



Indoor Sports & Leisure Facilities Strategy 2015 – 2025

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1: Introduction and Context

Introduction and Context

- 1.1 In April 2015 Rother District Council appointed naa to support them in the development of an indoor sports and leisure facilities strategy for the District. The Strategy updates the 2009- 2020 Rother and Hastings Districts Leisure Facilities Strategy.
- 1.2 The strategy is developed applying the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities (ANOG) methodology. Its overall aim is to provide the Council and its partners with a robust evidence base and strategy to direct future sports planning and facility development.
- 1.3 The strategy is focused on the Council's adopted corporate and local plan. It provides an evidence base and strategy which sets out how well the current provision of sports and leisure facilities across all providers is meeting current demand and participation.
- 1.4 Then based on the Council's corporate objectives and the changing demographics of the District it provides an evidence base, assessment of need and future requirements for five indoor sports and leisure facility types up to 2025 and beyond. Finally it identifies the scale of provision for the possible development of a new public indoor sports and leisure facility to be located in Bexhill.
- 1.5 The scope of the facility strategy was established by the Council as:
 - Swimming Pools
 - Sports Halls
 - Health and fitness centres (gyms)
 - Studios
 - Squash Courts
- 1.6 An integral part of a facilities strategy is that facilities developed, recommended or supported, must be sustainable, community focused, and aiming for positive health impacts. In particular including people who are inactive as well as those who participate at present and wish to increase their participation for whatever reasons.
- 1.7 It is important the strategy is embedded in what the Council wants to do but the quantitative need, qualitative assessments, accessibility findings and consultations on these topics comply with Sport England guidance and methodology to encourage participation through community based delivery. So nationally defined methodology but embedded in the direction and needs of Rother District.
- 1.8 This strategy has been undertaken and the report structured to address the key drivers of the Council whilst also complying with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The needs assessment work has been produced to meet the requirements of the NPPF paragraphs 73 and 74.
- 1.9 Following the direction set by the NPPF, Sport England produced industry wide guidance titled Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) in April 2013 which sets out the approach to undertaking needs assessment for indoor and built sport and recreational facilities, in order to be compliant with the NPPF.

1.10 The approach adopted to develop the facility strategy for Rother District has applied the process set out in the ANOG guide. It has integrated local consultations to ensure that overall it is compliant with national planning policy and the relevant guidance and national sports planning guidance, applied to the needs of Rother District.

1.11 The work has therefore: set out the strategic context for Rother; developed the population and participation profile now and in the future; assessed supply and demand, in terms of quantity, quality, access and availability across Rother; and undertaken extensive consultation to check, challenge and add to the data findings. This is based on what is happening on the ground and local views from clubs, schools and colleges, national governing bodies of sport; Rother District Council personnel and key national and regional stakeholders.

1.12 The sequence of the strategy document is:

- Section 2 – Strategy Objectives and Key Features of Rother District
- Section 3 - Assessing Needs and Opportunities for each sports facility type – the methodology
- Section 4 – Summary of key findings and issues for each of the five sports facility types
- Section 5 - Strategy recommendations and reasoned justification
- Section 6 – Monitoring and review

1.13 The appendices are:

- Appendix 1
Rother District profile of participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity
- Appendix 2
Audit and assessment report for each of the five facility types following the ANOG methodology
- Appendix 3:
Description of approach and findings from consultations

2: Strategy Objectives and Key Features

2.1 Rother District Council has key corporate objectives and drivers for change which provide context and direction for the indoor sports facilities strategy. These are set out below together with the source in brackets;

- We want our residents to have the opportunity of being pro-active in sport as well as cultural activities, leading to a greater community spirit and a healthy lifestyle for everyone (Rother District Council Corporate Plan Vision 2014 – 2021)
- We want Rother to be a place that is able to attract and retain young people (Rother District Council Corporate Plan Vision 2014 – 2021)
- Promoting active and healthy lifestyles by developing facilities which promote active lifestyles linked to needs and for all ages (Rother District Corporate Plan 2014 – 2021 outcomes and actions)
- There is a need to broaden employment opportunities, improve overall skill levels and increase earning potentials. This involves providing an environment more conducive to business growth as well as continuing to mitigate the adverse effects of the area's relative peripherality through improved connectivity – both physical and electronic (Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Vision September 2014)
- Sustainable economic growth has been secured with much improved job opportunities which encourages young people to stay in the area and provides greater prosperity for all (Rother Local Plan Core Strategy Vision for Rother in 2028)
- The Council seeks to secure investment in improved community infrastructure, particularly that which promotes active lifestyles (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy – Bexhill Objectives)
- The Council's Leisure Facilities Strategy identifies a need for further provision of sports halls, swimming pools, multi-use games areas, community health and fitness facilities (gyms and studios) and swimming lanes (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Bexhill Section)
- Develop local amenities including support for community activities and facilities learning opportunities and improved sports and leisure facilities, including a new leisure/swimming centre (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Policy BX 1 (ii))
- Safeguarding existing facilities from development, and only permitting their loss where it results in improved provision (in terms of quantity and quality) as part of a redevelopment or elsewhere in the locality (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CO 3 (i))
- Allocating land for open space, sports and recreation purposes and permitting proposals for the improvement of existing or provision of new facilities in localities where deficiencies are identified (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CO 3 (ii))
- To facilitate in partnership the increased provision of flexible, attractive, sustainable and affordable opportunities for people to develop and engage in physical activity (Active Communities Rother Local Strategic Partnership)

- To widen the appeal of greater participation by raising the profile of physical activity and its benefits throughout the community (Active Communities Rother Local Strategic Partnership).
- 2.2 These extracts from the District's corporate planning, planning policy and sports development policies show that the key drivers for change and the focus for the strategy are: regeneration of the District in terms of employment, retention of the active population; changing the demographic profile of the district; and creating opportunities for developing a more active and healthy lifestyle for residents.
- 2.3 The strategy is also meeting the key driver on assessing the need for indoor sports and recreational facilities and developing an evidence base that supports the Core Strategy Local Plan policies BX 1 and CO 3, as well as any relevant future site allocations.
- 2.4 The strategy has to meet several key drivers for change therefore and is perhaps best summarised by

"there are wider linkages: leisure and sports facilities along with outdoor spaces help make the local area more attractive places to live, work and visit, promote the enjoyment of more healthy lifestyles and are integral to the physical and mental well-being of any community" (Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Community Facilities scope and issues, para 14.9).

Population Change and the Sporting Population: Rother District Population Totals and Change 2015 & 2025

- 2.5 In determining the future demand for sports facilities the changes in population are integral to that assessment. It is reasonable to assume that an absolute increase in population will lead to an increase in the demand for sports facilities. However it is important to consider the age structure of the population now and how this is projected to change over the 2015 - 2025 period across Rother District. (Note: a 10 year projection is assessed because Sport England's view is that this is a reasonable period of time to assess changes in participation and hence demand for sports facilities. Projecting changes in population and demand for sports facilities is less reliable beyond 10 years. It is recognised the District's Core Strategy Local Plan timeframe is to 2028)
- 2.6 It could be that the age structure of the population means that although there is a projected increase in absolute population numbers 2015 - 2025, the changing age structure could result in a lower total number of people in the main age bands for sports participation in 2025 than there are in 2015. Changes in population are central to assess the potential changes in demand for each of the facility types.

Rother District Population 2015 - 2025

- 2.7 In 2015 the population of Rother District is estimated as 92,432 people of which 48% are men and 52% are women (Note: figures based on 2011 Census updated by the Office of National Statistics to 2015).
- 2.8 Table 2.1 overleaf sets out the population change in 5 year age bands for both genders and the percentage change 2015 – 2025. The age bands/gender which increase in population is shown in green and those which decrease are in yellow.

Table 2.1: Changes in Rother District Population 2015 – 2025 by Gender and in 5 year age bands

Age band	Rother 2015 Population	Rother 2025 population	% change 2015 - 2025
Male 0 - 4	2,143	2,143	0%
Female 0 – 4	2,034	2,081	+ 2.3%
Male 5 – 9	2,279	2,478	+ 8.7%
Female 5 - 9	2,315	2,439	+ 5.3%
Male 10 – 14	2,287	2,696	+ 17.8%
Female 10 – 14	2,152	2,616	+21.5%
Male 15	510	528	+ 3.5%
Female 15	494	534	+ 8%
Male 16 – 19	2,125	1,999	- 6.3%
Female 16 - 19	1,876	1,886	+ 0.5%
Male 20 – 24	1,849	1,544	- 16.4%
Female 20 – 24	1,652	1,387	- 16%
Male 25 – 29	1,882	1,849	- 1.7%
Females 25 - 29	1,778	1,661	- 6.5%
Males 30 - 34	1,682	1,903	+13.1%
Females 30 - 34	1,839	1,985	+ 7.9%
Males 35 – 39	1,671	2,020	+20%
Females 35 – 39	1,930	2,251	+16.6%
Males 40 – 44	2,307	2,199	- 4.6%
Females 40 - 44	2,511	2,386	- 4.9%
Males 45 – 49	3,037	2,258	- 25.6%
Females 45 - 49	3,232	2,458	- 23.9%
Males 50 – 54	3,363	2,890	- 14%
Females 50 -54	3,526	3,065	- 13%
Males 55- 59	3,050	3,664	+20.1%
Females 55 – 59	3,443	3,940	+ 14.4%
Males 60 - 64	3,178	4,093	+ 28.7%
Females 60 - 64	3,523	4,430	25.7%
Males 65 - 69	3,969	3,745	- 5.6%
Females 65 – 69	4,414	4,200	- 4.8%
Males 70 – 74	3,013	3,432	+ 13.9%
Females 70 – 74	3,388	3,850	+ 13.6%
Males 75 - 79	2,356	3,622	+ 53.7%
Females 75 - 79	2,762	4,132	+ 49.6%
Males 80 – 84	1,779	2,386	+ 34.1%
Females 80 – 84	2,257	2,804	+24.2%
Totals	92,432	99,701	+7.8%

(Source: ONS population projections 2011 Census, updated to 2015 and projected to 2025)

Implications of Rother District's Population Change for Sports Participation

- 2.9 In 2015 the population of Rother is 92,432 people. By 2025 the population of Rother District is projected to increase to 99,701 people a total increase of 7,269 people or 7.8%, of which 48% are men and 52% women¹.
- 2.10 If these changes are analysed in accordance with the different age groups that have the highest participation and frequency of participation, the situation is expected to be as follows and set out in Table 2.2 below.

¹ Note this looks at trend based projections rather than policy based projections and therefore do not take into account any allowance for changes in the demographic make-up of the population.

