

Newcastle-under-Lyme
Borough Council

Leisure Needs Assessment &
Playing Pitch Strategy

Executive Summary

By

Strategic Leisure Limited

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Introduction

- i. Strategic Leisure Limited (SLL) was appointed by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (October 2005) to undertake an assessment of sport and leisure facility needs within the Borough, to identify local needs for provision, and opportunities for enhancement, development or replacement of current facilities. The study is driven by the need to inform a number of current leisure facility proposals.

Scope of the Study

- ii. The study encompasses an assessment of all formal indoor and outdoor sport and leisure facilities. The study has focussed on those facilities typically provided directly or supported by the Local Authority (including Sports Halls, Swimming Pools, Health and Fitness, Playing Pitches, Tennis Courts, Bowling Greens). Community Centres have also been considered within the assessment in relation to their role in the provision of community based leisure provision.
- iii. The study has been undertaken to provide a borough wide assessment of need. This borough wide assessment forms the context and background for further analysis on a local level to inform the following:
 - A local needs assessment to inform current proposals for the **Renew (Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder) area of major intervention (AMI)** for formal outdoor sports and indoor leisure provision (specifically Leisure Centres and Community Centres)
 - A local needs assessment to inform current proposals for the **former Silverdale Colliery site** for formal outdoor sports and formal indoor leisure provision (Leisure Centres and Community Centres)
 - A local area based playing pitch assessment for the urban area of the Borough (including Kidsgrove) to inform **proposals for a “grouped” (multi-pitch) playing pitch site** located centrally within the Borough. This proposal also needs to be considered alongside the recent Sports Village Model developed by the Football Association, which makes reference to the opportunity for new facility development within Housing Market Renewal areas
- iv. Early project research also identified plans by Newcastle-under-Lyme College to rationalise their campus provision, and through the sale of one site, potentially fund the development of new sports facilities on the Trinity Road campus. This proposal has been considered through the assessment process. The planned development could in theory link to the proposal for a grouped playing pitch site.

Summary of Key Tasks

- v. In summary the following key tasks have been undertaken to inform the study:
 - 104 outdoor site visits involving auditing of 185 pitches, 46 tennis courts, 19 bowling greens and 14 indoor facilities in addition to a small selection of community centres.

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- Postal surveys to more than 150 sports clubs to obtain their views about quantity, quality and access
- Stakeholder Interviews with more than 25 identified stakeholders
- A door-to-door survey of 500 households across the borough encompassing interviews with local residents
- A review of existing consultation and market research undertaken
- A FREEPHONE and email consultation service operating for an eight-week period which was promoted within the local newspaper
- A number of mapping exercises to assess levels of provision and accessibility.
- Demand Modelling for indoor facilities using the parameters of the Sport England Facilities Planning Model
- Numerical modelling of a number of scenarios relating to playing pitch provision
- The use of demographic data sets to determine the propensity to participate in key leisure activities (CACI Analysis)

Knutton Cross Heath

- vi. Knutton Cross Heath (KCH) is one of four areas of major intervention within the RENEW boundary. KCH is situated just under a mile to the north and North West of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre and is separated by a dual carriageway.
- vii. An indicative masterplan for the area has already been developed which shows the desired balance of housing and community facilities, including leisure provision. The current masterplan indicates that the current leisure facilities will be replaced with proposed new facilities (indoor and outdoor) to serve the community and a potentially wider catchment of Newcastle under Lyme Residents.
- viii. At present the proposed masterplan is the subject of significant local consultation, with the following sport and leisure facilities proposed:
 - New Recreation Centre (no specific facility mix identified)
 - 3 mini soccer pitches
 - 2 Adult Soccer pitches
 - Retention of existing 3rd Generation Synthetic Pitch (behind current Recreation Centre)
 - Tennis Courts

Silverdale

- ix. Proposals for the regeneration of the former Silverdale Colliery site have been presented within the Masterplan for the area. English Partnerships have developed the plan in partnership with a range of partners, with £13m secured from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for investment on the site. The proposed masterplan includes:
 - Creation of up to 300 new mixed tenure housing
 - Provide a significantly enhanced high quality landscaped environment with ecology areas

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- Environmental improvements
 - “Breathe” new life into the area through the encouragement of new community and leisure facilities – the plan proposes creation of 9ha of formal recreation and community facilities
- x. The area assessment has considered the local need for leisure facilities, within the context of what is provided in and around the area at present.

Playing Pitch Assessment: Urban Areas

- xi. For the purposes of the Playing Pitch Assessment, a local assessment encompassing the urban areas of the borough has been undertaken in addition to the borough wide assessment. This has been undertaken in order to collate the relevant evidence to inform proposals to develop a dedicated multi-pitch sports site in the central part of the borough.

