

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY

August 2026

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Cert Num: 6543-QMS-001

Quality assurance	Name	Date
Report origination	Chris Horner / Rachel Burke	28 November 2025
Quality control	John Eady	02 December 2025
Client comments		
Final approval		

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL

BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) Built Facilities Strategy and Action Plan Report for the period 2025-2045. Recommendations are drawn from the indoor needs assessment report the main audit and consultation work for which was completed in September 2025. Both documents were prepared by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP).

The needs assessment and strategy were prepared in accordance with Sport England's ANOG (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance) for indoor and outdoor sports facilities and in consultation with SCC, Sport England, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), Active Essex, local sports clubs and key stakeholders including Freedom Leisure.

Based on the needs assessment, SCC is well-positioned to make informed decisions to ensure that facilities of the right type are located in the right places to enable the maximum number of local people to take part in regular, meaningful physical activity and sport. This strategy describes current supply and future demand for facility provision over the next 15 years. It builds on the clear evidence base and makes recommendations for future development and/or consolidation.

Appendix 1 provides a planning gain toolkit for SCC to use when developing sports facilities, including the cost breakdown for sport halls. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the indicative costs of developing new provision, and appendix three details an extended breakdown of the findings of the needs assessment document.

A Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM) run for sports halls and swimming pools was carried out in June 2026, the findings of which have been used to formulate this Strategy document.

1.1: Local policy

The council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide the city's growth and development to 2045, replacing and consolidating existing documents such as the Core Strategy (2007), Development Management Document (2015), Central Area Action Plan (2018), and selected policies from the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (2014).

This streamlined framework will set out a vision, objectives, and policies for sustainable growth, environmental and heritage protection, and the delivery of infrastructure and services aligned with housing and employment needs. Currently under consultation, the Local Plan is scheduled for submission in 2026 and adoption in 2027.

It will cover housing, employment, transport, climate resilience, green infrastructure and the potential creation of a new northern neighbourhood. A key focus will be regenerating Southend with the development of new homes within the existing built-up area and on land at Fossetts Farm to the north of the city. Land North of Southend is also being promoted for development.

The full breakdown of development areas is as follows:

- ◆ Southend Central Neighbourhood (incorporating City Centre and Central Seafront): 3,600.
- ◆ Fossetts Farm: 1,350.
- ◆ The other neighbourhoods of Southend: 1,850.

- ◀ Intensification across the City (windfall): 3,000.
- ◀ Development on Land North of Southend: 4,900
- ◀ Total: 14,700 homes

The Built Facilities Strategy and Action Plan tests both the higher growth scenario of 14,700 homes and a lower growth scenario of 9,800, which is the same as the above minus the development on Land North of Southend.

The council's corporate plan priorities are to:

- ◀ Create a growing city with a strong, prosperous community by driving inclusive economic growth, supporting local businesses, boosting jobs, and enhancing tourism, culture, and leisure
- ◀ Ensure a safe city that offers quality of life for all through resilient communities, improved safety, affordable housing, and robust infrastructure.
- ◀ Build a clean city with a resilient environment by managing coastal and flood defences, promoting sustainable transport, improving waste and recycling, and maintaining high-quality public spaces.
- ◀ Transform the council to deliver efficient, cost-effective services through digital innovation, customer-focused redesign, and operational efficiency.

The Physical Activity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) highlights that adult obesity in the authority remains above the England average. While children's physical activity levels in Southend compare well with national averages for both active and less active groups, younger pupils score lower for enjoyment, competence, and confidence in sport. Swimming ability varies by age.

The Southend-on-Sea Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021–2024 provided a framework for improving health, reducing inequalities, and supporting quality of life through coordinated action by the council, health partners, and other organisations. It identifies priorities such as tackling social and economic determinants of health, promoting partnerships, ensuring accessible services, encouraging healthy lifestyles through spatial planning, and improving digital resources and communications, aligning efforts to integrate health into wider policy agendas.

1.2: General findings

Sports halls

Southend-on-Sea has 34 sports halls containing 86 badminton courts. The sixteen 3+ badminton court halls provide a total of 68 badminton courts. They are generally well located in line with the areas of higher population density. The increase in population in the central Southend area due to housing growth will necessitate development of further provision.

Two sports halls are rated good quality, five are above average, six are below average and one is poor. (Two could not be assessed). Investment is needed in the poor and below average quality sports halls. This is particularly relevant at those with lower used capacities as this often hinders demand levels. The two public leisure centre sports halls are of above average quality, however, their age means that regular refurbishment is needed to retain quality.

93.9% of the population lives within one mile of a community available sports hall. 94% of residents live within a 20-minute drive of a sports hall with community use.

Thirteen 3+ court halls provide some level of community use; all have some level of spare capacity. Both public leisure centre halls are well used. There is an opportunity to extend community use hours in the sports hall at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre during quieter school access periods.

Several of the clubs which depend upon access to indoor sports hall facilities report that across the schools-based stock the volume of time lost to exams (and other school functions) has a negative impact on their programmes, viability and membership. A solution is required to improve the level of reliable, year-round (51 week) access to school sports hall provision for clubs.

FPM findings

Southend-on-Sea has a strong supply of sports halls and is well placed to meet demand now and in the future. The current mix of public, education and commercial facilities can accommodate almost all demand in 2026 and remains resilient under both growth scenarios to 2045.

Overall capacity is sufficient even with higher population growth, and unmet demand stays low across all scenarios. However, several facilities—particularly Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre and some school sites—already operate at high levels during peak times, highlighting the need to maximise community access and better balance usage across the network.

A key strategic issue is the ageing condition of the sports hall stock. Many facilities will require refurbishment over the plan period to remain attractive and fit for purpose. Protecting and improving education-based provision will be central to maintaining a sustainable and effective sports hall network for the City.

Swimming pools

The audit identified 21 pools at 14 sites. Six (not including lidos) are larger than 20m in length (160m²). KKP's audit finds pool supply to be reasonable. Re-opening the pool at Hamstel Junior School would go some way to increasing supply to meet the anticipated rise in demand caused by population and housing growth.

In terms of quality, three pools are above average, two are below average and one is currently closed. Improvement is required at Belfairs Swim Centre and Shoeburyness Leisure Centre (both below average) to improve the condition of public leisure stock.

Just over half (52.2%) of authority residents live within a one-mile walk of a pool available for community use. They all live within a 20-minute drive of a pool with community access.

Bringing the pool at Hamstel Junior School back into use could support club and commercial agency delivered learn to swim programmes.

All three public leisure sites provide a pay and play option to residents. David Lloyd provides a relatively high-cost membership option.

FPM

Southend-on-Sea has a good supply of swimming pools and is able to meet almost all current and future demand across all modelling scenarios. Despite planned housing growth, the existing network continues to accommodate the vast majority of demand to 2045, with only a small proportion remaining unmet.

Most swimming activity is satisfied within the City, and even under the high-growth scenario the network is still capable of meeting increased demand. Where unmet demand does occur, it is largely due to residents living beyond reasonable travel distances rather than a lack of capacity.

Public leisure centres provide most of the City's swimming provision. Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre operates at full capacity during peak periods in all scenarios, and Belfairs Swim Centre is projected to become increasingly busy as demand grows. This indicates rising pressure on the public sector offer.