Table 2.2: Population Change by Age Band for BOTH Genders 2015 – 2025 Rother District (1)

Age group	2015 population	2025 population	% change
Total population	92,432	99,701	+ 7.8%
Active population (5-54)	46,297	42,554	- 8%
Inactive population (0- 4, 55-79)	37,273	43,332	+ 16.2%
Junior sport (10-19)	9,494	10,259	+8.1%
Adult indoor hall sports (16-44)	23,102	23,065	No change
Veterans sport/physical activity e.g. dance exercise and swimming (45- 74)	41,137	42,025	+ 2.1%

2.11 The key findings from this assessment are:

- While the total population is estimated to rise by 7.8% between 2015 and 2025, for the purposes of participation in sport, the active population (i.e. those aged between 5 and 54 and who are more likely to take part in sport) is projected to fall by 8% over the same period
- The inactive population (i.e. those aged between 0 – 4 and 55 – 79) is projected to increase by 16.2% from 2015 - 2025
- As a proportion of the total population, the active population falls in total numbers from 46,297 people in 2015 to 42,554 people by 2025
- In terms of the age bands (aged 16 – 44) most likely to participate in indoor hall sports and do exercise and fitness classes there is no change in the total population between 2015 – 2025
- In terms of swimming it is difficult to assess as swimming is genuinely the only sports facility type that caters for cradle to grave participation. Participation is highest in the 14 – 44 age bands and higher amongst females. The no change in this population age range plus the overall increase in the total population and the 45+ population is most likely going to benefit swimming and lead to a slight increase in demand from population change. Swimming is the most popular activity in Rother
- The major increase in the older age groups (i.e. over 70) is unlikely to have any significant impact on participation, as most people at this age no longer take part in indoor sport and only around 2% - 3% undertake regular physical activity and this is mainly outdoor. However swimming does remain one of the activities which people in this age group do participate in
- Overall the aging of the core resident population and the projected increase in population 2015 – 2025 is not going to in itself generate increased demand for the sports facility types.

- 2.12 These are the projected changes created by population change and NOT related to development of leisure services, participation programmes of sports development by the District Council, sports clubs and National Governing Bodies of Sport.
- 2.13 Nor are the changes related to the District Council's explicit corporate plan and planning policy objectives and key drivers for change set out above. Namely to change the demographics of the district and create a more balanced population in terms of age, skills and retention of a younger working population within the District.
- 2.14 Undoubtedly achieving these changes will lead to a different demographic profile and will increase the rates of sports participation. By how much is difficult to assess because it depends on the speed and scale of the changes. As context Rother's rate of adult sports participation has increased by 3% between 2006 – 2014 based on the accepted benchmark measure of at least once a week participation of 30 minutes of moderate intensity (Note: moderate intensity is defined as activities that make you feel warm and slightly out of breath, like brisk walking, gardening, swimming and dancing. At this intensity you should still be able to talk without being too breathless).

Sports and Physical Activity Participation in Rother

- 2.15 The sports and physical activity profile for Rother is the essential context after population for developing the needs and evidence base for sports facilities. This is set out in full in the assessment report and is summarised next.
- 2.16 Sport England's Active People Survey provides the most comprehensive assessment of levels of sports participation across the country at a local authority, county, sports partnership, regional and national level. It is an annual telephone survey undertaken quarterly and commenced in 2006. The latest findings are for Active People 8 up to April 2014. (Note: the headline findings for Active People survey 9 were published in June but the detailed data for this 6 month period is not yet available. It is also only for 6 months and so the eight year annual data for October 2006 – October 2014 is applied in the strategy).
- 2.17 Active People measures a range of performance indicators including participation levels in particular sports and activities and by gender, disability, ethnicity and other demographic indicators. The benchmark measure and which Sport England use to set performance targets for investment with National Governing Bodies of Sport is the measure of at least once a week participation of 30 minutes duration at moderate intensity.
- 2.18 The key headline findings for Rother are:
- The Rother rate of at least once a week adult participation has increased by 3% from 28.7% in 2006 to 31.7% in October 2014. The rate of increase has been steady and progressive over the 8 year period
 - Female participation has been consistently lower than male participation over the 2006 – 2014 period. It has increased by 2.1% from 23.3% of adult females participating at least once a week in 2006 to 25.4% in 2014. The market segmentation profile (described next) for Rother shows that swimming, dance/exercise classes and gym are the most popular (indoor) activities for females
 - Male adult participation has increased by 3.8% over the 2006 – 2014 period, from 35% participating at least once a week in October 2006 to 38.8% in October 2014 but most of this increase is in 2013 – 14 period. The market segmentation profile for Rother for males is older than for females and outdoor activity, golf,

walking and cycling are generally more popular than indoor activities. Swimming and to a lesser extent gym are the most popular indoor activities

- Swimming participation in Rother has increased slightly and bucked the regional and national trend of declining participation. In Rother it was 6.4% of adults swimming at least once a week in 2006 and this has increased to 6.9% in October 2014. Over the eight year period swimming participation has retained this level of participation, except in 2009 when there was a one year dip to 4.9%
- The England and SE region rate of once a week swimming participation has declined, it being 8.4% of adults across England swimming at least once a week in 2006 and 8% in SE region. In 2014 the England rate was 6.2% and for SE region it was 6.1% of adults who swim at least once a week
- A corporate objective of Rother District Council is to encourage a healthy and active lifestyle as part of everyday life by residents. Non participation in physical activity is the scale of the challenge to create a healthy and active lifestyle. The rate of total non-participation in either sport or physical activity by adults has decreased by 5% in Rother over 2006 – 2014. It being 60.7% of the Rother adult population who did no activity in 2006 and 55.8% in 2014.

Participation by Market Segments across Rother

- 2.19 The findings from the Active People market segmentation provide a more detailed picture of the types of participants and how the participation profile differs spatially. As part of the Active People survey findings Sport England analysed the data on the English population to produce 19 market segments with distinct sporting behaviours and attitudes.
- 2.20 This includes information on specific sports people take part in as well as why people do sport and physical activity, whether they want to do more and the barriers to doing more. In addition, the segments provide information on media consumption and communication channels, social capital, health indicators including obesity and engagement in the wider cultural sphere.
- 2.21 The power of these sporting segments lies not only in their ability to help us better understand the characteristics of our potential market but also to explore the market base at differing geographic levels. Each segment has been assigned a name which reflects the most popular first names for the group.
- 2.22 A potted profile of the top nine market segments in terms of numbers of people in each segment in Rother is set out in the table overleaf. (Note: Appendix 1 assessment report provides information and an extensive profile and data for all 19 market segments (plus more detailed information on participation in Rother).
- 2.23 A summary of the findings across the market segmentation profile for Rother is:
- Amongst the top nine segments in population numbers there is even distribution of three segments which are (1) joint male/female segments, (2) male and (3) female segments in the top nine segments;
 - In terms of age bands, only two of the top nine segments are below the age of 25. In the 16 – 25 age range there is a higher than the national average rate of sports and physical activity participation. Also sports/physical activity participation is an important lifestyle choice for the segments in this younger age group;

- Six of the nine segments in population numbers in Rother are above 46 years of age. Their reasons for participating are for recreational, social activity and with a strong personal health motivation; and
- For six of the top nine segments swimming is an important activity – it has appeal across all age bands and genders. The reasons for swimming participation are for health benefit and as a recreational, social and as a family based activity.

Table 2.3: Top Nine Market Segment Numbers by Population in Rother District

Total and (% of adult population in Rother)	Forename & brief description Of Each segment	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to Increase Participation	MS Participation Activity
3,600 5%	Chloe Fitness Class Friends	Female 18-25 Single Professional	Body combat, Netball, Aqua Aerobics,, Gym, Swimming	Weight Fitness	Time	Cost Opening Hours Facilities People to go with	Active type 30-35% zero days
3,542 5%	Helena Working Focused Females	Female 26-35 Single Full time work	Gym, Road Running, Dance Exercise, Swimming, Yoga	Losing weight Keeping fit Improving performance	Time People to go with	Longer opening hours People to go with	Very active type 30-35% zero days
6,261 8.6%	Tim Settling Down Males	Male 26-45 Single / married May have children Professional	Cricket, Cycling, Squash, Swimming Golf,	Improve performance Keep fit Social	Time	More free time Help with childcare	Very active type 25-30% zero days
6,556 9.2%	Philip Comfortable Mid-Life Males	Male 46-55 Married Older children	Sailing Badminton, Cycling, Gym, Jogging, ,	Social Taking children Improving performance Enjoyment	Time Lack of childcare	More free time Help with childcare	Most active within Group C (mid aged) Approx. 40% zero days
5,889 8.1%	Elaine Empty Nest Career Ladies	Female 46-55 Married Children left home	Swimming, Walking, Aqua Aerobics, Step Machine, Yoga, Gym	Keeping fit Losing weight Help with injury	Time Lack of interest	Longer opening hours More people to go with	Reasonably active type 40-45% zero days

Total and (% of adult population in Rother	Forename & brief description Of Each segment	Gender/age/status	Sports Most Interested in	Motivations	Barriers	How to Increase Participation	MS Participation Activity
6,956 9.7%	Roger and Joy Early Retirement Couples	Male / female 56-65 Retired or part-time	Swimming, Walking, Bowls, Fishing,	Keeping fit To help with injury Enjoyment Taking grandchildren	Poor health Lack of interest Transport	Better facilities Improved transport	Participate once or twice a week 50-55% zero days
9,230 12.9%	Ralph and Phyllis Comfortable Retired Couples	Male / female 65+ Married Retired	Bowls, Golf, Swimming, Snooker, Walking,	Social Improve performance and keep fit Enjoyment	Transport Lack of people to go with	Improved transport More people to go with	Highest participation of Group D Approx. 70% zero days
3,710 5.2%	Frank Twilight Year Gents	Male 66+ Married / single Retired	Bowls, Golf, Darts, Pool, Snooker, Walking,	Social Enjoyment	Poor health	Improved transport Cheaper admission	Medium participation for group D 75-80% zero days
7,176 10%	Elsie and Arnold Retirement Home Singles	Male / female 66+ Widowed Retired	Walking, Dancing, Bowls, Low-impact exercise	Social Help with injury	Health problems and disability	Improved transport People to go with	Lowest participation of Group D Approx. 85% zero days

(Note: Table 2.3 sets out the findings for the top nine market segments in terms of population numbers. Appendix 1 sets out the profile and findings for all the 19 market segments in Rother District)

2.24 This section of the strategy is contextual: to set out the key drivers for change in Rother and the Council's approved corporate, planning policy and sports development objectives. Then to set out the demographic change and how this will impact on the demand for sports facilities over the next 10 years. Finally to set out the context for the trends in sports participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity – what is changing and at what scale.

2.25 All these key drivers, policies and trends are essential context for the strategy and assessment of need for the indoor sports facilities and determination of future requirements.