Boroughwide Assessment – Outdoor Provision

- xii. The study research has identified that there are **185 pitches** in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough. These are provided through a number of different providers, specifically:
- xiii. **Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Community Services** provides **59** pitches.
- xiv. **Staffordshire County Council Education.** **83** pitches are provided across the Borough via local schools. There is no “blanket” policy on the community use of school playing pitches and local use, pricing levels and extent of access is determined by the individual school.
- xv. **Private/ Voluntary Sector.** Facilities are also provided via the private and voluntary sector. These encompass private sports clubs (e.g. Michelin Sports Ground, Porthill Cricket Club, and The Stan Brown Stadium) and facilities which are leased on a long term basis for self-management by local clubs. **38** pitches have been identified.
- xvi. In addition to the above **5** synthetic turf pitches (STPs) have been identified within the Borough at the following locations: - Clayton Hall Business & Language College, Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme School (Education), Kidsgrove Recreation Centre (Public/Education) and Knutton Recreation Centre (Public).

Table A - Newcastle Borough: Current Community Accessible Playing Pitch Provision

Playing Pitch Type	Total Number of Playing Pitches	Playing Pitches with Community Access	% Community Use
Senior Football Pitch	74	72	97%
Junior / Youth Playing Pitch	41	33	80%
Mini Soccer Pitch	37	26	70%
Cricket Pitch	16	16	100%

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Playing Pitch Type	Total Number of Playing Pitches	Playing Pitches with Community Access	% Community Use
Rugby Union Pitch	12	12	100%
Full Size Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP) – Hockey	4	3	75%
$\frac{3}{4}$ Third Generation Pitch	1	1	100%
TOTALS	185	163	88%

- xvii. The audit of facilities has revealed that there are currently **163 playing pitches** available for **community use**.
- xviii. The quality assessments of pitches assessed through the audit and both the Sports Club and Schools questionnaires show that:
- xix. **Football**
- A large number of football pitches in Newcastle-under-Lyme are seen as being of a 'Good' standard (Audit 53%, Clubs 42% and Schools 41%).
 - Whilst the audit did not rate any football pitches as 'Excellent', in comparison 14% of clubs did provide excellent ratings whilst most of the schools rated pitches as 'Good' or 'Average'.
 - The club and school assessment highlighted a greater range of standards than those of the audit, ranging from 'Poor' to 'Excellent' as opposed to 'Good' to 'Below Average'.
- xx. **Cricket**
- Whilst the audit rated all pitches as 'Good' (100%) the clubs gave a far wider range of rankings from 'Excellent' (29%) to 'Below Average' (7%).
 - Some schools that do play cricket do so on a multi-use field and therefore have not given a specific rating for cricket pitches.
- xxi. **Rugby**
- The ratings provided through the audit and by the clubs for rugby pitches are more aligned with none of the pitches being rated by either as being 'Excellent'.
 - The audit suggested the pitches were either 'Good' (83%) or 'Below Average' (17%) whilst the clubs, of whom only two responded, rated the pitches as 'Average' or 'Below Average'. The small percentage of returns from clubs makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions.
 - Some schools that do play rugby do so again on a multi-use field and therefore have not given a specific rating for rugby pitches.
- xxii. **Hockey**
- Although Synthetic Turf Pitches were not assessed using a standard non-technical proforma, four of the five sites with a known STP were visited (Newcastle-under-Lyme proved inaccessible).

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- xxiii. The £258,000 new all-weather pitch, located behind Knutton Recreation Centre, was of a very high standard, having only recently opened in October 2005 with the assistance of Football Foundation funding worth in the region of £178,000. This site is currently very well used by residents of Knutton Cross Heath and surrounding areas. The only drawback to this facility is the dimensions due to construction being limited to a three quarter pitch as opposed to full size.
- xxiv. Artificial pitches at both Keele University and Clayton Hall Business & Language College were also deemed to be of a good standard with both facilities experiencing high volumes of usage. Both sites were again fully floodlit and required minimal investment.
- xxv. Although well used by the local school, the STP located behind Kidsgrove Recreation Centre is the oldest of the aforementioned stock which is apparent when visiting the facility. Floodlighting appears to be of an average standard although this fits in line with the age of the pitch. Attention to this facility is highly recommended.
- xxvi. The one Hockey Club that responded to the Sports Club Questionnaire rated their pitch at Newcastle-under-Lyme school as 'Good' but raised the difficulties they experience over the maintenance of facilities.
- xxvii. In order to assess the levels of provision for Football, Rugby, Hockey, Cricket and other sports across the Borough it is important to compare the quantity of facilities with the current level of demand in order to establish whether there is a Surplus or Deficiency in provision
- xxviii. The study research has identified **70 football clubs, 3 rugby clubs, 15 cricket clubs and 1 hockey club** within the Borough. From the research undertaken, these clubs generate the following number of teams using local pitch facilities. The figures are presented sport by sport:

Table B - Table of Demand by Sport – Number of Teams

Team Type	Number of Teams	Team Type	Number of Teams
Cricket		Hockey	
Senior	36	Senior	8
Junior	47	Junior	2
TOTAL	83	TOTAL	10

Table C - Table of Demand by Sport – Number of Teams

Team Type	Number of Teams	Team Type	Number of Teams
Football		Rugby	
Senior	92	Senior	12
Junior	61	Junior	6
Mini	39	Mini	9
TOTAL	192	TOTAL	27

