



## **COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2037**

**FINAL STRATEGY: MARCH 2015**

Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the Executive Summary of Colchester Borough Council's (CBC) Facilities Strategy and whilst CBC has been the key driver in developing it, it is expected that plans and actions emanating from it can only be delivered in partnership with other key stakeholders.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Sports Facility Strategy is to look to address a range of fundamental challenges and assess how sports facilities can be used to meet the needs of:

- ◀ A growing Colchester population, which is relatively prosperous and economically stable whilst also catering for areas of higher deprivation which may have different requirements.
- ◀ The specific requirements of the developments within the Northern Gateway.
- ◀ Health partners in addressing the cost of physical inactivity and obesity levels.
- ◀ Increased demand for facilities given the projected increase in population.
- ◀ A growing and active 'grey market' which is time rich, especially during the day.

The Strategy has been and is being developed in partnership with a range of agencies including the Garrison, the University of Essex, Active Essex and a range of national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) plus local clubs. It is recognised that the health agenda needs to be a major consideration moving forward but it is also acknowledged that the health sector has many conflicting and competing demands on its resources.

### Policy context

The key strategic themes with regard to sport and leisure in Colchester emanating from the main strategies and local context are considered to be:

- ◀ The need for high quality sports facilities in a growing and vibrant borough.
- ◀ Creating a genuinely attractive place that people enjoy visiting and using.
- ◀ Creating a cohesive new environment with outstanding urban design.
- ◀ Working with partners to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are provided to support sustainable communities in Colchester.
- ◀ Offering facilities and programmes of activity which contribute to
  - ✓ reducing health inequalities across the Borough for people of all ages.
  - ✓ the education and skills development of the local population.
  - ✓ local economic development
- ◀ Reducing the cost of operating leisure facilities to the resident population to a point where it is delivered at no recurring revenue cost.
- ◀ Working in partnership with other agencies to tackle health and crime issues.
- ◀ Supporting and promoting active lifestyles and increasing participation in sport and physical activity to allow residents to live longer, healthier, happier lives.
- ◀ Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Northern Gateway development to enable increased participation in a range of indoor and non-pitch sports

## Colchester

Colchester is relatively affluent with deprivation and unemployment rates lower than average in comparison to national and regional rates. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average. Colchester's population is projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. Work has started on the new Local Plan for Colchester which will have to accommodate approximately 1,000 new houses per year over the plan period that runs from 2017-2032. The current Local Plan identifies substantial housing growth in five areas in or on the edge of Colchester. This includes two large greenfield allocations; one of 1,600 houses in the North Growth Area Urban Extension and 800 houses at Stanway West, Colchester. There are also plans to grow student numbers at the University by 50% between 2013 and 2019.

The Northern Gateway has been promoted for development by CBC for a number of years. There is an emphasis on the creation of a distinctive, high quality leisure led development which contributes to the identity and role of North Colchester.

## Methodology

The Strategy is predicated on an in-depth needs assessment of indoor provision which is based on the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities. This guide provides a recommended approach to undertaking a robust assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The guide has primarily been produced to help local authorities meet the requirements of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

The three main themes of the strategy reflect Colchester's priorities emanating from Sport England's planning aim and objectives for sport; namely:

- Protect:** The existing 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.
- Enhance:** The programming and animation of facilities in order to meet the changing sport and physical activity needs of local residents.
- Provide:** Access to high quality sports facility infrastructure for all residents regardless of personal circumstances.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## BUILT SPORTS PROVISION

CBC's vision, working with and through partners is:

***“The creation of high quality, sustainable sports facilities which meet community need, increase participation, help tackle health and crime issues and provide accessible and inclusive activities for all Colchester residents as part of an active lifestyle”***

Facility type	Key challenges and issues
Sports halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ There is more demand for sports hall space than currently exists in Colchester.</li> <li>◀ There is restricted use at schools, the Garrison and University of Essex.</li> <li>◀ The diverse management arrangements of facilities lead to variations in quality, programming, access and pricing.</li> <li>◀ There is lack of availability of sports halls in neighbouring authorities for Colchester residents.</li> <li>◀ The projected increase in population will place increased pressure on resources/sports halls especially in the North of the Borough.</li> </ul>
Swimming pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Leisure World Colchester is the only fully community accessible pool in the Borough.</li> <li>◀ It is strategically significant for residents.</li> <li>◀ There is unmet latent demand for more swimming provision in the Borough which is likely to be exacerbated (especially in the North and East) by projected population increases.</li> <li>◀ Management indicates that public sessions are not full to capacity.</li> <li>◀ Corporal Budd VC Swimming pool offers a high quality facility.</li> <li>◀ The recent closure of Colchester Academy will put further pressure on water space.</li> </ul>
Health & Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ There are a wide range of Health and Fitness operators in the Borough offering different levels of pricing and access.</li> <li>◀ The reach of Leisure World Colchester appears to be good.</li> <li>◀ Membership data from the three local authority managed venues is not compatible.</li> <li>◀ Facility modelling indicates that there are sufficient stations for the size of the population.</li> <li>◀ A good Health and Fitness offer can help cross subsidise other types of leisure facilities.</li> </ul>
Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Cycling is increasingly popular in the Borough for different age groups and both genders.</li> <li>◀ Local clubs are strong and British Cycling appears keen to invest in the area.</li> <li>◀ CBC has the potential to develop a closed cycling circuit in the Northern Gateway as part of a wider facility mix.</li> </ul>
Squash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The Borough is well served with its number of squash courts although the quality varies.</li> <li>◀ There is a need to support the club infrastructure if squash is going to increase participation</li> </ul>
Indoor bowls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ The Borough has two indoor bowls facilities with c.700 members.</li> <li>◀ There is still scope for increasing participation given the projected increase in older people in the Borough.</li> </ul>
Water sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ There are a range of different size water spaces across the Borough, which do not appear to be used to their full potential</li> <li>◀ Given its extended coastline there is the opportunity to develop a water sports strategy per se, to help drive increases in participation.</li> </ul>

The proposed development of the Northern Gateway provides an exciting opportunity for Colchester. It already has many stakeholders in the sporting community excited as to what the facility mix/potential facilities might include. The projected increase in Borough population will put increasing strain on the current facility stock, particularly for daytime access (given the ageing population). This will lead to a demand for additional space at a time of efficiencies and cuts. It is, therefore, important for the Borough Council to utilise developer contributions secured via CIL or planning obligations to support new/enhanced facilities, given the major development proposed.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Where CBC is not in a position to invest in new and enhanced facilities (due to budgetary constraints) it will give its support to partners who choose to invest in facilities which fit within the strategic priority ambit and which commit to community use and other access issues.

The table below considers CBC's and partners key strategic priorities to ensure that Colchester has sports facilities which continue to be fit for purpose:

<b>Key strategic priorities</b>	
◀	Investment in Leisure World Colchester is a key priority. It remains the main and only community accessible swimming facility in the Borough. CBC staff must continue to monitor usage to ensure that it remains genuinely available to all sections of the local community.
◀	The opportunity to develop facilities fit for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century in the Northern Gateway is a key strategic priority for Colchester. It has aroused the interest of a range of national governing bodies which are keen to be involved. This has also been the subject of a separate study and needs to be considered in respect of a growing population.
◀	CBC needs to continue to liaise, develop and maintain relationships with a range of leisure providers/partners which have potential to open up a number of facilities (including the Garrison, Colchester Institute and the University). These could/should underpin increases in participation and the resulting positive effect on health and well-being and reduction in crime etc.
◀	There is a need to provide additional indoor sports hall and water space in the Borough (particularly the North) to accommodate current and projected increases in population.
◀	There is an identified need for small scale flexible affordable space for sports to develop and flourish.
◀	The importance of coordinating programmes of activity in sports halls is key to improving local opportunity. There is a need to increase the number of sports halls hours available to the community, especially in areas identified for significant growth (i.e. NGUAE and Severalls)
◀	Any new school build should consider how sports facilities are to be made available (via access and management) for wider community use.
◀	Consideration should be given to how a Sports Delivery Board might be created and developed, comprising key partners to take responsibility for key aspects of Strategy delivery. Investigation into the variety of roles that partners could/should play will also help to draw in Active Essex and enable CBC to make best use of the strengths of different partners.
◀	To ensure that CBC works with and through partners to get best value for money and drive investment into facilities in line with the Strategy.

## Summary

It is recognised that CBC (along with many other local authorities) is under increasing financial pressure, whilst understanding and being committed to protecting, enhancing and developing appropriate sports facilities. With this in mind, CBC has a number of key priorities which include developing facilities in the Northern Gateway; ensuring that Leisure World Colchester remains fit for purpose and continues to adapt to changing leisure needs. In addition, it needs to work in partnership with Essex University, Colchester Institute and The Garrison to help them develop and improve their facilities when the opportunities arise.



## INTRODUCTION

This is a Strategy for the Borough and whilst Colchester Borough Council (CBC) has been the key driver in developing it, it is expected that plans and actions emanating from it can only be delivered in partnership with other key stakeholders. As the commissioning body for the Strategy, CBC has identified a number of priorities which align to its new Strategic Plan objectives 2015-2018. Colchester wishes to be known as a vibrant borough with a bright future:

- ◀ **Vibrant** - promoting our heritage and working hard to shape our future
- ◀ **Thriving** - attracting business and selling Colchester as a destination
- ◀ **Prosperous** - generating opportunities for growth and supporting infrastructure
- ◀ **Welcoming** - a place where people can grow and be proud to live

This Strategy is being developed in partnership with a range of agencies including the Garrison, the University of Essex, Active Essex and a range of national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) plus local clubs. It is recognised that the health agenda needs to be a major consideration moving forward but it is acknowledged that engaging with the health sector can be difficult and time consuming.

The partnership approach to Strategy delivery is necessary due to the limited amount of in-house resources available to drive the development of sport and leisure in Colchester. The result may be that CBC has responsibility for coordinating and facilitating other partners to deliver elements of the Strategy. CBC is, however, on course to achieve its financial target to deliver a cost neutral service by 2015/16 but may need to consider factoring this new approach in to its business plan in the future. The key strategic themes with regard to sport and leisure in Colchester emanating from the main strategies and local context are considered to be:

- ◀ The need for high quality sports facilities in a growing and vibrant borough.
- ◀ Creating a genuinely attractive place that people enjoy visiting and using.
- ◀ Creating a cohesive new environment with outstanding urban design.
- ◀ Working with partners to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are provided to support sustainable communities in Colchester.
- ◀ Offering facilities and programmes of activity which contribute to
  - ✓ reducing health inequalities across the Borough for people of all ages.
  - ✓ the education and skills development of the local population.
  - ✓ local economic development
- ◀ Reducing the cost of operating leisure facilities to the resident population to a point where it is delivered at no recurring revenue cost.
- ◀ Working in partnership with other agencies to tackle health and crime issues.
- ◀ Supporting and promoting active lifestyles and increasing participation in sport and physical activity to allow residents to live longer, healthier, happier lives.
- ◀ Taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Northern Gateway development to enable increased participation in a range of indoor and non-pitch sports.

## **Partners**

The strategy has been developed via ongoing engagement with a range of key partners including Active Essex the University of Essex, local sports clubs, Sport England, The Garrison, NGBs and Colchester schools. Its delivery is predicated on partners accepting and taking responsibility for different aspects of its implementation.

## LOCAL CONTEXT

The Borough of Colchester covers an area of 324 square kilometres in North East Essex. It borders Babergh District in Suffolk and three Essex districts of Tendring, Braintree and Maldon. Colchester's population is increasing more quickly than any other Borough in Essex, with the exception of Uttlesford, and is rapidly becoming more diverse. It is located approximately 60 miles North East of London and also lies in close proximity to the seaport of Harwich (20 miles) and Stansted Airport (30 miles).

Recognised as a Garrison town, it is relatively affluent with deprivation and unemployment rates lower than average in comparison to national and regional rates. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average. The most densely populated areas are the main conurbation of Colchester in the East of the Borough and the wards of St Annes, St Andrews and New Town.

Colchester's population is projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years. Work has started on the new Local Plan for Colchester which will have to accommodate approximately 1,000 new houses over the plan period that runs from 2017-2032. The current Local Plan identifies substantial housing growth in five areas in or on the edge of Colchester. This includes two large greenfield allocations; one of 1,600 houses in the North Growth Area Urban Extension and 800 houses at Stanway West, Colchester. There are also plans to grow student numbers at the University by 50% between 2013 and 2019.

The Northern Gateway has been promoted for development by CBC for a number of years. There is an emphasis on the creation of a distinctive, high quality leisure led development which contributes to the identity and role of North Colchester. The Economic Growth Team (Regeneration Department) is tasked with developing a sport and leisure themed area which covers the 81 hectare area to the North and South of the A12.

Sports facilities are a key component in the drive to address health inequalities and Sport England's Active People Survey (APS 7) data suggests that Colchester out performs regional and national data sets in the areas of club membership, sports tuition and competitive sport, although it is comparable in terms of sports participation. Further, Colchester has a higher incidence of participation using health and fitness suites and cycling than national and regional rates. The rate of swims is, however, marginally lower than both the East and national levels.

This strategy looks to address a range of fundamental challenges and assesses how sports facilities can be used to meet the needs of:

- ◀ A growing population, which is relatively prosperous and economically stable whilst also catering for areas of higher deprivation which may have different requirements.
- ◀ The specific requirements of the developments at the Northern Gateway.
- ◀ Health partners in addressing the cost of physical inactivity and obesity levels.
- ◀ Increased demand for facilities given the projected increase in population.
- ◀ A growing and active 'grey market' which is time rich, especially during the day.

## ***Planning***

NPPF paragraph 74 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Given the nature of potential developments in Colchester, especially in regard to the Northern Gateway, it is important that the Council's Planning Department retains oversight with regard to potential facility developments across the Borough. This includes policies and supplementary planning documents setting out the approach to protecting existing sport and recreational facilities and securing new ones as part of new developments. It also includes Planning'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 aspiration of the Council and its partners.

The approach taken by the Council's planning department will be pivotal to the longer term delivery of this strategy. CBC has yet to adopt CIL but is keen to adopt the principle that if it cannot provide facilities, due to resource issues, it is keen to work with and through partners to achieve those improvements/ new build etc. Given the limited amount of financial resource CBC can realistically invest, it is focussed on providing best value for money, whilst understanding that priorities and opportunities change e.g. the very recent suggestion that Colchester Institute of Higher Education is close to securing funding for a sports hall and fitness suite. CBC's aim in this instance will be to facilitate its development as long as it recognises the requirement for a minimum amount of community use.