3: Assessing Needs & Opportunities for each Sports Facility Type – The Methodology

- 3.1 This section summarises the methodology that has been used in the development of the needs assessment and strategy. The assessment has been produced to follow the guidance from Sport England in its Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) for indoor and built sports facilities.
- 3.2 There are five sports facility types included in the strategy. These are: sports halls; swimming pools; health and fitness/gyms; studios and squash courts. Consideration has also been given to indoor provision for other sports, where these have been raised during consultation - activities that can take place in sports halls, for example martial arts, gymnastics, trampolining and indoor cricket.
- 3.3 The needs assessment has focused on assessing needs based on quantity, quality, accessibility and availability, which are the components of the ANOG methodology. The Sport England ANOG guidance advises to set out the findings from the needs assessment in the strategy in terms of three main outcomes;
- **Protect:** an evidence base which can inform policy formulation and seek to protect existing facilities where there is an identified current need and future need for use by the community;
 - **Enhance:** an evidence base which can inform policy and seek to enhance the provision of existing facilities where there is an identified current and future need and the most effective way to meet this need is by improvement to what already exists. This could be by enhanced facility provision but it could also mean changes in the access and availability of existing facilities to make the existing supply deliver more use for the community; and
 - **Provide:** an evidence base which can inform policy and lead to provision of new facilities where there is an identified need now and in the future, and where the most cost and sports effective way to meet this need is by provision of new facilities.

Figure 3.1: Sport England Approach to Assessing Needs



3.4 The ANOG methodology was adopted by Sport England as the industry wide needs assessment methodology in April 2013. It replaced the former guidance in PPG 17 Companion Guide to Sports and Recreational Facilities Needs Assessments.

3.5 Set out next is a description of how the ANOG methodology has been applied in Rother District

A Undertaking the Assessment:

Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor your assessment

Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand and consultation

Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together

B Application of the Assessment

Undertaking the Assessment

Stage 1: Prepare and Tailor the Assessment

3.6 A project proposal was prepared in February 2015 and this was considered and approved by the Council in April 2015. A meeting with the project clients was held in early May 2015 to review the aims of the study, understand in more detail the key objectives for the strategy, the key drivers for change, establish views on the collective needs and priorities for the study and agree the consultations process and consultees.

3.7 A review of the Rother District Council key corporate, and sports documents was then completed. This allowed naa to become familiar with the key Council documents and understand the relationship between the facilities strategy and wider Council objectives.

Stage 2: Gather Information on Supply and Demand

3.8 The first extensive task was to compile;

- An assessment of the profile of sports and physical activity participation across the district. This sets out who participates, how often, barriers and motivations to participation and the spatial distribution of participation. Trend information of changes in all categories was developed through use of the Sport England Active People and Active People market segmentation data for the period 2006 – 2014. Finally given the importance and Rother corporate objective of creating a healthy and active population, the findings on the inactive population, the scale and costs of treating an inactive population through illness was added to the profile; and
- An assessment of the quantity, quality, access and availability of each of the five sports facility types. In effect a detailed supply and demand assessment following the four ANOG headings.

3.9 These findings comprise the assessment report and are set out in Appendix 1.

3.10 Site visits were made to the main public leisure and sports centres in the project scope. At the site visits meetings were held with the facility manager. Discussion focused on the type of operation, the objectives, hours and types of use, changes and challenges in operation of the venue for community use from the provider and the customer perspective.

- 3.11 Discussion also focused on the core business case and the business model applied. Follow up consultations were held with the Freedom Leisure area manager to discuss consultation findings and views on the possible strategy direction.
- 3.12 Overall the site visits allowed for a cross check on what the hard evidence data was saying about the facility provision but more importantly what is happening on the ground. The community access to the venues and the barriers to increasing participation. Information where available was also collected on customer surveys, membership details, user group forums or engagement with clubs to provide details of casual and club user information. These findings are set out in Appendix 3 and included in the strategy directions and actions section.

Consultation

- 3.13 The consultation programme involved all National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's) for the facility types in the study. A questionnaire survey was sent to all the NGB's requesting information on the current and future needs for their sport in Rother. A copy of the questionnaire is set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.14 The response to the survey was reasonable with detailed responses received from gymnastics, badminton, cricket (for indoor), netball and table tennis. More consultations were held with Active Sussex and the NGB team. The findings from this consultation were more detailed as Active Sussex has more local knowledge than national NGB representatives. The views of Active Sussex were consistent with our experience of other studies in similar areas to Rother, such as North Norfolk and Great Yarmouth Districts.
- 3.15 The rationale being that all NGB's are participation focused as their Sport England investment and continuation of the investment is embedded in NGB's improving participation – across a number of performance indicators – total participation, young people, disability and gender are key performance indicators . Consequently the focus is for NGB's to focus their priorities and investment in areas of greatest participation return. In effect the cities and big urban local authorities with bigger population numbers. So it is not that Rother is not important it is that the authorities with the higher population are much more important or offer a more increased return on participation.
- 3.16 NGBs will prioritise an area for their participation drive, based on potential, where they consider demand exceeds supply and there is a solid club base network. An example of this is in Hastings and investment by Badminton England in Summerfield Leisure Centre to upgrade the sports hall floor, lighting and access for wheelchair users. This investment in return for guaranteed ten hours of use per week for badminton for ten years. The leisure management contractor is tied into this arrangement.
- 3.17 Consultation with NGBs also confirmed that protection of venues is very important too and then development of opportunities for club based sport. There is a national Priorities Spreadsheet which captures all Sports England funded NGB's plans, funding awards, and NGB key programmes for development. A review of this spreadsheet did not identify any stated projects or priorities for Rother.
- 3.18 Stakeholders at national and county level in Sport England and East Sussex County Council involved in either sports provision/planning or development programmes in Rother were consulted and a telephone interview held to discuss their views on the requirements of the strategy. These findings are set out in the assessment Appendix 3 and incorporated into the strategy.
- 3.19 All schools and colleges in Rother District that provide sport facilities for community use were contacted and a set of topics for consultation was sent to all schools and colleges. A telephone interview was then held with all the school and colleges

(including private schools) to collect information on all topics and get their views about continuation of community use and what they consider are the future facility needs and why. These findings are set out in Appendix 3 and incorporated into the strategy actions and direction.

- 3.20 All neighbouring local authorities to Rother in Sussex and Kent were contacted as well to establish if they had any commitments or plans to change their stock of community sports facilities and if so how this may impact on Rother. A very extensive consultation was held with Hastings Borough with regard to the content and findings of the refresh of their Leisure Facilities Strategy. The response from the other authorities was not good with responses received from Wealden Council but no responses received from the Kent Authorities or Active Kent. This despite three e mails and two phone calls with recorded messages left for each authority. The detailed assessment of need based on the location and catchment area of facilities identified that the main issues relate to Hastings and there is little overlap in catchment area of facilities in the northern and eastern authorities. So the extensive and detailed consultation with Hastings is most important. Wealden District confirmed they have no plans to change their existing provision but are focusing on their community use agreements with local schools to provide more for community sport.
- 3.21 Regarding local sports clubs, Active Rother provided club contacts, details and views about particular sports/clubs. This consultation was an iterative process and developed as particular issues arose during the study. In addition a page about the study was placed on the Active Rother web site asking all clubs to contact naa for a discussion about their views on the needs of their sports club.
- 3.22 Active Sussex provided the Be Inspired database of local clubs in Rother and over 30 local clubs were sent an e mail setting out the topics for discussion and a follow up phone call was requested. Consultations were then held with around 15 clubs who responded. The clubs comprised the swimming clubs and indoor sports clubs identified through the consultations with National Governing Bodies of Sport or from Active Rother or Active Sussex. Again a record of these consultations is set out in the assessment Appendix 3.
- 3.23 A feature of the structured consultations was the need to collect consistent information but where the needs of particular sports do vary. Quire understandably clubs want to discuss the issues which affect their club. Based on the consultation process and findings a suggested survey questionnaire for club consultations is set out in Appendix 3 as a guide to future club consultations.
- 3.24 Finally the key personnel in Rother District were consulted to establish the views and the needs of their particular responsibilities in the strategy and telephone interviews were held with four members of the District Council covering corporate development, regeneration, planning, property and active communities.
- 3.25 Collectively, the consultation findings were used in several ways: to verify or not the hard evidence findings about participation, facility provision, access and how well the stock is meeting current needs; gaps in provision and what is most important and why; soundings on the possible future facility requirements, scale, type and location; the importance of Rother to NGB's and potential investment. Again all these findings are recorded in assessment Appendix 3.
- 3.26 A selection of the key themes/topics emerging from the consultations were (not in any particular order) (Note: these are reporting the comments received and are not the views of the consultant or the District Council):
 - The importance of the District Council taking ownership of the work and the direction set by the strategy (Sport England, Active Sussex and RDC Officers)

- The District Council has approved planning policies and the Core Strategy focuses on regeneration of the District. Not just physical regeneration but creating a more balanced and skilled workforce and retaining more of the active population in employment in the District. Part of the regeneration and the offer is to improve sports and leisure facilities. This in turn will increase demand over and above the demographic changes (RDC Officers)
- Why do we need a leisure pool with a wave machine when we have enough waves in the sea!!! (swimming clubs)
- The importance of creating a healthy lifestyle for more residents and focus on increasing sports participation and sports development at the local level and not to focus on development of elite athletes. Getting people who do nothing to do something is the bigger part of the population and challenge. Acknowledging that facilities play the smaller part in increasing opportunities for people to be active (East Sussex CC and Rother District Council officers). The importance of retention of a leisure pool with wave machine and the importance of family based swimming activity for fun and recreation as the main rationale for providing swimming pools (RDC Officers & Freedom Leisure Managers)
- In preparing a strategy and the way forward on the need for sports facilities, it is important to consider all providers and all ways of operation. Very often it is possible to make more effective use of what already exists by working differently and in partnerships than trying to provide new facilities (local schools and colleges who operate their own community use programmes)
- The potential challenge of continuing access to schools and colleges venues for community use. The commitment is there but finances are becoming more important – it has to pay its way (local schools and colleges who operate their own community use programmes)
- The focus is on supporting clubs and sports development in larger localities – the focus is on increasing participation and so attention is given to areas with most potential “it’s a numbers game” (NGB’s)
- Both Rother and Hastings need to maintain and develop their own swimming pool provision. Whilst there is overlap in catchment areas and shared access there is sufficient demand for swimming in both authorities to develop provision to meet their own resident’s needs (Hastings BC, RDC Officers and swimming clubs)
- The need to balance sport facility provision based on evidence of need but which is also affordable and can be delivered – so all three parts in the overall strategic approach (RDC Officers)
- Access to public leisure centres during the day for older groups to play casual sport and do physical activity is very important. This is because of the older age profile of the District and older people wanting to participate during the day. Older people are less inclined to play sport/do physical activity in the evenings and they cannot access school sports halls and pools during the day because of school use (NGB’s views and clubs)
- There is not any set format or preferred way of presenting the strategy. It is the application of the methodology, the rationale of how the findings are used to develop the evidence base and then applied in the strategy which are important (Sport England)

- There is no sports hall venue bigger than 32m x 18m and there is increasing pressure from NGBs about fit for purpose and quality – eg lack of run off space and size of main hall. The absence of bigger sports halls is restricting use of venues for competitions. Clubs have to travel outside the district to compete/host competitions (sports clubs)
- There is a need for more informal space such a studios and flexible spaces to develop individual activities around dance/exercise classes. Also there is increasing demand for fun, thrill and adventure spaces for young people and which is not really provided for at present. Opportunities mentioned were climbing walls and indoor skate parks and roller blading (did not want to be attributed – but more than one)
- Activity programmes work more easily in voluntary sector buildings such as community centres and village halls than formal sports facilities, as these venues are embedded in community based activity and more attuned to meeting a wide range of individuals doing informal and un structured activity (East Sussex CC and some sports clubs)
- It is important to protect what already exists and ensure we do not lose access to any venues. It is a concern that individual schools could decide not to commit to community use any longer (NGB views and clubs).