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Taking these factors into account the overall level of provision for each sport shows:
(Please refer to Appendix 4A for a full breakdown of the assessment calculations)

- xxix. **Football:**
- Provision for Senior Football in Newcastle-under-Lyme is more than **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Sunday. There is a **surplus of +36 Senior soccer pitches**
 - Provision for Junior Football in Newcastle-under-Lyme is **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Sunday. There is a **surplus of +3 Junior soccer pitches**
 - Provision for Mini Soccer in Newcastle-under-Lyme is **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Sunday. There is a **surplus of +7 Mini soccer pitches**.
- xxx. **Cricket:**
- Provision for Senior Cricket in Newcastle-under-Lyme is just **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Saturday. There is a **surplus of +1 Cricket pitch**.
 - Provision for Junior Cricket in Newcastle-under-Lyme is **marginally deficient** to meet peak demand during midweek. There is a **deficiency of -3 Cricket pitches**, however, it should be noted that the junior matches are likely to be spread throughout the week rather than all on one night and as such there are currently *sufficient cricket pitches to meet demand*.
- xxxi. **Rugby:**
- Provision for Senior Rugby in Newcastle-under-Lyme is **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Saturday. There is a **surplus of +9 Rugby pitches**.
 - Provision for Junior and Mini Rugby in Newcastle-under-Lyme is more than adequate to meet peak demand on a Sunday. There is a **surplus of +6 rugby pitches**. This is particularly the case when it is taken into account that 2 Junior or 4 Mini games can be played on one full size pitch.
- xxxii. **Hockey:**
- Provision for Senior Hockey in Newcastle-under-Lyme is more than **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Saturday. There is a **surplus of +3 Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs)** which is the equivalent to 12 slots surplus.
 - Provision for Junior Hockey in Newcastle-under-Lyme is more than **adequate** to meet peak demand on a Sunday. There is a **surplus of +4 Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs)** which is the equivalent to 16 slots surplus.
- xxxiii. The calculations highlight that there is currently a surplus provision of pitches for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area.
- xxxiv. **Theoretical Carrying Capacity.** The basic quantity assessment demonstrates a surplus in all types of provision to meet the identified demand. This is based on the assumption that pitches are available and 'playable' at the times stated. However, the consultation and site visits has highlighted that this is not always the case and that other factors have be taken into consideration when determining the supply and demand of pitches and availability. These factors include the capacity of the site to accommodate games due to poor quality of pitches, access and accessibility issues related to transport links and also the availability of changing facilities.

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- xxxv. A selection of pitches within the Borough has been noted as being of a relatively poor standard which impacts on the overall quality and capacity of the provision. In addition, some of the sites have no changing facilities and where they do exist they are considered, on the whole, to be poor or average quality.
- xxxvi. On this basis, it is possible to apply a reasonable assumption in terms of a more realistic capacity of the pitches to accommodate games. Based upon the feedback in terms of the stated issues and the quality of drainage, access to facilities etc, the following assumptions have been applied to ascertain a theoretical carrying capacity of the pitches. For example, in theory, if the pitch quality is 'good' it can be assumed that this will be able to accommodate 2 games per week, and the assumption applied accordingly with a theoretical 'multiplication factor'.

Table D - Theoretical Carrying Capacity

Rating of Pitch	Carrying Capacity	Multiplication Factor
Excellent/Good	Two matches per week	1.0
Average	One match per week	0.5
Below Average	One match per fortnight	0.25
Poor	One match per month	0.25

- xxxvii. Using the results of the non-technical site audits and applying the above assumptions, the following tables provide examples of the indicative impact of the quality of pitch provision on the actual availability of pitches to provide a more realistic outline.

Table E - Theoretical Carrying Capacity of Football Pitches

Rating of Pitch	No. of pitches (Non-technical audits)	Multiplication Factor	Theoretical Availability
Excellent/Good	68	1.0	68
Average	31	0.5	15*
Below Average	29	0.25	7*
Poor	-	-	-
TOTAL	128		90

*Figures have been rounded down to reflect the availability of full pitches

Table F - Theoretical Carrying Capacity of Rugby Pitches

Rating of Pitch	No. of pitches (Non-technical audits)	Multiplication Factor	Theoretical Availability
Excellent/Good	10	1.0	10
Average	-	0.5	-
Below Average	2	0.25	0.5
Poor	-	0.25	-
TOTAL	12		10.5

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- xxxviii. The tables demonstrate that in theory the indicative quality ratings of the pitches would reduce the number of actual pitches for football and rugby and therefore reduce the surpluses previously outlined. It is suggested that all pitches need to be enhanced to a good standard to increase the capacity as a whole.
- xxxix. **Single-pitch sites and sites without changing accommodation.** In addition to the theoretical carrying capacity of the pitches, the reality of the availability of pitches is influenced by a number of factors such as the cost of accessing school pitches at weekends which is sometimes prohibitive for teams. Removing from any calculations those sites without changing provisions and those which can be considered not completely 'accessible' for all teams can have a considerable impact on the availability of playing pitches that are suitable for all use.
- xl. In addition to this many of the pitches are on recreational sites which have a significant amount of informal use, further exacerbating the issues with quality.