Although overall supply is sufficient, higher utilisation levels show that spare capacity is limited. As demand increases, maintaining the quality and attractiveness of existing pools will be essential. Much of the swimming stock is ageing, particularly within the public sector, and refurbishment and modernisation will be important to ensure facilities remain fit for purpose and able to retain participation.

Health and fitness

There are 26 health and fitness stations in Southend-on-Sea, 19 of which have more 20+ stations. 15 of the 19 are available for community use, nine of which are available on a pay and play basis.

There is a positive supply demand balance of fitness facilities in the area both now and when accounting for population growth to 2045.

Twelve of the 19 fitness suites with 20+ stations are of good or above average quality. Four are below average and two are poor. The fitness facilities at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre (poor quality) and Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre (below average quality) both need modernisation.

Extending the gym at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre would enable management to better encourage further uptake of memberships. The revenue generated will help offset the cost of running the swimming pool. Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre could, as part of a refurbishment, house all its fitness provision on one floor to make better use of underutilised space and provide a more modern amenity.

With high demand for facilities and a large number of national chain operators in the area and in close proximity, there is a need for the public leisure centres to have high quality facilities to enable them to compete commercially and be financially sustainable.

Almost all (94.8%) of Southend-on-Sea residents live within one mile of a health and fitness suite. This increases to 100% for those within a 20-minute drive of a community accessible venue.

A summary of provision for squash, indoor bowls, indoor tennis, gymnastics, trampolining, combat sports, table tennis, water sports, community and village halls and climbing walls is provided as Appendix 3.

PART 2: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

The principal opportunity/challenge for SCC is to ensure that its current indoor and built facilities remain fit for the future and offer accessible opportunity, and that new strategically located provision is provided to cater for identified demand.

There is a need to cater for the core market of sports consumers already participating in local facilities and clubs whilst enabling growth of existing or new activities to meet the needs of new participants. Southend's growing population means that the facility mix, programming schedules at public leisure sites and the provision of availability during the day are all important.

The new leisure contract with Freedom Leisure provides an opportunity to modernise the Council's public leisure stock, which appears to have been neglected in the latter stages of the previous leisure management contract. Freedom Leisure has agreed an initial three-year contract with SCC. This new partnership allows for updated programming and operational efficiencies, although the limited contract duration may restrict larger-scale renovations or long-term planning.

2.1: Overarching strategic recommendations

Invest in and modernise existing facilities, prioritising public leisure sites, to meet contemporary standards.

Public leisure health and fitness provision does not match the standard set by commercial operators in the authority.

The layout of Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre should be improved to provide a better use of the large space occupied by the site. At present, health and fitness provision is situated across two floors, causing issues for less mobile users. The site has substantial underutilised space, including closed health suite and social area, unused changing provision and a large studio, which is used infrequently partly due to its location in the building.

Remodelling would enable all fitness suite provision to be located on the first floor, development of a modernised spin studio (to reflect its reported popularity) on floor two and the re-introduction of use of the (currently broken) trampolines in the 2-court sports hall, which is predominantly used for class activities.

Shoeburyness Leisure Centre also needs modernisation. The current health and fitness provision does not meet contemporary standards. It would benefit from extension to make use of the (currently closed) toilet and changing facilities. Additional income generated from increased memberships can then be used to offset the cost of pool provision.

Its studio space insufficiently large to accommodate group exercise sessions of more than six people. Given the current layout of the building, there is scope to extend this room, utilising currently underutilised car parking space. In so doing, the ceiling should be lowered and LED lights fitted to modernise the facility.

In terms of pool provision, improvements are also required at all three public leisure sites.

- ◆ At Belfairs Swim Centre, work is needed to address plant room issues which limit the extent to which pool/air temperatures can be controlled and to improve learning pool décor.

- ◀ At Shoeburyness Leisure Centre the lighting system, the roof and general décor need investment as does the plant room which is dated and inefficient.
- ◀ The timing system at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre is not functional. This has an adverse impact on City of Southend Swimming Club's ability to host galas at the facility.

The significant housing growth within Southend-on-Sea over the local plan period will place greater emphasis on existing facilities. As such, the (currently closed) swimming pool at Hamstel Junior School could be re-introduced, with Council support, to accommodate potential growth in learn to swim and club demand.

In terms of sports hall provision, half of the 3+ court halls in the authority are of below average or poor quality although both public leisure centre sports halls are above average. The FPM assessments highlight that Southend-on-Sea's sports hall stock is ageing, with the average age of facilities rising from 25 years in 2026 to 44 years by 2045. Several sites are identified as priorities for modernisation to maintain quality, efficiency and long-term participation.

The FPM notes that Chase High School remains the only pre-2000 sports hall that has not been modernised, and that six educational sports halls built in the early 2000s have not yet been refurbished. In addition, Thorpe Hall School, located within the largest planned housing growth area, will reach 27 years old by 2045, with utilisation projected to increase significantly, reinforcing the need for future modernisation.

Maximise accessibility and year-round community use of facilities.

Access to sports hall space on weekday daytimes is limited to two sites (Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre and David Lloyd Southend) the latter only being accessible via a substantial monthly membership. This limits opportunity for older people, the unemployed or shift workers to access sports hall space.

Shoeburyness Leisure Centre which is, at present, only available to the public weekday evenings and at weekends provides an opportunity to extend community use hours to allow public use at times when not required by the school. This will require joint review of the current access policy by SCC, Freedom Leisure and Shoeburyness High School.

Several clubs report losing access to sports hall space for up to 12 weeks of the year due to school holidays and the use of sports to accommodate school exams. SCC should work with schools and Active Essex (which has expertise in this work area) to:

- ◀ Develop and communicate a clear business and community case for maintaining community access to school sports facilities throughout the year, helping school leaders understand the benefits for both their institution and the wider community and supporting informed decisions on facility access and authorisation.
- ◀ Investigate whether and how measures could be implemented to ensure that school sports halls are available particularly on weekday evenings throughout key booking periods when demand for them is at its highest (typically September - May) plus school holidays. The key issue to tackle relates to the periods of time when school exams are taking place (when community access to sports halls is severely disrupted).
- ◀ Consider how to engage with schools with a view to diagnosing the type and range of support needed (e.g., advice and/or additional resource to enable/improve marketing/administration of community bookings).

While pay-and-play access is available for health and fitness facilities, indoor tennis, and climbing walls, the only squash and indoor bowls facilities within the Authority currently

require membership for access. The council should explore opportunities to work with clubs and operators to expand the range of pay-and-play options for these activities.

For swimming pools, the FPM identifies Belfairs Swim Centre as the only site with scope to increase peak-period availability, with potential to add three hours for the main pool and six hours for the teaching pool. At Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre, reviewing the programme of the 20m x 17m diving pool may create additional capacity for other activities, depending on depth and safety considerations.

TruGym (Thorpe Bay) has expressed interest in collaborating with the council to introduce pay-and-play access for its on-site squash facilities. However, the gym is looking for support to refurbish and reopen its currently closed squash court before this can be implemented.

Support club development and cross-sport collaboration.

In achieving greater access to sports hall provision, opportunities for club growth will be enhanced. Growing participation is a key theme amongst badminton, basketball, archery and table tennis clubs within Southend-on-Sea.

Invicta Table Tennis Club could lose access to its current facility given the existing lease agreement. It may need to identify alternative options – one of which could be a facility share with Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club, which is reportedly struggling financially.

Strengthen workforce capacity and service delivery at public leisure sites.

