



Active Hertfordshire:

Sports Facilities Strategy 2008-2016

Active Hertfordshire

Sports Facilities Strategy

These are exciting and challenging times for sports facility provision in Hertfordshire! The excitement comes from the huge opportunities afforded by factors such as London 2012, the growth agenda in the County (particularly within urban areas such as Stevenage) and the Building Schools for the Future programme. The challenges include the need to re-invest in the existing (and ageing) stock of facilities.

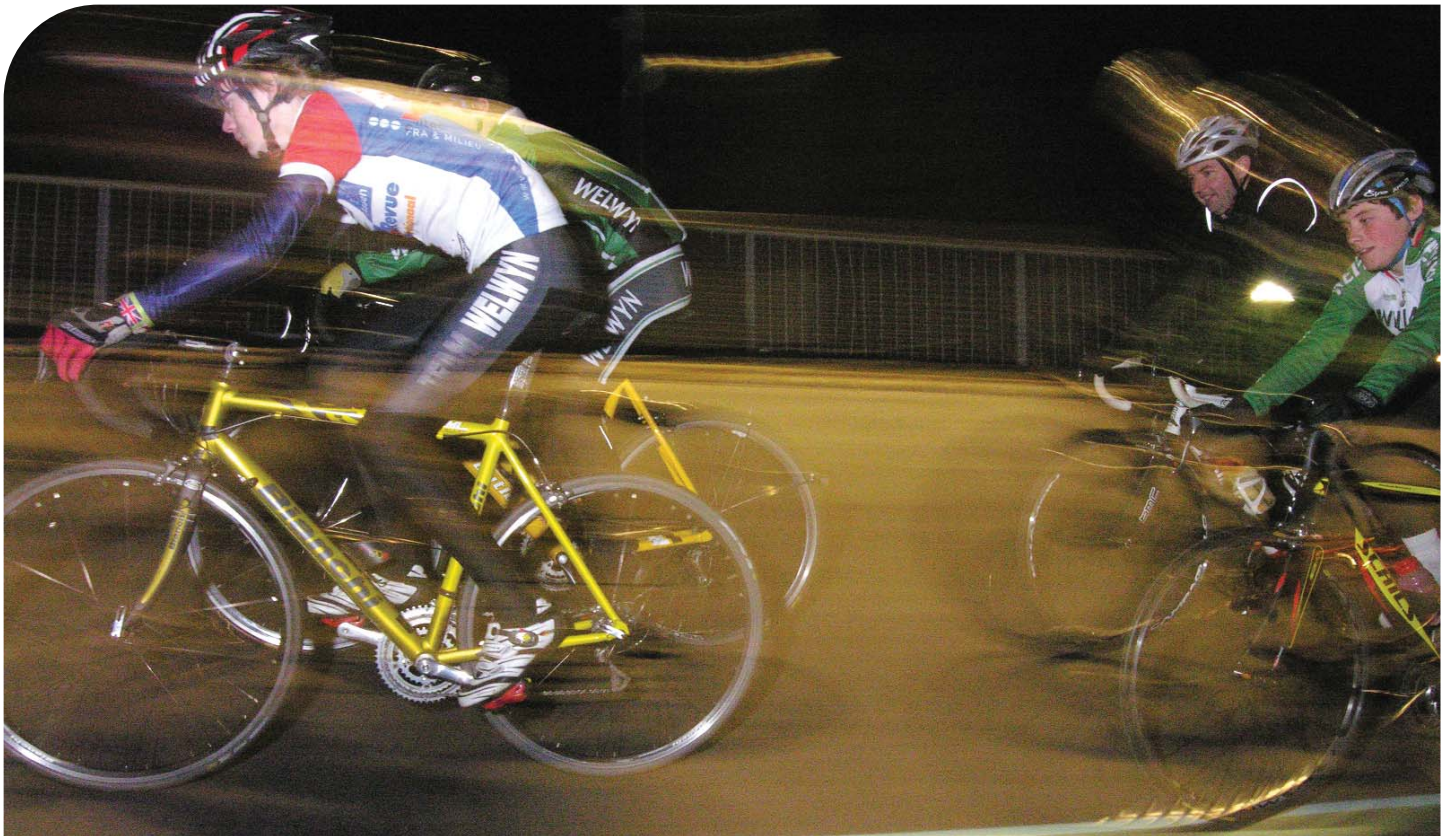
Many of these facilities are not of the appropriate quality, nor in the appropriate location to effectively address community needs; have suffered from a lack of long term investment, and which are inaccessible/unwelcoming for some potential users. The County also lacks facilities capable of staging or supporting major sporting events and fit for purpose provision to support some elite athletes.

