

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
Squash courts Protect	Retain existing squash facilities at the current or an improved, level of quality	Maintain court quality via appropriate maintenance regimes.	Long (Low)	Everyone Active, England Squash & Racketball, commercial operators, schools, clubs, DBC	Number of hours of squash court availability maintained. Pay and play provision retained.
		Actively promote squash in the area (link to workforce development plan identified above).			
		Retain pay and play access to squash courts to ensure wider availability to residents.			
Include village halls and community centres in the broader activity portfolio Protect	Continue to work with village halls and parish councils to help them offer a broad activity programme to support the physical activity offer.	Enable delivery of new community hall facilities on key site residential developments in order to help develop sustainable self-reliant communities.	Long (Medium)	DBC, Parish Councils, Community groups Private facilities	(Documented) regular liaison with village halls to understand sport and physical activity offer.
		Discuss (enable) a financial contribution to be secured from developers to try and secure community hall provision identified above.	Medium (High)		Community halls identified as a planning requirement in key residential developments.
		Concurrently support village hall and parish council committees to continue to offer, coordinate and publicise community spaces which contribute positively to the physical activity and health and wellbeing agenda.	Ongoing (High)		Community spaces publicised on DBC website or other platforms.
Borough wide development Enhance	Establish a workforce development plan which aims to build capacity in sports clubs	Establish a working group to develop coaches and volunteers to support a range of sports.	Short (High)	Clubs, Dacorum Sports Network, Everyone Active	Increased workforce.
		Consider how to deploy volunteers/coaches to best effect linking to increased sporting opportunities at school sites and a stronger and more sustainable club structure in the borough.	Medium (Medium)		Co-ordinated approach to programming and pricing.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Strategic Priority	Recommendation	Action	Timescale (Importance)	Responsibility	Measure
	across the borough.	On confirmation of the proposed housing development for the borough, paying particular regard to the development of Hemel Garden Communities, and in close association with St Albans Council, re-evaluate the sporting needs of the community, using the needs assessment and strategy as the start point.	Long (High)	NGBs, Herts Sports & Physical Activity partnership, DBC	Re-evaluation of the sporting needs arising from growth once proposed housing development is confirmed.
		Working to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2018) principles ensure that DBC owned facilities make a progressively greater (and measured) contribution to the needs of all residents and are fully available to all the borough's communities through targeted initiatives, facilities, programming and training.	Short (High)		Measured contribution
Monitor and review	Keep the Facilities Strategy relevant and up to date.	Complete an annual light touch review of progress. Undertake a complete review within 5 years of adoption.	Medium (High)	DBC	Light touch reviews completed. Document updated as part of Local Plan review cycle Reviews of Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

Site by site recommendations

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Abbots Hill School	Independent School – in house	4-court sports hall built in 2007. Currently not available for community use.	Work with School to discuss possibility of opening sports hall for community use.	DSN/AHC/DBC	Medium	Medium
				AHS / LTC	Short	High

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
		Lease of the tennis courts and facilities to Langley Tennis Club expires in 2024.	Determine whether to renew lease for Langley Tennis Club to provide long term security – or - inform the club that it will not be renewed so that alternative arrangements can be made to enable it to relocate or make alternative arrangements.			
Westbrook Hay School	Independent School – in house	4-court sports hall of below average quality and of significant age (69 years) with no reported refurbishment or significant investment. Currently used privately by the school only.	Discuss possibility of opening sports hall for community use. At minimum, better understand why community use is not offered. Explore potential to invest in improving the quality of the hall on the condition it is made available to the community.	DSN/WHS/DBC	Medium	Medium
HMP The Mount	Government	Private use only				
Ashlyns School	School - In house	4-court sports hall opened 2015 offering a broad range of club activities including football, netball, badminton, Futsal, indoor cricket, karate. It is of good quality apart from a leak in the roof. It is available to the community via a sports club/association block booking. This is a key badminton facility area. The 60-station health and fitness gym is good quality.	Repair the roof. Continue to monitor community use of facilities. Support clubs using the facility with workforce development if required. Maintain the quality of the health and fitness gym. Maintain and where possible improve the quality and offer at the facility to increase participation.	AS, HCC, DBC DSN, DBC AS BGC, AS, SE	Short Medium Long Medium	High Medium Low Medium