Freedom Leisure has had to reduce the number of learn to swim sessions it offers over the course of a week due to a shortage of qualified instructors at two of the three public leisure sites with pools. A significant factor in the reduced workforce is that commercial competitors are offering higher wages.

As set out in the physical activity JSNA, swimming competency levels are generally above national averages, with the exception of school year groups seven and eight. Workforce issues, such as a lack of qualified instructors need to be addressed to ensure that younger children maintain this positive trend in Southend-on-Sea. This is seen to be important given that the area is coastal.

Freedom Leisure currently has 28 young people on its waiting list for learn to swim programme across the public leisure sites. There is a need to conduct a pay review to better retain and recruit swim teachers to deliver sessions and ensure that swimming competency levels remain high.

Promote inclusive and affordable participation.

As highlighted in the needs assessment, physical activity levels in Southend-on-Sea are above the national average.

Although deprivation levels are lower than in other parts of Essex and the wider country, a significant proportion of Southend-on-Sea residents are classed as living in poverty and/or reside in its deprived areas. Just over one-quarter of the local population falls within the three most deprived cohorts, compared to approximately 30% nationally.

These individuals and families should be a key focus of support within the new council leisure contract with Freedom Leisure, helping to deliver ambitions clearly stated in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This could be achieved by making available and effectively promoting low-cost memberships and/or sessions for swimming, group exercise and gym use. Sports aimed at older residents such as walking football and basketball could also be provided to meet the demands created by Southend-on-Sea's ageing population. Providing discounts to monthly memberships and, for example, children's swimming lessons would provide greater impetus to improve long term health and wellbeing.

In addition to doing more for less well-off residents, there is an opportunity to increase uptake of facilities at public leisure sites during typically quieter periods by developing a more dynamic pay and play pricing model. For example, the cost of hire for indoor tennis provision at Southend Tennis and Leisure Centre does not differ during peak/off-peak time - or allow concessionary rate users.

Experimenting with adjustments to this might both lead to greater take up during quiet periods and enable (with specific encouragement) a broader range of residents to take the opportunity to access indoor tennis opportunity.

The KKP audit identified that the (former) online system for signing up to public leisure centre memberships required significant modernisation to align with commercial competitors that have adopted user-friendly recruitment strategies. The previous system was outdated, preventing potential members from viewing membership costs online and requiring a phone call with an advisor to complete the sign-up process.

Since production of the needs assessment and this draft strategy, a new online platform has been launched. This upgrade is clear, informative and user friendly. It enables users to complete the entire sign-up process independently, eliminating the need for telephone enquiries and improving overall accessibility and convenience.

Membership options currently comprise junior (1-15 years), adult (16-59 years) and senior (60+years). As noted above. There is opportunity to extend both the opportunity and the level of membership discounting further – to/for students, those on low incomes and in respect of off-peak related use to make it more accessible to all in line with the Southend-on-Sea Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Carry out further strategic planning to ensure the facility stock can accommodate future population growth whilst reviewing these findings to ensure this Strategy remains up to date.

Southend-on-Sea is set to develop between 9,800 and 14,700 new homes during the plan period. Whilst the needs assessment does not currently identify need for new provision to accommodate this (with the exception of bringing the pool at Hamstel Junior School back into use), this should be continually reviewed, and an updated built facilities strategy produced every five years.

The protection of existing sites is essential to meeting future demand in this case. TruGym (Thorpe Bay) is currently subject of a live planning application for demolition without replacement – which would result in the loss of the only publicly accessible squash provision in the authority.

2.2. Action plans

The following action plan contains two sections:

- ◀ A strategic objectives action plan.
- ◀ Site specific recommendations.

In respect of timescales, short term refers to 1-2 years; medium is 3-5 years and long-term equates to 5-10 years. Action plan priorities are categorised either as protect, enhance or provide in line with Sport England objectives. The Sport England definitions for these 'headings' are as follows:

- ◀ **Protect**- to protect the right opportunities in the right places.
- ◀ **Enhance** - to enhance opportunities through better use of existing provision.
- ◀ **Provide**- to provide new opportunities to meet the needs of current and future generations.

NB: Responsibility for actions set out in the plan are not solely the responsibility of SCC. It is, thus, assigned to a number of agencies including the council, schools, Active Essex, NGBs and sports clubs. This reflects the fact that, while the strategy is commissioned by the local authority, it requires a partnership approach to deliver recommendations over the period covered.

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2.2.1: Strategic objectives action plan

Strategic objective	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Invest in and modernise existing facilities, prioritising public leisure sites, to meet contemporary standards. Enhance / provide.	Raise the quality of public leisure stock quality to bring it into line with commercial operators: - Reconfigure Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre, to house all health and fitness provision on one floor and make better use of currently unused space. Invest in the spin studio (improving current décor and increasing the number of bikes). Replace pool timing equipment and replace trampolines to enable this activity to return to the programme. - Improve the health and fitness offer at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre - extend gym and studio facilities, making use of the currently closed toilets/changing spaces and car parking area. Upgrade poolside décor and the lighting system. - Refurbish the plant room and poolside décor at Belfairs Swimming Centre. If feasible, support Hamstel Junior School to refurbish and re-open its swimming pool. Encourage, and where possible directly support improvements to school sports halls (attached to processes to enable year-round availability underpinned by clear and binding community use agreements - CUAs).	Short Medium Ongoing	SCC, Freedom Leisure. SCC/Hamstel School SCC, Active Essex (AE), schools, NGBs
Maximise accessibility and year-round community use of facilities. Enhance / provide	Review of the current sports hall access policy at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre to enable further daytime access. Reduce the loss of (in particular weekday evening) sports hall space at high schools during school holidays and exam periods. Work to implement policies which enable the maximum possible uninterrupted annual club access. Encourage TruGym (Thorpe Bay) and both indoor bowls clubs in the Authority to increase the availability of pay and play options for squash and indoor bowls. Support TruGym to refurbish its second squash court and bring it back into use.	Short Ongoing Medium	SCC, Freedom Leisure, school. SCC, Active Essex, Schools. SCC, clubs.
Support club development and cross-sport collaboration. Protect	Support Invicta Table Tennis Club to either agree a formal lease with Invicta Tennis Club, securing its long-term access to its current dedicated facility, or support it to find alternative provision. Include consideration of the potential opportunity to accommodate the table tennis club at Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club.	Short	SCC, Invicta TTC, Southend-on-Sea BC.
Strengthen workforce capacity and service delivery at public leisure sites. Enhance / provide	Address the number of swimming teachers in the authority. Work jointly to recruit and train (via accredited programmes) young people to become active swim teachers. In the first instance look to recruit from the local swim clubs, which have strong membership bases.	Short	SCC, Freedom Leisure, Swim England, swimming clubs