Recommendations

- At present 88% of pitches within the Borough have community access. This is a very healthy percentage and the recommendation is therefore to maintain such a figure working closely with education and private sites where possible.
- It was noted that the type of pitch with the lowest percentage of community use is Mini Soccer and the Council are subsequently advised to pay careful attention to this figure with a view to maintaining or increasing this long term.
- The Council are advised to maintain the current provision of pitches although it may prove worthwhile to consider re-designating some senior pitches to address any potential deficiencies in mini soccer and in particular junior football pitches. Although there is currently a surplus of seven Mini Soccer pitches to meet current demand on a Sunday when taking into account the theoretical carrying capacity of both Mini and Junior pitches in relation to pitch quality and changing facilities these figures will change and subsequently decrease. The same scenario is predicted for Junior and Senior pitches also although the current surplus of Senior pitches will counteract the potential change to pitch numbers.
- In relation to the quality of pitches, although the majority of pitches for each individual sport were deemed to be of a good standard (SLL non technical visual inspection), there was a range of quality ratings as highlighted below:-

Table G - Quality Range for All Pitches

Type of pitch	Pitches Rated Community Use	Quality Range
Football Pitches	128 pitches	Below Average – Good
Cricket Pitches	16 pitches	All rated as Good
Rugby Pitches	12 pitches	Below Average – Good
Ancillary facility rating	80 sites (51 with changing facilities) serving 167 pitches	Very Poor - Excellent

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- The Council should adopt a policy of providing “Good” sites rather than “Average” or “Below Average”. Those sites scoring “average” or below in the quality assessment are contained within Appendix 7.
- Changing Provision. – The study revealed limited or no changing provision at some sites in addition to concerns regarding the quality of provision at specific sites. Majority of sites (36) had very poor or no changing provision with only one site (Roe Lane) having excellent ancillary facilities The study also revealed a large variance in quality ranging from Very Poor – Excellent.
- Information contained within the action plan (Appendix 7) should be used to prioritise improvements to changing provision throughout the Borough. Priorities should be in sites which are heavily used and those with more than one pitch.
- In relation to STP’s the advise to the Council is to main the standards of these well used facilities although as a priority investment is required to the facility located behind Kidsgrove Recreation Centre which is well used by both the adjacent school and the local community. The STP is the oldest facility of the stock of five sites and requires investment including resurfacing in the near future.
- It is a suggestion that the Council use the results of the quality audit to help inform the ratings currently used to set pitch hire fees and charges
- The Council should maintain good quality facilities at Roe Lane and Birchenwood with some improvements to pitches on the Birchenwood site
- It would prove beneficial if the Council worked closely with the Education Department to improve pitch quality across the sites where there is regular community use
- The Council to work with Private Clubs to ensure pitch quality is maintained
- The Council should review hire fees and charges on a regular basis. Comparison of fees and charges across a wide range of similar local authorities is recommended in order to benchmark fees and charges. Consultation with local clubs is invaluable when reviewing charges to ensure fees are realistic to all
- Council to re-assess pitch provision where possible on an annual basis or alternatively on a two yearly basis to ensure that changes in demand and supply are considered

Bowling

- xii. The audit has identified a total of 19 bowling greens currently in use (across 15 sites)

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xlii. As shown the majority of the bowling greens have been assessed as being of a good or satisfactory standard with only 5% being rated as poor. Other key findings from the site visits include:

- A variance in standard across the current supply with quality scores ranging from 24% (poor) to 80% (good)
- All greens have access to a pavilion although these vary in quality from very poor to excellent (only one site rated as excellent)
- 47% of sites (9 out of 19) are served by floodlighting which extends usage and can improve access. It must be noted that the majority of floodlighting was of poor condition

Access:-

xliii. Study analysis highlighted that both membership policies and the cost of playing bowls vary within the Borough. Neither of the two Bowling Clubs contacted outlined access difficulties as an issue although a true representation from all bowling clubs is required.

xliv. The mapping of bowling greens shows the distribution of current provision. Although the urban areas of the Borough appear to be well catered for there doesn't appear to be any greens to cover the areas of Keele, Madeley, Whitmore, Maer and Loggerheads.

Recommendations

- Maintain current provision levels (supply of greens). Update the Bowls Green Audit every two years, including quality assessments.
- Council to improve the condition of the provision rated as average (4 sites) in addition to improving facilities deemed to be of a satisfactory standard – please refer to Action Plan for a listing of sites.
- Initially improve the quality of floodlighting available at various sites with the longer term aim of increasing the percentage of greens with floodlighting to increase the hours of usage.
- Make some improvements to the condition of pavilions to bring specific sites up to an acceptable standard.
- Improve the publishing of information at sites in relation to opportunities to play bowls. Ensure that some information is provided at ALL greens.