## ASSESSMENT REPORT CONCLUSIONS

The following section summarises the key findings of the Assessment Report with further detail found in appendix 1. These enable key conclusions to be drawn:

### Sports halls

There is more demand for sports hall space than currently exists in Colchester. The Assessment Report identifies a current under supply of approximately 14 courts which does not take account of the recent closure of Colchester Academy (4 courts) in October 2014. The undersupply is across the Borough but the closure of Colchester Academy is likely to have a greater effect in the East of the Borough in particular. Community use at indoor sports halls varies across the Borough, with limited access at the University of Essex and Corporal Budd VC (due to their primary function of servicing their respective institutions). Schools generally offer good access although this is restricted to evenings and weekends. The quality of sports halls is variable with three schools identified as having below average changing and sports hall accommodation but ten facilities are considered to have good or above average sports halls. It is recognised that poor quality facilities can have a negative impact on demand.

The diverse management arrangements of facilities, (local authority, education and private), leads to variations in hire costs, access and limited coordination of programming space and activity across the Borough. In addition, there are no available sports halls (within neighbouring authorities) within one mile of the boundary of Colchester. The sports of badminton, table tennis and gymnastics have all suggested that they are constrained in their development by lack of space. Basketball has also lost out with the recent closure of Colchester Academy. The lack of available space is likely to be exacerbated given the predicted increase in population (especially in the North of the Borough).

### Swimming pools

There is more demand for swimming pool space than currently exists in Colchester. Sport England's Facilities Planning Model identifies unmet demand of 5 lanes of a 25m swimming pool, which is based on lack of capacity at existing pools and people living outside the catchment drive or walk time of a facility. This will have increased further by the very recent closure of the swimming pool at Colchester Academy.

Leisure World Colchester is the Borough's flagship venue and is strategically significant as the Borough's only community accessible swimming pool. It offers a significant learn to swim programme with over 2,300 people registered; 90% of whom are residents of the Borough. The local swimming club is thriving but has to undertake regular rationalisation to ensure that young talent can continue to develop. There is a surfeit of demand at peak times with all sectors of the community competing for water space at the same time. Management at the Centre indicates that many current public swimming times attract relatively low numbers.

There is a range of other privately managed swimming facilities (none of which offer pay and play opportunities to swim), some of which offer time to swimming clubs (notably, Corporal Budd VC) and some which provide swimming lessons. Corporal Budd VC is an excellent facility but is unlikely to become available for pay and play access due to its primary function of supporting the military. That said, it is worth investigating whether it can increase the volume of block bookings. The projected population growth in Colchester is likely to increase pressure on existing water space and it is unlikely that current water space will meet the projected growing demand in the future. This is especially noticeable in the North and East of the Borough where significant population growth is proposed

### Health and Fitness

There are a wide range of health and fitness providers in the Borough (20 sites) encompassing low cost operators through to more expensive subscription and spa outlets. This ensures relatively equitable access for all sections of the community. The reach of Leisure World Colchester (based on membership data) appears to be good, with areas of higher population density showing

relatively high membership (which covers the more deprived communities).

Based on the modelling applied, supply of gym provision is sufficient in the Borough. That is not to say that more facilities could/should not be considered as they have the ability to be inclusive for the harder to reach groups, in particular, and can be run at a profit which allows cross subsidy for other less profitable activity. The potential investment at the Northern Gateway by David Lloyd indicates that it believes that there is scope for more fitness provision in the Borough. The University of Essex is also considering extending its fitness offer but this is likely to affect the community minimally as its main focus will be on increasing student participation.

## Cycling

Cycling is a particularly popular sport amongst all age groups and is increasingly so with women and younger age groups. British Cycling is keen to develop closed circuit facilities to drive both participation and excellence in the sport in the East and has identified Colchester as a potential development area. There also appears to be a willingness and understanding within CBC that the development of a cycling facility will be of benefit to the local (and potentially) wider population.

The Northern Gateway offers both space and opportunity for such a facility to be developed; although, it is accepted that external funding is likely to be needed to develop such a facility.

There is a reluctance on behalf of British Cycling to advocate that a local club manages such a facility; however, there is also a reluctance of the Council to manage such a facility, given its stated objective of ensuring that leisure facilities are cost neutral by 2015/16.

The local cycling club is strong and increasing both its profile and number of members. It has a strong and vibrant volunteer workforce which is open to new ideas and ways of working. It has developed good working relationships the Football Club and CBC Parks section in order to increase participation and widen the cycling offer across Colchester.

The development of a cycling facility in Colchester warrants further investigation and it is recommended that CBC, working with British Cycling, undertakes a more indepth feasibility study for such a facility alongside a range of other potential facilities in the Northern Gateway development.

## Squash courts

The Borough is generally well served for squash with six sites providing 22 courts, although they vary in quality from below average to good. Two of the sites are commercially operated and there is restricted use at courts located at the Garrison and the University. Consultation indicates a need to support squash clubs in the area to develop their infrastructure and to equip coaches with more business skills to support an increase in participation. There does not appear to be demand for more squash courts as capacity exists on current facilities, although it will be necessary to invest in the current stock if participation levels are to remain.

## Indoor bowls

The Borough has two vibrant indoor clubs with, reportedly, 700 members between them. There is still scope for increasing participation at both clubs (although Colchester Bowls Club will need to expand its facility to cope with any increase in participation), especially with the projected increases in population and the age profile of that increase. Bowls is a particularly popular sport amongst older age groups; the older population (65+years) is expected to increase substantially in Colchester up until 2037. Any proposal to increase the size of the Colchester Bowls Club facility in particular should be looked upon favourably by CBC.

## Water sports

There is a range of different size inland water spaces across the Borough; these do not appear to be used to their full potential. With fewer than expected water sports clubs based in the Borough, given its extended coastline, the opportunity exists to develop a coherent water-sport strategy which could help drive up participation in water sports *per se*.

## Summary

CBC is clearly a key provider of facilities in the area and recognises the importance of its leisure facility stock to the health and well-being of its residents and understands that it needs to take account of this in its future planning needs. It further understands the importance of coordinating programming within its own facilities to maximise improvements. The situation is further complicated by the range of providers which services the sporting and physical activity needs of the local population. It recognises its role as an enabler and is further developing partnerships across Colchester with a view to maximising opportunities with, for example, the Garrison, Colchester Institute, the University of Essex and health providers.

The proposed development of the Northern Gateway provides an exciting opportunity for Colchester. It already has many stakeholders in the sporting community excited as to what the facility mix/potential facilities might include.

The projected increase in Borough population will put increasing strain on the current facility stock, particularly for daytime access (given the ageing population). This will lead to a demand for additional space at a time of efficiencies and cuts. It is, therefore, important for the Borough Council to utilise developer contributions secured via CIL/planning obligations to support new/enhanced facilities, given the major development proposed.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following key strategic priorities should be considered in delivering this strategy:

- ◀ Investment in Leisure World Colchester is a key priority. It remains the main and only community accessible swimming facility in the Borough. CBC staff must continue to monitor usage to ensure that it remains genuinely available to all sections of the local community.
- ◀ The opportunity to develop facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in the Northern Gateway is a key strategic priority for Colchester. It has aroused the interest of a range of national governing bodies which are keen to be involved. This has also been the subject of a separate study and needs to be considered in respect of a growing population.
- ◀ CBC needs to continue to liaise, develop and maintain relationships with a range of leisure providers/partners which have potential to open up a number of facilities (including the Garrison, Colchester Institute and the University). These could/should underpin increases in participation and the resulting positive effect on health and well-being and reduction in crime etc.
- ◀ There is a need to provide additional indoor sports hall and water space in the Borough (particularly the North) to accommodate current and projected increases in population.
- ◀ There is an identified need for small scale flexible affordable space across the Borough for sports to develop and flourish.
- ◀ The importance of coordinating programmes of activity in sports halls is key to improving local opportunity. There is a need to increase the number of sports halls hours available to the community, especially in areas identified for significant growth (i.e. NGUAE and Severalls)
- ◀ Any new school build should consider how sports facilities are to be made available (via access and management) for wider community use.
- ◀ Consideration should be given to how a Sports Delivery Board might be created and developed, comprising key partners to take responsibility for key aspects of Strategy delivery. Investigation into the variety of roles that partners could/should play will also help to draw in Active Essex and enable CBC to make best use of the strengths of different partners.
- ◀ To ensure that CBC works with and through partners to get best value for money and drive investment into sports facilities in line with the Strategy.

## STRATEGY VISION AND OBJECTIVES

*“The creation of high quality, sustainable sports facilities which meet community need, increase participation, help tackle health and crime issues and provide accessible and inclusive activities for all Colchester residents as part of an active lifestyle.”*

This Strategy Vision builds upon the conclusions identified in the Assessment Report (November 2014). It provides a framework within which, CBC working with and through partners, a clear, coherent way forward for the management and delivery of sports facilities in Colchester can be identified. The primary focus is to give residents leisure facilities of which they can be proud and ensure that sport and physical activity programmes lead to increases in regular participation, taking account of the projected increases in population in the Borough up until 2037.

### Strategic objectives

The above vision is based upon a clear, achievable framework of strategic objectives (not in any priority) and summarised in the boxes below. The three main themes of the strategy reflect Colchester’s priorities emanating from Sport England’s planning aim and objectives for sport; namely:

- Protect:** The existing 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.
- Enhance:** The programming and animation of facilities in order to meet the changing sport and physical activity needs of local residents.
- Provide:** Access to high quality sports facility infrastructure for all residents regardless of personal circumstances.

It is recommended that CBC and its partners adopt the following strategic objectives (as policy) to enable the above vision to be achieved:

#### OBJECTIVE 1: PROTECT

To **Protect** the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future demand. There is also a requirement to **protect** sports facilities where there is a need to do so through local planning policy.

#### OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE

**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.

#### OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE

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



## STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

### OBJECTIVE 1 - PROTECT

To **Protect** the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future demand.

#### Recommendations:

- a. Protect sports facilities where there is a need to do so through the development of a facility hierarchy.
- b. Protect facilities through local planning policies which include criteria based policies that protect existing facilities which meet identified needs.
- c. Support security of tenure and access to facilities for high quality, development minded clubs, through a range of solutions and partnership agreements.

## Facility hierarchy

CBC and partners should consider how they ensure that the network of sports facilities across the borough 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 as well as contributing to the wider health and well-being benefits that this delivers.

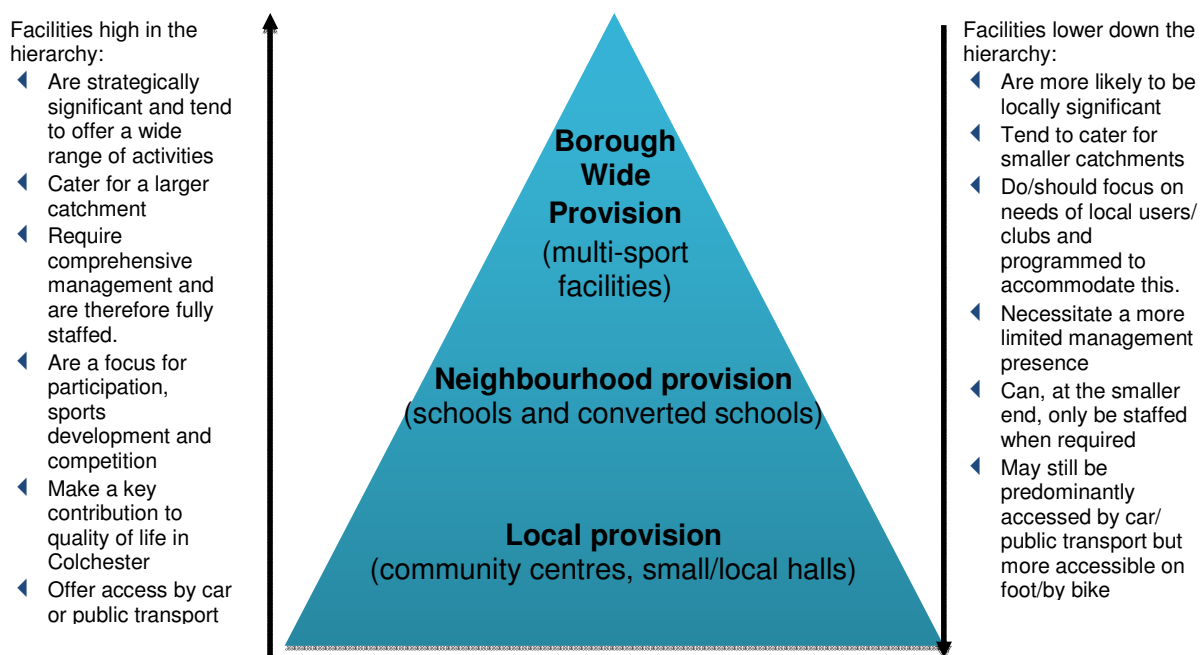
As such there is a need to develop a sports facility hierarchy in Colchester in which specific venues have distinct roles and functions; carry differing levels of operational weight and related staffing.

In parallel, it is important that facilities have a defined function from a user perspective. Hence 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.

Broad principles are illustrated in the hierarchy diagram shown below, whilst key principles are as shown in the table overleaf.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Figure 1.1 Facility hierarchy – core principles



It is worth noting that facilities identified in level 3 below are generally smaller than those identified within the scope of this commission. They are, however, often valuable assets for the local community offering either a range of recreation/participation opportunities or, in some instances, offering beginner to performance opportunities.