This strategy has been co-ordinated by the Herts Sports Partnership and supported by HACO (Herts Association of Cultural Officers) to help guide the response to the opportunities and challenges referred to above. It sets out the findings from an assessment of the current stock of facilities within Hertfordshire, and identifies priorities for future action. Finally, it examines how future facility provision can be successfully delivered. It builds on the recently produced Regional Sports Facilities Strategy (Sport England, November 2007).

The delivery issue will not be easy. It will require a partnership approach to working across different local authorities and involving agencies with differing remits. Different approaches to funding sports facilities will need to be developed. However, the target remains the same – to ensure that Hertfordshire develops a high quality stock of sports facilities over the next 10 years that will meet the needs of all residents and sports participants in the county and be capable of both driving and accommodating the growth in sports participation that we all strive for.

**The vision therefore for Active Hertfordshire is:
“To develop a network of quality and accessible community and specialist sports facilities, with appropriate support services, within Hertfordshire that will facilitate increased participation and achievement of potential, enhance quality of life and improve the health and well-being of local communities.”**

An assessment of community and sport specific facility needs was carried out across the county, involving the use of Sport England strategic planning tools and consultation with key partners such as Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies of Sport. The scope of the study has focused on indoor and outdoor community and sport specific facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools, and does not cover outdoor grass pitches. The following table gives a flavour of some of the facility needs identified in each district. For full details please see the full strategy which can be accessed at www.sportinherts.org.uk



Community and Sports Specific Facility Needs (based on current and future population, and participation increase of 5% to 2016) by Local Authority Area

All districts will require additional sports hall and swimming pool provision – either to meet existing unmet demand: cater for projected increases in participation; to meet the needs of new population in designated growth areas or to locate facilities where they can best meet the needs of residents.

In some areas there are existing facilities to meet demand but poor access to them, so the priority will be to open up access rather than build new facilities.

The full strategy contains the quantitative assessment of future needs for halls and pools in each district based on existing levels of demand, existing supply and projected population growth and participation increases.

The following table summarises some of the other identified facility needs in each district, as well as facility needs that are required across the county as a whole:

LOCAL AUTHORITY

IDENTIFIED SPORTS FACILITY INVESTMENT NEEDS

ie additional/enhanced provision, based on population increase and increased demand (5%)

Broxbourne

- Review sustainability of Hoddesdon Outdoor Pool and consider investment
- 1.8 swimming pools
- 4.8 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 105 fitness stations
- Fit for purpose athletics facilities
- **Canoeing** – White Water Centre Canoe Centre, Lee Valley Park, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire; Performance Centres (based around BCU World Class Clubs/Sites) to develop paddling skills at all levels eg Broxbourne
- **Football** – Priority investment will continue to be linked to FA Community Club status
- **Netball** – Potential projects include extension to courts at Wormley playing fields, Broxbourne to cater for increase in league usage

Dacorum

- Increased access to community sports facilities on school sites – The Cavendish School, Kings Langley School, Ashlyns School
- Increase number of community fitness facilities
- Refurbishment of existing community sports facilities
- 5.6 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 3.7 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m)
- 242 fitness stations
- 3 x ATPs (plus investment in Longdean School facility)
- More tennis courts
- Increased access to community sports facilities on school sites, particularly out of school hours e.g. Berkhamsted Collegiate School (new swimming provision).
- **Gymnastics** – Sapphire School of Gymnastics, Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre, Hertfordshire – extension to sports centre; Gymnastics Facility, Ashlyns School