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Tennis

- xliv. The audit has identified a total of **46** accessible tennis courts, as shown below (either casual access or via club membership / formal hire) across the borough. There are 44 Macadam courts and 2 Shale/Clay courts provided via 13 sites.
- xlvi. Assessment against Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) provision standards reveals that there is a need for 54 courts within the Borough although only 30 courts with community access have been identified. A standard is also proposed for the number of floodlit courts based on 1 floodlit court per 65 players. On the basis of this there is a requirement for 38 floodlit courts. There are currently 20 courts (8 with community use) with floodlighting throughout the Borough.
- xlvii. Key findings relating to the assessment of quality include:
- A substantial variance in quality ratings, ranging from a score of 31% through to 80%.
 - The key reasons for low quality are inadequate run offs, poor or no floodlighting, poor rated club hut and no information board. Posts and nets often rated poorly but that was often due to none present (time of year and usage).
 - The tennis club response rated the courts as being of an excellent standard in addition to good quality ancillary facilities.

Access:-

- xlviii. In most cases, casual play on tennis courts in parks is free. The study also outlined that the cost of tennis at formal clubs varies with no standardised fee system in place.
- xlix. GIS mapping showed that the location of tennis courts predominately covers the urban areas although there is no provision to cover the areas of Audley, Keele, Madeley, Whitmore, Maer & Loggerheads.

Recommendations

- Retain the current provision of tennis courts and maintain the number of sites with community use (69% at present) with a view to increasing this longer term.
- Look to address deficiencies identified via LTA provision standards although facility usage decline must be improved prior to any change.
- Decline in the usage of facilities may be due to quality. As a priority it would be advisable for the Council to improve sites from average to good quality and longer term improve those from poor to good (5 sites). The key reasons for low quality appear to be inadequate run offs, poor or no floodlighting, poor rated club hut and no information board.

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- Work closely with Tennis Development Officer(s) to reverse current decline in usage and promote the sport and facilities within the Borough.
- Work with schools to identify courts which could be available to the public on a seasonal basis for casual use. There may be opportunities to secure court usage in areas which are currently not covered by this type of provision.

Golf Courses

- i. There are 4 private golf courses within the Newcastle under Lyme Borough plus one driving range (Keele) as indicated in the table below.

Table H - Golf Provision within the Borough

	Driving Range (Bays)	Golf Course (Holes)	Other
Keele Driving Range	26	n/a	n/a
Keele Municipal Golf Course	n/a	18 + 9	Practice putting green
Newcastle-under-Lyme Golf Club	n/a	18	n/a
Onneley Golf Club	n/a	18	n/a
Wolstanton Golf Course	n/a	18	Snooker Room

- ii. Pricing – green fees range from £10 for a weekly round at Keele Municipal to £27.50 for a 'summer rate' at Wolstanton Golf Course.
- iii. Consultation revealed that the cost of participation, although varying significantly is generally high (compared to other similar golf courses), creating a barrier to one off provision. Membership fees also present a significant barrier to regular golf-playing for some individuals, although it is recognised that the choice of how disposable income is spent is also a factor in decisions about affording golf membership fees. The driving range is the only realistic way of participating in regular golfing activity for low-income households.

Recommendation

- Ensure that casual pay and play opportunities are maintained and further developed. Work with local clubs to improve all opportunities for casual use of sites

Athletics

- There is one public athletics track in the Borough, Ashfields Track (Newcastle AC) which is adjacent to St Josephs School and used by North Staffs AC.

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- Ashfield's track is at best described as being in "average" condition, with some maintenance improvements required. The track surface although very dated does appear safe
- Although floodlighting is available for the track and pitch located within the centre of the track, floodlighting does not look as if it is of a particularly high specification. The site is very secure with fencing all around and locked gates
- Signage could be better – no indication on the external fence of opening times, club sessions etc
- Pavilion is relatively modern and a plaque denotes lottery funding (estimate mid 90's). The site is served by a small parking area
- The Athletics Facilities Strategy for the UK (2002-2006) provides a framework for assessing the quality of provision on a local level. The Strategy broadly requires an 8 lane synthetic track in each county (1 track per 250,000 within a 20 minute drive time in urban areas and a 45 minute drive time in rural areas).
- The research showed that there is sufficient provision within the Borough due to the requirement being met by provision at Northwood Stadium (located within Stoke City Council Boundary). Due to its location it is also used by local schools and North Staffs AC for competition; however it is important to retain the existing athletics facility provision at Ashfield's for the Borough.

Recommendations

- Maintain provision currently located within the Town ward (Ashfield's Track) although improvements are recommended to the track and floodlighting – (source potential funding via UK Athletics) to ensure its continued use for athletics.