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
		Leases activity hall to Berkhamsted Gymnastics Club which has converted it to a dedicated facility. It currently has keyholder access out of school hours.				
Astley Cooper School	School - In house	It has a 3-court sports hall (refurbished 2004) and swimming pool 20m x 4 lanes. Pool is available for 33 hours per week at peak times.	Explore whether pool opening hours could be extended at peak times to accommodate additional demand.	ACS, DBC, HCC	Medium	High
Berkhamsted Leisure Centre	Local authority – Everyone Active Trust	Although a key day-time access venue, it is poor quality, outdated, under-utilised and needs significant refurbishment or replacement. 6-court hall is of below average quality. The 6-lane 25m pool and 52 station health and fitness gym are also both below average in quality.	Decide on the future role of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre. Consider where/when replacement facilities would have the greatest impact and be financially viable and sustainable - while meeting the needs of the local population and contributing to getting the inactive active.	DBC, Everyone Active	Medium	High
Berkhamsted School (Kings Campus)	Independent School - In house	4-court sports hall, built in 2004 and above average in quality. Wider offer including; badminton, netball, cricket, martial arts, basketball, Futsal. This is a key badminton facility.	The School should prioritise maintaining the quality of the current facilities. Work with partners to increase community use where possible.	BS, DBC	Long	Low

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
		The 6 lane x 25m pool also opened in 2004 and is above average in quality. The small health and fitness gym is currently in poor condition.				
Berkhamsted School Castle Campus	Independent School - In house	30 station health and fitness gym and a 1-court activity hall.	Maintain and if possible improve the quality and offer at the facility to increase participation.	School	Long	Low
Beechwood Park School	Independent School - In house	Main use is by students. This 3-court hall (opened 1985) is below average quality The small pool 18.5m x 4 lanes is poor quality despite refurbishment in 2015). The 2 squash courts area below average in quality. They can be booked by sports clubs/associations.	The School should prioritise improving the quality of the current facilities. Work with partners to increase community use where possible.	BPS, DBC	Medium	Medium
Cavendish School	School - In house	4-court sports hall for athletics, football, taekwondo, table tennis and basketball. Two activity halls (opened 2009) are both 1-court. The 23-station health and fitness gym is used privately by the school only.	Continue to offer the range of sports currently available.	CS	Medium	Medium
John F Kennedy Catholic School	School – In house	4-court hall opened in 2009. Badminton and kick boxing offered at the site.	Continue to offer the range of sports currently available. Maintain the quality of the sports hall.	JFKCS	Long	Low

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
		A community use agreement was completed in 2007 for the sports hall as a requirement of planning. Two further activity halls; one 2-courts and one 1-court.				
Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre	Local Authority Everyone Active Trust	9-court hall (opened 1974, refurbished 1999) is of below average quality. Water includes a 6-lane 25m pool, a lido of the same size, teaching/learner pool, diving pool and leisure pool. All are good/above average in quality. Refurb in 1999 followed by cosmetic upgrades (£1.8m in 2018). It also has a 200-station health and fitness gym and 4 squash courts.	Monitor usage to understand who uses this facility with a view to increasing participation among harder to reach groups. Continue to invest in the facility to help drive increases in participation. Consider refurbishment/replacement over the Local Plan period.	Everyone Active, DBC	Medium	High
Hemel Hempstead School	School - In house	As part of a rebuild programme the school is acquiring a new 4-court sports hall (opening Easter 2019)	Ensure a Community Use Agreement (CUA) is in place for the new sports hall. Programming and pricing required in line with rest of the borough	HHS, HCC, DBC	Short	High
Kings Langley Secondary School	Academy - In house	Good quality 4-court sports hall; opened in 2016. No CUA for indoors sports facilities. Hall is available for sports club and association block bookings.	Retain watching brief on programme of activities offered to ensure they continue to complement other activity in the borough.	KLSS, HCC, DBC	Medium	Medium