East Hertfordshire

- 4.2 sports halls (4 badminton court size) (no council-owned facilities); priority areas are Hertford and Bishop's Stortford
- 157 fitness stations
- More public tennis courts in Bishop's Stortford
- 2 more ATPs in the District
- **Gymnastics** – Additional equipment, coaches and infrastructure, and if possible specialist facilities, Ware Gymnastics Club

Hertsmere

- Floodlit MUGA, Meadows Park, Borehamwood
- 0.6 sports halls (4 badminton court size); priority area would be Potters Bar
- Improved use of existing provision, particularly school facilities linked to the PESSCL programme and School Sport Co-ordinator Partnerships.
- Develop floodlit facilities at the multi use games area in Meadow Park, Borehamwood
- Establish a 3 year pitch enhancement programme for the Borough's sports pitches
- Establish a 3 year programme to refurbish sports pavilions in Hertsmere's parks

North Hertfordshire

- Replacement for North Hertfordshire Leisure Centre
- Replacement of other existing facilities, to develop a strategic network of facility provision, based on population centres
- 4.5 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 133 fitness stations
- 4 x ATPs (Baldoek and Hitchin FC, Knights Templar School, Royston)

St Albans

- 4.7 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 2.3 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m) (excludes new pool, Westminster Lodge); enhanced swimming pool facilities, particularly a competitive swimming venue for the district
- 99 fitness stations (accessible and affordable for community use)
- 5 x full size, floodlit ATPs; there should be further assessment of the appropriate surface required, but a minimum of 1 should be suitable for hockey
- A new indoor bowling facility in the district
- Improvements to ancillary facilities at Westminster Lodge Athletics Track; indoor training facilities for athletics
- Modernised/new sports centre provision to replace facilities that are becoming tired and dated
- New indoor tennis facilities
- Specialist Sports College, Nicholas Brakespeare School (improvements to meet Sports College criteria)
- Increased access to community sports facilities on school sites
- **Equestrian** – Improved provision of facilities Royal Veterinary College, Oaklands College
- **Football** – Priority investment will continue to be linked to FA Community Club status
- **Martial Arts** – Replacement permanent judo facilities, St Albans Judo Club
- **Rugby Union** – Upgrades to National League Clubs – Old Albanians, Hertford RFC

Stevenage

- 3.3 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 3.2 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m)
- 15 fitness stations
- 1 x ATP
- Increased Martial Arts provision
- Indoor archery facilities.
- Technical athletics facilities (Jumps and throws) and J Tracks to enable school club links on school sites

Three Rivers

- 4.1 sports halls (4 badminton court size) – Sports halls at 6 secondary schools
- 1 swimming pool (4 lane x 25m) (this need will be addressed by the new pool at Woodside in the north of Watford Borough)
- 185 fitness stations (eg Croxley Green)
- 1 x ATP
- Learner Pool – Sir James Altham Leisure Centre
- Specialist gymnastics facilities
- More squash facilities

Watford

- 2.2 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 1.5 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m)
- 86 fitness stations
- N.B These needs will be provided through the 2 new facility developments in the Borough (one in the north at Woodside, and one in the town centre).
- **Cycling** – Closed circuit - venue in Watford
- **Gymnastics** – Purpose built facility, Watford Gymnastics Club

Welwyn Hatfield

- 1.5 sports halls (4 badminton court size)
- 0.5 swimming pools (4 lane x 25m)
- 88 fitness stations
- Football – Priority investment will continue to be linked to FA Community Club status

FACILITY NEEDS ACROSS THE COUNTY

Athletics

In rural areas – multi-activity athletics areas, aligned to schools eg J Tracks as part of overall outdoor facility provision

Badminton

Refurbishment of existing halls in poor condition
All new community centres/village halls should include 1 or 2 badminton courts with correct hall height, lighting and size
Competition standard badminton courts

Cricket

Indoor centres – South West Hertfordshire
New cricket grounds – M11 corridor

Cycling

Traffic free facilities based in the County

Hockey

2 pitch sites and ancillary facilities

Martial Arts/ British Judo

Additional permanent mat areas/dojos
Martial arts facility, Dacorum
Improved boxing facilities