Boroughwide Assessment – Indoor Provision

- liii. All formal indoor sports facilities have been considered within the assessment, encompassing public, education and private / commercial facilities. Community Centres, some of which facilitate sports participation opportunities, have been assessed separately within this report.
- liv. A comprehensive audit of current facilities and accurate knowledge about the facilities available to local residents was required in order to identify priorities for the future. The supply of Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities (refer to Map 5) within Newcastle-under-Lyme is through a number of different providers. These can broadly be categorised as follows:

Public Leisure Facilities

- iv. The Council directly provides 2 Leisure Centres:

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- Jubilee Pool
- Knutton Recreation Centre

Dual Use Facilities

lvi. The Council facilitates (through funding and centre management) community access to facilities at:

- Chesterton Community Sports Centre
- Kidsgrove Sports Centre

Community Operated Facility

lvii. The audit has identified one sports facility, Clayton Sports Centre operated by the Stone and District Sports Association

Education Facilities

lviii. A number of sport and leisure facilities on school and college sites are available for the community to use at certain times (minimum of 3 court sports halls).

lix. The primary purpose of the facilities is to service school PE and sport needs, however the schools also let out the facilities to specific community groups.

lx. These facilities encompass:

- Clayton Hall Business & Language College
- Keele University
- Madeley High School
- Newcastle Community High School
- Newcastle-under-Lyme College

Private / Commercial Sports Facilities

lxi. The audit has also identified a small range of facilities operated by the private sector:

- Michelin Sports Centre
- Spirit Health and Fitness Club
- Total Fitness

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Public & Dual Use Facilities

- lxii. The facility audit identified a range of issues with the current stock including:
- In terms of the general condition of the buildings the majority of sites were rated as average with only Kidsgrove being awarded a 'good' rating. At present the facilities are not 'fit for purpose'. All facilities require modernisation in addition to cash injection to bring them up to an acceptable standard
 - Within each facility the audited amenities available predominately range from very poor to average
 - All facilities have DDA issues which require immediate attention. DDA surveys provided by the Council for Jubilee Pool and Knutton Recreation Centre (none available for the other facilities) highlight a number of recommendations including car parking, various improvements to access, changing provision, facilities and signage
 - Facilities have varying needs of repair and maintenance

The following table provides an outline of some of the specific issues for each facility:

Table I – Issues with Indoor Facilities

Facility	Analysis
Jubilee Pool	Poor layout, plant not cost-effective and uses excess space, ceiling & lighting (main pool hall) – replacement issues, DDA issues, car parking issues, general wear and tear (cash injection required); structural survey identified £1.5m of works needed
Knutton Recreation Centre	Limited storage for sports hall, sports hall inadequate safety margins around courts (do not comply with Governing Body recommendations), and generally in poor condition. However the roof was repaired in early 2006, the sports hall floor has been repaired, and DDA issues have been addressed. Floodlights require maintenance, general wear and tear.
Kidsgrove	Some wasted space, car parking problems, moderate investment requirements
Chesterton	General design issues with building, significant amount of wasted space, major DDA issues, general wear & tear, poor sign posting, poor condition of site

Council Recommendations

- A number of issues with indoor facilities have been identified and are outlined within the Borough-wide section of the main report (p50-52). The Council should refer to these issues when devising an appropriate action plan with short, medium and long term goals, timescales and costs attached.

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- In brief, as things stand, cash injection is required for all four facilities – Knutton Recreation Centre, Jubilee Pool, Kidsgrove Sports Centre and Chesterton Community Sports Centre. The level of investment required ranges from minimal to significant i.e. Knutton Recreation Centre and Jubilee Pool to ensure that there are brought to an acceptable standard, modernised, DDA compliant and are deemed fit for purpose.
- Recommendations for Jubilee Pool and Knutton Recreation Centre are discussed later within the Executive Summary in relation to the AMI (Knutton Cross Heath).

Demand Modelling Exercises

- The Demand Analysis (2004) for **sports hall provision** within Newcastle-under-Lyme identified that there is a demand for **28** badminton courts and a current supply of **51** courts.
- It was however noted that a number of courts are located on education sites (29 courts) and given the varying degrees of community use (i.e. availability and access) of school sports facilities, this does have an impact on the current surplus. With this in mind it is not suggested that there should be any reduction in the current provision of sports halls within the Borough.
- The demand Analysis (2204) for **swimming pool provision** within Newcastle-under-Lyme identified that there is a demand for **854** sqm of water space within the region and a current supply of **1739.6** sqm.
- It would appear from the above that the Borough has a healthy surplus of water provision, however it was noted that the Sport England Demand modelling exercise does not factor in accessibility which relates to the amount of pay and play community use. When accessibility was factored in a more realistic supply figure emerged which equalled **1273.73** sqm.
- Taking the above into account, there is still a surplus of water provision equal to **419.73** sqm. ($1273.73 - 854 = 419.73$). It is therefore recommended that there is no need to increase the number of public swimming pools available within the Borough; however the quality of the existing provision should be addressed.
- The demand modelling for Newcastle-under-Lyme indicated that there is a need for **434 fitness stations** within the Borough and an actual supply of **469** fitness stations.
- Via the study analysis it became apparent that the majority of health and fitness provision is provided via the private market which is not always accessible to all members of the community. If the private sector fitness provision was excluded from the demand modelling, there would be a total of 160 stations available for community pay and play access, which would highlight a substantial deficiency (274 stations) against the demand model of 434 stations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It is advised that the Council re-address current fitness provision within the Borough in relation to both quantity and quality to ensure that sufficient opportunities are available to access provision for local residents at an acceptable cost.