Stage 3 – Assessment, Bring the Information Together

- 3.27 The final part of this stage is to bring all the findings together into the actual assessment of the current and future demand for each of the facility types.
- 3.28 The assessment is set out in full in appendices to this strategy document. The Appendices as reported are;
- Appendices 1 and 2 with Assessment report of (1) Rother District profile of participation and non-participation in sport and physical activity. (2) Full audit and assessment for each of the five sports facility types included in the project scope; and
 - Appendix 3; Description of all consultation and findings.

Application of the Assessment

- 3.29 The application of the assessment is set out next with the key findings for each sports facility type. This is a summary of the full assessment, the key findings and the issues that arise on future provision.
- 3.30 This is followed by the application of the assessment in the section on strategy direction and justification set out under the headings of: Protect, Enhance and Provide.
- 3.31 The final section of the strategy sets out the monitoring and review and describes the actions required, responsibilities and timescales.

4: Summary of Key Findings & Issues for each of the Five Sports Facility Types

- 4.1 This section sets out the key findings from the assessment report for each of the five facility types. It summarises the findings and key issues that arise from the FULL assessment report. This may seem like repetition but it is considered that the strategy does have to contain this summary of the assessment, otherwise there is no context for the strategy's future direction and recommendations.
- 4.2 The findings are presented in tabular form with key findings on the left and key issues and a short overview on the right. Consultation findings are weaved into the bullet points.

Table 4.1: Summary of key findings and issues for each of the five facility types

Sports Halls Key Findings	Sports Halls Key Issues
<p>Quantity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rother has 9 sports halls on 7 sites. Rother has the second lowest provision of sports halls sites amongst the neighbouring authorities. Hastings has 7 sports halls on 6 sites. Based on a comparative measure of badminton courts per 10,000 population, Rother has the lowest provision with 3.4 badminton courts per 10,000 population. Next are Hastings and Wealden with 3.5 badminton courts. The highest provision is in Tunbridge Wells which has 6 badminton courts per 10,000 population. Hastings has 3.5 courts per 10,000 population. Rother's resident population is estimated to generate a demand for a minimum of 26 badminton courts in 2015. This compares to a current available supply of 27 badminton courts which are available in the weekly peak period of weekday evenings and weekend days for public and club use. So overall for Rother there is a positive supply/demand balance of 1 badminton court in 2015. In effect, the hard evidence data findings are that supply and demand are almost in balance. Consultation supports this finding that overall supply matches demand with access to venues is OK and bookings are possible – subject to the constraints about access to education venues having no access for the 5 week exam period plus the total hours for community use varies at each location. There are also programming issues of different users wanting access to venues at the same time – but these are about balancing the programme for different activities/user groups. The majority of the venues are 4 badminton court size sports halls. There are a range of sizes for 4 badminton court size sports halls. Most of the Rother 4 badminton court size sports hall venues are 32m x 18m. Consultation has suggested the size of venues does mean limited run off areas between courts and this restricts hosting of competitions. Also scope to have multi activity in the hall at the same time is limited for the majority of time as the hall size means only one activity can be scheduled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The collective benefit of the sports halls is dissipated because of separate ownership, management and access arrangements for community use across the sports hall sites. This is simple reality and there cannot be one overall operator or provider. However a provider's forum could review how the full stock could be managed and programmed to create more benefit/use - in effect making more use of what already exists. Better co-ordination could result in reducing the capacity used at peak times. The quality of the sports hall is an issue in terms of size of venue, flooring and lighting, also the quality of the changing rooms. This is a reflection of the age of the venues. The average age of the public sports halls is 27 years. The oldest sports halls are Rye Sports Centre and Battle Area Sports Centre both opened in 1987 with the Battle Area Centre refurbished in 2012 and 2014. These were followed by Bexhill Leisure Centre (BLC) which opened in 1990 and which was refurbished in 2007. The absence of a full size four badminton court size sports hall as set out in Sport England and National Governing Bodies guidance is possibly the biggest issue. The requirement is for a 34.5m x 20m main hall. This could accommodate all the indoor hall sports with run off space between courts and allow the staging of district and higher level competitions. A feature of clubs comments was the need to travel outside the area to host competitions. The dependence on school and colleges to provide access to sports halls for community use is an issue. Maintaining the

Accessibility

- The location of the sports halls in Rother provides good access with over 91% of the total Rother demand located inside the drive time catchment area of a sports hall. Car travel is the dominant travel mode with 88% of all visits to sports halls by Rother residents being by car.
- Mapping of the catchment areas shows there is a small area to the north of the district which is outside the 20 minutes' drive time of a sports hall. The hard evidence data suggest the demand in this area equates to 2 badminton courts and so, in scale terms, it is not large.
- Consultation largely confirmed that access to venues in terms of locations and ability to book venues at time required is not an issue. Schools and colleges are moving much more towards a core business plan model with term based bookings and much fewer casual lets. Examples being the venues at Bexhill Academy and Northiam Primary. Access to the Bexhill Leisure Centre is more flexible with a combination of regular bookings and pay and play. It is an adaptive and dynamic programme with full utilisation of the sports hall space.

Availability

- The hard evidence data on how full the sports halls are estimates that 61% of the total capacity at peak times is used. It does however vary at individual venues. It being highest at Bexhill Leisure Centre, at an estimated 100% of capacity used at peak times, than at Rye Sports Centre 67% and Bexhill Academy 66%. The reason being;
 - Variations in the amount of demand in each area, obviously areas with the highest population and bigger towns will have the highest demand; and
 - Public leisure centres provide for the full range of sports activity – individual hall sports, as pay and play as well as for club use. So there is a bigger range of activities at public centres as distinct from education venues which will more likely provide for club use – hence a greater demand/pull to public sports centres.
- Consultation very much bore out the findings about the 100% occupancy at Bexhill Leisure Centre. It is a popular centre, it retains its membership and client base and the centre management is adaptive in use of the centre to schedule new activities. Full occupancy is underlined by the extensive range of activities programmed which can create lack of time for changeover/set up/take down of equipment and users requiring their allocated time for activity. Also the centre is experiencing increased demand for adventure activity and martial arts which is challenging to accommodate.

overall supply and demand balance is very much dependent on this continuing access. However it is now more complex and dependent on the policy and attitude of individual schools and colleges. Most schools do have a formal agreement in place but the move to a new Academy ownership at Northiam Primary may result in a review of the agreement but which is subject to 18 years remaining on a Sport England Lottery Funding Agreement securing community use.

- The demographic profile of the District is likely to change as intended in the objectives of the Council's corporate plan. This could have a knock on effect in increased participation. Plus the Council' sports development programme and clubs work could all impact on increasing participation and demand for sports halls. However the changes in the Rother resident population as set in section 2 and the changes in the active population have to be balanced in offsetting any increase in participation from changes in the demographic profile of the District.

Swimming Pools Key Findings

Swimming Pools Key Issues

Quantity

- Rother has 4 swimming pools on 4 sites which have a main pool over 160 sq. metre of water (configuration for a 20m x 4 lane pool). ALL four sites have one main pool tank varying in size from 200 sq metres at Rye Sports Centre and St Mary's School to a 250 sq. metre leisure pool at Bexhill Leisure Pool and a 300 sq metre pool at Crowhurst Park. The St Mary's school is a special school and the pool is focused on the needs of its pupils. It does provide extensive use for swimming clubs and is the pool most used by clubs and swim schools. The Crowhurst Park pool is only available to Rother residents on a membership basis, being a pool located on a commercial holiday site. There is also a pool at the independent Battle Abbey Preparatory School which is a 25m x 6 lane pool. Through the Rother Swim Academy there is a committed programme of weekday after school and weekend days in and out of term times for learn to swim programmes for children. So this is another venue which provides for learn to swim programmes and for children to develop confidence and competence in water. The School does not offer access for casual public pay and swim.
- Based on the comparative measure of water space per 1,000 population. Rother is mid table in comparison to neighbouring authorities. Rother has 10.5 sq metres of water per 1,000 population. Ashford and Tunbridge Wells have 14.6 sq metres of water, and Wealden 13.2 sq. metres of water per 1,000 population. Hastings with 6 sq metres of water and Shepway with 7.9 sq metres of water have lower provision than Rother.
- The total demand for swimming pools from Rother residents in 2015 equates to 893 sq metres of water. Whilst the total supply available for public use is 823 sq metres of water. So demand exceeds supply by 70 sq metres of water, across the district in 2015. This is Sport England hard evidence data.
- Consultation and trends suggest this is an under estimate. Reasons being:
 - clubs and swim schools say there is not enough pool time at St Mary's School (although this maybe a programming issue);
 - Hasting Seagulls (who use Rother's pools) have a steady waiting list of 100 people for learn to swim and cannot accommodate these because of lack of pool time;
 - Bexhill Leisure Pool has experienced increased usage over each of the past three

- None of the pool sites in Rother have a dedicated and separate teaching/learner pool which is an unusual finding and means that learn to swim programmes or confidence building activity either takes place in the leisure part of the Bexhill pool or in the main tank at the other sites. This maybe a constraint on people learning to swim and could be supressing swimming participation – don't learn to swim and get confidence/then don't swim.
- Expectations and provision in most local authorities is for a dedicated teaching/learner pool. Swimming clubs have commented on the constraints posed by the absence of such a pool for learn to swim programmes.
- Demand for swimming exceeds supply across the district and is probably an under estimate of the amount of unmet demand. The two public pools are attracting most of the demand because of the swimming offer and management – Bexhill is estimated to be full and Rye is close to being comfortably full. Rother has maintained and slightly increased its swimming participation (against the regional and national trend) and if the trend continues there is little scope for more pool time to be found. So pool used capacity and unmet demand will increase. If pools become too full this could discourage participation.
- The swimming pools in Rother are small scale, this and the age of pools are a quality and activity constraint. Bexhill Leisure Centre opened in 1990 and was modernised in 2007. The Rye Sports Centre pool is a 200 sq metres pool, more modern and opened in 2003. St Mary's School pool is also a 200 sq metre pool opened in 1989 and has not had a major modernisation. The average age of the three pool sites is 22 years old.

years and the aquatics plan sets targets to increase this further. Bexhill is a leisure pool and if customers want to visit a leisure pool it does mean there is a unique catchment area and wider draw for family/leisure based activity. The hard evidence data will not include this leisure pool specific demand/market and may therefore underestimate demand for the pool;

- Swimming is the most popular activity in Rother. The district has bucked the regional and national trend of declining participation in swimming. In Rother swimming participation has been maintained and slightly increased over the period of the Active People surveys 1 – 8 from 2006 – 2014 and was 6.9% of adults swimming at least once a week in 2014 up from 6.4% in 2006; and
- The age structure of the Rother population has nearly 50% of the population above 46 years of age and set to increase. Swimming is the most important/popular activity for this sector of the population and has appeal for both genders. It has a strong, social activity and personal health motivation for older people.