Table 1.1: Proposed facility hierarchy – site designation and definition

Designation	Role and function
Level 1: Borough wide facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a Borough (or Essex) significant facility which is the primary performance venue for a single or select number of priority sports.</li> <li>Potential venue which can host Colchester or county and local events.</li> <li>Provides a wide a range of opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in sport and physical activity, contributing significantly to the quality of life of borough residents.</li> <li>Provides and programmes opportunities for local people to try new activities, develop their skills and progress to a higher performance level.</li> <li>Core venue for training and the development of teachers, coaches, volunteers, officials and others in key sports organisations.</li> </ul>
Level 2: Neighbourhood facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to quality of life of residents within the community, and provides a range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity.</li> <li>Generally a combination of stand-alone community facilities and dual use sports facilities on school sites.</li> <li>Potential venue for hosting Colchester -wide and local events.</li> <li>Provides a base for the provision of opportunity (delivered by a range of providers) for local people to develop their skills and try new activities.</li> <li>Core venue for health and fitness activity in/across Colchester.</li> <li>Core venues to accommodate Colchester's Learn to Swim and sports instruction programmes (where a pool is available).</li> <li>Provides options for a range of sports organisations to develop skill, participate and compete within their chosen activity.</li> <li>Supports the voluntary sector to raise standards with respect to coaching, coach education, administration and volunteer development in chosen sport.</li> </ul>

Designation	Role and function
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility use to reflects demographic profile of the local community</li> <li>• Improves quality of PE and school sport for young people attending the school upon which it is based.</li> </ul>
Level 3: Local provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where this facility is within the vicinity of a 'community sports facility' it should seek to complement the programming and opportunities offered to the local community.</li> <li>• Tend to be stand-alone small dry-side community/sports facilities which operate independently.</li> <li>• Contributes to quality of life of the locality, accommodating a small range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities – often for just for one or two dedicated sports organisations to participate, train and compete (e.g. boxing, martial arts).</li> <li>• Programming can appeals to a specific demographic e.g. young people or faith groups</li> </ul>

### **Planning**

It is important that CBC's Planning Department uses the above requirements to develop robust planning policies that set out an approach to securing sport and recreational facilities via new development. Guidance should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions to include provision and/or the enhancement of appropriate indoor facilities.

Section 106 contributions or CIL (the Community Infrastructure Levy) should be used to improve the condition and maintenance regimes of existing indoor facilities to maintain quality and increase capacity to accommodate more usage, enhancing their capacity to increase participation.

CBC needs to protect the existing supply of sports facilities where it is needed for meeting current or future needs. The majority of facilities from the assessment report justify protection as there appears to be under provision in both swimming and sports halls with only squash being recognised as having adequate provision. Local plan policies should protect facilities and the scope to legally safeguard long term use of strategically important facilities to the community such as the borough wide and neighbourhood facilities identified.

### **Security of tenure**

Local sports clubs may require support from partners including CBC, national governing bodies or the County Sports Partnership (in this instance Essex CSP) to achieve sustainability across a range of areas including management, membership, funding, facilities, volunteers and partnership working. For example, supporting club development and encouraging clubs to develop evidence of business and sports development plans to generate an income through their facilities. All clubs could be encouraged to look at different management models such as registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC)<sup>1</sup>. Clubs should also be encouraged to work with partners locally whether volunteer support agencies or linking with local businesses.

In the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which announced public spending cuts, it is increasingly important for CBC to work with voluntary sector organisations in order that they may be able to take greater levels of ownership and support the wider

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cascinfo.co.uk/cascbenefits>

development and maintenance of facilities. To facilitate this, the proposed new Sports Board should consider how it might support and enable clubs to generate sufficient funds to allow this.

### **OBJECTIVE 2 - ENHANCE**

**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.

Enhance facilities by relevant investment to modernise existing stock.

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

- ◀ Establish a Colchester wide Sports Board which has a specific 'facility group' to bring together as many operators of sports facilities in the Borough as possible.
- ◀ Develop an agreed approach and Colchester definition of community use to which all partners sign and agree to implement.
- ◀ Consider how this group might engineer an holistic approach to both strategic programming (across all sites) and input into the capital developments required to modernise and upgrade facilities.
- ◀ Use this group as a reference point for marrying Colchester's sports club infrastructure and physical activity initiatives with appropriate facilities in order to achieve identified health and wellbeing and physical activity objectives.

### **OBJECTIVE 3 - PROVIDE**

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

In delivering the above, CBC and partners will need to consider the following:

- ◀ Given the financial imperative of Sport and Leisure to be financially self-sufficient as a service, CBC needs to ensure that price does not become a barrier to participation; especially for young people and economically challenged residents.
- ◀ How developments in the Northern Gateway complement current and projected future demand for sport and physical activity.
- ◀ How CBC can affect the new school development in the North of the Borough to ensure, at minimum, community access to a new sports hall and, potentially, to other community space to help address local physical inactivity, obesity and health related challenges.
- ◀ How partners can agree bespoke, high level interventions to shape service delivery across all facilities to meet Colchester's wider health and well-being objectives.

### Facility development

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 the residents of Colchester and to enable the Council to meet its wider objectives. This section first considers Leisure World Colchester as the most important current facility in the Borough (due to its offer, access, geography and current throughput). It also considers the potential role of other providers such as the Garrison and the University of Essex to impact further on provision, now and in the future.

#### *Leisure World Colchester*

The Assessment Report identifies the importance of Leisure World Colchester for both residents and non-residents. Membership of this facility emanates from all areas of the Borough. As noted via consultation and via analysis of the membership data, there is significant travel to the facility from people living outside the Borough which contributes to the site's financial viability.

Built in 1991, it has benefitted from recent (2012) investment of circa. £1.6million. This was used to upgrade the dance and studio offer, expand the reception area and fitness centre, open a new café and introduce new technology. The site offers three swimming pools, a large fitness suite, large sports hall and squash courts. In addition, it offers Aqua Springs Spa facility and Charter Hall events venue, which draws visitors from much further afield than conventional leisure facilities.

Both dry side and wet side facilities are identified in the non-technical assessment as good. There is a financial imperative to break even (reducing its annual deficit from c. £800,000 per annum) and the site regularly records over 1 million visits per annum. This level of use obviously puts pressure on facility infrastructure so continuing re-investment is essential to retain a high quality offer.

CBC's management team needs to continue to balance the needs of financial performance with ensuring that this facility remains accessible to the local community. This is, of course, in addition to functioning as a flagship venue serving a wide Colchester remit. CBC will need to consider contingency plans for the swimming pool plant, in particular, as it ages and should consider how it might cope with the prospect of increasing maintenance costs.

#### *The Garrison*

The Garrison has excellent facilities (indoor and outdoor) which are maintained to a very high standard. Although their primary function is to support service personnel, there is also a commitment to supporting community use, albeit with 'permitted users' only (i.e. pay and play facilities are not available due to security issues).

CBC has a 35 year agreement with the Garrison which encapsulates proposed usage and charging policies at MoD facilities. This needs to be revisited to try and extend the times available with a view to increasing participation in a range of sports and complementary activities. Income accrued by the garrison from lettings is available for re-investment and needs careful consideration as it has the potential to benefit the whole community and not just service personnel.

### *The University of Essex*

There is very limited community use at the University of Essex, as it is mainly given over to use by students. There are plans to grow student numbers by 50% from 2013 to 2019, which will create greater pressure. It is, however, developing plans to increase the scale of its sports facilities with a primary focus on expanded sports hall space, substantially greater fitness room/gym capacity and more playing pitches. The University's ideal would be to increase sports hall space by approximately 10 badminton court size, gym space by a further 50% and sports pitches by 50% (or increase usability by developing 3G artificial grass pitches). Given the identified need to increase water provision for swimming and other aquatic sports, there is an opportunity to explore whether the University has the potential to deliver such a community accessible facility.

It is also looking at the viability of introducing additional temporary facilities in order to deal with growing demand prior to additional permanent facilities being completed. Increases in net levels of demand for facilities across Colchester (at least at certain times of year) are likely to be exacerbated by the University looking into the opportunity of sourcing use of external sports facilities in order to release pressure from its growing market at least in the short term.

### *Leisure World Tiptree (Joint use centre at Thurstable School)*

Built in 1977 and refurbished in 2005, this facility serves its local population. There is a need to invest in Tiptree Sports Centre to address the quality of the offer and ensure that its facilities meet customer expectations.

### *Leisure World Highwoods (Joint use centre at Gilbert School)*

Highwoods Sports Centre was built in 1985 and refurbished in 2011. As the only sports hall North of the railway line and with a range of indoor and outdoor activities available (albeit via a dual use arrangement), it is significant. It currently makes a financial loss. The School has grown significantly over the past few years and is investing in a new sports hall. Consultation indicates that the present intention is that this will only be available for school use with no community access (reportedly due mainly to VAT issues relating to the funding of its construction costs). Housing developments in the North of the Borough are likely to increase demand for both indoor and outdoor facilities.

### *The Northern Gateway*

Over the past few years, significant planning work has been applied to the Northern Gateway, an area of approximately 81 hectares to the North and South of the A12. CBC has placed emphasis on the creation of a distinctive, high quality leisure and recreation based development, which not only contributes to the identity and role of North Colchester, but also meet some borough wide and/or regional demand. It will be necessary to ensure that any developments in the Northern Gateway complement existing facilities in the area and that community use is considered paramount as part of any development.

The Assessment Report identifies a strategic need to provide and increase indoor sports hall provision to serve residents in Colchester in general and in the North of Colchester, in particular. This corroborates CBC's own extensive consultation which indicates that:

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- ◀ David Lloyd is expected to develop an indoor tennis and fitness/pool facility on part of the site (subject to agreeing a lease with CBC).
- ◀ British Cycling is keen to support the development of a cycling specific facility.
- ◀ Discussion has taken place with regard to potential development of a swim teaching facility through possible private provision.
- ◀ The Rugby Club has been approached and discussion is taking place with a view to relocating it to the area along with other sports users currently accommodated on the Mill Road Sports Ground.
- ◀ There is a need for the development of a large multi-functional indoor space and a range of 3G artificial grass pitches with a view to becoming a major outdoor site in the area.

It will be necessary to undertake a full feasibility study of the area but the Needs Assessment report indicates that consideration should be given to developing facilities which have the potential to operate on a revenue neutral basis, in line with current CBC policy. The feasibility should cover potential capital/revenue implications and consider:

- ◀ Expanding indoor sports hall provision by (say) 6 courts – capable of hosting up to regional standard badminton/basketball tournaments/events.
- ◀ Building a specific purpose built venue to meet a borough or regional need. Investment in studio and fitness facilities (size to be determined) which will be available to the wider public (acknowledging the David Lloyd Centre and likely reach of this facility).
- ◀ Cycle route (fenced but free of charge). Litherland Sports Centre in Sefton is an example of a mix of dry side facilities which includes a 1km cycle route for all levels of rider (which is free to use).
- ◀ Football cages (number to be determined following feasibility and cost benefit analysis).
- ◀ Moving the Rugby Club and associated ancillary facilities (allowing for growth given the projected increase in population and local development plan).
- ◀ There is a strategic need to provide a community accessible swimming pool (4 lanes by 25m) and other water based facilities – this development (in the future) could cater for increased demand for water space, at a time when private providers or CBC is able to consider offering this facility (within its current fiscal targets) and the operation of a cost neutral service. The benefits of developing facilities via a modular approach should be considered. Pool facilities could be provided to the east of the Borough (see Essex University) and this site could provide some outdoor water facilities.

### *Design and management*

- ◀ The design of new facilities is important in that it can impact massively on reducing revenue costs by, for example, allowing some facilities to be accessible by key holders e.g. Broadway Badminton Centre in St Helens, which is owned by the local authority but managed by a trust, in association with Badminton England.
- ◀ Management - CBC needs to consider alternative methods of managing facilities moving forward. The feasibility should identify a preferred facility mix and anticipated income levels from each component. Given the current entrepreneurial approach to managing facilities, CBC may consider that it is within its capability to achieve a surplus with the proposed facility mix.
- ◀ The addition of a swimming pool to the facility mix is likely to increase the risk of operating at a deficit. There are, however, examples of pools with appropriate levels of fitness and judicious management which either break even or achieve a

surplus (this normally entails high levels of population density and can be found in certain areas of London, in particular).

- ◀ Another type of management arrangement includes a not for profit trust, an example of which can be found at Crewkerne Aqua Centre, Somerset. This comprises a mix of volunteers and leisure professionals who work together to keep operating costs to a minimum but drive income levels through high levels of participation.

The Northern Gateway should be one of a number of key priorities for CBC, alongside other high priority aims (identified within the action plan) which includes working in partnership with Essex University, Colchester Institute and The Garrison.

### *Colchester Institute of Higher Education*

It is important to understand that strategies move on and opportunities and threats alter. Very recent consultation indicates that Colchester Institute of Higher Education has plans to build new sports facilities, which include a new sports hall and fitness suite, costing approximately £4million. It is apparently £400,000 short of its target finances and discussions with Sports England for funding are under way. This development will go some way to reducing the identified undersupply of sports hall provision and, as such, should be supported by CBC with the recommendation that its design and support for it is likely to generate and improve community use.



# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## ACTION PLAN

The following actions are relative to the overall management and programming of key facilities in Colchester. All actions identified below should take account of accessibility issues (hearing, visual and wheelchair access). Timescales are considered to be 1- 3 years (short); 3-6 years (medium); 7+ years (long).