Community Centres

- lxiii. Within the context of the study, in total 27 community centres and village halls were identified (Map 6). Of the 27, 22 were contactable and a small selection of sites (6) was visited. Refer to Appendix 3 for additional information.

Recommendations

- In relation to access, it immediately became apparent via consultation that the vast majority of Centres are open for bookings only and therefore severely restrict access for local residents.
- Analysis also revealed that usage has predominately remained the same over the last few years which is undoubtedly partly due to the limited opening hours. It is advised that the Council review the policy of opening hours where possible with a view to increasing opportunities for residents to use such facilities. This is significantly important in rural areas which are not served by other types of sport/leisure provision and often rely on the use of Community Centres and Village Halls for a variety of purposes.
- Although some facilities are used for sport/leisure purposes, the level of usage across the 27 sites is rather disappointing. The Council are advised to liaise with individual centres to facilitate improvement regarding usage levels and the programme of activities currently available.
- When questioned regarding the quality of Centres and Village Halls the responses were generally positive. It is therefore recommended that the Council maintain the level of these facilities and ensure that all facilities are DDA compliant to again ensure that sites are fully accessible for all.

Area Based Assessments and Recommendations

Needs assessment to inform AMI (Knutton Cross Heath)

- lxiv. At present the proposed master plan is the subject of significant local consultation, with the following sport and leisure facilities proposed:
- New Recreation Centre (no specific facility mix identified)
 - 3 Mini Soccer Pitches
 - 2 Adult Soccer Pitches
 - Retention of existing 3rd Generation Synthetic Pitch (behind current recreation centre)
 - Tennis Courts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

lxv. This study has highlighted the following issues for the AMI:

Knutton Cross Heath (KCH)

lxvi. Although the study has revealed that in relation to quantity, Knutton Cross Heath clearly has more facilities than Silverdale, provision covering both areas is very limited and predominantly of average standard particularly in the AMI area.

Indoor Facilities:-

lxvii. KCH provides one recreation centre although this site is only deemed to be of average standard (with the exception of the Astroturf and the studio) and requires significant investment. An outline of the site issues are detailed within the Borough-Wide and Local Area Assessment sections of this report.

lxviii. Two community centres are also located within KCH, however there are issues relating to the limited opening hours in addition to the lack of sport and leisure activities provided via these facilities.

lxix. Attention must be given to the current value of the community centres within KCH with a view to extending opening hours and increasing usage levels. Consultation with individual centres is required in relation to the programme of activities offered.

lxx. The assessment of need for the AMI area supports the case for the provision of new sport and recreation facilities, indoor and outdoor.

lxxi. In relation to indoor provision there is an opportunity to develop a new 'fit for purpose' facility within the AMI area, which would replace Jubilee Pool and Knutton Recreation Centre (KRC). Both of these facilities are out of date and require significant investment simply to bring the facilities up to date. In addition, Jubilee Pool is land locked and cannot be further developed. Provision of a new state of the art facility (wet and dry), gives the opportunity to:

- Provide increased participative opportunities in higher quality facilities
- Reduce on going maintenance requirements at ageing facilities
- Ensure sport and leisure provision is at the heart of the AMI regeneration programme
- Develop local provision in the heart of the community, which should help to improve both health and quality of life
- Address the current lack of sports facility provision in KCH
- Address the lack of publicly provided health and fitness provision in the borough

lxxii. The recommendation from this study is to develop a new facility in the AMI, and for this to replace existing facilities at Jubilee Pool and Knutton Recreation Centre. A new facility would need to include a 25m, 8 lane swimming pool, a sports hall and health and fitness provision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Issues to Consider

- lxxiii. There are two main issues to consider in implementing this recommendation
- Access to a new facility for existing users of Jubilee Pool and Knutton Recreation Centre, the council and its partners may wish to resource transport schemes to address access for existing users in the initial opening period of a new facility
 - If a new indoor facility was to be developed, the council must consider the issue surrounding the third generation pitch at Knutton Recreation Centre
- lxxiv. The pitch is currently very well used by the community and only recently opened in October 2005, having received significant funding via the Football Foundation. Consultation would need to take place with the Football Association to ensure that all options are considered.
- lxxv. There are two main options for this pitch:-
- Relocation
 - Retention
- lxxvi. If Knutton Recreation Centre is closed, there will be no changing facilities for the STP. These facilities would need to be provided if the STP stays in its existing location. The issues with retaining the STP in its current location are:
- Potential vandalism – Unless the site is managed
 - Costs of running a managed site

Relocation

- lxxvii. The STP could be relocated to the site of the new indoor facility (AMI); however there will be cost implications and changing provision would need to be provided. The Football Association/Football Foundation would need to approve the relocation decision.

Alternative Option

- lxxviii. The other option to consider is the closure of the STP (which is only $\frac{3}{4}$ size) and the transfer of all existing users to new facilities which may be provided via a Sports Village located at Newcastle College.