Accessibility

- The drive time catchment area for a swimming pool is 20 minutes actual drive time (based on Sport England research) for regular participation. Within Rother car travel is the dominant travel mode with 88% of all visits to pools by Rother residents being by car.
- The data shows that 69% of the Rother demand for swimming goes to a pool in Rother (based on residents going to the nearest pool to where they live). This suggests good location/catchment area of pools and which matches up with where Rother residents live. Consultation supports these findings. The Freedom Leisure mapping for the Bexhill and Rye pools shows a distinct cluster of membership in both towns and for each pool.

Availability

- The total used capacity of Rother's four pools sites, as a District average, is 63.2% of the pools capacity at peak times. The district wide average may appear low, given demand for swimming exceeds supply across the district. However Rother is exporting some 30% of its own demand for swimming to pools in neighbouring authorities which lowers it.
- The District average does however vary at individual pool sites. Bexhill Leisure Centre is estimated to be at 100% of capacity used. Whilst at Rye the estimated pool capacity used is 62% of total pool capacity. Consultations support these levels but possibly too low for Rye.

- The size and possibly the configuration of the pools may constrain the full range of swimming activities of recreational swimming, learn to swim programmes, lane and fitness swimming and swimming club swimming development programmes to take place. The size of the water area of each pool in effect limits programming to one or at best two swimming activities at any one time. Clubs have commented on the problems of shared access as well as the limitations on pool time access (at St Mary's School pool).
- There appears virtually no scope to redistribute demand around pools so as to even out demand. The distance between the pool locations means that in effect they are serving distinct catchments. Any changes would most likely lead to a reduction in participation as people chose not to travel longer distances to swim on a regular basis. St Mary's school is a special school and scope to increase supply for more community based swimming would have to be reconciled with the school's education needs.

Overall the issues for swimming pools are about: the absence of a dedicated teaching/learner pool and possible constraints this is having on learn to swim programmes and possibly lower participation; demand is however greater than supply and pools are very full. Re-development of the Bexhill Leisure Centre pool is an integral part of the new Bexhill centre. The oldest pool would then be the Rye Sports Centre opened in 2003, so still quite a modern community pool.

The reasons are:

- The management operation and attention to customer care is a most important feature of usage of pools. Whilst research evidences that the majority of swimmers go to the pool closest to where they live – attracting people to visit a pool and become regular participants is driven by the management operation. It could be that some customers will go to a pool not closest to where they live because of the management and customer care at a pool. A finding from the Freedom Leisure customer surveys is that customers consider the number one reason for liking the centre is customer care as friendly welcoming centres and staff care. This is a consistent finding – hence a draw to the pools.
 - The amount of demand in the catchment area of each pool varies and which will obviously impact on how full any one pool is. Possibly a reason for lower used capacity percentage at Rye.
 - The public pools provide for the full range of swimming activities, casual and fitness swimming, learn to swim programmes and swimming club development. Whilst school pools will not provide for public casual use and have reduced hours of use. Hence greater demand pull to public leisure centres.
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Quantity

- Sport England defines health and fitness suites as those facilities providing fitness stations for both cardiovascular and strength training, more commonly known as gyms and excludes spaces for aerobics and dance activities (which are dealt with separately). The assessment is based on the demand and supply analysis overlaid with consultations.
- There are 13 health and fitness venues in Rother in 2015 providing a total of 258 health and fitness stations. Of these 13 venues 9 are available on a pay and play and or membership basis. Two venues are for registered members only and 2 are private access. Private access does mean that and the access is only available for the owners of the gym. Private access gyms are included in the statement of supply but because there is no public access they are not included in the supply and demand assessment. It is simply a recording of fact of all the different types of ownerships
- Pay and play/membership has the most quantity of provision with 175 stations, some 68% of the total number of stations. The two venues for private use have 13 stations; the two membership only venues have 65 stations.
- A very noticeable feature is the very small number of stations per venue, it averages 20 stations across the 13 venues. However there are 6 venues where the provision is less than 10 stations. Three of these are education venues and the other three are commercial sites where gym provision seems to be an "add on" and not a main source of business focus. For example Dale Hill Hotel and Golf Club with 8 stations and Poolside Leisure Club with 7 stations.
- The largest venue is Bexhill Leisure Centre with 75 stations and there are no large venues with 80 + stations, which is the norm for a major commercial health and fitness gym.
- Provision in Rother contrast with Hastings where there are 7 venues but with 393 stations. Also there are three venues with over 70 stations, at Bannatynes 74 stations, Falaise Fitness Centre 99 stations and Zeus Gym with 80 stations. So in Hastings fewer but larger size venues with an average of 56 stations per venue.
- The Sport England tools of Active Places or the facility planning model do not consider health and fitness in the same degree of detail as other facilities, and there is no 'ready reckoner' for assessing demand. However the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has devised a model that provides guidance on the supply of stations against the current anticipated demand. The

- Gym provision in Rother is small scale with 13 venues and an average 20 stations per venue. This dispersed provision and small scale is possibly hindering the development of critical mass to allow for a major gym investment. In Hastings there are 7 venues with an average of 56 stations per venue.
- The public leisure centres are early 1990's venues and gym provision was not an integral part of the projects and the core business case at the time of construction. Each centre has modified/adapted the buildings to accommodate more space for gyms as the participation and demand has increased and been sustained over time. Whilst having modern equipment they lack being a purpose built modern gym. The overall quality of the offer maybe detracting from participation – potential.
- There is insufficient capacity at peak times at the main public leisure centres with participants waiting to access machines – not an unusual peak time problem. The BLC has 1,500 members and a monthly turnover of 150 members. Of the turnover some 100 members are return members who have ether tried the gym offer elsewhere and/or returning to gym activity. The retention rate says the gym offer and pricing at BLC is retaining members and there is not a more attractive alternative offer in Bexhill.
- Consultation confirmed that the supply of stations is insufficient to meet demand at peak times for both cardiovascular and strength training. There is no scope to increase supply at the current venues and there has been a recent (2015) increase in supply of low cost gyms in Bexhill.
- There is small increase in gym participants doing exercise classes in preference to gym. However this could also be a reflection of lack of access to machines at peak times.

Overall the issues all relate to demand exceeding supply with no

model defines health and fitness users as all people participating in health and fitness, including private club members and users of local authority facilities. The model is based on peak period demand, and the peak times are identified as Mon-Fri, 6pm – 10pm and Sat-Sun, 12pm – 4pm. For modelling purposes, the FIA assumes that 65% of the total weekly usage occurs at the busiest (peak) time periods. Based on research with health and fitness operators it has been assumed that the average member/user visits the facility 2.4 times per week. The Active People Survey finding of 8.7% of adults in 2014 participating at least once a week has been applied to Rother as there is not a participation rate for Rother.

- This identifies a total of 383 stations are required during the peak time period to accommodate anticipated current levels of demand. The Active Places Power database identifies a current supply is 258 stations. So there is a “deficit” of 125 stations.
- The assessment of 383 stations based on the FIA methodology is only 10 stations fewer than the actual provision in Hastings in 2015. The total population of both districts is very close at 92,434 people in Rother and 91,726 people in Hastings
- The venues (but not the stations) are quite old, with 5 opening in the 1980's, 4 in the 1990's, 3 post 2000 and 1 in the 1970's. Ten of the refurbished venues have been modernised. The three public leisure centres replaced equipment in 2007 at Bexhill Leisure Pool; 2010 at Bexhill Leisure Centre; and 2013 at Rye Sports Centre
- It is the smaller education venues which have not replaced equipment but these are very small venues: Frewen College 5 stations, opened in 1990; St Richards Catholic College 4 stations opened in 2002; and Bexhill 6th Form College 9 stations opened in 2005.

Accessibility

- Geographically there is quite a balanced spread of locations with venues in all the main towns. Accessibility in terms of public venues is good with all public leisure centres having gyms, albeit the one at Bexhill Leisure pool is small with only 20 stations. Of the 13 venues 9 are accessible on a pay and play and or membership basis. Only 2 venues are for registered members only and 2 are private access.

Availability

- It is the pay and play/membership venues which are the effective available supply for public use and this has the most quantity of provision. The largest venue at Bexhill Leisure Centre has membership of 1,500 members and a turnover of between 100 – 150 members a month. At the peak public times of weekday evenings there is 100% usage of the centre as there is at

capacity to increase supply at public leisure centre venues. This gives support to application of the Fitness Industry Association methodology that there is a deficit of 125 stations in Rother and predominately in Bexhill. If this were supplied the number of stations would be 383 stations in Rother which is 10 less than the current supply at the current Hastings supply with 7 venues. So there is some comfort in the projected demand for Rother against the actual provision in Rother.

Rye Sports Centre and Battle Abbey Sports Centre. At Bexhill members do have to wait to access specific machines such as treadmills. The centre has tried incentives to stagger the times of peak usage but this does not reduce demand at peak times. Despite this full peak time usage the centre does retain its membership.