Strategic function	Challenges	Recommended actions	Facilities	Time-scale	Partners	Aim	Importance
<b>Borough wide programming</b>	Achieving an holistic approach to programming (given the different types of management) across all facilities leading to improved access for all sections of the community taking account of talent development.	Consider and assess the coordination and sports development links across programming in the Borough. Define the role of each facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester. Complete an access to schools review with a view to developing a site by site action plan for improving programming across the Borough	All	Short	Schools, MOD, University, Institute	Enhance	High
<b>Community use agreements</b>	Increasing the availability of the current stock of sports halls to more sections of the community.	Working through the new Sports Development Board, identify available time (especially during the day) to extend community use. Consider this on a site by site basis with a view to increasing opportunities for the ageing population.	All sites	Short	Garrison, University, Schools	Enhance	High
<b>Sports halls</b>	Improving access to facilities during the day time given the current reliance on educational facilities for indoor activity	Complete an access to sports halls review with a view to extending day time access by, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Key holder access to specific sports groups</li> <li>◀ Designing in good access to new facilities</li> </ul>	Level 2 facilities	Short	Garrison, University, Schools	Enhance	Medium
<b>Incorporating level 3 facilities into</b>	To free up more space in the four court halls by developing an improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Identify a project coordinator to lead on this element of work (partner agency)</li> </ul>	Level 3 facilities	Medium	Parish Councils, Community	Enhance	Medium

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Strategic function	Challenges	Recommended actions	Facilities	Time-scale	Partners	Aim	Importance
<b>the broader activity portfolio</b>	understanding of the importance of level 3 facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Undertake review of level 3 facilities to see current levels of activity and which are able to increase physical activity.</li> <li>◀ Consider how the programming of these facilities fit into the wider programming offer.</li> </ul>			groups, private facilities		
<b>Planning</b>	To recognise the importance of this study and ensure recommendations are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ CBC to adopt the recommendations in this Study and ensure that they are encapsulated in planning policy documents (Local Plan)</li> <li>◀ CBC to develop a methodology for securing developer contributions to ensure the delivery enhancement or protection of sport and leisure facilities across Colchester Borough as part of future developments.</li> <li>◀ CBC has the potential to allocate CIL funding once it is adopted in the Borough; to directly support the provision of sports and leisure related developments through the planning system or to support and enable partners to deliver sports and leisure related projects in the Borough.</li> <li>◀ The Northern Gateway should be one of a number of key priorities for CBC, alongside other high priority aims identified in the action plan which includes working in partnership with Essex University, Colchester Institute and The Garrison.</li> </ul>		Short	Planning Department	Provide and Enhance	High

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Strategic function	Challenges	Recommended actions	Facilities	Time-scale	Partners	Aim	Importance
<b>Monitor and review</b>	Keeping the Facilities Strategy relevant and up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◀ Complete a light touch review of the study annually;</li> <li>◀ Undertake a complete review within 5 years of its implementation.</li> </ul>		Medium	CBC		High

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

Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>Leisure World Colchester</b> (Borough wide facilities)	Local authority	<p>Ensuring that it remains accessible to residents from deprived areas of Colchester while delivering a financially self-sufficient sport and leisure service.</p> <p>Potential of increased maintenance costs for pools as they age.</p> <p>Ensuring needs of different market segments are met given the high demand for wet and dry facilities.</p> <p>Site popularity may adversely affect the quality of the facility.</p>	<p>Its strategic and borough role must be balanced against the needs of local residents by coherent, pragmatic programming and pricing.</p> <p>Regular analysis of membership data to identify who is accessing facilities</p> <p>Continued investment (especially on pool maintenance) to ensure it remains a high quality destination.</p> <p>Consideration of different pressures on the main hall space including cultural performances and physical activity.</p> <p>Consider whether and how the fitness equipment can be extended (due to high demand) in line with CBC's financial parameters.</p>	CBC	Short	High	Protect and Enhance
<b>Corporal Budd VC Gymnasium</b> (Borough wide facilities)	MOD	<p>Enabling wider community use given that the facilities exist primarily for the use of MOD personnel.</p> <p>All use of the facility must be pre-booked by 'permitted users'.</p> <p>Identifying where best to re-invest the income generated through hire charges.</p> <p>Consideration of how this facility fits into wider programming and talent development across the Borough.</p>	<p>Maintain dialogue between CBC and MoD to ensure programming and pricing are commensurate with wider goals of increasing sports participation.</p> <p>Consider the best projects to invest MOD income in new facilities of greatest benefit to the whole community.</p> <p>Consider how facilities access can be improved by the general public without security at the base being jeopardised i.e. increasing use by 'permitted users'.</p> <p>Identify the role of the swimming pool and indoor sports hall within the wider hierarchy of opportunity.</p>	MOD	Short	High	Protect and Enhance  Protect and Enhance

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Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>Highwoods Sports Centre (Gilberd School)</b>  Neighbourhood facility	Local authority and School	CBC is only responsible for programming at peak times. Its ability to support day time usage is very limited.  Located in the North of the Borough it is likely that more pressure will be placed on it due to increased local house building.  It makes a loss which may strain the relationship between the School and CBC.  Membership data is weak so its specific importance to the local community is difficult to judge.  The School is in the process of building a second sports hall which is, reportedly, not going to be available for community use.  The quality of facilities is average, which can impact negatively on the demand for them.	CBC to maintain good communication with the School to ensure efficient and effective management and investment in the site.	CBC	Short	High	Enhance
			Make better use of quality management information system to help identify users and their profile.  Continue to liaise with the School to secure regular reliable community access to the new sports hall.				
			Continue to work with the School to identify opportunity to use the second hall (potentially through block bookings if VAT remains an issue).	CBC	Short	Medium	Enhance
			Liaise with the School to improve the the quality of changing provision ensuring that CBC's strict financial regulations are adhered to.	CBC	Short	High	Provide
<b>Holmwood House Preparatory School</b> Neighbourhood facility	School	Built in 2010, this site is assessed as good with relatively strong community use (being available for sports club and by community use agreement). It should be considered as part of the wider sports development programme.	Establish regular lines of communication with School so that it can better define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester.  Consider how the School may contribute to the broader sports and physical activity agenda from a strategic viewpoint.	Facilities group	Active Essex	Low	Protect and Enhance

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Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>Tiptree Sports Centre (Thurstable School)</b>  Neighbourhood facility	Local Authority & Thurstable School	<p>CBC is only responsible for programming at peak times. Its ability to support daytime usage is very limited.</p> <p>The facility currently requires a subsidy; putting strain on the relationship between the School and CBC.</p> <p>Membership data is weak so its importance to the local community is difficult to judge.</p> <p>It is the main sports hall in the South and West of the Borough servicing a specific population.</p> <p>The sports hall and changing facility is assessed as below average.</p>	<p>CBC to maintain good communication with the School to ensure efficient and effective management and investment in the site.</p> <p>Make better use of quality management information system which will help to identify users and their profile.</p> <p>Consider the best way to improve the condition of the facilities in association with the School and ensure that its programming is responsive to local need within a wider strategic programme.</p>	CBC	Short	Short	Enhance
				Thurstable School and CBC	Medium	Medium	Protect
				CBC	Medium	Short-medium	
<b>Philip Morant School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form College</b> Neighbourhood facility	School	<p>The sports hall has no separate community access and the school layout does not lend itself to community use. Nevertheless, as of January 2014, the sports hall was made available for community use. This is currently limited with the facility unavailable at weekends, school holidays and exam periods</p>	<p>Define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester and encourage increased use of facilities.</p> <p>Negotiate with the School to extend its hours of community use so it contributes more to the broader sports and physical activity agenda.</p>	Facilities group	Active Essex	Medium	Enhance

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>St Benedict's College</b> Neighbourhood facility	Education	The School would not allow access to assess the amount of community use nor the quality of facilities. Consultation suggests that there is community use of the sports hall.	Establish regular lines of communication with School to make it aware of the wider strategic drive to increase sport/physical activity. Define role of the facility within the wider community use offer in Colchester.	Facilities group		Low	Enhance
<b>St Helena School</b> Neighbourhood facility	Education	Although refurbished in 2005, sports hall/changing provision is considered below average. There is considerable community use available on a pay and play basis. Ensuring that facility programming at the school is part of a wider coordinated approach to sport development across the Borough	Define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester Establish closer links with the School and try to help coordinate what it delivers within the wider sporting offer made across Colchester	Facilities group	Short	Medium	Protect and Enhance
<b>Stanway School</b> Neighbourhood facility	Education	Refurbished in 2005, this facility is considered above average and offers nearly 40 hours of community use per week. The challenge is coordinating programming with a wider Borough approach. Access to its health and fitness suite has recently been removed from the general public.	Maintain links with the school to reinforce the good community access it currently offers. Establish regular lines of communication with School to try and coordinate what it delivers with the wider sporting offer made across Colchester. Support the School to re-open its fitness facilities if financially viable.	Facilities group	Medium	Medium	Protect and Enhance
<b>The Thomas Lord Audley School</b> Neighbourhood facility	Education	Refurbished in 2008, the sports hall is above average and the changing rooms - below average. It offers nearly 40 hours of community use per week. The main challenge is bringing its programme into a coordinated approach to sport development across the Borough	Maintain links with the school to retain the good community access it currently offers. Engage with it to try and coordinate what it delivers with the wider sporting offer made across Colchester	Facilities group	Medium	Medium	Protect and Enhance

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Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>University of Essex Sports Centre (Borough wide facilities)</b>	Education	<p>Refurbished in 2006, the main focus of this facility is to provide for the student population (with limited public access).</p> <p>There are plans to grow student numbers at the University by 50% between 2013 and 2019. This will place increasing strain on the University and local sporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Supporting University to develop improved provision including sports hall and health suites.</p> <p>Consider how to re-engage with the University to discuss extending water provision options.</p>	<p>Engage with the University to explore how its plans might fit into the wider sporting and physical activity offer of the Borough.</p> <p>Support the University in its efforts to build new facilities, ensuring community access, as this has the potential to alleviate use at other sites in the Town.</p> <p>Enter into negotiation with the University about the provision of extending water space in the future.</p> <p>Support the University to develop the provision of additional temporary facilities , which will deal with growing demand prior to additional permanent facilities being completed</p>	University CBC	Short	High	Provide Protect and
<b>Mersea Sports Centre</b> Local provision	Private	Built in 1981 with some refurbishment in 2001, it has a dated one court hall two squash courts and fitness facilities. It will need more investment to remain open at a level of quality adequate for local use.	<p>Define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester.</p> <p>Support the management to identify appropriate funding pots to enable it to continue to raise the quality of provision of the site.</p>	Facilities group	Medium	Short / medium	Protect and Enhance
<b>Mersea Indoor Bowls Club</b> Local provision	Private	<p>This appears to operate in isolation from other sport/physical activity opportunities in the Borough.</p> <p>It has the potential to link to the wider health and well-being offer (especially for the older age group).</p>	Define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester	Facilities group	Medium	Short / medium	Protect



## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
<b>Colchester Indoor Bowls Club</b> Neighbourhood facility	Private	This is a large successful club operating near to capacity. It is currently investigating how it might expand its current space. It also needs to consider whether it is open to all sections of the community. It is unlikely that that the EIBA will have funding available to support development at the site.	CBC should look favourably on any planning application which may emanate from the Club as it seeks to increase participation in the sport. Define the role of the facility within the wider community use offer across Colchester	Facilities group	Active Essex?	Short / medium	Protect and Enhance
<b>New build school</b>	Education	The County Council unable to influence the design due to education legislation. Ensuring that any sports hall built for school purposes is accessible for community use	Essex County Council to identify minimum requirement. Explore different external funding opportunities to support and improve the specification of sports facilities ensuring excellent community access is built in to the design	Essex County Council and Education	Medium	High	Provide
<b>Smaller community facilities</b>	Various	The quality and availability of community facilities is not known. They do, however, have the potential to ease pressure on larger facilities and offer opportunity for increased physical activity in very local areas. Communication with management at some of these facilities varies but they can offer complementary programmes of activity.	A commitment to understanding the sporting offer made at these sites needs to be agreed. Only then will their potential to support wider programming and sporting offer based objectives be fully understood. This should be followed by integrating/ supporting community use of these facilities into the wider Colchester network.	Essex rural council	Medium	Medium	Enhance
<b>Northern Gateway</b>	Various tbc	Ensuring that the proposed leisure destination proposed for the Northern Gateway complements current and future sports facility developments.	Undertake a full feasibility study of the Northern Gateway taking account of the Needs Assessment report which indicates developing facilities which have the potential to operate on a	CBC Economic Growth Team (Regener	Short	High	Provide

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Facility	Management	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Time-scale	Priority	Objective
		Relevant partners support the development in development, management and financially,	revenue neutral basis, in line with current CBC policy. The feasibility should cover potential capital/revenue implications and consider a range of facility mixes as identified above.	ation Department)			
<b>Colchester North Urban Extension</b>	tbc	Ensure the proposed community centre for this area does not compete with other proposed facilities in the area.	Confirm what facilities are proposed for this area and identify a project leader to develop appropriate mix of facilities.	CBC planning department	Short	High	Provide
<b>Major New Housing developments</b>	tbc	Ensuring that major housing developments (which have not yet got planning permission)					

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Sport specific recommendations

Sport	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
<b>Badminton</b>	There is significant badminton activity in the Borough, but it is constrained by the lack of appropriate facilities. In particular, consultation indicates a need for a single quality venue and for more time to be made available for smaller clubs at school venues.	Enter negotiation with Badminton England and the Local Badminton Network (LBN) to assess the level of investment available, especially for the Northern Gateway development. Consider alternative methods of management e.g. keyholder access for such a facility. Liaise with the LBN to assess how its needs can be catered for within a wider sports development programme within Colchester.	tbc	Short	Provide and Enhance
<b>Basketball</b>	Basketball is popular but fragmented across clubs in Colchester and the sport has recently lost use of Colchester Academy as a venue for one club (matches and training).	Work with local clubs to identify new venues available for training and playing matches, ensuring that venues meet relevant league standards, so that development of talent can continue.	tbc	Medium	Protect
<b>Cycling</b>	CBC and British Cycling appear to be in agreement about the demand for a cycling circuit in Colchester. BC has indicated the potential of accessing funding for such a development within the Northern Gateway. The main challenge is the future management of such a facility, given CBC's commitment to income neutral facilities and British Cycling's predisposition not to support local club's to manage such facilities (due, in the main to a lack of skills and expertise).	Undertake a feasibility study to assess the specific requirements of a cycling circuit for the Northern Gateway. Enter into negotiation with British Cycling and local clubs to assess the level of investment required and available for a development in the Northern Gateway. Consider different management arrangements from the outset, as this is a potential stumbling block to development.	CBC and British Cycling with local clubs	Short	Provide
<b>Gymnastics</b>	Despite recent investment in expanding the gymnastics offer in Colchester demand appears to be outstripping supply	Consideration to be given to offering a coordinated beginners gymnastics programme at a range of indoor venues across the Borough and potentially in the longer term looking to extend or find new facility provision	tbc	Medium	Enhance

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Sport	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
<b>Indoor bowls</b>	Improved coordination and joint work between the two clubs has potential to drive participation up further. Colchester Indoor Bowls Club is considering expanding its number of rinks. There is also a need to support the Club to improve its offer to members of the BAME community.	CBC needs to support (via planning) Colchester Indoor Bowls clubs in its aspirations to expand its current footprint. Both clubs should be encouraged to work together to drive up both participation and performance levels in the sport	English Indoor Bowls Association and CBC	Medium	Provide and Enhance
<b>Netball</b>	The NGB suggests that training indoors is not a priority and it would prefer to focus on developing a good Central Venue League outdoors.	Continue to engage with netball leagues and clubs to ensure netball needs are met.	Netball Association	Medium	Enhance
<b>Squash</b>	Supporting the Squash Academy as it moves from the University to the Garrison. The need to support squash clubs to develop their infrastructure and to equip squash coaches with more business skills. Maintaining quality courts for all levels of squash ability	The NGB needs to work with local clubs and facilities to help coordinate developments and support workforce development. CBC will need to invest in the quality of its courts, particularly at Tiptree if it is going to continue to offer a quality squash and racketball offer in the Borough.	Active Essex/Squash and Racketball Association  CBC	Medium	Enhance  Protect