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Strategic objective	Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Promote inclusive and affordable participation. Provide	Ensure that, going forward, leisure centre programming and pricing clearly and measurably reflects SCC commitments to meeting the needs of all local people: – Explore the potential to introduce more, and more affordable, pay and play options during weekday daytimes particularly at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre and David Lloyd. – Building upon what is a good base in the Southend Advantage Card - work jointly to develop a comprehensive 'passport to leisure' membership card via which discounted membership-based access (and swimming lessons) for people living in poverty and facing other specific barriers to access can be obtained. – Extend community use at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre. Initiate a joint review of the current access policy and develop a shared agreement to allow public access during school downtime without disrupting educational activity. – Design an engagement plan related to secondary school sports halls - focusing on securing uninterrupted (or much less disrupted) all year-round weekday evening access. – Work with owners/operators to extend the volume of pay and play at squash and indoor bowls venues.	Short / medium	SCC, Freedom Leisure, TruGym, David Lloyd, Shoeburyness High School, AE, England Squash, EIBA.
Environmental sustainability and climate crisis. Protect/Enhance/Provide	Continue to improve the performance of council buildings aiming to achieve net zero emissions and maximise funding opportunities. Ensure that all newly constructed council-controlled/influenced buildings, extensions and refurbishments are designed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (Essex pledge). Focus on the switch away from oil and natural gas use. Deliver ongoing 'invest to save' energy efficiency projects to reduce overall emissions and reduce running costs. Maximise onsite renewable energy generation opportunities	Short	SCC, AE schools/College, community organisations
Carry out further strategic planning to ensure the facility stock can accommodate future population growth with regular reviews carried out. Protect / enhance / provide	Adopt the strategy as an evidence-based document supporting the Southend-on-Sea Local Plan and development management decisions. Use the strategy and action plan document to inform the need for proposals for new/enhanced provision as well as protecting existing provision. Use Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator to calculate demand and contributions towards indoor sports facilities. Keep this strategy relevant and up to date. Complete a light touch annual strategy review. Deliver a complete review within 5 years of adoption. High priority projects for the direction of developer contributions include the remodelling of Southend Sports and Leisure Centre, the maintenance of the pools at Belfairs Swim Centre and Shoeburyness Leisure Centre and potentially reintroducing Hamstel Junior School Pool. In terms of sports hall space, the quality of St Bernards High School is affecting usage rates.	Medium	SCC, Sport England

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2.2.2: Site specific recommendations action plan

Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale
Belfairs Academy	In house	Opened in 2004, the 4-court sports hall is above average quality. It offers limited community use (20 hours per week). The capacity available for increased demand is not known due to the absence of a response from the school to consultation requests. A CUA is already in place.	Explore the option to increase community use hours at the site, particularly for Southend Volleyball Club.	SCC, Belfairs Academy	Short
Belfairs Swim Centre	Freedom Leisure	A 4 lane 25m swimming pool and a 10m x 8m teaching/learner pool both of below average quality – as are the changing rooms. Pool temperatures cannot be adjusted due to one of the two boilers being out of action; some lights are not working and poolside tiling work incomplete. (Since the audit some remedial work has taken place).	Fix the boiler which is not working. Complete the lighting and tiling work and undertake other cosmetic works to improve site aesthetics. Consider opportunities to increase peak period availability as per the FPM findings. This is a high-priority site and should be considered for developer contributions.	SCC, Freedom Leisure	Short
Cecil Jones Academy	Private use	A 4-court sports hall used exclusively by the school.	Investigate whether community use of the school sports hall could be organised especially given its location in an area of higher deprivation. Assess the potential to do this accompanying such arrangements – if successful - with a binding CUA.	Cecil Jones Academy. SCC, AE	Medium
Chase High School	In house	Opened in 1994 the 4-court sports hall has good availability for community use and is operating at 60% capacity so could accommodate increased demand. It is in below average reportedly due to limited investment and no refurbishment. The floor requires relacquering and needs new line markings. Its below average 21-station gym and studio are unavailable to the community.	Invest in refurbishing the sports hall floor – or replacing it if required as per the audit and FPM findings. Agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term.	Chase High School, SCC, AE	Short
David Lloyd	In house (commercial)	A 77-station gym, 4-court sports hall, swimming pool and two lidos, two glass backed squash courts, five indoor acrylic tennis courts and two padel courts - all good quality. Membership is generally required for access to the gym and squash courts, however, an agreement for 500 hours of community tennis coaching is in place.	Explore the opportunity to enable daytime access to the sports hall via a CUA comparable to the tennis agreement.	SCC, David Lloyd	Short

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Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale
Essex County Indoor Bowls Club	In house	Six rink indoor bowls centre above average quality. It hosts inter-county plus, on occasions, international competitions. The carpet has an anticipated life span of c.10 years and the club has a sinking fund in place.	Continue to maintain and invest in the facilities to ensure they remain attractive and operational.	Essex County Indoor Bowls Club	Long
Hamstel Junior School	In house	The swimming pool has been closed since July 2024 – despite reportedly high club and learn to swim school demand, upkeep costs too high to justify keeping it open. Significant investment (£500k+) in the roof, ventilation system and plant room is required to bring it back into use.	Explore funding support opportunities to re-open the pool. This is a high-priority site and should be considered for developer contributions.	Hamstel Junior School, SCC, Swim England	Medium
Indirock	In house	3.8m bouldering wall available on a pay and play and membership basis. There is reported to be high demand for the facility due to its location.	Ensure the tenure of the current operator as its current location is key to attracting a high footfall. Support the centre to continue to offer cost effective/ discounted sessions to those on the lowest income and who face barriers to participation.	Indirock, SCC	Medium
Shoeburyness Leisure Centre	Freedom Leisure	Opened in 1997, the above average quality 4-court sports hall was refurbished in 2008 and 2023. The 20m x 4 lane pool is of below average quality and the 30-station fitness suite and changing provision are poor quality. The sports hall is in high demand and is very well used – limiting additional use.	Invest and modernise the site. Extend/upgrade health and fitness provision making better use of the (currently closed) toilets and changing room space. Develop a changing village alongside this to better meet current user needs. This is a high-priority site and should be considered for developer contributions.	SCC, Freedom Leisure	Medium
Southchurch High School	In house	Opened in 2018, the 4-court sports hall is above average quality. It has good levels of availability and is operating at 50% capacity. It could accommodate increased demand.	Market and promote the availability of the sports hall. Agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term.	Southchurch High School, SCC, AE	Medium
Southend High School for Boys	In house	This 5-court sports hall was opened in 2005 and is below average quality. It has had limited refurbishment since being built. It has good availability for community use and has capacity to cater for increased demand (it is presently at 60% used capacity).	Invest in the sports hall to improve quality. Market and promote the availability of the sports hall. Agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term.	Southend High School for Boys SCC, AE	Medium
Southend High School for Girls	In house	This 4-court sports hall was opened in 2008 and is of below average quality. Hall décor is unattractive, and the polymer flooring is worn in patches. It is available 25 hours per week and is operating at 60% capacity. There is opportunity to increase opening hours at the site on Sundays– subject to demand.	Invest in the sports hall to improve quality. Extend sports hall availability to include Sundays. Explore the option to increase the hours of community use at the site and convert the current informal letter covering the community use of the hall to a formal CUA..	Southend High School for Girls, SCC, AE	Medium