- Rye Sports Centre and Battle Area Sports Centre have the same 100% occupancy weekday evenings 6pm – 9pm and for four hours each weekend day. Centre managers at both Bexhill and Battle Abbey have expanded their gym areas as much as possible within the buildings and both confirm the need for bigger gyms and this is sustained over a few years. At Bexhill the suggested requirement is for a gym of 120 stations, so 45 more stations than at present. Again this gives comfort to the FIA assessment of a deficit of 125 stations across all of Rother.
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Studios Key Findings

Studios Key Issues

Quantity

- There are 9 purpose built dance studios across Rother. This however maybe an under estimate reflecting that data collection has only just started. There are also dance and exercise classes which take place in community centres. However the project scope is to assess the supply and demand for dedicated provision for dance studios. The 9 venues are 4 less than the 13 venues for health and fitness (gyms). This maybe a reflection of the small scale size of the gyms in Rother. The dry side public leisure centres in Rother have studios.
- Eight of the venues are pay and play access with St Richard's College having private use access.
- In Hastings there are also 9 studios but at 7 venues. There being two studios at Bannatynes Health Club and Summerfields Leisure Centre. Of the 7 venues there are 5 pay and play access and one at Bannatynes is for membership access only. William Parker Sports College being accessed by membership of the community association.
- The oldest studios in Rother are Rye Sports Centre in 1987.
- Bexhill Leisure Centre opened in 1990 and the studio at Battle Area Sports Centre is a conversion from former squash courts – but is a dance studio specification. The most recent is at Bexhill Academy opened in 2010.
- Active People data on participation is available for a number of related activities that take place in studios, these are (1) movement and dance and (2) keep fit/exercise classes. As with the gym data Active People data for participation is not available at individual local authority level, but it is at the Active Sussex level but only from 2011 onwards.
- At the Active Sussex level the rate of participation for movement and dance rose from 0.7% of the adult population doing it in 2011 to 1.6% in 2012 and has since declined to 1.2% of adults in 2014 but still a 0.5% increase over four years.
- Participation in keep fit and exercise classes and the once a week participation rate at the Active Sussex level was 2.3% of all adults in 2011, then 1.8% in 2012 and for 2013 and 2014 it has been 2.4% of all adults doing exercise classes at least once a week.
- To gain a better understanding of the potential scale of demand in Rother itself, the market

- Studios are a dedicated facility type that requires a sprung timber floor, excellent quality sound systems, air conditioning and a mirrored wall. Quality of instruction is also a very big feature in demand. There is possibly an issue in the relationship between the facility provision need and the different types of demand – is this long term? Consultation with the facility managers at the school/college venues, Bexhill Leisure Centre and Rye Sports Centre has identified a constant and increasing demand for different types of exercise and dance classes. There is now a long established trend for individual activity which is exercise and fitness based so as to achieve a healthy lifestyle.
- There is also an increasing trend of people doing exercise classes in preference to gym, although this could be a reflection of lack of access to machines at times that suit and the transfer ability to join a class. Again a feature that is happening more widely than just in Rother but has been confirmed by centre managers.
- Exercise classes and dance activity require less time commitment, organisation and less learning of skills. For team or individual sports it is time to play, train and learn skills. The Active People research has established these as strong motivations to increasing participation, especially amongst younger females and females in mid life as increasing demand for studios. There is a trend for increasing participation in these activities and possibly less participation in hall sports.
- An emerging issue is another national trend based on the popularity of exercise classes/fitness training and circuits and these activities replacing the use of sports halls for indoor hall sports. Simply put exercise has bigger numbers requiring a bigger space. Consultations have suggested this is a trend at some of the school sports halls. However the public leisure centres in Rother do retain the sports hall for

segments for the female segments who participate most in dance/exercise has been plotted for a 3 mile catchment area of Battle Area Sports Centre. The centre was selected because of its central location in the district and it does provide an extensive community programme for dance/exercise.

- It shows for these seven segments there is a total population of 2,690 people and 4 segments with a population of over 500 people. It is quite a considerable potential number of participants in this area of Rother.

Accessibility

- Access to studios is based on applying the same accessibility criteria as for gyms of a 20 minute drive time catchment area and it shows the same results as for gyms. The finding is that there is a small area of Rother to the north bordering Wealden and Tunbridge Wells which is outside the 20 minute drive catchment area of a dance studio.
- Accessibility will be enhanced because of the village halls and community centres which provide for dance and exercise classes although not in dedicated studios.

Availability

- Consultation findings from discussions with the managers of Bexhill Leisure Centre, Battle Area Sports Centre, Rye Sports Centre, Bexhill Academy and Bexhill 6th Form College all identify that studios are occupied at full capacity for classes in the weekday evenings of 6pm – 9pm. In addition at Bexhill Leisure Centre given the age profile of the District there is increasing usage and studio occupancy of 4-5 sessions a week for classes during day off peak times. This demand possibly exists in the joint use venues but schools occupancy during day times precludes availability for community activity at these times.
- Dance exercise is female dominated with occupancy by females at over 90% of participants. Also females prefer all women sessions. However spinning classes are more evenly balanced with equal male and female participants. Combination of exercise and strength work and not focusing on co-ordination is the appeal to men.
- Consultation has also identified there is a small cross over from participants doing gym but who cannot access equipment at times that suit them. They will join an exercise class in order to do fitness and exercise at times that suit.

indoor hall sports use and contain exercise classes to the studios.

- A future challenge is possibly balancing numbers for exercise as an individual activity and providing a broad based sporting participation offer for indoor hall sports. Consultation has confirmed Rother District has a strong, long term and well respected commitment to sports development.
- Overall the issues for dance studios are about the need to increase provision and that fits with the Council's wider regeneration and healthy lifestyle objectives – very much.
- There is a need for increased provision of studios as new development projects are progressed. The Bexhill Leisure centre project has recommended 2 purpose built studios as an integral part of the project.
- The challenge is to ensure that the need for sports halls for indoor sports is also recognised in its own right that the sports hall does not become by drift of popularity of exercise and the financial return an exercise venue at the expense of individual and team hall sports.

Squash Key Findings

Squash Key Issues

Quantity

- There are 3 squash court venues in Rother with a total of 8 courts, Bexhill Leisure Centre has 3 courts, one of which is a glass backed court. This is the only glass backed court in Rother. Cooden Beach Sports and Social Club has three courts and there are 2 courts at Bexhill Squash and Social Club.
- Bexhill Leisure Centre is a pay and play public venue. Whilst the other two venues are club based venues requiring membership of the club.
- The Active People data on participation in squash also includes racketball and it is only available at the South East Region and at England wide level. This is because the Active People survey respondents were insufficient to generate an accurate rate of participation.
- The rate of at least once a week participation in squash at regional and national level has declined over the 2006 – 2014 period of the Active People surveys. In SE Region this is from 0.93% of the regional population playing squash in 2006 to 0.69% in 2014. At England wide level, it has declined more from 0.74% of the population playing at least once a week in 2006 to 0.47% in 2014.
- The market segmentation data does develop a participation in squash and racketball in Rother but this is based on measuring at least once a month participation. For virtually all of the Rother area there is at least once a month participation rate in squash, which is 1.1% - 2% of the Rother adult population. However within Bexhill and Rye this is lower at 0.1 – 1% of the adult population playing squash at least once a month. For people who would like to play squash, the market segmentation identifies a latent demand of a lower rate at 0.1% - 1% of the Rother adult population would like to play at least once a month
- The Bexhill Leisure Centre courts opened in 1990 and have been maintained over that period. The Cooden Beach squash courts opened in 1977 and have been well maintained since. They are in a 2 and 1 court set up and the 2 courts were completely refurbished in 2014. The changing rooms are also well maintained. The Bexhill Sports Club courts were opened in 1955 and no further details are available.

Accessibility

- The location of the squash venues are all in Bexhill and based on the 20 minutes' drive time, it

- There are options on what is the rate of participation and demand for squash in Rother. Applying the SE region once a week rate to Rother would mean 0.69% of the adult population playing at least once a week. Whereas the market segmentation data for Rother itself for those who do play and would like to play – but based on at least once a month – shows a participation rate of between 1.2%- 2% for most of Rother. It is lower at around 1% in Bexhill and Rye.
- On balance and considering all the data, a rate of 1% of the Rother adult population playing squash at least once a week is a reasoned assessment.
- The absence of glass backed court(s) at the main club venue is possibly a quality limitation and expectation of current standards by club players.
- Consultation with Cooden Beach club identified access barriers of travel time, distances and time commitment by members to compete in the Sussex League (up to 1 hour travel in each direction). It is a barrier to improving squash performance standards. Members really want to play in the local or club league because it is local and makes less personal demands on time and travel.
- Both Cooden Beach and Bexhill Leisure Centre have 100% occupancy weekday evenings between 6pm – 9pm (up to 10pm at Cooden Beach). Summer evenings occupancy May – August can be lower. Day time use at three venues is very low and would seem to be only 5% occupancy.
- The occupancy rates at both venues have been steady for the past 2-3 years. Bexhill Squash Club it is understood has declining membership and is by far the least active venue.

shows the same findings as for other facility types of an area to the north of the district which is outside the drive to catchment area of sports facilities.

- Consultation with the Cooden Beach club identified the catchment area for the club membership is Rother wide and from Hastings. Consultation with the Bexhill Leisure Centre confirmed that for pay and play access the Centre draws predominately on a Bexhill and Hastings town catchment area.
- Consultation has identified membership of the Cooden Beach Squash club is around 40 – 50 members and been steady for the past three years. Membership of the racketball club is between 60 – 70 members and again steady. It appeals more to old aged players where squash and issues of agility and knee problems make squash more demanding – again reflective of the sports participation profile and demographics of Rother.

Availability

- Consultation with BLC as the pay and play venue identifies the courts are available throughout the opening times of the centre. Peak time usage is 100% occupancy between 6pm – 9pm weekday evenings for all three courts. Given the courts are only pay and play and there is no club structure or a squash ladder then this identifies a strong level of demand for casual play. Outside of these hours there is virtually no use of the courts. Day time use of one court is for table tennis.
- Rye Sports Centre used to have one court for pay and play availability but the court has been converted to a small dance/exercise studio (10 users for a session) because of lack of demand and increased demand for exercise classes. Possibly a reason for the high occupancy of the BLC courts is because of casual squash use moving to Bexhill.
- Two clubs operate on a membership basis and the Cooden Beach club also operates a guest availability as a way of encouraging people to play and take out a membership.
- Consultation identified that the Cooden Beach squash courts have 100% occupancy weekday evenings 6pm – 10pm. There are Sussex League and club league competitions. Outside of the peak hour's day time occupancy is very low at only around 5% of court time available. Consultation with Bexhill squash club was not possible but the understanding is that membership is only around 12 playing members.