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Sport	Challenges	Recommended actions	Lead agency	Timescale	Objective
<b>Swimming and other aquatic sports</b>	Ensuring that the needs of different clubs and the community are satisfied via effective programming and pricing. Consider how the water provision can be extended given that there is an under supply of water currently and this will be exacerbated by the projected increase in the population over the lifetime of this strategy.	Maintain dialogue between CBC (as the facility operator), ASA, different user groups and clubs to ensure that the needs of the users are considered in the context of the wider swimming programme. Liaise with the University to confirm current review for swimming provision and other facility aspirations. Consider how CIL may support new build!	CBC University ASA Clubs and other user groups.	Short	Enhance
				Long	Provide
<b>Table tennis</b>	Finding appropriate space for table tennis at an affordable price is becoming more difficult for current players. In addition, matches can run late which is not conducive to the closing times of some of the larger facilities. The numbers playing the game are relatively small when compared to other indoor sports	Consider the programming and pricing requirements of table tennis when older venues become available and when new ones are built. Consider the viability of building a table tennis specification based (but potentially also multi-functional space with the ability to host table tennis matches and larger competitions) available for use on a key holder basis, within the wider Northern Gateway. Consider how CIL may support new build!	Table Tennis England Local clubs	Long	Protect
					Provide
<b>Water sports</b>	As well as being a coastal Borough, there is a range of different size inland water spaces which do not appear to be used to their full potential.	Develop a coherent water-sports strategy which could help drive up participation in water sports <i>per se</i>	CBC and a range of water based NGBs	High	Enhance

## Appendix 1: Needs Assessment summary

### Sports halls

- ◀ The FPM identifies 16 halls on 10 sites. Of the 16, only 12 comprise three courts or above. The FPM identifies that the level of unmet demand for sports halls in Colchester equates to 4.28 badminton courts (this is a global figure and the FPM does not specify where these should/could be located).
- ◀ The audit, however, identifies 14 halls on 11 sites of three courts or higher. The two missing from the FPM include Philip Morant School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre and Colchester Academy.
- ◀ Colchester Academy has, within the timescale of this study, closed its sports hall to community and school, due to it being deemed to be unsafe. This has left (specifically) a basketball club looking for a venue to train and play matches in, whilst other casual users have also been displaced.
- ◀ Demand for sports hall space is, therefore, greater than that identified in the FPM.
- ◀ Community use at indoor sports halls is varied across the Borough, with limited access at the University of Essex and Corporal Budd VC. Schools generally offer good access (only Philip Morant and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre operates below 50%). This also indicates that there is limited opportunity for increasing capacity at other sports halls.
- ◀ Poor quality facilities can have a negative impact on demand. The quality of sports halls is variable. Three schools (Tiptree, St Helena and Highwoods) have below average changing facilities and halls.
- ◀ Consultation clearly indicates demand for more space and time for badminton, table tennis and gymnastics. Badminton, in particular is constrained by available sports hall space and it lacks a single quality venue with the exception of Essex University (which it can only use on a rare occasions during holidays). Badminton England has money to invest in suitable facilities should a suitable opportunity occur.
- ◀ Consultation indicates that cost is of importance to users (notably table tennis players) wishing to hire facilities (although it is not clear whether these are available at the relevant times) suggesting that CBC is (at least as perceived by this user group) too expensive.
- ◀ Given the fragmented nature of management arrangements for sports halls (private, local authority and education); no organisation takes a lead on the coordination of programming space and activity across the Borough.
- ◀ The predicted increase in population, especially in North Colchester, is likely to put more strain on the current stock of facilities. Further investment will be required in the sporting infrastructure if it is to keep pace with projected demand (assuming population projections come to pass).
- ◀ In addition, there appears to be little scope for extending day time use at the current stock of facilities (given the high number of school halls within the facility mix).
- ◀ Neighbouring local authorities do not help to ease the demand for indoor sports halls.

### Swimming pools

- ◀ This assessment identifies only one community accessible swimming pool. This is in accordance with Sport England's FPM.
- ◀ There is, however, a range of privately managed swimming facilities, some of which offer time to swimming clubs (notably, Corporal Budd VC) and some which provide swimming lessons.
- ◀ Sport England's FPM indicates that there is unmet demand for swimming pools of 5 lanes of a 25m pool. This calculation is based on a combination of lack of capacity at existing pools and people living outside a catchment drive or walk time of a facility.
- ◀ The lack of pool space is particularly noticeable around the area in which Bannatynes is situated, mainly due to the population density of that area.
- ◀ Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator indicates that, if the population grows at the expected rate, the demand for water space is likely to increase by up to a further eight lanes (up to 2037).
- ◀ Both the FPM and the audit identify that Colchester gains no benefit from its neighbouring authorities' supply of public facilities close to Colchester's borders.
- ◀ The main facility is located at Leisure World Colchester; this is within 20 minutes' drive time of most Borough residents. This is offset by the fact that 19% of residents do not have access to a car. There is a surfeit of demand at peak times with all sectors of the community competing for water space at the same time. Management at the Centre indicates that many current public swimming times attract relatively low numbers.
- ◀ Four fifths of people in the top 20% most deprived wards do not have access to a swimming pool within one mile of where they reside.
- ◀ Some of the higher levels of need are located within the Northern Gateway area where significant population growth is proposed
- ◀ Leisure World Colchester offers a significant learn to swim programme with over 2,300 people registered; 90% of whom are residents of the Borough.
- ◀ The quality of Leisure World Colchester is generally good but it will need continued investment to ensure that this quality is maintained.
- ◀ Colchester Swimming Club is thriving and regularly has to undertake a process of rationalisation to ensure that it has capacity to develop its young talent. It reports needing more training time; a situation likely to be exacerbated by the very recent closure of Colchester Academy Pool to all community use.
- ◀ Corporal Budd VC is an excellent facility but offers only with limited community use. It is unlikely to become available for pay and play access but investigation of whether it can increase the volume of block bookings ought to be considered.
- ◀ The projected population growth in Colchester is likely to increase pressure on existing water space and it is unlikely that current water space will meet projected growing demand going forward.

### Health and fitness

- ◀ The wide range of health and fitness providers in the Borough (21 sites) encompass low cost operators through to more expensive subscription and spa outlets. This ensures relatively equitable access for all sections of the community.
- ◀ Facility quality is generally good and reflects the saleable value of this type of venue.
- ◀ The main community accessible fitness offer serves the main population centres of the Borough including Colchester Town Centre, North of Colchester (Highwoods) and Tiptree (serving the South West of the Borough).
- ◀ The reach of Leisure World Colchester (based on membership data) appears to be good, with areas of higher population density showing relatively high membership (which covers the more deprived communities).
- ◀ The quality of Highwoods fitness facility is considered (in the non-technical assessment) to be below average. Tiptree is considered above average. Both these sites need further investment if they are to compete with private sector venues and maintain levels of public participation.
- ◀ It would be beneficial to gathered improved intelligence about users at Tiptree and Highwoods. Such data would enable CBC to more clearly identify who is using, and therefore, who is not using the, health and fitness facilities at these locations.
- ◀ Based on the modelling applied, supply of gym provision is sufficient in the Borough. That is not to say that more facilities could/should not be considered as they have the ability to be inclusive and can be run at a profit which allows cross subsidy for other less profitable activity. The investment at the Northern Gateway by David Lloyd indicates that it believes that there is scope for more fitness provision in the Borough.

### Squash courts

- ◀ The Borough is generally well served for squash with six sites, providing 22 courts.
- ◀ The quality of the courts varies, ranging from below average to good.
- ◀ There is restricted use at a number of these courts including the Garrison and the University. Two of the sites are commercially operated.
- ◀ The Garrison has an excellent 6-court glass back facility and is in the process of developing an Academy on site (which is moving from the University). This is likely to lead to an increase in participation in the sport.
- ◀ Pay and play opportunities for squash are available at Leisure World and Tiptree.
- ◀ There are several development programmes operating in the area; this is thought to have contributed to an increase of 9% in adults and 119% in junior participation in the sport in the Borough in the past year. Overall numbers are, however, still relatively small.
- ◀ Consultation indicates a need to support squash clubs in the area to develop their infrastructure and to equip coaches with more business skills to support an increase in participation.



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- ◀ There does not appear to be demand for more squash courts as capacity exists on current facilities.
- ◀ CBC will need to invest in the quality of its courts, particularly at Tiptree if it is going to continue to provide a quality squash and racketball offer in the Borough and be a provider for the recreational participant rather than club players.

### Indoor bowls

- ◀ The Borough has two vibrant indoor clubs with, reportedly, 700 members between them. There is still scope for increasing participation at both clubs especially with the projected increases in population and the age profile of that increase.
- ◀ Bowls is particularly popular sport amongst older age groups; the older population (65+years) is expected to increase substantially in Colchester up until 2037.
- ◀ Essex Indoor Bowls Association (EIBA) is targeting increasing participation in younger people (14-25), women and girls and people with disabilities as part of its Whole Sport Plan strategy.
- ◀ Colchester Bowls Club is a strategically significant site which has the potential to offer and support physical activity among older people. West Mersea Bowls Club is not as large but is still an important local venue.
- ◀ Colchester Bowls Club is situated in an area of high population density and has good parking and access; it is also close to a bus route and has a significant catchment population within walking distance.
- ◀ It is considering its options to expand to accommodate its increasing membership. Any proposal to increase the size of the Colchester Bowls Club facility in particular should be looked upon favourably by CBC.

### Cycling

- ◀ Cycling is particularly popular amongst people in all age groups; it is increasingly popular with women and younger people.
- ◀ British Cycling is keen to develop closed circuit facilities to drive both participation and excellence in the sport.
- ◀ The Northern Gateway offers both space and opportunity to develop such a facility.
- ◀ In general, British Cycling does not advocate local club management of facilities. However, CBC is also reluctant to manage such a facility, given its stated objective of to ensure that leisure facilities operate at 'cost neutral' by 2015/16.
- ◀ External capital funding is likely to be needed to develop such a facility.
- ◀ The local cycling club is strong and increasing both its profile and membership. It has a strong volunteer workforce which is open to new ideas and ways of working.
- ◀ It has good working relationships the Football Club and CBC Parks Section; a good base from which to broaden the cycling offer and widen participation in Colchester
- ◀ Consideration needs to be given as to how any cycling facility will be managed alongside/with other potential developments in the Northern Gateway



### Water sports

- ◀ There is a range of different size inland water spaces across the Borough; these do not appear to be used to their full potential.
- ◀ There are few water based clubs in the Borough; fewer than might have been expected given its coastline.
- ◀ Colchester Canoe Club is relatively successful and is keen to develop further having successfully achieved Clubmark and raised funds to keep improving its offer.
- ◀ The RYA has identified Ardleigh Sailing Club as its priority in relation to development within Essex and is keen to develop the sport in the area.
- ◀ Sport England Active Places survey identifies a limited amount of demand for sailing.
- ◀ With the exception of the rowing club at the University, it does not appear to be a locally driven community sport and there is no established club in the Borough.
- ◀ The opportunity exists to develop a coherent water-sport strategy which could help drive up participation in water sports *per se*.

## Summary

- ◀ CBC recognises the importance of its leisure facility stock to health and well-being and future planning needs.
- ◀ Leisure World is the Borough's flagship venue. It is strategically significant as the Borough's only community accessible swimming pool. If it were to become unavailable there would be a severe shortfall of accessible water space – also resulting in the most deprived community not being within easy reach of a pool.
- ◀ Corporal Budd VC swimming pool and sports hall provide high quality valuable supporting facilities for residents of the Borough (albeit, with limited community use).
- ◀ The University offers limited community use in its sports hall and fitness facilities, due to high student demand. It is keen to develop its facilities further and has indicated a wish to invest in a further 10 courts and increase its fitness offer by up to 50%. This should satisfy anticipated increased demand likely to result from extension of its free access policy (to students) and projected increased student numbers.
- ◀ The dedicated gymnastics centre provides the full gamut of gymnastics activities. Despite its recent extension (supported by CBC) it still has a significant waiting list.
- ◀ Most sports halls identified in the audit allow for some level of community use although CBC only has direct influence over three of them. This renders its lead on facility programming in the Borough as weak; many of the halls 'operate in silos' without any overall leadership, coordination or direction.
- ◀ Consultation clearly indicates that more time is needed in facilities for sports such as badminton, gymnastics and table tennis. Neighbouring local authorities are unable to help to ease the demand for indoor sports halls.
- ◀ The proposed development of the Northern Gateway provides an exciting opportunity for Colchester. It has already has many stakeholders in the sporting community excited as to what the facility mix /potential facilities might be.
- ◀ CBC has an opportunity to drive facility programming linked to the health and well-being agenda in its own facilities and drive up participation.
- ◀ Developer contributions secured via CIL/planning obligations could be used to support new/enhanced facilities, given the major development proposed.
- ◀ CBC has a current agreement with the Garrison which encapsulates proposed usage and charging policies at MOD facilities. If CBC can extend this, this venue could accommodate and encourage increased participation in a range of sports.
- ◀ In addition, CBC is keen to re-negotiate community provision by, for example, using the excess funding generated at the Garrison facilities to increase access to facilities, rather than build new facilities *per se*.

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

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- ◀ The projected increase in Borough population will put increasing strain on the current facility stock, particularly (given the ageing population) for daytime access. This will lead to a demand for additional space at a time of efficiencies and cuts.
- ◀ Links with health partners need to be further developed and relationships more formalised. There is a genuine opportunity to ensure that facilities better serve the health and wellbeing needs of residents. Active Essex is a leading player in the development of this relationship so partnership work is recommended. This is specifically relevant given health challenges faced by the ageing Borough population
- ◀ The lack of programming coordination and a sports development service leads to duplication of activity and/or gaps in provision of a full sport and leisure offer.
- ◀ Developing new partnership relationships needs to remain high on the CBC agenda, particularly with a view to facility/service co-location.
- ◀ The closure of Colchester Academy in 2014 has impacted on the provision of a number of sports facilities and community access to them. While it is not known when the sports facilities will re-open, re-establishing community use at Colchester Academy should remain an objective for the future.