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Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale
Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre	Freedom Leisure	Built in 1996 and refurbished in 2021, it has an 8-court sports hall which is of above average quality. It is in high demand and operating at capacity and has limited opportunity to accommodate an increase in demand. Its three pools are an 8-lane 25m x 15m main pool, a 20m x 17m diving pool and 10m x 8m learner pool plus a dry diving area. Pool and wet-changing facilities are of above average quality. Its 4 indoor acrylic tennis courts are of above average quality but there is a roof leak that has damaged court 4 during periods of extreme weather. The 150-station gym (set out across two floors) is of below average quality. The air conditioning is not working; fitness equipment is dated (with some stations out of operation). Trampolining activity has ceased due to the poor condition of the trampolines.	Ensure that the facility is maintained to maintain the quality of the presently good areas - while maximising usage to meet the needs of residents. Replace timing equipment to enable the swimming pool to host regional competitions. Ensure that all pool space, including the diving pool, is timetabled to encourage maximum usage. Reconfigure the site to locate fitness and changing provision on one floor, with spin and group exercise studios located above/below. Modernise the spin studio as part of this process. Fix/replace broken equipment and improve facilities. Repair the roof above the tennis courts to prevent further damage. Purchase new trampolines to reinstate the sport.	SCC, Freedom Leisure	Short
Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club	In house	Three rink dedicated bowls club of below average quality. Playing facilities are dated and limited investment has been made over the last 15 years. It struggles financially due to dwindling membership numbers and it reports facing difficulties with general management duties due to a lack of volunteers. The long-term sustainability of the club is in question due to limited demand and the cost of upkeep of the building.	Assist the club to market and promote the centre and indoor bowls to increase participation. Facilitate discussion about collaboration in respect of facility use by other sports such as table tennis.	Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club, AE, SCC	Short
St Bernards High School	In house	Opened in 2000, this 4-court sports hall is poor quality. It has a combination of LED and halogen lighting and the sports hall floor is heavily marked. It has the lowest levels of community use of all 3+court halls in Southend-on-Sea (30% used capacity). It does not actively advertise and has limited weekend availability. The poor quality of the sports hall is considered to be having an adverse effect on demand levels	Work with the school to secure investment in the sports hall to improve quality and attractiveness. Once refurbished market and promote the availability of the facilities. This is a high-priority site and should be considered for developer contributions. Explore the option to increase the number of hours of community use at the site linked to a binding CUA.	St Bernards High School, AE, SCC	Short
St Thomas More High School	In house	Opened in 1970, this 4-court sports hall was refurbished in 2010 it is below average quality. It has good availability (45 hours per week) and is busy at 75% used capacity. It is a key facility for futsal.	Invest in the sports hall to improve quality and attractiveness. Agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term.	St Thomas More High School, SCC, AE	Medium

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Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale
The Eastwood Academy	Private use only	This 4-court sports hall opened in 1985 and was refurbished in 2007. It is of below average quality. There is also an 18m x 4 lane swimming pool which is above average and leased to swim school operators in the area. In 2024 the school ceased offering community access to its sports hall because of concerns over cost-effectiveness, staffing and the level of wear and tear. It reported repeated instances of property damage during community use. It has chosen to prioritise pupil access and suspend external bookings.	Work with the school and partners to bring the sports hall back into community use. Link this to investment accompanied by a binding CUA.	SCC, AE, The Eastwood Academy	Medium
St Christopher's School	In house	Opened in 2003 this School has a 3-court sports hall which is below average quality and a small teaching/learner swimming pool.	Invest in the sports hall and swimming pool to improve quality	St Christopher's School	Medium
Thorpe Hall School	In house	The 4-court sports hall which opened in 2018 is rated good quality. It has good levels of community use and is available for 45 hours per week. The 40-station fitness gym (also above average) and not available to the community.	Continue to invest to maintain the good quality provision. Agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term. Ensure that quality remains good given the likely high wear and tear suggested by the FPM.	Thorpe Hall School	Long
TruGym (Thorpe Bay)	Commercial	The site has a 2-lane x 17m swimming pool, a 200-station fitness gym and two squash courts Currently a membership for the swimming and health and fitness is required to access squash provision which may be prohibitive. There is currently a planning application submitted to demolish the site, which would result in the loss of the authority's only accessible squash provision.	Protect the loss of squash courts and other key provision (such as 200-station health and fitness suite and pool provision), if possible, and seek to provide replacement facilities within Southend.	TruGym (Thorpe Bay), SCC, England Squash	Medium
Unique Gymnastics	Club in house	Secured dedicated site in 2024, the club reports low membership numbers and a need to increase participation.	Market and promote gymnastic opportunities.	Unique Gymnastics	Short

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Facility	Management	Overview	Action	Lead agency(s)	Timescale
Westcliff High School for Boys	In house	Opened in 2002, the 4-court sports hall is of above average quality. It has good availability (45 hours per week) and is operating above comfortably full levels (80%). It has white walls which is not conducive for all sports and is unattractive for sports such as badminton and table tennis. Any future refurbishment should consider changing the wall colour to make it more attractive to an increased number of sports. The 28-station fitness gym is unavailable for community use. Its 2 traditional squash courts are of above average quality and were invested in - in 2017. They are unavailable for community use due to their location within the school.	Upgrade the lighting (not yet changed to LED) and heating systems to make it more energy efficient. When feasible, as [part of a next maintenance phase paint the walls a better colour for indoor hall sports At this point, agree and implement a new binding CUA to secure community use for the long term.	Westcliff High School for Boys, SCC, AE	Short
Westcliff High School for Girls	In house	A 4-court sports hall used exclusively by the school. A new floor was installed in 2024. There is no appetite to make the sports hall available for community use despite the outdoor netball courts and studio being available for hire.	Maintain the good quality provision. Work with the school and partners to bring the sports hall back into community use which could be linked to investment aligned to a binding CUA.	Westcliff High School for Girls AE, SCC, England Netball	Long
Commercial gyms	Commercial	The commercially operated health and fitness facilities contribute to the diverse facility offer available in the Authority.	Continue to monitor use and gauge the extent to which they complement other activity across the district.	Commercial operators	Long

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PART 3: MONITORING AND REVIEW

This strategy identifies and recommends the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain a high-quality built facilities infrastructure for Southend-on-Sea for the period up until 2045.

It is important that it is (and is treated as) a live document and is used in a practical manner to prioritise investment, develop key work programmes and partnerships, guide planning gain investment and ensure that built sports facilities are a vital component contributing to the quality of life of Southend-on-Sea residents.

Strategy production is just the start of the process and there is a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review to ensure that a considered perspective and approach is maintained throughout the strategy period.

It will be important for SCC and its partners to develop a 3–5-year action plan based around the Strategy and for this to be annually monitored and reviewed. This should not only evaluate progress made (against action plan targets) but should identify and keep track of actual/potential changes in supply and demand in the district. This is on the basis that the strategy is as much about how facilities are used as it is about ensuring that local infrastructure is of a good quality.

The annual review process should include:

- ◆ A review of progress in respect of actions taken with regard to action plan recommendations made; taking account of any changes required to the priority of each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase/reduce following implementation of others).
- ◆ Lessons learnt throughout the period.
- ◆ New facilities coming on stream (or being made newly available to the community) which will need to be considered.
- ◆ Any specific changes in the use of key sites (e.g., site sport specific specialisms, changes in availability, etc.).
- ◆ Any specific changes in demand at/for particular facilities and/or clubs in the area (e.g., reduction or increase in club numbers, new housing growth).
- ◆ New formats of traditional sports that may need to be considered.
- ◆ Any other new or emerging issues and opportunities.

The outcome of the review will be to develop a new annual and medium-term action plan for indoor and built sports facilities across the Authority.