The key factors/issues for squash are:

- The rate of participation - for Rother this appears to be steady at around 1% of the Rother population playing at least once a month. This is slightly higher than the rate for SE Region which is around 0.75% of adult but has been declining in recent years. The NGB is trying to actively promote squash participation and the focus is on club based participation squash.
- The Rother demographics for the main squash playing age group of 25 – 49 are not increasing over the period up to 2025 and so maintaining the current rate of participation against this backdrop should be considered an achievement – the trend evidence is not towards increasing participation in squash but retention.
- The balance between pay and play and membership use - the Bexhill Leisure Centre is providing for pay and play and the demand is for 2 people x 3 courts = 6 people @45 minutes per session) x 4 sessions per evening x 5 nights = 120 users per week, with some day time off peak usage. It is a large space with limited alternative uses, except possibly for table tennis and as a small exercise area for up to 10 people.
- In any future changes in provision the challenge is to maintain a balance of access with pay and play (at BLC) and membership access at Cooden Beach. Bexhill Squash club is also membership based but is much less active and it is understood only has around 12 playing members.
- The vexed issue is occupancy with 100% occupancy at both main venues for weekday evenings for 3 hours a night. Outside of these days/hours occupancy is at best 5% of time available. Alternative uses are limited but can be for table tennis and small exercise classes – without fundamentally changing the space. This is more limited option at Cooden Beach because it is a squash, racketball and tennis venue.

Overall the way forward for squash is;

- Continuation of a pay and play venue for squash given the consistent levels of participation and demand at peak times in Rother. Also it is the entry into the sport and if there is not a pay and play venue to try the sport and provide for casual participation, then the only access is through membership of one club. This will discourage some casual participation.
- In any future project squash provision could be reduced to two courts acknowledging this does cause an issue of access to a third court for up to 15 hours a week, for which there is demand in Bexhill. However the space for the 2 players per court for three hours a week for five nights a week, has to be considered against the cost of provision. Plus the alternative uses of that space for higher participation in other activities.

5: Strategy Recommendations and Reasoned Justification

- 5.1 This section sets out the recommendations for each sports facility type. The recommendations are categorised under the headings of 'Protect', 'Enhance' and 'Provide', as recommended by Sport England in the ANOG guidance. These categories are not mutually exclusive and some options will sit comfortably both within 'Enhance' and 'Provide' for example.
- 5.2 Also some recommendations are not self-contained to one facility type or location and so there is a read across between some of the options. Between them, they encompass the approach to underpin the development of a sustainable framework for the future provision of facilities across Rother District.
- 5.3 A description of each heading is;

Protect

- To protect and maintain existing sports facilities for sport and physical activity where the needs assessment has identified a current and future by the core resident population.
- To protect the overall balance of facilities where the needs assessment has identified a continuing need. This recognises there could be replacement or re-provision of existing facilities based on the needs assessment identifying a better facility mix and/or location to meet supply, demand and access. It is not preservation of the existing stock. If there is re-provision then there should not be a net reduction in the overall scale of provision.
- To protect, develop and secure the community use of sport facilities on education sites and to do so in a cohesive approach with a co-ordinated approach to access and use.

Enhance

- To upgrade and enhance existing sports facilities for community use so as to ensure that sports facility needs are met by the provision of appropriate, high quality facilities in the future.
- To manage and programme facilities effectively and sustainably across sites and promote partnership working to enable greater use of existing sports facilities and the sharing of skills, expertise, resources and facilities.
- To improve accessibility to sports facilities, in order to encourage greater participation by all sectors of the community.
- In order to increase participation for a healthy and active lifestyle benefit, it is considered enhanced facilities at existing sites (which are already known to the local community) are a more effective way to encourage and develop more participation across a wider population.

Provide

- To provide facilities for sport and active recreation where, based on the needs assessment, there is a gap in the existing supply and/or a demand which exists now and which is projected to be sustained and possibly increase.
- To provide updated information on sports participation and the demand for facilities based on the needs assessment reports.

5.4 The suggested recommendations for delivery of the strategy and what could be done under each of these headings are set out in Table 5.1 overleaf. The recommendations for each facility type are: SH Sports Halls; SP Swimming Pools; H&F Health and Fitness; S Studios; SQ Squash.

Table 5.1: Strategy recommendations and reasoned justification for each of the five sports facility types

Sports Halls	
PROTECT	<p>SH 1. Protect the existing stock of sports halls for community use as there is a need to retain the existing quantity of supply across the district to meet demand up to 2025 and beyond.</p> <p>There are separate ownership, management and access arrangements for community use across the sports hall sites. It is a fact of life and this makes meeting the needs for community use more complex.</p> <p>Retention of the sports hall stock at its current range of locations is essential to meeting the demand now and up to 2025 and beyond. Any loss of a venue for community use will change the overall supply and demand balance. There are two joint use agreements in place at Rye Sports Centre and Battle Area Sports Centre but it would appear at the other school/college venues arrangements for community use could be reviewed and changed.</p> <p>This requirement for retention of community facilities and resist any loss is recognised in paragraph 14.17 of the Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy (page 107) and also referred to Policy CO1, which safeguards community facilities and services.</p> <p>The assessment report does provide details of the supply and demand for each venue and this data is updated annually by Sport England. Should there be any proposal in the future to reduce access or close any school/college venue for community use, it is suggested that the Active Places Power (APP) data at that time is used to assess how any changes would affect the overall supply and demand balance. The APP data is available free to local authorities and all a local authority has to do is register on the APP part of the Sport England web site to access the data. In effect Sport England is ensuring there is an accurate and up to date database which local authorities can use to assess the impacts of proposed changes.</p> <p>Timescale – ongoing Lead responsibility – Rother District Council</p>
ENHANCE	<p>SH 2 Consider the opportunities to improve the quality of existing venues in terms of sports halls, flooring, lighting and changing accommodation.</p>

	<p>The assessment report and consultation has identified that the quality of the sports halls at Bexhill Leisure Centre and Battle Abbey Sports Centre is an issue in terms of size of venue with limited run off areas between courts and the flooring (lack of sprung timber floor at Bexhill). This is a reflection of the age of the venues. The average age of the public sports halls is 27 years.</p> <p>The provision of solid floors and the absence of sprung timber floors has been commented on by local clubs and Badminton England as increasing the potential for as well as actual injury. Also a solid floor discourages the improvement of standards of performance. It could also be a barrier to increased participation as participants compare quality with other venues.</p> <p>Opportunities to improve sports hall quality is dependent on funding. Sport England does have themed rounds for improvement in the quality and modernisation of sports facilities. It is the Inspired Facilities Programme with capital grant aid of £20,000 - £150,000 for local authority applicants but does require matched funding. Asset owning clubs and education establishments are also eligible.</p> <p>An advantage of an education sports hall site improving its facilities is that it would tie the school/college into a community use agreement for several years and hours of use for the community. So it would assist recommendation SH 1.</p> <p>Timescale – ongoing Lead responsibility – Rother District Council</p>
<p>PROVIDE</p>	<p>SH 3. Provide a new indoor sports hall located in Bexhill to meet the needs of indoor hall sports, so as to increase and broaden the sports and physical activity participation and contribute to the District Council's collective regeneration objectives for the District. The scale of the sports hall should be a 34.5m x 20m the maximum size for a 4 badminton court size sports hall</p>

The need and reasoned justification for this project has several strands

- The assessment of need has identified that the supply and demand for sports halls provision are in balance in 2015 with the resident population estimated to generate a demand for a minimum of 26 badminton courts (rounded). This compares to a current available supply of 27 badminton courts which are available for community use. There is a need to protect the existing supply (SH1) but also to maintain a better scale and quality of supply to meet demand up to 2025 and beyond.
- The public leisure centre sports halls are full at peak times, accommodating most demand and they provide for the full range of activities and types of use, club and pay and play. The centres are meeting increasing demand for new types of activity, fun and thrill activity especially. Plus there is increasing demand for exercise classes in larger numbers and which are accommodated in studios.

The centres and Active Rother have resisted programming these activities into the main sports halls because of the need to provide for indoor hall sports for both club and pay and play – at all levels. The District Council wishes to continue to offer a broad based participation, physical activity and sports development offer.

- The current demographics of the District are creating increased demand for day time use of sports halls by older residents and this can only be met at public leisure centres. This is because of being unable to access education venues during the day. NGB's have said the opportunities for older age groups to be able to access educational leisure centres during the day is essential to maintain and increase participation.
 - The Council has adopted planning policies to regenerate the District and increase the working age population in the district, through an increased housing supply, development of the skills base and widening employment opportunities. A changing and younger demographic will broaden and increase sports participation. Provision of modern, fit for purpose indoor sports facilities is an integral part of the Council's adopted regeneration strategy and the need to improve the offer.
 - The Council's adopted Local Plan Core Strategy has an adopted policy to provide for a new multi purpose sports and leisure facility in Bexhill, on the site of the existing Bexhill Leisure Centre (paragraph 8.25 page 48, policy BX 1 page 50 and policy CO 3 page 111). The assessment report which is Appendix 2 to this strategy provides the evidence base to support that adopted policy in terms of quantity of need, quality, accessible location and availability to meet a range of activities for sport and physical activity.
 - The quality of the existing sports halls in the absence of modern fit for purpose buildings with sprung timber floors, higher grade lighting, run off space between courts, lack of spectator space and even more storage space are all quality barriers to increasing participation. The stock is well maintained but it is not modern day standards in terms of specifications and quality standards. Despite this the centres are still attracting and retaining participation but realizing potential is a barrier.
 - Overall there is need for a new sports hall in Bexhill to address all these findings. The new centre would replace the existing Bexhill Leisure Centre and its 1990 sports hall of 32m x 18m.
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- There is demand for more flexible use of the sports halls to accommodate a wider range of activities. However there is limited scope to do this, for example one activity can take up two badminton courts, so two courts (for say) table tennis and two for badminton. However most sports require use of the full hall and there is not the size of venue to offer a more flexible programme of activity.
 - Clubs have commented that local level competitions have to be held outside the district for some sports because the size of the sports hall in Rother and the need to have more run off areas and accommodate spectators. Also lack of storage space to store equipment especially matting for martial arts is an issue. As is the inability to have a permanent matted area for martial arts and this is restricting clubs from doing grading events.

For all the reasons set out from the assessment of need and consultations, the requirement is for provision of a 4 badminton court size sports hall to meet the needs of hall sports within the District up to 2025 and beyond and meet the Council's sports development, development planning policies and wider regeneration objectives. The provision is a 4 badminton court sports hall of 34.5m x 20m, adopting the design and quality specification set out in the Sport England and the indoor hall sports NGB guidelines for provision of sports halls.

Timescale – short term 2015 - 2020

Lead responsibility – Rother District Council

SWIMMING POOLS

PROTECT

SP 1 Protect the existing stock of swimming pools for community use as there is a need to retain the existing quantity of supply across the district to meet demand up to 2025 and beyond

This is the same issue as for sports halls. However it is simpler in that there are in effect only three swimming pool sites and two of these are public swimming pools. However it is more difficult because the third site at St Mary's Special School is a special school but which does provide extensive community use. It is also the pool most used by clubs and swim schools. So it is an important venue for learn to swim programmes and swimming development. It needs to be retained to meet these particular uses as well as wider community use. The fourth site is Crowhurst Park but this is a commercial holiday centre and access for Rother residents is by membership of the centre to access the pool.