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Lockers Park	Independent School - In house	Cricket nets and badminton offered at this below average 3-court sports hall. Maintenance is required to resolve leaking roof and undulating floor. 2 squash courts of above average quality. Community use has been revoked.	Complete required maintenance. Work with the school to establish a CUA to further embed sport into the school programme. Develop new door entry system to enable community use to be reinstated.	LP, DBC	Short Medium Medium	High Medium Medium
Longdean Sports Centre	Local Authority – Everyone Active Trust	4- court hall poor quality due to poor floor condition. Hall opened in 2001 and was refurbished in 2009. Sports played; roller hockey, netball, football (Performance Academy). SE suggests CUA required as a condition of 2014 planning permission. Needs to be checked.	Although this site offers significant community use, the CUA needs to be checked to ensure that conditions of use are being met. Improve the quality of the floor.	LS, Everyone Active, DBC, School, DBC, Trust	Short Short	High High
Tring Sports Centre	Local Authority Everyone Active Trust	Poor quality 5-court hall (opened 1977). To be replaced by a new 4- court hall in the next two years as part of the school rebuild programme. Swimming pool refurbishment anticipated re-opening spring 2019. It offers pay and play and community access - daytime and evening.	Taking account of the needs of local clubs, work with DSN to determine best use of the site by sports clubs. Monitor usage to ensure the facilities are being accessed by hard to reach groups and programming options are maximised.	Everyone Active, DBC,	Short	High

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Overview and challenges	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale (S/M/L)	Priority (H/M/L)
Berkhamsted Lawn Tennis & Squash Racket Club	Sports Club/Association	To continue to offer high quality recreational, coaching, and competitive programmes to ensure the membership levels remain able to sustain the club.	Continue to grow the sports and participation programmes. Continue to maintain and invest in the high-quality facilities on offer.	BLTSRC	Medium	Medium
Langley Tennis Club	Sports Club/Association	The lease is due to expire in 6 years' time it is not yet known if it is likely to be renewed by Abbots Hill School.	To try to establish long term security for the club. Should lease not be renewed an alternative site comparable to the existing site is needed to ensure no net loss of facilities.	LTC, School	Short	High
Bovingdon & Flaunden Tennis Club	Sports Club/Association	Explore the opportunity to cover two outside courts with an air hall over the winter months.	Support Club to achieve aspiration of covering the two courts with an air hall over the winter months.	BFTC, LTA	Medium	Low
Tring Squash Club	Sports Club/Association	TSC aspires to enhance facilities via the addition of a second glass-backed court, warm up and cool down area and improved ancillary provision.	Support the Club to enhance the existing facilities and improve the ancillary provision.	TSC	Medium	Medium
Commercially operated facilities		There is a plethora of commercially operated facilities including spa, health and fitness, swimming pools etc. which all contribute to the diverse offer of facilities available across Dacorum	Continue to monitor use and understand how these facilities complement other activity across the borough. Ensure that facility developments complement and do not compete with DBC owned and developing facilities.	Leisure, commercial operators	Medium	Medium

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

PART 5: HOW WILL THE LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY BE MEASURED?

The Leisure Facilities Strategy identifies the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain high-quality built facilities infrastructure for Dacorum for the period up until 2038. There will be a requirement to consider demand arising from significant housing growth within the lifetime of the assessment. A measurement mechanism is identified for each strategic priority. It is important that the Strategy is (and is treated as) a live document and used in a practical manner to prioritise investment, develop key work programmes and partnerships, guide planning gain investment and ensure that built sports facilities are a vital component contributing to the quality of life of Dacorum's residents.

Strategy production is just the start of the process. There is a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review in order to ensure that a strategic perspective and approach is maintained throughout the life of the Strategy.

It is also important for the Council and its partners to develop a 3-5 year action plan based around the Strategy and for this to be monitored and reviewed annually. This should not only assess progress against the action plan but also identify actual/potential changes in supply and demand across the authority. This is on the basis that the Strategy is as much about how facilities are used as ensuring that the infrastructure is of a good quality.