Netball

New facilities built to Netball specifications with correct run offs
1 or 2 court venue required with meeting rooms and viewing area appropriate for competitions and UKCC delivery – Mid Hertfordshire
Refurbishment of existing sport halls in poor condition
Additional outdoor courts and toilets/changing facility required on sites where leagues significantly increase in size

Rugby Union

One Model 3 venue in each county (an established venue with a wide range of programmes and potentially a higher level of competitive rugby)
Additional ATP (3rd generation) provision
Saracens Training Venue for Premiership and Academy

Swimming

Feasibility into 50m pool at University of Herts as one option to replace ageing/unfit facilities across county and provide venue for elite training and competition, and club use

Volleyball

Indoor Halls – minimum size requirement is 37m x 28m – in all main population centres ie over 50,000 population; this level of provision should also link into other sports requiring sports halls eg basketball, netball, handball etc
Access to 2 court (netball) halls for competition



In summarising the above priority investment needs, it is important to emphasise that:

- Investment in future sports facility provision is not about additional provision alone; there may also be opportunities to open up access to existing education facilities (private and state schools), or to refurbish and extend existing sports facilities. Rationalisation of provision and replacement with fewer better quality facilities, whilst reducing facility quantity, may actually have a greater impact on increasing participation, and be more sustainable to operate, because the facilities will be fit for purpose. If existing facilities are unfit for purpose, or cannot be opened up for community use, there will, however, be a need to develop replacement facility provision. Where this cannot be achieved in growth areas, there will be a need to develop additional facilities to meet demand.
- There is significant building work going on across the County, which will provide some means of addressing identified deficiencies in provision.
- The NGBs are clear about the facility needs in the County for their sport, and have articulated these needs at County, District and Borough level.
- If population growth is combined with increased demand this results in a need for significant investment in facility provision in the County.
- There is not always a good link between the perceived facility needs of local authorities, those of NGBs and those of the voluntary sector; given that the strategy identifies the priority facility needs for the County, these issues should be addressed through its implementation.
- There remains a need for more detailed work at District/Borough level to analyse population movement within the district; spatial distribution of facilities at the local level and planning of provision into the future. The calculations made in this strategy using Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator do not take into account cross-boundary movements or assess areas of unmet demand within each district. Instead they give a 'broad-brush' assessment of facility supply and demand within each district across the county.