## Appendix2: Sport England’s Facility Planning model: Sports hall provision in Colchester 2014

### Introduction

- 1.1. This report and the accompanying maps provide a strategic assessment of the current level of provision for Sports Halls in Colchester. This assessment uses Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model and the data from National Facilities Audit run as of January 2014.
- 1.2. The information contained within the report should be read alongside the two appendices. Appendix 1 sets out the facilities that have been included within this analysis together with those that have been excluded. Appendix 2 provides background to the Facilities Planning Model (FPM), facility inclusion criteria and the model parameters.
- 1.3. The FPM modelling and dataset builds in a number of assumptions as set out in Appendix 2 regarding the supply and demand of provision. This report should not be considered in isolation and it is recommended that this analysis should form part of a wider assessment of provision at the local level, using other available information and knowledge. Please remember that the FPM is a desk based report which makes certain assumptions about the accuracy of the data (drawn from Active Places) and as a result has limitations and should not be used in isolation to make conclusions and recommendations.
- 1.4. Where applicable the data outputs for Colchester will be compared with (a) national and regional averages, (b) neighbouring authorities – Babergh, Braintree, Maldon and Tendring, Essex County and CIPFA neighbours Charnwood and Cheshire West and Chester.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Supply of Sports Halls

Table 1 - Supply	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Number of halls	16.00	5,584.00	625.00	151.00	12.00	13.00	8.00	12.00	26.00	37.00
Number of hall sites	10.00	3,985.00	422.00	95.00	8.00	8.00	5.00	8.00	17.00	30.00
Supply of total hall space in courts	63.60	21,321.60	2,363.50	563.70	46.30	44.40	27.60	42.30	108.90	171.50
Supply of publicly available hall space in courts (scaled with hrs avail in pp)	45.62	16,317.16	1,862.49	430.25	36.34	33.23	24.71	34.18	90.97	127.01
Supply of total hall space in VPWPP	9,239.00	3,304,225.00	377,154.00	87,126.00	7,358.00	6,730.00	5,004.00	6,922.00	18,421.00	25,720.00
Courts per 10,000	3.49	3.91	3.91	3.92	5.23	2.92	4.37	2.95	6.22	5.16

- 1.1. Colchester has a total of 16 halls on 10 different sites. The difference in figures relates to sites that have more than one hall. If a site has a hall of 3 courts or more and then a secondary hall, regardless of size it will be included in the dataset. Of these halls there are two 6 court halls, nine 4 court halls and two 3 court halls with the rest small halls.
- 1.2. The facilities range in age significantly from St Helena School in 1938 to Holmwood House Prep in 2010. This does highlight some issues and challenges moving forward. Tiptree Sports Centre, as a public facility was built in 1977, and whilst it had refurbishment in 2004 in the medium term is likely to need either major new investment or replacement to ensure it can continue to play a positive role in sport and leisure activity in to the future. Leisure World, built in 1991 is also nearing a time where major investment may be required. Highwoods Sports Centre is now nearly 30 years old (1985), but it did have investment in 2011. Most of the school facilities were developed in the 70's or 80's. What this indicates is that whilst there are a number of sites where 4 court or more facilities are provided moving forward a number are likely to require major investment or replacement if they are to continue to provide positive experiences.
- 1.3. In terms of the management of the facilities they all sit theoretically within the public sector as local authority owned and operated facilities, schools or MOD sites. However, the reality may well be different. Schools are now much more independent in terms of their operations, particularly with academies and MOD sites, whilst often having public access, this is often limited and controlled so cannot be considered as general public facilities for that reason. This does have implications in Colchester as only 3 sites are owned / operated by the Council. Leisure World, Highwoods and Tiptree. It is recommended that checks are made on all of the school sites and the MOD site to see how the levels of access in reality relate to those indicated in this report.

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

- 1.4. From the 16 halls on 10 sites a total of 63.6 courts are provided. When taking in to account their availability for community access in the peak period this reduces to 45.62 courts, which can provide for 9,239 visits per week in the peak period (VPWPP). This is the equivalent of 3.49 courts per 10,000 of the Colchester population. This compares poorly to National (3.91), Regional (3.91) and to the County (3.92) averages. It also compares poorly to neighbours Babergh (5.23), Maldon (4.37) but well against Tendring (2.95) and Braintree (2.92) but is has to recognised that their levels of provision are very poor. CIPFA comparators Charnwood (6.22) and Cheshire West and Chester (5.16) have much better levels of provision in comparison.

### Demand for Sports Halls

Table 2 - Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Population	182,350.00	54,472,081.00	6,039,771.00	1,438,716.00	88,507.00	151,911.00	63,224.00	143,422.00	175,051.00	332,617.00
Visits demanded –vpwpp	8,458.00	2,483,519.00	269,947.00	63,431.00	3,708.00	6,727.00	2,676.00	5,852.00	8,117.00	14,586.00
Equivalent in courts – with comfort factor included	52.21	15,330.36	1,666.34	391.55	22.89	41.53	16.53	36.13	50.10	90.04
% of population without access to a car	19.50	24.90	17.70	17.00	13.40	15.20	11.70	22.40	17.40	17.70

- 1.5. Colchester's total population, based on its demographic breakdown creates a demand for 8,458 VPWPP. This equates to a need for 52.21 courts to meet this demand. This is based on using comfort factor modelling where once a hall exceeds 80% of its capacity it is considered full. The reason for this is that beyond 80% it will make it very difficult for anyone looking to use a facility to find a time that meets their needs. (See comfort factor notes at the end of this document for further details).
- 1.6. Currently 19.5% of the residents of Colchester do not have access to a car. This is low in comparison to National (24.9) averages but is relatively high in comparison to Regional (17.7) and Essex averages (17).
- 1.7. Only Tendring out of the comparator data has higher levels of residents without access to a car. This does have implications for those residents who live outside the catchment of existing provision. Most of the sports halls in Colchester are in or around Colchester and the north / north east side of the borough. This means that many residents will rely on public transport to access facilities as they are outside a walking catchment of a site and we know that this is likely to reduce their propensity to participate.



## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

### Supply & Demand Balance for Sports Halls

Table 3 - Supply/Demand Balance	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Supply - Hall provision (courts) scaled to take account of hours available for community use	45.62	16,317.16	1,862.49	430.25	36.34	33.23	24.71	34.18	90.97	127.01
Demand - Hall provision (courts) taking into account a 'comfort' factor	52.21	15,330.36	1,666.34	391.55	22.89	41.53	16.53	36.13	50.10	90.04
Supply / Demand balance	-6.59	986.80	196.15	38.70	13.45	-8.30	8.18	-1.95	40.87	36.97

- 1.8. Currently the population of Colchester creates a demand for 52.21 courts in the peak period. The current supply in the same period equates to 45.62. This provides an under supply of 6.59 courts across the whole district. Out of the comparator authorities only Braintree (-8.3) and Tendring (-1.95) have under supply of court space. A number have very large levels of over supply – Babergh is significant (13.45) but the levels of over provision in Charnwood (40.987) and Cheshire West and Chester (36.97) are extremely high.
- 1.9. There is large levels of growth planned for Colchester and this will have a significant impact on demand for court provision. With a developing level of under provision now this problem will get significantly worse as the population increases.
- 1.10. Applying Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator it is suggested that the proposed 61,300 population growth creates a demand for a further 17.93 courts. This would mean that a total of 24.52 courts were needed in the future to ensure that Colchester had average levels of provision.

**Note:** This section only provides a 'global' view of provision and does not take account of the location, nature and quality of facilities in relation to demand; how accessible facilities are to the resident population (by car and on foot); nor does it take account of facilities in adjoining boroughs. These are covered in the more detailed modelling set out in the following sections (Satisfied Demand, Unmet Demand and Relative Share).

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Satisfied Demand- demand from Colchester residents currently being met by supply

Table 4 - Satisfied Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Total number of visits which are met	7,725.00	2,263,744.00	248,602.00	59,201.00	3,355.00	6,215.00	2,477.00	5,192.00	7,818.00	13,841.00
% of total demand satisfied	91.30	91.20	92.10	93.30	90.50	92.40	92.60	88.70	96.30	94.90
% of demand satisfied who travelled by car	83.20	77.00	83.50	84.10	89.30	88.20	89.90	84.10	78.80	81.40
% of demand satisfied who travelled by foot	9.60	15.40	11.20	10.70	7.70	7.60	7.60	10.20	15.80	12.90
% of demand satisfied who travelled by public transport	7.20	7.60	5.30	5.20	3.00	4.20	2.50	5.70	5.40	5.60
Demand Retained	7,321.00	2,262,834.00	243,403.00	54,223.00	2,623.00	5,273.00	2,000.00	4,928.00	6,354.00	12,135.00
Demand Retained -as a % of Satisfied Demand	94.80	100.00	97.90	91.60	78.20	84.90	80.80	94.90	81.30	87.70
Demand Exported	404.00	910.00	5,199.00	4,978.00	732.00	941.00	477.00	264.00	1,464.00	1,706.00
Demand Exported -as a % of Satisfied Demand	5.20	0.00	2.10	8.40	21.80	15.10	19.20	5.10	18.70	12.30

- 1.11. Currently 7,725 VPWPP of the demanded 8,458 are being met by Colchester based and neighbouring authority supply of sports halls. This equates to 91.3% of the current total demand. This compares well to the National (91.2%) and Regional (92.1%) averages. However, it is lower than the Essex (93.3) average and lower than Braintree (92.4), Maldon (92.6), Charnwood (9.6£) and Cheshire West and Chester (94.9).
- 1.12. Of the 7,725 VPWPP 83.2% of these are made by people travelling by car, with just 9.6% by foot and 7.2% by public transport. This identifies a key reliance on personal transport for access to facilities. It suggests that walking distances are too far and public transport is not convenient enough to encourage residents to use it for sporting activity. Again the car transport figures are relatively high and this is still with a number of the facilities being provided on school sites which generally indicates are within walking distance for large numbers of residents. This also has implications when linked to the fact that 19.5% of the population do not have access to a car.
- 1.13. Of the 7,725 VPWPP 7,321 are retained within facilities in Colchester, this equates to 94.8% of the total sports hall participation by Colchester residents taking place in Colchester based facilities. This figure is very high in comparison to all neighbouring and CIPFA authorities.
- 1.14. When looking at the distribution of the sports halls in Colchester they tend to be located in close proximity to Colchester and towards the north and east of the Borough (except Tiptree). There are a few facilities close to the borders provided in neighbouring authorities which will account for the small number of VPWPP that are exported.
- 1.15. Colchester exports 404 VPWPP which is the equivalent to just 5.2 of its total demand. This is significantly lower than all comparator authorities other than Tendring (5.1%).

- 1.16. Colchester imports 754 VPWPP with 404 going out this means they are a net importer of 350 VPWPP which equates to approximately 2.1 courts.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Unmet Demand - demand from Colchester residents not currently being met

Table 5 - Unmet Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Total number of visits in the peak, not currently being met	734.00	219,775.00	21,345.00	4,230.00	352.00	512.00	199.00	660.00	299.00	745.00
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	8.70	8.80	7.90	6.70	9.50	7.60	7.40	11.30	3.70	5.10
Equivalent in Courts - with comfort factor	4.53	1,356.64	131.76	26.11	2.18	3.16	1.23	4.08	1.85	4.60
% of Unmet Demand due to ;										
Lack of Capacity -	8.40	27.50	15.10	7.30	3.90	7.50	0.20	17.00	0.80	0.40
Outside Catchment -	91.60	72.50	84.90	92.70	96.10	92.50	99.80	83.00	99.20	99.60
Outside Catchment;	91.60	72.50	84.90	92.70	96.10	92.50	99.80	83.00	99.20	99.60
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	79.80	64.50	69.40	81.30	64.40	79.90	62.20	75.20	91.80	89.70
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	11.70	8.00	15.50	11.40	31.80	12.60	37.60	7.80	7.40	9.90
Lack of Capacity;	8.40	27.50	15.10	7.30	3.90	7.50	0.20	17.00	0.80	0.40
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	7.20	23.20	7.50	5.30	0.10	5.60	0.10	10.60	0.70	0.30
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	1.30	4.40	7.60	2.00	3.80	1.90	0.10	6.40	0.10	0.10

- 1.17. 734 of the 8,458 VPWPP currently demanded by Colchester residents are not being met by facilities either within Colchester or in neighbouring authorities. This equates to 8.7% of the total participation demand. This level of unmet demand is similar to the National (8.8%) and Regional (7.9%) averages. It is higher than all comparator authorities other than Tendring (11.3).
- 1.18. This level of unmet demand equates to 4.53 courts across the whole of Colchester. This level of unmet demand when spread across a Borough is relatively limited and the highest levels of unmet demand actually sit close to the existing Leisure World site at 1.1 courts. Even though there is significant levels of provision in this area this is where the majority of Colchester's population is based hence requiring higher levels of provision.
- 1.19. Of the unmet demand 91.6% of this (672 visits), is from those who live outside the catchment of an existing facility. This is either due to the fact that they do not have access to a car or are outside of the 20 minute walk / drive time used to calculate access to facilities. This is always going to be a challenge within an authority like Colchester that has areas with high levels of population and then large areas of rurality.
- 1.20. 79.8% of the unmet demand is from those who do not have access to a car.



## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

### Used Capacity - How well used are the facilities?

Table 6 - Used Capacity	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Total number of visits used of current capacity	8,075.00	2,265,043.00	256,270.00	57,682.00	3,244.00	5,628.00	2,250.00	5,187.00	7,503.00	13,540.00
% of overall capacity of halls used	87.40	68.50	67.90	66.20	44.10	83.60	45.00	74.90	40.70	52.60
% of visits made to halls by walkers	9.20	15.40	10.90	10.90	9.20	8.40	8.30	10.30	16.20	13.10
% of visits made to halls by road	90.80	84.60	89.10	89.10	90.80	91.60	91.70	89.70	83.80	86.90
Visits Imported:										
Number of visits imported	754.00	2,210.00	12,867.00	3,459.00	620.00	355.00	250.00	259.00	1,149.00	1,404.00
As a % of used capacity	9.30	0.10	5.00	6.00	19.10	6.30	11.10	5.00	15.30	10.40
Visits Retained:										
Number of Visits retained	7,321.00	2,262,834.00	243,403.00	54,223.00	2,623.00	5,273.00	2,000.00	4,928.00	6,354.00	12,135.00
As a % of used capacity	90.70	99.90	95.00	94.00	80.90	93.70	88.90	95.00	84.70	89.60

- 1.21. The overall levels of usage at Colchester sports halls is very high and at 87.4% is significantly above the 80% comfort factor that SE would advise is worked too to drive participation and access. These figures are far higher than the National (68.5%) and Regional (67.9%) averages and only Braintree (83.6) comes anywhere near to Colchester's figures, and CIPFA authorities Charnwood (40.7) and Cheshire West and Chester (52.6) have much lower figures. This correlates closely with the fact that Colchester has an identified level of under supply for courts but the likes of Charnwood and Cheshire West and Chester have large levels of oversupply.
- 1.22. Each facility is allocated a number of hours per week in the peak period under the use of the model. As a result clarity on whether the hour's allocations for community use are accurate is crucial to understand how additional capacity could be created at the sites. If the hours are accurate and there is little or no ability to add additional community hours then the only likely solutions to add capacity would be to enhance the level of provision on these or alternative sites through the addition of courts.
- 1.23. Of the facilities in the patch Leisure World is modelled to be 100% full in the peak period, as is Highwoods, Tiptree is at 65% and does potentially offer some scope for further usage. Full details are available in appendix 1.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Personal/Relative Share - equity share of facilities

Table 7 - Relative Share	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Charnwood	Cheshire West & Chester UA
Score - with 100 = FPM Total (England and also including adjoining LAs in Scotland and Wales)	77.80	100.00	100.00	101.20	104.90	71.60	133.30	107.40	132.10	130.90
+/- from FPM Total (England and also including adjoining LAs in Scotland and Wales)	-22.20	0.00	0.00	1.20	4.90	-28.40	33.30	7.40	32.10	30.90

- 1.24. The relative share is an indication of the equity of provision available to residents in a given area and is a comparison to the National average score of 100. Colchester's residents enjoy a score of just 77.8 which is well below the National and Regional averages. This also compares very poorly with all comparator authorities with Maldon having figures as high as 133.3. It must be noted that this score is about access to courts, not just those provided in Colchester, but those accessible to residents which may be in other areas.
- 1.25. The relative share score is an average across the district. The relative share map highlights the highs and lows across the patch and this shows that those residents living in the Tiptree area enjoy a score of 158 which is high, but those in the area close to the University Sports Centre have a score of just 62.
- 1.26. The relative share score is similar to the facilities per 10,000 at the start of this report but it is also a reflection on a resident's ability to travel to a site and for that site to have capacity to meet the demand that they generate. As a result the relative share score is a more intelligent piece of data to understand the authorities current levels of provision.

### Summary and Conclusions

- 1.27. Colchester has a relatively poor level of supply when compared to neighbouring and comparator authorities. This level of supply equates to an under provision of just over 6.5 courts and with the proposed growth for the area this will increase to over 24 courts which is significant.
- 1.28. The sports halls currently provided are on a variety of sites, local authority owned, schools / education and MOD. Whilst all theoretically public sites the levels of access will vary greatly and the assumptions made in this report about hours of access need to be clarified as the levels of need may be lower or greater than indicated here dependent upon the availability of these sites.
- 1.29. The current data suggests that the existing stock is at uncomfortable capacity levels with a number of sites being modelled as full in the peak period and few having spare capacity to grow participation.
- 1.30. Regardless of the availability the sites in general are ageing and will require investment in the short / medium and long term to ensure that the existing offer can be sustained. This should not be under estimated and the challenges of securing investment to maintain community access to school sites is very tough in the current climate. However, access to educational sites is likely to be key if the needs of Colchester's residents are to be met now and in the future.
- 1.31. There is significant diversity in the quality of access that Colchester residents do or do not enjoy depending upon where they live. Whilst there will always be challenges associated with rurality and sustainable provision it is interesting that here a number of those with the worst levels of access are in higher populated areas. Even though there is provision in these areas the levels of provision are not enough to meet the demands of the population and the result is full facilities with little capacity to accommodate further growth. The solution may be to increase capacity at existing sites by providing more courts or developing new sites.



## Appendix 3: Sport England's Facility Planning model: Swimming pool provision in Colchester 2014

### Introduction

- 1.5. This report and the accompanying maps provide a strategic assessment of the current level of provision for Swimming Pools in Colchester. This assessment uses Sport England's Facilities Planning Model and the data from National Facilities Audit run as of January 2014.
- 1.6. The information contained within the report should be read alongside the two appendices. Appendix 1 sets out the facilities that have been included within this analysis together with those that have been excluded. Appendix 2 provides background to the Facilities Planning Model (FPM), facility inclusion criteria and the model parameters.
- 1.7. The FPM modelling and dataset builds in a number of assumptions as set out in Appendix 2 regarding the supply and demand of provision. This report should not be considered in isolation and it is recommended that this analysis should form part of a wider assessment of provision at the local level, using other available information and knowledge.
- 1.8. Where applicable the data outputs for Colchester will be compared with (a) national and regional averages, (b) neighbouring authorities – Babergh, Braintree, Maldon and Tendring, Essex County as a whole and CIPFA neighbours Charnwood and Cheshire West and Chester.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Supply of Pools

Table 1 - Supply	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Number of pools	7.00	3,086.00	341.00	82.00	4.00	11.00	3.00	4.00	25.00	12.00
Number of pool sites	4.00	2,187.00	242.00	57.00	4.00	6.00	2.00	3.00	17.00	11.00
Supply of total water space in sqm	1,614.00	688,869.80	75,674.40	17,942.10	2,100.00	2,033.50	482.00	958.80	5,413.80	3,493.90
Supply of publicly available water space in sqm (scaled with hrs avail in pp)	1,229.41	571,371.75	62,934.66	15,076.05	1,249.52	1,677.28	406.08	922.28	4,762.92	2,677.67
Supply of total water space in VPWPP	10,655.00	4,951,889.00	545,434.00	130,659.00	10,829.00	14,536.00	3,519.00	7,993.00	41,279.00	23,206.00
Water space per 1,000	8.85	12.65	12.53	12.47	23.73	13.39	7.62	6.69	16.28	19.96

- 10.1 Colchester has a total of 7 indoor pools on 4 sites. Small pools and lidos are excluded from the analysis due to their limited value in driving year round swimming participation. Smaller pools are included where there is a larger indoor pool on site. The pools sites are Leisure World Colchester – which has a main pool (25x13), a learner pool (12x12), A diving area (13x8) and a dedicated leisure pool. The remaining 3 sites all have one water space. These are Bannatynes (20x8), Clarice House (20x8) and Corproal Budd VC Gymnasium (25x18).
- 10.2 Leisure World is the key facility in the area providing up 7,033 of the 10,655 visits per week in the peak period (VPWPP) that are available in Colchester. This facility is operated by Colchester Borough Council and is as a result fully accessible to the community. The Corporal Budd facility is also open to the public. The data in Appendix 1 indicates that the pool is available for 12 hours per week in the peak period and therefore has limited value (875 VPWPP or 8.2% of overall visits available). If the facility is available for more hours for public swimming in the peak period then its value / role in swimming provision would increase significantly. As a Garrison site the pool will have its challenges in terms of access so cannot be considered a public pool as is the case for Leisure World. Bannatynes is a private club and will have membership fees that are not in the reach of all residents. Clarice House is a private health spa operation and as with Bannatynes will have a limited role to play in general community swimming. As a result there is only one strategic pool site that prioritises general peak time community swimming. This is a relatively limited offer for a Borough the size of Colchester.
- 10.3 The pools range in age significantly with Leisure World originally constructed in 1991 but it has had significant refurbishment in 2009. Bannatynes was built in 2004, Clarice House in 2006 and Corporal Budd VC in 2008. The fact that Leisure World is nearing 25 years old, even with its recent investment, it is likely that it will require further investment in the medium term to ensure that it can continue to meet the needs of Colchester residents as it does do today. Research indicates a clear correlation between the quality of experience and a participant's propensity to continue to participate and the age and condition of a facility is a key factor in that experience.

- 10.4 In terms of location the pools are not evenly spread across the Borough. All 4 facilities sit within the central east band of the Borough meaning that a number of residents are likely to have poor access to pool space or will enjoy their pool offer outside of the Borough. However, the facilities within a drive time catchment of Colchester residents are limited and are concentrated within the south west corner of the Borough with 3 hotel facilities (Benton Hall, Prested Hall and Crowne Plaza) and one public facility at Bramston Sports Centre.
- 10.5 In terms of overall water space Colchester residents have a poor level of provision at 8.5sqm per 1,000 residents. This compares poorly to National (12.65) and Regional 12.53) averages. It is also poor in comparison to the Essex (12.47), Braintree (13.39) figures. It compares extremely poorly to Babergh (23.73) and to its CIPFA neighbours of Cheshire West and Chester (16.23) and Charnwood (19.96). Only Maldon has a lower level of provision at just 7.62 but this figure is the fourth lowest in the country for any local authority. It must be stressed here that the National average is just that an average – no judgement is given as to whether this level of provision is good or bad.
- 10.6 With Colchester planned to experience significant growth in to the future (up to 61,000 additional residents) the pressure on existing water space is going to be significant and unlikely to meet the demands going forward.

## Demand for Pools

Table 2 - Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Population	182,350.00	54,472,081.00	6,039,771.00	1,438,716.00	88,507.00	151,911.00	63,224.00	143,422.00	332,617.00	175,051.00
Swims demanded –vpwpp	11,823.00	3,515,618.00	385,925.00	91,427.00	5,456.00	9,727.00	3,923.00	8,597.00	21,083.00	11,245.00
Equivalent in water space – with comfort factor included	1,948.77	579,497.43	63,613.97	15,070.40	899.27	1,603.39	646.67	1,417.07	3,475.19	1,853.57
% of population without access to a car	19.50	24.90	17.70	17.00	13.40	15.20	11.70	22.40	17.70	17.40

- 11.1 The population of Colchester, based on its size and demographic make up creates a demand for 11,823 VPWPP. The age and demographic of an area does have a significant impact on their likelihood to participate in any activity including swimming. As a result if the area is likely to benefit from significant population growth (as Colchester is) or change in the future it is also important to understand what implications this may have for demographic change so this can be accommodated when planning for all sports provision, including swimming pools. The 11,823 VPWPP creates a need equivalent to 1,948.77sqm of water space. This figure makes an allowance for comfort factor in pool capacity. Pools are modelled to be “full” when they are at 70% capacity. The reason for this is if a pool were 100% full then it would be a very poor experience for those who do swim and it is likely to discourage regular participation. 1,948.77 equates to 5.99 6 lane swimming pools (325sqm – 25x13).
- 11.2 19.5% of the Colchester population do not have access to a car. This is lower than the National (24.9%) but is higher than the Regional (17.7%) averages. The figures are also higher than the Essex (17%) and CIPFA neighbours Cheshire West and Chester (17.7%) and Charnwood (17.4%). This does create challenges for a number of residents as they are only going to be able to access facilities that are within walking distance or those that are served by public transport. As the facilities in Colchester are all located within a small geographical area it is likely that significant numbers of residents are going to be unable to access pool provision due to location.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Supply & Demand Balance

Table 3 - Supply/Demand Balance	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Supply - Swimming pool provision (sqm) scaled to take account of hours available for community use	1,229.41	571,371.75	62,934.66	15,076.05	1,249.52	1,677.28	406.08	922.28	4,762.92	2,677.67
Demand - Swimming pool provision (sqm) taking into account a 'comfort' factor	1,948.77	579,497.43	63,613.97	15,070.40	899.27	1,603.39	646.67	1,417.07	3,475.19	1,853.57
Provision available compared to the minimum required to meet demand	-719.36	-8,125.68	-679.31	5.65	350.25	73.89	-240.59	-494.79	1,287.73	824.10

- 12.1 When looking at a very simplistic picture of overall supply and demand for Colchester the population is estimated to generate a demand for a minimum of 1,948.77sqm of water space. This compares to current available supply of water space in Colchester for community users in the peak period of 1,229.41sqm. This creates a significant pool based shortfall of 719.36sqm. This is over 2 (2.2) 6 lane pools. This is a significant shortfall. As previously indicated this is on the basis of current population levels, with significant growth anticipated in the area this issue is only going to become more challenging. This level of undersupply is 58.5% of the current level of supply which is significant. However, as indicated in the previous section Corporal Budd VC pool may provide higher levels of community swimming than the current modelling indicates. Even if this is the case there is still going to be a significant shortfall of swimming space in Colchester now and in the future.
- 12.2 Applying Sport England Sports Facility Calculator to the population growth figures suggest that the 61,000+ new residents would create a further demand for 658m<sup>2</sup> of water space. This is demand equates to just over 2 6 lane pools.
- 12.3 Whilst the above analysis excludes neighbouring authorities facilities it has to be noted that Colchester residents do not benefit greatly from neighbouring authorities having well located pools that can meet their needs and a number of these authorities also have high levels of under provision.

**Note:** This section only provides a 'global' view of provision and does not take account of the location, nature and quality of facilities in relation to demand; how accessible facilities are to the resident population (by car and on foot); nor does it take account of facilities in adjoining boroughs. These are covered in the more detailed modelling set out in the following sections (Satisfied Demand, Unmet Demand and Relative Share).



**Satisfied Demand- demand from Colchester residents currently being met by supply**

Table 4 - Satisfied Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Total number of visits which are met	10,146.00	3,212,349.00	347,441.00	82,735.00	4,821.00	8,881.00	2,970.00	6,556.00	19,584.00	10,903.00
% of total demand satisfied	85.80	91.40	90.00	90.50	88.40	91.30	75.70	76.30	92.90	97.00
% of demand satisfied who travelled by car	87.43	75.74	83.56	84.89	90.14	87.88	93.20	87.32	83.55	78.41
% of demand satisfied who travelled by foot	4.57	14.97	10.17	9.06	6.41	6.78	3.81	7.04	9.88	15.70
% of demand satisfied who travelled by public transport	8.00	9.29	6.27	6.05	3.45	5.34	2.99	5.64	6.57	5.89
Demand Retained	8,987.00	3,210,450.00	337,083.00	74,792.00	3,701.00	7,872.00	1,686.00	5,358.00	17,752.00	8,580.00
Demand Retained -as a % of Satisfied Demand	88.60	99.90	97.00	90.40	76.80	88.60	56.80	81.70	90.60	78.70
Demand Exported	1,159.00	1,899.00	10,358.00	7,943.00	1,121.00	1,009.00	1,284.00	1,198.00	1,832.00	2,323.00
Demand Exported -as a % of Satisfied Demand	11.40	0.10	3.00	9.60	23.20	11.40	43.20	18.30	9.40	21.30

- 13.1 A total of 10,146 VPWPP in the peak period are currently being met by the pool provision accessible to Colchester residents, facilities based in Colchester and within neighbouring authorities, within a 20 minute drive / walk time. This is 88.6% (11,823 total VPWPP demand) of the total demand generated by Colchester's current total population.
- 13.2 The figure of 88.6% is lower than both National (91.4%) and Regional averages (90%). It is also lower than the Essex (90.5%) average. It is significantly lower than CIPFA authorities Cheshire West and Chester (92.9%) and Charnwood (97%), but significantly higher than Maldon (75.57%) and Tendring (76.3%).
- 13.3 Of the 10,146 VPWPP a total of 87.43% are modelled to be made by car. This figure is high in comparison to National (75.74%) and Regional (83.56%) and reflects both the relative rural nature of the Borough beyond Colchester itself and the location of facilities.
- 13.4 Of the total 11,823 demanded 10,146 swims are currently met, but of these 8,987 are met by facilities within Colchester. This equates to 76% of the total swims demanded and 88.67% of the swims that are met. These figures reflect the fact that there is an under supply of water space in Colchester and that facilities across local authority borders are limited within the 20 minute drive time.
- 13.5 Colchester exports 1,159 VPWPP, 11.4% of the total demand generated. This equates to 191sqm of water space, which equates to 3.5 lanes of a 6 lane 25m pool (325sqm). Colchester imports 1,059 VPWPP, meaning that they are a net exporter of 100 VPWPP. This is not a significant amount.