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APPENDIX 1: PLANNING GAIN CONTRIBUTION TOOLKIT

Introduction

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

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

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

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

For all developments (regardless of size) developer contributions should be sought towards social, sport and open space facilities. Section 106 agreements will be the principal route for securing developer contributions, particularly for larger developments where site-specific impacts require tailored mitigation. Where a development may be considered too small to provide a contribution, consideration should be given to where a number of small developments may have a cumulative impact on the community infrastructure and refer to local planning policy. In areas where housing delivery is expected to come from many small sites, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should explicitly identify these growth patterns. By mapping areas of fragmented growth, the IDP can demonstrate where cumulative impacts are most likely to arise. This provides the justification for directing CIL receipts to those areas, ensuring that infrastructure needs are met even when individual schemes are too small to warrant S106 obligations.

In instances where a development may fall within two or more local authorities it is recommended that the demand from the more urban area or locally reflective area are applied in calculating the requirements. This is in order to reflect the on the ground use of provision in the context of its setting. If provision is to be provided on the outskirts of an urban settlement and therefore is to act as an extension of that settlement, it is justifiable to utilise the demand/standards most appropriate.

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

- ◀ Southend-on-Sea City Council Built Facilities Strategy - Needs Assessment Report
- ◀ Southend-on-Sea City Council Built Facilities Strategy – Strategy Report

Process

Step 1	Determine the key indoor sports facility requirement resulting from the development	Navigation
	The key tools to assess this are provided within Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator which is accessed via the Active Places Power website.	Access to the calculator is restricted and requires

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	https://www.activeplacespower.com/ This will enable you to determine the demand for sports halls, swimming pools and indoor bowls facilities that the new population from a development generates.	a username and password to be set up.
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The Southend-on-Sea City Council Built Facilities Strategy provides an estimate of future demand for key indoor sports facilities based on population forecasts as a result of key housing growth areas. This key demand is translated into units of badminton courts, swimming pool lanes and indoor bowls rinks.

As the exact number of units are identified from specific housing developments then the Council will need to apply the household occupancy rate to this to determine the total population.

Number of dwellings x household occupancy rate¹ = associated population

This is the population that is applied within the Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) to determine the additional provision that is required to meet the additional demand. The SFC is a modelling tool designed to assist local planning authorities to quantify how much additional demand is generated by increasing populations and new housing areas. The model has no spatial qualities or dimension and can only be used to estimate the facility needs for whole area populations. The model makes no reference to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ National occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per household is used

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

The Assessment Report (in specific sections) identifies need for other provision. This results from consultation with specific clubs and organisations, sports facility managers and NGBs. It also takes account of the size, scale, and quality of existing provision. Facilities identified within the Assessment Report are determined by the scope of the study which the Council commissions. This will also be informed by how busy existing facilities are. As an example, if an existing leisure centre (adjacent to the new housing development) is fully programmed with high demand for space, it is unrealistic to expect this facility to accommodate the demand generated from the new development. Therefore, additional provision will be required.

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

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

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

Therefore, further investigation should be undertaken to identify if there is an opportunity to ensure that community use of school sports facilities can be guaranteed, thus minimising potential duplication.

In this instance the 'contribution' associated with the increased demand for sports facilities could be used to enhance the school provision to ensure it was appropriate for community use (e.g., extend fitness facilities, community access arrangements, etc.).

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

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

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

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

Detailed analysis of facilities within the vicinity of the new development should be undertaken to assess the suitability of these facilities to accommodate the increased demand generated from the development.

As an example, the following information should be pulled together in order to determine if this is an appropriate solution to accommodate the increased demand:

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

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

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

It is important to ensure that the design of new or extended facilities is in line with the needs of local clubs and organisations as well as relevant design guidance. It will be important that any design reflects best practice design guidance taking into account all the key considerations which will be relevant to each facility. As an example, this will include aspects such as: health and safety, safeguarding, storage, sport specific design features, etc.).

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

Development of community hubs is a key focus for many organisations as benefits derived from facility co-location are often greater than those derived from stand-alone facilities.

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There is a need for developers and stakeholders to consider how different facilities may ‘fit’ together. This could, for example, include the following which may be required as part of a development:

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

The master plan for new developments need to consider the strategic location of facilities and the clustering and co-location of facilities in order to maximise the benefit for the local community. There is also a need to ensure that the location of outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities are appropriately located in the context of indoor sports provision (if also being provided onsite) to ensure a cohesive approach to the whole sporting offer.

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

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

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

This in turn requires the Council and developer to consider the wider housing growth within the area which may also include that within a neighbouring authority. Where the combined increased demand generates the requirement for a strategic facility this should be pooled via developer contributions to a strategic development. However, it should be noted that the contribution may go towards a facility which is outside of the local authority boundary but reflects how people will live their lives within that specific development.

In order to calculate the contribution from each housing development into a strategic leisure facility fund the Council should use the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator. Using the population growth and process identified from stage 1 this will provide a basis for negotiation with developers on the contribution from each development.

[Active Places Power](#)

[Sport England Design and cost guidance](#)

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Checklist summary

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

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APPENDIX 2: INDICATIVE COSTINGS

Indicative costs

The indicative costs of implementing key elements of the Action Plan are detailed below. (Further detail available on the Sport England website [Sport England facility cost guidance](#)) The costs outlined below are for the development of community sports facilities. These rounded costs are based on schemes most recently funded through the Lottery (and therefore based on economies of scale), updated to reflect current forecast price indices provided by the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS), prepared by Technical Team Lead of Sport England.

The latest facility costs should be used at the time of calculating contribution.

Facility capital costs

These are calculated using estimates of what it typically costs to build modern sports facilities, including fees and external work, naturally taking into account varying conditions, inflation and regional adjustments. Costs are updated regularly in conjunction with information provided by the BCIS (Building Cost Information Service) and other Quantity Surveyors. The document is often referred to as the Planning Kitbag costs as the figures are often used by planners and developers when reviewing potential planning contributions to site developments.

Facility type/details	Area (m ²)	Capital cost (£)
Affordable sports halls		
1 Court (18m x 10m)	382	905,000
2 Court (18m x 17m)	515	1,030,000
4 Court (34.5m x 20m)	1,532	3,005,000
5 Court (40.6m x 21.35m)	1,722	3,260,000
6 Court (34.5m x 27m)	1,773	3,300,000
8 Court (40m x 34.5m)	2,240	4,125,000
10 Court (40.6m x 42.7m)	2,725	4,960,000
12 Court (60m x 34.5m)	3,064	5,465,000
Affordable community swimming pools		
25m Pool 4 Lane (25m x 8.5m)	1,084	4,685,000
25m Pool 5 Lane (25m x 10.5m)	1,344	5,670,000
25m Pool 6 Lane (25m x 12.5m)	1,543	6,155,000
25m Pool 6 Lane (25m x 12.5) plus secondary pool (13m x 7m)	1,850	7,335,000
25m Pool 8 Lane (25m x 17m)	1,878	7,420,000
25m Pool 8 Lane (25m x 17m) plus secondary pool (17m x 7m)	2,226	8,515,000
Affordable sports centres with community 25m pool		
4-lane pool, 4-court hall, 50-station gym, studio	2,879	10,060,000
6-lane pool, 4-court hall, 100-station gym, 2 studios	3,553	11,805,000
6-lane pool, learner pool, 4-court hall, 100-station gym, 2 studios	3,906	13,000,000
8 lane pool, learner pool, 5-court hall, 100-station gym, 2 studios	4,509	14,400,000
Indoor bowls centre		
6 Rink (excludes Club/Function Room)	1,914	2,730,000
8 Rink (includes Club/Function Room)	2,500	3,570,000
Indoor tennis centre		

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Facility type/details	Area (m ²)	Capital cost (£)
3 court	2,138	3,085,000
Extra court	-	1,005,000

NB – The costs for:

- ✦ Affordable sports halls.
- ✦ Affordable community swimming pools.
- ✦ Affordable sports centres with community 25m pool options.
- ✦ Affordable sports centres with 50m pool options.