Outdoor Facilities

Pitches

- lxxix. KCH currently provides four pitches (via two sites), all of which received average ratings (58%). Neither site offers changing or parking facilities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- lxxx. The council is to improve the quality of all four football pitches in addition to long term consideration regarding changing facilities and parking provision at sites within the AMI.
- lxxxi. In relation specifically to pitch provision, this study recommends:
- Provision of additional mini soccer pitches (3 recommended in master plan).
 - Provision of additional senior pitches (2 recommend in master plan); these could be part of the Newcastle College proposals, or stand-alone pitches, on one site in the AMI. All new pitch development should incorporate changing and car parking given the lack of this in the KCH area.

Bowling

- lxxxii. There is one bowling green located at Knutton Recreation Centre (public facility) although the site only scored a satisfactory rating (58%).
- Improvements are required to the above site. Refer to Appendix 7 for an outline of the site scores.

Tennis

- lxxxiii. There are four Macadam tennis courts located behind Knutton Recreation Centre although those courts were not being used for tennis purposes at the time of the visit (November 2005). Courts were only deemed to be of average standard via the SLL audits.
- lxxxiv. If Knutton Recreation Centre is closed, then the tennis courts could be relocated or retained, given that the AMI Master plan includes provision of tennis courts. It would not be a viable option to retain tennis courts on their own if they are to be managed, but tennis courts could be retained on the KRC site, if the STP is retained. Alternatively, new tennis courts could be developed as a part of the AMI Master plan.
- Any new tennis courts developed should be floodlit.

Silverdale

- lxxxv. The only indoor recreation opportunities in the area are currently provided through the two community centres; although the centres have limited opening hours and activity programmes. It is recommended that existing community provision is improved; this could include extension of existing buildings to provide opportunities for formal and informal leisure activity e.g. badminton, aerobic classes, martial arts etc.
- lxxxvi. In addition to this the quality of existing facilities needs to be improved e.g. overall environment, opening hours, operational policies etc to fully realise potential benefits for local community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Outdoor Facilities

Pitches

- lxxxvii. There are currently two football pitches located within Silverdale (Senior pitch located at Jollies Field and a Mini Soccer pitch located at Silverdale Primary School). Both pitches scored very poorly in relation to quality (30%, Below Average at Jollies Field and 53%, Below Average at Silverdale Primary) with neither sites having changing or parking facilities.
- lxxxviii. One cricket pitch is also located within Silverdale – Silverdale Cricket Club. The pitch has both changing and parking facilities and was allocated a quality score of 79% for the pitch (Good) and 59% for ancillary facilities (Average).
- lxxxix. Silverdale Cricket Club rated the pitch and ancillary as being in good condition although a number of issues were raised including lack of volunteers and retaining/recruiting new members.
- xc. In relation to pitch provision, this study recommends:
- The council is to improve the quality of all football pitches within Silverdale in addition to long term consideration regarding changing facilities and parking provision.
 - Following consultation with Silverdale Athletic Football Club (90 playing members, 5 teams) it is clear that there is a lack of provision with the club currently using facilities at Alsagers Bank, Roe Lane, Silverdale Cricket Club and Manor Road. The club anticipate that membership is likely to remain the same over the next five years due to the lack of playing fields within the area.
 - Improvements should be made to Jollies Field with a view to use for Junior football although additional pitches, in the form of Senior and Junior provision, should be provided although the proposals at Newcastle College may alleviate some problems in the surrounding areas.

Bowling

- There is currently one bowling green at Silverdale Green Park which scored 44% (Average). Improvements are required to the site in relation to benches, rules and regulations as well as floodlighting.

Tennis

- One Macadam court is available at Silverdale Park although quality is again only of an average standard (45%). The existing facility needs improving in relation to surface, line markings and adequate run offs. There is currently no floodlighting available, no information boards and no club hut.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Multi-pitches (grouped site)

- xc. The evidence from the study supports the proposal for the development of a multi-pitch site in the borough. This could be achieved either by the borough, by Newcastle College or by these two agencies in partnership. The critical issues to inform such a development are:
- There is currently a surplus of senior pitches in the borough, the majority of which do not have changing or car parking. Development of a multi pitch site could address this, and allow the 'loss' of surplus 1 pitch sites, or the development of these as junior pitches
 - The development of additional pitches in the KCH AMI area will need to be in the context of the multi pitch site location, to avoid over provision. An ideal location would use part of the AMI area and part of the college site
 - Football Clubs are willing to travel 6+ miles to access facilities (majority of clubs prioritise better quality facilities requiring further travel than more localised facilities)
 - Further analysis of the club questionnaires also highlighted that teams using high quality multi-pitch sites (i.e. Roe Lane) register high satisfaction with current facilities
 - Newcastle Town FC is the obvious candidate to be the key club in the development of a grouped playing pitch site as part of a sports village concept. The 1st team play at a high level (Northern Counties League) and the club has 15 teams from Mini – Senior + Women's Team. The club also currently play at 4-5 different venues and would benefit from one core facility of a high standard
 - A multi pitch site is not recommended for the Silverdale area, given the size of the area. In Silverdale the initial priority is enhancement of existing facilities e.g. Jollies Field for Junior Football in addition to provision of additional pitches for Senior and Junior use