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

## Unmet Demand - demand from Colchester residents not currently being met

Table 5 - Unmet Demand	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Total number of visits in the peak, not currently being met	1,676.00	303,269.00	38,484.00	8,692.00	634.00	847.00	954.00	2,041.00	1,499.00	342.00
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	14.20	8.60	10.00	9.50	11.60	8.70	24.30	23.70	7.10	3.00
Equivalent in water space m2 - with comfort factor	276.34	49,989.43	6,343.44	1,432.76	104.53	139.54	157.19	336.37	247.10	56.40
% of Unmet Demand due to ;										
Lack of Capacity -	15.40	11.60	8.20	10.30	1.10	0.00	0.20	22.30	0.40	0.70
Outside Catchment -	84.60	88.40	91.80	89.70	98.90	100.00	99.80	77.70	99.60	99.30
Outside Catchment;	84.60	88.40	91.80	89.70	98.90	100.00	99.80	77.70	99.60	99.30
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	66.97	68.83	59.95	63.48	55.32	72.26	30.50	51.16	80.94	84.83
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	17.61	19.54	31.83	26.21	43.55	27.69	69.31	26.53	18.65	14.47
Lack of Capacity;	15.40	11.60	8.20	10.30	1.10	0.00	0.20	22.30	0.40	0.70
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	9.20	9.06	3.46	5.12	0.18	0.01	0.00	7.20	0.21	0.54
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	6.22	2.57	4.75	5.19	0.95	0.04	0.19	15.10	0.21	0.15

- 1.32. A total of 1,676 VPWPP, or 14.2% of total swimming demand, are currently not being met. This equates to a total water space of just over 276.34sqm, allowing for the previously discussed comfort factor. This level of under provision is approximately 5 lanes of a 25m pool.
- 1.33. This percentage of unmet demand is high in comparison to National (8.6%) and Regional (10%) averages. It also compares poorly to the Essex average (9.5%), Babergh (11.6%), Braintree (8.7%) and CIPFA neighbours Cheshire West and Chester (71.1%) and Charnwood (3.%) but is significantly better than Maldon (24.3%) and Tendring (23.7%).
- 1.34. In terms of demand that is currently not being met the highest levels of unmet demand (identified in the aggregated unmet demand map in Appendix 1) is Colchester itself near to the existing Bannatynes facility. This level of unmet demand equates to 135sqm of water space. This is relatively high and indicates that although the majority of water space is close to this area the size and scale of the population in the area means that their needs are not being met by current levels of supply. In general other area with higher levels of need are to the north of Colchester as a town centre. This has implications for the growth proposed in this area.
- 1.35. Of the demand that is currently not being met just 15.4% is due to lack of capacity at existing facilities, with 84.6% being from those who currently live outside a 20 minute walk / drive time of an existing facility. This links back to previous comments regarding the location of facilities both within and outside of Colchester as a Borough.





## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

### Used Capacity - How well used are the facilities?

Table 6 - Used Capacity	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Total number of visits used of current capacity	10,046.00	3,212,760.00	349,659.00	83,232.00	4,699.00	9,745.00	2,064.00	5,359.00	20,761.00	10,369.00
% of overall capacity of pools used	94.30	64.90	64.10	63.70	43.40	67.00	58.60	67.00	50.30	44.70
% of visits made to pools by walkers	4.60	15.00	10.10	8.90	6.50	6.20	5.50	8.60	9.30	16.40
% of visits made to pools by road	95.40	85.00	89.90	91.10	93.50	93.80	94.50	91.40	90.70	83.60
Visits Imported;										
Number of visits imported	1,059.00	2,310.00	12,576.00	8,441.00	998.00	1,873.00	378.00	1.00	3,009.00	1,788.00
As a % of used capacity	10.50	0.10	3.60	10.10	21.20	19.20	18.30	0.00	14.50	17.20
Visits Retained:										
Number of Visits retained	8,987.00	3,210,450.00	337,083.00	74,792.00	3,701.00	7,872.00	1,686.00	5,358.00	17,752.00	8,580.00
As a % of used capacity	89.50	99.90	96.40	89.90	78.80	80.80	81.70	100.00	85.50	82.80

- 15.1 Overall used capacity at the 4 sites is very high at 94%. Bannatynes is modelled to be 78% full in the peak period (1,074 of its available 1,360 VPWPP being used), Clarice House 76% (1,054 of 1,387), Corporal Budd 100% (all 875 swims being used) and Leisure World 100% (all 7,033 used). This provides little scope for further use at any of the sites and in particular Leisure World which is the key publicly accessible site. Corporal Budd pool could offer additional hours to provide spare capacity subject to site access.
- 15.2 94.3% of the pool capacity available in the peak time in Colchester is used. This is a very high figure and far exceeds the comfort level of 70% for pools. This figure is far higher than any comparator data and is likely to have a negative impact on the swimmer experience for those who currently attend and will discourage potential swimmers from taking part. With the growth that is proposed for the area this issue is only likely to get significantly worse.

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES STRATEGY

### Personal/Relative Share - equity share of facilities

Table 7 - Relative Share	Colchester	ENGLAND	EAST REGION	Essex County	Babergh	Braintree	Maldon	Tendring	Cheshire West & Chester UA	Charnwood
Score - with 100 = FPM Total (England and also including adjoining LAs in Scotland and Wales)	82.50	99.10	101.80	107.90	123.70	102.60	95.60	89.50	125.40	147.40
+/- from FPM Total (England and also including adjoining LAs in Scotland and Wales)	-17.50	-0.90	1.80	7.90	23.70	2.60	-4.40	-10.50	25.40	47.40

- 16.1 At 82.5 Colchester residents have poor access to facilities on average in comparison to National (100) and Regional (101.8) averages.
- 16.2 This figure also compares poorly to the Essex (107.9) average and those in Babergh (123.7), Braintree (102.6) and CIPFA neighbours Cheshire West and Chester (125.4) and Charnwood (147.4). Even Maldon (95.6) and Tendring (89.5) which Colchester has compared relatively well with in other areas out performs Colchester for relative share.
- 16.3 The average figure for an area can mask overall highs and lows. The relative share map shown in Appendix 1 shows that the area around the existing Bannatynes facility scores lowest at just 55 with residents near Tiptree enjoying 158.
- 16.4 It is important to remember that the relative share score is a reflection of access to any pool, not just those provided within the district itself.

### Summary and Conclusions

- 17.1 Colchester residents currently have poor levels of supply at just 8.85m<sup>2</sup> of pool space per 1,000 residents. This limited level of provision creates high levels of under supply in water space across the Borough.
- 17.2 When added together the existing under supply and future demand created by growth equates to a need for just over 4 6 lane pools for Colchester to have a supply that equates to the national average. Whilst significant further work would be required to understand the sustainability, location and management of this level of further provision what the data clearly indicates is the significant levels of under provision that exist in the Borough.
- 17.3 The existing pool provision is limited to one public pool. Whilst this pool is large scale and well located it is also very well used meaning that it has little or no capacity to meet the growing needs of the area. Gaining further access to the other pools in the area, particularly the Corporal Budd facility may assist in easing pressure but this only forms part of a solution to meeting the needs of swimming and further provision will be needed.
- 17.4 Colchester does not benefit from neighbouring authorities having a good supply of public facilities that are close to Colchester's borders. Conversely the levels of supply are actually creating problems for Colchester in that a number of neighbouring areas have large levels of under supply.
- 17.5 If any new facilities were to be provided dialogue with neighbouring authorities about their plans for further provision and how projects could jointly benefit their communities should be explored.
- 17.6 Some of the higher levels of need do sit within the Northern Gateway area where significant population growth is proposed. As a result any new provision in these areas would not only serve the new communities but those in the area who currently do not enjoy good levels of access.
- 17.7 The data in this report does rely on the quality of the data in the Active Places national run. Sport England would advocate that further strategic modelling is undertaken if there is an appetite to develop additional public pools to ensure that their location and size and scale is informed by up to date and accurate population, facility and usage data

### Appendix 3: Sports participation

Understanding an area's population characteristics, numbers, age and interests is essential if sports participation is to be maintained or increased and the demand for facilities understood and predicted. The characteristics of who takes part (in sport) can vary from one sport to the next and, as such, are among the more important variables to be considered.

The adult population (aged 16+ years) of Colchester is currently 140,133<sup>2</sup>; data from Sports England's (SE) Active People survey<sup>3</sup> indicates that 35.2% of people take part in sport for 30 minutes at least once a week and 49.5% have done so at least once in the past four weeks.

The five most popular sports in Colchester are swimming, gym, football, cycling and athletics. However, even for the most popular sports it is important to recognise that only a relatively small proportion of the population are participants. For example, 15.2% of people swims at least once every four weeks, 10.8% attend the gym and 2.39% play badminton (minor variations can be seen between different releases of APS data and segmented datasets which relate to the period up to 2010).

The most recent ONS projections indicate a rise of 23.4% in Colchester's population (+41,186) over the 25 years from 2012 to 2037. This equates to 24.45% of the adult population. The figures estimating future demand for specific activity is based on this figure.

#### Keep fit and gym (including aerobics, yoga, classes)

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 18.3% (25,672) of adults currently take part in keep fit and a further 7.3% (10,191) would like to – an overall total of 25.6% (35,863).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 2,060 males and 2,718 females taking part in keep fit and using the gym, which is an increase on current demand levels of 4,778 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to swim).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for keep fit and gym (25.6%) is estimated to be 45,713, which is an increase of 9,850 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for health and fitness facilities.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Sport England segmentation data

<sup>3</sup> Active People 7

### Swimming

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 14.6% (20,520) of adults currently swim and a further 14.0% (19,614) would like to – an overall total of 28.6% (40,134).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 1,058 males and 1,648 females swimming, which is an increase on current demand levels of 2,698 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to swim).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for swimming (28.6%) is estimated to be 51,070 which is an increase of 10,936 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for swimming facilities.

### Cycling

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 10.3% (14,366) of adults currently take part in cycling and a further 5.9% (8,224) would like to – an overall total of 16.1% (22,590).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 1,212 males and 446 females cycling, which is an increase on current demand levels of 1,658 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to swim).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for keep cycling 16.1% of is estimated to be of 28,749 which is an increase of 6,159 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for cycling.

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAFT FACILITIES STRATEGY

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### Badminton

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 2.4% (3,344) of adults currently take part in badminton and a further 2.0% (2,843) would like to – an overall total of 4.4% (6,187).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 257 males and 177 females playing badminton, which is an increase on current demand levels of 433 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to play badminton).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for badminton (4.4%) is estimated to be 7,857 which is an increase of 1,670 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for badminton and, therefore sports hall space.

### Basketball

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 0.65% (906) of adults currently take part in basketball and a further 0.43% (608) would like to – an overall total of 1.08% (1,514).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 105 males and 28 females playing basketball, which is an increase on current demand levels of 133 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to play basketball).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for basketball (1.08%) is estimated to be 1,928 which is an increase of 415 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for basketball facilities and therefore sports hall space.

### Table Tennis

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 0.22% (303) of adults currently does gymnastics / trampolining and a further 0.16% (219) would like to – an overall total of 0.38% (522).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 123 males and 53 females playing table tennis, which is an increase on current demand levels of 176 people (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to play table tennis).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for table tennis (0.38%) is estimated to be 679 which is an increase of 157 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for table tennis.

### Netball

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 0.46% (651) of adults currently take part in netball and a further 0.41% (576) would like to – an overall total of 0.87% (1,227).
- ◀ Taking account of the age and gender profile of the national population and applying activity rates up until 2037 (assuming that demand remains the same in each age profile) it is estimated that there will be an additional 66 females playing netball, which is the total increase on current demand levels (this does not take account of those who have expressed a desire to play table tennis).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for netball (0.87%) is estimated to be of 1,553 which is an increase of 326 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for netball, which can, of course, use outside and inside courts to satisfy demand.



### Gymnastics and trampolining

- ◀ APS7 indicates that 0.48% (669) of adults currently take part in table tennis and a further 0.21% (301) would like to – an overall total of 0.69% (970).
- ◀ If the adult population increases by 24.45% the total number of adults in Colchester is estimated to be 178,568 in 2037. Assuming market segmentation remains the same the projected demand for gymnastics and trampolining (0.69%) is estimated to be of 1,232 which is an increase of 262 people adjudged to be over and above current and latent demand for gymnastics and trampolining.
- ◀ It is worth noting, that in the case of gymnastics and trampolining, that the vast majority of demand is from under 16s, so this data analysis needs to be combined with more rigorous qualitative data to be considered reliable and robust.

### Summary

As a very broad indicator and assuming that market segmentation remains pretty similar, KKP has calculated what are likely to be the most popular sports via a combination of using APS7 data (which is based on ages 16+) and scaling up the current trends of activity in line with projected ONS increases in population for Colchester (up until 2037). The most popular sports, in order of that demand, are considered to be:

- ◀ Swimming and other aquatic sports
- ◀ Health and fitness (including studio classes, Yoga, Pilates etc.)
- ◀ Cycling
- ◀ Badminton
- ◀ Basketball
- ◀ Netball
- ◀ Gymnastics
- ◀ Table tennis

Other sports are omitted due to the small number of returns on Active People Survey data.