In particular, the annual review process should include:

- ◀ A review of annual progress on the recommendations made and the 3-5 year action plan; taking account of any changes required in relation to the priority attached to each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following implementation of others).
- ◀ Lessons learnt throughout the period.
- ◀ New facilities that may need to be taken into account.
- ◀ Any specific changes in the use of key borough sites (e.g. sport specific specialisms of sites (such as the proposed indoor netball centre), 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 considered.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

The outcome of the five-year review will be to develop a new annual and medium-term action plan for leisure facilities across the borough from the data collected for the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and the Annual Monitoring Report.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING GAIN CONTRIBUTION TOOLKIT

Introduction

The purpose of this toolkit is to ensure that planning gain contribution sought from an individual development is based on a tailored approach, using the robust evidence bases provided as part of the Dacorum Leisure Facilities Strategy. This will help to clearly justify the needs arising from the development and how they are to be met.

It provides a step by step guide which should be used by stakeholders directly involved in negotiating developer contributions, either local authority case officers or housing developers/planning consultants acting on their behalf.

The following processes should be followed in order to inform the potential additional demand that a new housing development generates. This sets out the process for leisure facilities.

There is also a checklist summary for the process which should be completed as evidence of working through each step. In terms of social sustainability, a series of questions to explore are provided with possible options to consider.

For all developments, the Council seeks contributions from developers towards the provision of infrastructure required to support growth in Dacorum via a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 Planning Obligations.

The CIL charging schedule was adopted in 2015 and infrastructure projects to deliver new indoor sports and leisure facilities, plus outdoor green infrastructure and open space including outdoor sports, are all eligible for CIL funding. CIL can, and should, be used to fund strategic infrastructure with no restraints on proximity to the development that it has been collected from, however S106 obligations will still have to meet the legal tests, i.e. to mitigate the strain on infrastructure as a direct result of that development. Where appropriate CIL and S106 can be combined to fund infrastructure. Amendments to the CIL regulations in September 2019 removed S106 pooling restrictions and the requirement for Councils to produce a R123 list a new Infrastructure Funding Statement was instead introduced and will include the Local Authorities infrastructure priorities.

In instances where a development falls across two or more local authorities KKP recommends that the demand from the more urban area is applied in calculating the requirements. This is in order to reflect the on the ground use of provision in the context of its setting. If provision is to be provided on the outskirts of an urban settlement and therefore is to act as an extension of that settlement, it is justifiable to utilise the demand/standards most appropriate. This will be most relevant to the proposed development of Hemel Garden Communities.

The suite of evidence documents which should be used to assess demand includes:

- ◀ Dacorum Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment Report: January 2019 March 2020?
- ◀ Dacorum Leisure Facilities Strategy: March 2019
- ◀ Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2018

Process

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Step 1	Determine the key indoor sports facility requirement resulting from the development	Navigation
	<p>The key tools to assess this are provided within Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator which is accessed via the Active Places Power website. https://www.activeplacespower.com/</p> <p>This will enable you to determine the demand for sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls facilities that the new population from a development generates.</p>	<p>Access to the calculator is restricted and requires a username and password to be set up.</p>

The Dacorum strategy provides an estimate of future demand for key indoor sports facilities based on population forecasts as a result of key housing growth areas. This key demand is translated into units of badminton courts, swimming pool lanes and indoor bowls rinks but it also considers the quality of facilities, as this is an essential element in ensuring participation.

Once the exact number of new homes to be provided at specific housing developments are identified, the Council will need to apply the household occupancy rate to this to determine the associated population.

$$\text{Number of dwellings} \times \text{household occupancy rate}^2 = \text{associated population}$$

This is the population that is applied within the Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) to determine the additional provision that is required to meet the new demand.

The SFC is a modelling tool designed to assist local planning authorities to quantify how much additional demand is generated by increasing populations and new housing areas. The model has no spatial qualities or dimension and can only be used to estimate the facility needs for whole area populations. The model makes no reference to:

- ◀ Location of existing facilities compared to demand.
- ◀ Capacity and availability of facilities (i.e. opening hours, how well they are used).
- ◀ Cross boundary movements of demand.
- ◀ Travel networks and topography.
- ◀ The attractiveness of the existing facility network.

The SFC uses information that Sport England has gathered on who uses facilities and applies this to the population profile of the local area. This ensures that the calculations take on board the population profile (e.g. age, gender, etc.) of the local area.

The SFC then turns this estimation of demand (visits per week) into the equivalent amount of facility which is needed to meet these visits. For swimming pools, it uses 25m lane equivalents and for sports halls it uses the number of badminton courts.