Align with the costs included within Sport England publications of the same name updated to 3Q2025. The reader is referred to these documents and their Appendices for further information on sizes and general arrangement layouts.

The costs for other facilities include:

- ✦ External works (car parks, roads, paths, services connections etc) are included at an average cost of 12% in addition to the costs of the works.
- ✦ 12 months maintenance/grow in costs for grass pitches.
- ✦ Allowance for fees inclusive of PM, SI, planning, and associated fees.

The costs exclude the following:

- ✦ Project specific details/information, including poor ground conditions, difficult access, long service connections.
- ✦ Natural turf pitches exclude the costs for site remodelling, pump and sump systems and SUDS attenuation.
- ✦ Inflation beyond 3Q2023.
- ✦ VAT.
- ✦ Land acquisition costs.
- ✦ Regional cost variations in materials and labour.

Lifecycle costs

Lifecycle costs are how much it costs to keep a facility open and fit-for-purpose during its lifetime. They include costs for major replacement and planned preventative maintenance (PPM) day-to-day repairs. The costs are expressed as a percentage of the capital cost.

The importance of regular maintenance should not be underestimated nor should the expense associated with maintaining a facility throughout its life.

The table below provides typical annual allowances expressed as a percentage of the overall estimated total project cost per annum based on a 25-year cost model.

Facility type/details	Sinking fund (%)	Maintenance (%)
Multi – use sports hall		
Good quality sports hall – irrespective of size	0.7	0.5
Affordable community swimming pools		
Good quality community swimming pool, irrespective of size	0.4	1.1

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Sinking Fund

Major replacement costs. Typical items for consideration include:

- ✦ Scheduled replacement of major systems and components, i.e. upgrades/replacement of mechanical and electrical equipment (HVAC, tanks, filtration/chlorination/dosing plant, CCTV and the like). Re-configuration of wet areas, replacement of sports flooring, reception refurbishment.
- ✦ Scheduled refurbishment and adaptations, including replacement of sports specific equipment/netting. Re-sealing / re-lining of sports flooring, replacing carpets and signage, replacement of external seating and fittings.
- ✦ Cyclical redecoration.

Maintenance

Day to day repairs and planned preventative maintenance (PPM). Planned preventative maintenance includes the costs for servicing and maintaining mechanical and electrical plant and systems in accordance with recommended standards/frequencies and statutory/mandatory inspections (i.e. legionella, lift and boiler insurance inspections etc).

Day to day repairs include:

External walls

Repairs to external walls, cladding, glazed screens, external doors and windows. Roofs
Repairs to roofs, roof lights and the like, together with all associated work such as roof flashings, DPC's, gutters and downpipes.

Other items; repairs to ducts, internal doors and frames and the like, fittings and fixtures, repairs to fitted cupboards, seating, notice boards, shelving, worktops and the like.
Excludes loose furniture such as chairs, curtains/blinds etc.

Other items

Repairs to ducts, internal doors, and frames and the like.

Fittings and fixtures

Repairs to fitted cupboards, seating, notice boards, shelving, worktops and the like.
Excludes loose furniture such as chairs, curtains/blinds etc.

Internal finishes

Repairs to internal floor, wall and ceiling finishes.

Plumbing and internal drainage

Repairs and PPM to plumbing and internal drainage including work to; rising mains, storage tanks and cisterns; hot and cold-water services; sanitary ware; waste, soil, overflow, and vent pipes; internal manholes, rodding eyes, and access covers.

Heating and ventilation

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Repairs and PPM to fuel tanks, boilers, flues, plant, pump, motors, filters, switches, expansion tanks, pipework up to and including calorifiers, radiators, ducts, valves, fans and heating and other HVAC equipment.

Power and lighting

Repairs and PPM to electrical switch gear, fuse boxes, busbars, casings, wiring and conduit to lighting and power supply.

Other M&E services

Repairs and PPM to other M&E services which are part of the building, such as filtration/chlorination/dosing plant, fire alarm and bell systems, emergency lighting, clock systems, PA systems, firefighting equipment, flood lighting and lighting conductors.

External Works

General grounds maintenance, repairs to car parks and external paving.

Exclusions:

Operation, occupancy, end of life costs, fees, and VAT are excluded from the allowances. The definition of these are provided below:

Operation costs: The cost of operating the facility rather than its occupancy excluding maintenance costs. Includes utility costs, administrative costs, overheads, and taxes etc.

Occupancy cost: User support costs relating to the occupation of the facility e.g. security.

End of life: Notional costs payable and credits accruing after 25 years. Includes disposal inspection and reinstatement to meet potential contractual requirements.

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APPENDIX 3: A SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

This section includes summary findings from the needs assessment, including sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness (including studios), squash, indoor bowls, indoor tennis, gymnastics and trampolining, combat sports, table tennis, watersports, community halls and climbing provision.

Sports halls

Southend-on-Sea has 34 sports halls containing 86 badminton courts. The 16 3+ court halls equate to 68 badminton courts. Sports halls are generally well located in line with the areas of higher population density. The increase in population in the central Southend area due to housing growth will require further provision to be developed.

Two sports halls are rated good quality, five are above average, six are below average and 1 is poor. Two could not be assessed due to a lack of response to KKP's site visit request. Investment is needed in the below average/ poor-quality sports halls. This is particularly relevant at sports halls with lower used capacities as this could be hindering demand levels. The two public leisure halls are both above average in quality, however, the age of both means that regular refurbishment is needed to retain quality.

93.9% of the population lives within one mile of a community available sports hall. 94% of residents live within a 20-minute drive of a sports hall with community use.

Thirteen 3+ court halls provide some level of community use, all have some level of spare capacity. Both public leisure centre halls are well used. There is an opportunity to extend community use hours in the sports hall at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre during quieter school access periods.

Several clubs report that across the schools-based stock the volume of sports hall time lost to exams is having a negative impact on facility hire. A solution is required to improve access to provision for clubs.

FPM key findings:

- ◆ Strong overall supply of sports halls across public, education and commercial sites
- ◆ Almost all demand met in 2026, with the network remaining resilient to 2045
- ◆ Low unmet demand across all modelling scenarios
- ◆ High utilisation at key sites, especially Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre and several school sports halls
- ◆ Ageing facility stock, with many sports halls requiring refurbishment and modernisation over the plan period
- ◆ Education-based provision is critical to maintaining overall capacity and community access

Swimming pools

The audit identified 21 pools at 14 sites. Six pools are larger than 20m length/160m². Despite Swim England's findings of a water space shortage, KKP's audit finds pool supply to be reasonable. Re-opening the pool at Hamstel Junior School would go some way to reducing the Swim England defined deficit.

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Three pools are above average, two are below average and one is currently closed. Improvement is required at Belfairs Swim Centre and Shoeburyness Leisure Centre (both below average) to improve the condition of public leisure stock.

Over half (52.2%) of authority residents live within a one-mile walk of a pool available for community use. All residents live within a 20-minute drive of a pool with community access.