Active Hertfordshire – Strategic Recommendations

- 1. Invest in Existing Facility Stock** – this will be a priority where existing facilities are in the right location to meet community needs but require investment to make them fit for purpose for 21st century users. This may involve refurbishment of reception/changing areas to make them more attractive to users, or upgrading facilities (e.g adding floodlighting or resurfacing) to enhance sporting use.
- 2. Develop New Facility Provision** – this may be required to replace ageing or poorly located facilities: to meet a clearly identified unmet demand for a type of facility in a given area or to meet the needs of new population, particularly within designated growth areas such as Stevenage.
- 3. Address Unmet Demand** – new facilities may be required in locations where the population are outside the catchment area of existing facilities, or where existing facilities are already close to, or at, capacity at peak times. This is less an issue in Hertfordshire than more rural, dispersed counties such as Norfolk and Suffolk but pockets of unmet demand still exist.
- 4. Improve Accessibility to Existing Facilities** – many facilities are in the right place to meet community needs but are not accessible due to pricing structures or public opening hours. Negotiating improved public access to existing facilities (provided they are fit for purpose) could be a less expensive way of meeting facility needs. This issue is particularly relevant in Hertfordshire with regard to access to some swimming pools at school sites.
- 5. Future Sports Provision through Building Schools for the Future (BSF)** – the BSF programme offers a significant and unique opportunity to secure improved sports facility for both schools and local communities across Hertfordshire. However, it requires a strategic and planned approach with genuine partnership working across all sectors if potential benefits are to be maximised. A Sport Stakeholder Group has already been established in Stevenage, and the rest of the County will enter this programme over the next few years.
- 6. Partnership Working** – the delivery of all major sports facility projects (including BSF) will require a partnership approach across all sectors in order to deliver the right facilities in the right place to meet the needs of all potential users. Partnership working will be particularly important to develop new multi-sport hubs within Hertfordshire.
- 7. Utilise the Planning Framework** – it is important that the planning framework is utilised fully to help deliver new sports facilities, not just from the point of view of ensuring facility provision is part of policy development, but also that Supplementary Planning Documents are produced to ensure that planning contributions are secured towards new community sports provision as part of major new developments. All policy development relating to new sports facilities will need to be backed up by robust evidence bases such as PPG17 assessments, playing pitch strategies and sports facilities strategies.
- 8. Retain Performance Sport and Performance Athletes in the County** – projects should be supported that will deliver sports facilities in Hertfordshire suitable for competition and training, where gaps have been identified by relevant national governing bodies, in order to encourage the retention of performance athletes living and training within the county.
- 9. Harness the Benefits of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games** – one of the key objectives of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, for both the government nationally and at the local level is to use the Olympics to increase sports participation rates across the population. There is also a great interest in securing a tangible legacy from the Games.
- 10. Sports Clubs Security of Tenure** – as part of facility development in the voluntary sector, and to ensure the maintenance of opportunities for participation through local sports clubs, there is a need to address the existing difficulties faced by clubs over security of tenure. This is critical to facilitate external funding applications, but also to ensure continuity of development and participative opportunity, and to support the ongoing development of school/club links etc. There is potential to link security of tenure to club accreditation schemes, which in itself will also assist in improving the quality and consistency of club delivery and opportunities for participation.
- 11. Multi-Sport Hubs** – wherever possible, community sports facilities should be grouped together to form a sports ‘hub’ or ‘village’ environment eg possibly using the new Sport England Sports Village Model (Community Sport Hubs). This model will generate increased levels of participation and offer a wide range of opportunity. Such a facility will also be more economically sustainable and should also be linked where possible to other community facilities such as a doctor’s surgery, crèche etc, where they are available at a local level.

Delivering Active Hertfordshire

Delivering Active Hertfordshire priorities will not be easy and will need to be achieved through a number of delivery mechanisms. As a non-statutory service in local authorities there is generally little capital, and diminishing revenue funding, to facilitate investment in existing provision, let alone new facility development, particularly when such provision may not be the main political priority.

There are fewer formal grant aiding opportunities to use external funding for major sports and leisure facility provision. Links with education, health, regeneration, economic development and other cultural partners, through investment in sport, need to be maximised, and used creatively, to deliver funding partnerships, which break the mould of traditional funding for sports facilities. Opportunities to use the planning framework and/or private sector to achieve capital investment into sports facilities at local or regional level also need to be maximised.

An overview approach which could be taken by this group is set out below, given that the key agencies for delivering this strategy are Hertfordshire Local Authorities, National Governing Bodies, HACO, Hertfordshire Forum, and the BSF Project Board in consultation with the PE and Sport Stakeholder Group.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
District/Borough Authorities Prepare Local Facility Strategies and ensure these are regularly updated	Hertfordshire Local Authorities
Co ordination of BSF Programme	BSF Project Board working with district authorities and the PE and Sport Stakeholder Group to co-ordinate all stages of the BSF programmes
Co ordination and monitoring of Hertfordshire Facilities Strategy	HACO, in conjunction with HSP
Future information supplied to HACO on NGB Governing Body needs	Hertfordshire NGB Forum, in conjunction with HSP.
Playing Pitch Strategies in place and regularly updated	Hertfordshire Local Authorities
Cross Boundary Partnerships for Sports Facility Provision should be identified and assessed to determine benefits/disadvantages	Hertfordshire Local Authorities, in conjunction with HSP
Sports needs should be considered as part of the Local Development Planning Framework in each District/Borough	Hertfordshire Local Authorities



Further information

To find out more about Sport England and to get the latest news and information, please go to: www.sportengland.org/east

Sport England, East

Crescent House, 19 The Crescent, Bedford MK40 2QP. T 08458 508 508



Stock code number SE-0508-01

Date of publication May 2008

Designed by Generation Design & Marketing Ltd

This brochure is printed on paper stock which is produced with 25% pre-consumer fibres and 75% FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) mixed sources fibres.