Registration is required to access Active Places Power (APP) and therefore the SFC. If you are not already registered, you can register for free via the link under the login button on the APP homepage.

Please note the SFC is one tool and should not be used on its own to determine the need for sports facilities from a single development.

² National occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per household is used

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

Step 2	Determine the other indoor sports and community facilities required as a result of the development	Navigation
	Use the Indoor Leisure Needs Assessment to identify level of need that may be generated from new development(s) for indoor sporting provision not included within the SFC. This should also extend to community centre facilities within the area.	Leisure facilities strategy

There is no clear calculation of the requirements for other indoor sports provision and community centre facilities (not covered by SFC) as a result of a new housing development. In this instance, the Dacorum Leisure Facilities Strategy should be used to determine the need for additional facilities within the area. This should take into account the requirement for other dedicated sports facilities if the Strategy identifies this.

The Assessment Report (within the specific sections of the report) should identify the need for other provision within the area. This will be as a result of the consultation with specific clubs and organisations, facility operators and national governing bodies of sport. It will also take account of the size, scale and quality of existing provision in order to inform this. The type of facilities identified within the Assessment Report is determined by the scope of the study which the Council commissions.

This will also be informed by how busy existing facilities are. As an example, if an existing leisure centre (adjacent to the new housing development) is fully programmed with high demand for space, it is unrealistic to expect this facility to accommodate the demand generated from the new development. Therefore, additional provision will be required.

Step 3	Demonstrate an understanding of what else the development generates demand for	Navigation
	Consideration also needs to be given to the other infrastructure that will be generated as a result of the development. As an example, this could include primary and secondary schools, health centres, library, etc. The key focus here is to determine where there may be duplication of facilities and where there may be opportunities for shared provision.	Consultation with other council services, partners and developers

In reality, it will take a significantly large development to generate the requirement for a new stand-alone wet and dry leisure centre. Therefore, it is important to identify where other provision may be required as a result of the development in order to determine if this could replace or supplement the need to provide sports facilities or community facilities.

A key example of this is the requirement for primary and secondary school provision as a result of the development. A primary school will require a multi-purpose indoor hall, playground and playing field space to deliver its national curriculum requirements for PE. A secondary school will require at least a three-court sports hall and playing field space in order to deliver its national curriculum requirements for PE.

Therefore, further investigation should be undertaken to identify if the opportunity exists to ensure that community use of the school sports facilities can be guaranteed, thus minimising the potential duplication of facilities. In this instance the 'contribution' associated with the increased demand for sports facilities could be used to enhance the school provision to ensure

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

it was appropriate for community use (e.g. extend fitness facilities, community access arrangements, etc.).

In relation to other service (e.g. library, health centre, etc.) there is a need to consider how these could be co-located alongside sports and community facilities, thus creating a community hub. This is a key driver for sports facilities in attracting users that might not otherwise use these types of facilities.

The financial, social and sporting benefits which can be achieved through development of strategic sites (also known as hub sites) are significant. Sport England provides further guidance on the development of community sports hubs at:

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/>

Step 4	Consider if there are existing facilities within close proximity that could be enhanced or extended to accommodate increased demand.	Navigation
	Further investigation is required to determine if there is an existing facility that is close enough to the development site which, if extended /refurbished / remodelled could accommodate the increased demand generated from the new development.	Facility mapping within the Sports Facilities Assessment Report

Detailed analysis of facilities within the vicinity of the new development should be undertaken to assess the suitability of these facilities to accommodate the increased demand generated from the development. As an example, the following information should be pulled together in order to determine if this is an appropriate solution to accommodate the increased demand:

- Is the facility close enough to the development to accommodate the increased demand?
- The quality of the facility.....does it need investment?
- Is there capacity to accommodate increased demand....how well used is the facility?
- Are there any restrictions in access to the facility?
- Are there plans in place to maintain or refurbish the facility?
- What type of activities are accommodated within the facility?
- Are the current management arrangements appropriate to accommodate changes or increased demand at the facility?
- Are there opportunities to co-locate other services alongside or within the facility?