There is an opportunity to bring the pool at Hamstel Junior School back into use to support clubs and commercial learn to swim programmes.

All three public leisure sites provide a pay and play option to residents. David Lloyd provides a relatively high-cost membership option.

FPM key findings:

- ◆ Nearly all current and future demand met across all three modelling scenarios.
- ◆ Demand accommodated to 2045, even with significant planned housing growth.
- ◆ Only a small proportion of unmet demand, mainly due to travel distance rather than capacity.
- ◆ Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre operating at full capacity during weekly peak periods in all scenarios.
- ◆ Belfairs Swim Centre becomes uncomfortably busy under future growth scenarios.
- ◆ Public leisure centres provide the majority of swimming capacity.
- ◆ Ageing pool stock, particularly in the public sector, requiring future refurbishment and modernisation.

Health and fitness

There are 26 health and fitness stations in Southend-on-Sea, with 19 having more than 20 stations. 15 of the 19 are available for community use, nine of which are available on a pay and play basis.

There is a positive supply demand balance of facilities in the area both now and when accounting for population growth to 2045.

12 of the 19 fitness suites with 20+ stations are good or above average in quality. Four are below average and two are poor.

Shoeburyness Leisure Centre (poor quality) and Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre (below average quality) are both in need of modernisation. Extending the gym at Shoeburyness Leisure Centre will encourage further uptake of memberships. The revenue generated from this will help to off-set the cost of running the swimming pool. Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre could house all fitness provision on one floor to make better use of underutilised space and provide a more modern amenity.

With high demand for facilities and a large number of national chain operators in the area and close by there is a need for the public leisure centres to have high quality facilities to enable them to compete and be financially sustainable.

Almost all (94.8%) of Southend-on-Sea residents live within one mile of a health and fitness suite. This increases to 100% for those within a 20-minute drive of a community accessible facility.

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Squash

There are four squash courts in Southend-on-Sea, one of which is currently closed. No courts are glass-backed.

Westcliff High School for Boys has two above average courts. TruGym (Thorpe Bay) has two below average courts, however, one is currently closed and being utilised as a storage facility. Trugym has plans to bring this court back into use. It is keen to open both facilities up to pay and play use, as demand for squash provision is reportedly high.

All Southend-on-Sea residents live within a 20-minute drive of a squash court – only one of which is actually available for use at present. The Council should investigate opportunities to support Trugym (Thorpe Bay) to implement pay and play provision.

Westcliff High School for Boys does not currently provide any community use. Potential for community use of the squash courts should be investigated.

Indoor bowls

There are two indoor bowls facilities in the authority. Essex County Indoor Bowls Club is a six-rink facility, and Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club a three-rink venue.

There is a need to retain and support existing facilities to ensure they continue to accommodate members and visitors from other clubs during the winter months when demand for indoor bowls is high.

Essex County Indoor Bowls Club is of above average in quality. Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club is below average. Facilities could be improved by seeking funding opportunities to modernise the facilities at Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club and utilising the sinking fund to replace the carpet when required at Essex County Indoor Bowls Club.

Both clubs provide access via a reasonably priced registered membership. Both clubs provide daytime activity. They should continue to look to diversify their offer to a younger demographic to increase participation and remain financially viable.

There is an opportunity for Southend-on-Sea Bowls Club to collaborate with other sports such as table tennis, where clubs seek access to facilities. This could strengthen the Club's financial position.

Indoor tennis

There are nine indoor tennis courts in Southend-on-Sea, four (above average quality) located at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre and five (good quality) at David Lloyd Southend.

There is a need to fix the roof at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre to ensure no further damage occurs to the playing surface.

All residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of an indoor tennis facility. Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre provides a pay and play option, whilst David Lloyd Southend offers access via registered membership. Freedom leisure, alongside the Council, should consider pricing amendments to encourage further uptake of facility hire at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre during weekday mornings.

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The LTA has estimated that Southend-on-Sea could sustain around 15 padel courts based on population and demand, with current provision limited to six courts (three covered at Garon Park and three uncovered, including two at David Lloyd for members only). High weekday evening demand at Garon Park suggests scope for additional courts, though no local tennis clubs are currently planning padel development, so this should be monitored.

Gymnastics and trampolining

There are four dedicated gymnastics sites in Southend-on-Sea and one non-dedicated site, currently being used by Max Whitlock Gymnastics. There is a need to ensure that clubs accessing dedicated provision have secure tenures and sufficient workforce capacity to futureproof continued access.

100% of Southend-on-Sea's population lives within a 30-minute drive of gymnastics provision.

Unique Gymnastics has experienced significant club demand growth. It now has 72 members (an increase of 51 since 2025) and operates a waiting list for most sessions.

The Council should consider the opportunity to host gymnastics sessions at more centrally located public leisure sites should demand increase significantly. This should involve the refurbishment/replacement of the trampolines at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre.

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Combat sports

There are 16 facilities in which combat sports activities are currently taking place. 12 of the 16 are dedicated facilities, owned, rented or leased by the club user. The cost of facility hire is a significant concern for clubs.

There is a high proportion of dedicated facilities in Southend-on-Sea. Dedicated sites generally provide a better offer than non-dedicated sites. There is a need to ensure that, where possible, combat sports clubs have security of tenure at good quality fit for purpose facilities and can meet the demands of the population. Rising rents/rates pose a threat to the supply of dedicated sites. Operator's social return on investment should be considered when considering rental prices at council owned venues.

All Southend-on-Sea residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of either a dedicated or non-dedicated combat sports facility.

Clubs/operators generally operate on the basis of pay & play access with membership systems in place for regular members.

Table tennis

There are two dedicated table tennis facilities in Southend-on-Sea at which regular table tennis takes place. One is operated by Invicta Table Tennis Club, which leases the room three nights a week to another club, whilst the other is used by a professional who offers coaching. Informal table tennis activity is also taking place at Haven Community centre.

All Southend-on-Sea residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of a facility providing table tennis. Table Tennis England (TTE) aims to have a club and/or league within 30 minutes' drive of 80% of the population by 2025, which is already the case in Southend-on-Sea.

Invicta Table Tennis Club is actively seeking new members, evidencing spare capacity across Southend-on-Sea. More sporadic, informal table tennis is also taking place at community halls in the authority area.

Watersports

Nine clubs/organisations offer a range of water sport activities in Southend-on-Sea. One in Rochford is also accessible to Southend-on-Sea residents.

The Council owns a currently disused facility, which it is looking to lease out to an operator to deliver further watersport activity.

All Southend-on-Sea residents live within a 30 minutes' drive time of an operator providing water sports activities.

All clubs and organisations have capacity to take on additional members and deliver introductory courses.

Community halls

There are 54 community halls in Southend-on-Sea. They are distributed across the authority, generally serving smaller population areas.

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No quality rating was given to facilities, however, there is a need to ensure that ageing halls are regularly refurbished to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

There is a good level of accessibility; 94.7% of the population lives within 800m of a smaller hall.

All sites appear to have some level of spare capacity.

Climbing walls

There is one climbing facility in Southend-on-Sea, Indirock, which serves the Authority from central Southend.

No quality issues were identified in the audit, The facility opened in 2022. The facility is open seven days per week and is available via either pay and play or registered membership.

It offers discounted sessions for newcomers and those on low incomes. Support should be given to ensure that the facility can stay open in its current location, which brings in a high footfall, and that training opportunities are available in the area to ensure staffing levels can accommodate demand.