In addition to the above, it will also be important to assess the potential impact of the additional demand on clubs and organisations within the vicinity. As an example, some clubs and organisations may already be at capacity; therefore, there may be no capacity to accommodate increased demand within the existing infrastructure.

Step 5	Consider the design principles for new provision	Navigation
	The exact nature and location of provision associated with either onsite or off-site developments should be fully determined in partnership with leisure and community specialists (e.g. NGBs, local authority, advisers, etc.) and community groups themselves.	https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/

It is important to ensure that the design of new or extended facilities is in line with the needs of local clubs and organisations as well as relevant design guidance. It will be important that

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

any design reflects best practice design guidance taking into account all the key considerations which will be relevant to each facility. As an example, this will include aspects such as: health and safety, safeguarding, storage, sport specific design features, etc.).

Where an extension or refurbishment of an existing facility takes place, it will be important to ensure that the local community is involved in that design. It will also be important to ensure that continuity of provision is also considered as clubs and organisations will need alternative accommodation during the construction period associated with a refurbishment or extension. This is important in ensuring these organisations continue to exist in the longer term.

The development of community hubs is a key focus for many organisations as the benefits derived from the co-location of facilities is often greater than from stand-alone facilities. Therefore, there is a need for developers and stakeholders to consider how different facilities may ‘fit’ together. As an example, this could include the following facilities which may be required as part of a development:

- ◀ Indoor and outdoor sports facilities
- ◀ Primary and Secondary schools
- ◀ Health centres and GP surgeries
- ◀ Library
- ◀ Early years provision
- ◀ Community centre
- ◀ Children’s play areas
- ◀ Allotments and community growing areas
- ◀ Local retail centres

The master plan for new developments needs to consider the strategic location of facilities and the clustering and co-location of facilities in order to maximise the benefit for the local community.

There is also a need to ensure that the location of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities are appropriately sited in the context of indoor sports provision (if also being provided on-site) to ensure a cohesive approach to the whole sporting offer.

Step 6	Strategic pooling of financial contributions to deliver new provision	Navigation
	Consideration needs to be given to the multiple developments across the local authority or a combination of local authorities in order to determine if the combined increased demand is sufficient to warrant a contribution to a strategic leisure development.	Wider housing growth strategies.

If the authority considers each housing growth area in isolation then it is unlikely that there will be sufficient demand generated from a single development to warrant new stand-alone leisure provision, especially swimming pools.

As such the Council needs to consider how the cluster of housing developments within the local authority boundary, or relevant cross border area should make a contribution to strategic sport and leisure facilities. As discussed previously, this may be to provide new provision or to enhance existing, in order that it can accommodate increased demand.

This in turn requires the Council and developer to consider the wider housing growth within the area which may also include that within a neighbouring authority. Where the combined

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL: LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

increased demand generates the requirement for a strategic facility this should be pooled via developer contributions to a strategic development.

However, it should be noted that the contribution may go towards a facility which is outside of the local authority boundary but reflects how people will live their life within that specific development. An example of this could happen at Hemel Garden Communities with housing being developed in St Albans and Dacorum local authority areas.

Subject to the CIL and s106 regulations in place within the authority – contributions from strategic and local sites can be earmarked for leisure facilities, and may be subject to national regulations. Using the population growth and process (including the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator) identified from stage 1 this will provide a basis for negotiation with developers on the contribution from each development.

<https://www.activeplacespower.com/>
<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/>

Checklist summary

Prompt	Evidence	Navigation
Step 1: <i>Determine the indoor sports facility requirement resulting from the development</i>		https://www.activeplacespower.com/
Step 2: <i>Determine the other indoor sports and community facilities are required as a result of the development</i>		Leisure Strategy
Step 3: <i>Demonstrate an understanding of what else the development generates demand for</i>		Consultation with other council services, partners and developers)
Step 4: <i>Consider if there are existing facilities within close proximity that could be enhanced or extended to accommodate increased demand.</i>		Facility mapping within the Sports Facilities Assessment Report
Step 5: <i>Consider the design principles for new provision</i>		Consultation https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/
Step 6: <i>Strategic pooling of financial contributions to deliver new provision</i>		https://www.activeplacespower.com/ https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/cost-guidance/