This requirement for retention of community facilities and resist any loss is recognised in paragraph 14.17 of the Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CO3. This does refer to all indoor sports and recreational facilities. It is an important planning policy to allow the district an early warning of potential change of provision. .

Overall the reasoned justification for setting out that the swimming pool stock needs to be retained are:

- Swimming is the most popular activity within Rother and swimming participation is across all age ranges – it is the only facility type which is a cradle to grave facility in terms of ages of participants. It is also it is also a lifetime and safety skill. It has higher participation by female
- Swimming participation in Rother is increasing – albeit slowly but against a backdrop of decreasing participation nationally and regionally
- There is a current small deficit in water space in 2015 across Rother where demand exceeds supply by 70 sq metres of water
- The Council's wider regeneration strategy will generate increased demand for swimming pools
- The responsibility of East Sussex County Council and schools to meet the national curriculum requirement that by the end of key stage 2 children have learnt to swim.

All these findings underline the need to retain and protect the existing supply of swimming pools for community use.

Timescale – ongoing

Lead responsibility – Rother District Council Planning and Active Rother

ENHANCE	<p>SP 2 consider the opportunities to improve the quality of existing swimming pools in terms of changing accommodation and modernisation of the pool</p>
	<p>This recommendation is limited in scope for two reasons. Firstly it really only applies to Rye Sports Centre and St Mary's School (SP 3 relates to Bexhill) which is an organisation independent of Rother District Council. Secondly the scope is restricted to improvements in changing accommodation and possibly the pool hall.</p> <p>Some of the swimming pools in Rother are small scale, the standard community pool is 25m x 4 lanes at 220 sq metres of water. The Rye Sports Centre pool is a 200 sq metres pool and opened in 2003. St Mary's School pool is also a 200 sq metre pool opened in 1989 and has not had a major modernisation. The Bexhill Leisure pool is 250 sq metres of water. The pool at Battle School a 25m x 6 lane is the largest at 312 sq metres of water but this is owned and managed by the independent private school.</p> <p>The biggest quality and activity constraint for pools is the size of pools for which little if anything can be done, The size and possibly the configuration of the pool at Bexhill Leisure Centre does constrain the pools from being able to provide for the full range of swimming activities: these being learn to swim; public casual recreational swimming; lane and fitness swimming and swimming development programmes through clubs. The size of the water area of each pool in effect limits programming to one or at best two swimming activities at any one time. Clubs have commented on the problems of limited access and pool time at St Mary's School pool. Although they very much welcome the use they have to do development work and learn to swim.</p> <p>That constraint notwithstanding opportunities to improve changing accommodation should be taken. Sport England's Inspired Programme is a funding source. Education establishments are eligible to apply.</p> <p>Timescale – ongoing Lead responsibility – Rother District Council</p>
PROVIDE	<p>SP 3. Provide a new swimming pool located in Bexhill as an integral part of the Bexhill proposed new Leisure Centre. The requirement is for a pool facility which meets the full swimming activities of learn to swim, casual recreational swimming, fitness lane swimming and club development. The recommendation is for is a 6 lane x 25 metre main pool and a separate teaching/learner pool of 100 sq metres of water.</p>

The justification for this project also has many strands as set out below:

- A very big justification is that NONE of the existing swimming pool sites in Rother has a dedicated and separate teaching/learner pool which is an unusual finding. It means that learn to swim programmes or confidence building activity either takes place in the leisure part of Bexhill pool or in the main tank at the other sites.
- This maybe a constraint on people especially children learning to swim and could be suppressing swimming participation – don't get confident and learn to swim/then don't swim. Expectations and provision in most local authorities is for a dedicated teaching/learner pool. Swimming clubs have commented on the constraints posed by the absence of such a pool for learn to swim programmes.
- Demand for swimming exceeds supply across the district by 70 sq m of water in 2015 and is considered to be an under estimate of the amount of unmet demand. This is because the two public pools are attracting most of the demand because of the swimming offer they provide of all swimming activities and at public leisure centres. Whereas the school based pools offer limited time for community use and this is for learn to swim programmes and club development only. Hence because of the greater offer at the public leisure centres the findings from the Sport England data is that Bexhill and Rye are attracting more demand in the weekly peak period of weekday evenings and weekend days.
- Rother has maintained and slightly increased its swimming participation rates from 6.4% to 6.9% of adults swimming at least once a week over the 2006 – 2014 period. This is against the regional and national trend of declining swimming participation. (Confirmed in June 2015 with the latest release of Active People national data for sports participation). If this trend in Rother continues of increasing participation there is little scope for more pool time to be found and unmet demand will increase. Or if pools are too full this could discourage participation.
- Swimming pools are the facility type that is most compatible with meeting the Council's wider regeneration objectives and creating a more balanced workforce in terms of age and skills across Rother. It will create new demands for swimming. Also the Council's health objectives are best met by swimming pools. An aging core resident population will still swim and the motivations are for health benefit and recreation.
- None of the swimming pool venues are suitable for the staging of swimming galas. This is not a big limitation as there are alternative swimming venues and the consultation identified it as a minor issue for clubs. However the opportunity to stage very local galas can attract interest and lead to more swimming development.
- As with sports halls the Council's adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan has a policy to provide for a new multi-purpose sports and leisure facility in Bexhill (paragraph 8.25 page 48, policy BX 1 page 50 and policy CO 3 page 111). The assessment report provides the evidence base to support that adopted policy in terms of quantity of need, quality, accessible location and availability. It will provide at one venue a swimming pool which can cater for the full range of swimming activity. Based on the pool location and its catchment area a pool of this size recommended will serve district wide needs. This still needs the retention of the pool at Rye to meet the demand for swimming in that part of the district.

Based on the assessment, the scale of provision required to replace the existing Bexhill Leisure Pool and provide a pool which meets the full swimming activities of learn to swim, casual recreational swimming, fitness lane swimming and club development is a 6 lane x 25 metre main pool and a separate teaching/learner pool of 100 sq metres of water.

This scale of provision and configuration is for a main pool and separate teaching/learner pool. It is recognised that the current Bexhill Pool is a leisure pool and this has distinct features. Plus the pool's financial performance will reflect a wider catchment area for fun leisure and recreational swimming. The precise configuration and type of pool for the new project will be the subject of detailed feasibility.

This recommendation is based on the scale of swimming pool provision to meet the current and projected needs for all swimming activity up to 2025 and beyond.

Timescale – short term 2015 - 2020

Lead responsibility – Rother District Council

HEALTH AND FITNESS

PROTECT	HF 1. To retain the existing supply of health and fitness venues in the District and promote enhancement of the quality of the venues
	<p>The assessment recognises there is a mixed economy of provider and operators of health and fitness provision in the District. There is competition between providers and there are distinct markets based on the quality of venues and the ability and willingness to pay a membership.</p> <p>There are 13 venues in Rother District providing 258 stations. A very noticeable feature is the very small number of stations at an average of 20 stations across the 13 venues. There are also 6 of the 13 venues where the provision is less than 10 stations. Overall this SCALE of provision reflects the market for gyms and demographics in Rother and there is a need to retain the small scale gym provision across the district as well as meet the demand for increased gym provision of a bigger scale (HF2).</p>
PROVIDE	HF 2. Provide a new health and fitness centre with a gym of 120 stations for cardio vascular, strength and conditioning as an integral part of the Bexhill new Leisure Centre (with recommendation SH 3 and SP 3)
	<p>As with the sports hall and swimming pool recommendations the need and reasoned justification of this project has several strands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of need has identified that the demand for gyms in terms of stations exceeds supply. Based on the Fitness Industry Association methodology there is a deficit of up to 125 stations across Rother. • The public leisure centres have increased their capacity for gyms but cannot increase it any further. The scale of provision of gyms across Rother is small scale with 13 venues providing 258 stations at an average of 13 stations per venue. The nature of the provision means there is no one venue which can increase its supply to meet the projected deficit of gym stations. At best the venues will provide small scale increases. • The District Council wishes to provide leadership and develop the scale of gym which is required to meet demand up to 2025 and beyond. This is also about the Council's adopted corporate policies to regenerate the District and create a younger demographic profile which will broaden and increase sports participation. Gyms are a facility type which will very much appeal to this changing demographic profile. Provision of modern, fit for purpose indoor sports facilities is an integral part of the Council's adopted regeneration strategy and the need to improve the offer. • The Council's adopted Core Strategy and Local Plan has an adopted policy to provide for a new multi-purpose sports and leisure facility in Bexhill, (paragraph 8.25 page 48 and policy CO 3 page 111). The assessment report provides the evidence base to support that adopted policy in terms of quantity of need, quality, accessible location and availability to meet a range of activities for sport and physical activity. <p>For the reasons set out from the assessment of need and consultations, the requirement is for provision of a new gym with up to 120 stations as an integral part of the new Bexhill Leisure Centre project.</p> <p>Timescale – short term 2015 - 2020 Lead Responsibility – Rother District Council</p>

STUDIOS

PROVIDE

S 1 Provide two studios as part of the Bexhill new sports and leisure centre (with recommendation SH 3, SP 3 and HF 2)

Recommendations for dance studios related to protect and enhance are more problematic. They are about dedicated and purpose built dance studios. Not about multi purpose community centres which is a different assessment and facility type and based on the full range of activities that can take place in community centres of which dance and exercise are two. There is less of a public expectation of public sector provision for studios as there is for pools and sports halls – but expectations are changing and again the District Council wishes to provide the leadership in the inclusion of studios in the development of the Bexhill new leisure centre project.

Consequently the recommendation is focused on the assessment of need for further purpose built studio provision based on the current supply and demand and projected change up to 2025 and beyond.

In determining the future needs for studios the key factors are:

- To provide dedicated facilities that meet a long term need for dance and exercise classes. The Rother demographics are supportive of a broader based dance/exercise classes participation profile. Somewhat contradictory is the need created by the older population and their use of studios at off peak times for classes. This is only available at public leisure centres because school/college venues preclude it in term time.
- There is an established near 100% occupancy of the public/school and college venues at peak times and the BLC has increased the dance studio provision to 2 dedicated studios (albeit one is for yoga and pilates). Plus provided a dedicated spinning class area. Occupancy has been maintained at these levels and this shows there is sustained participation for this scale of provision. This provision serves a Bexhill area catchment.
- Provision of a larger gym in any new public centre will have knock on effects for increased dance and exercise classes – as one membership package and ability to move between gym and exercise. Active People data shows a strong correlation between the two types of activity.
- The District Council corporate regeneration objectives will broaden the working age population of the District and a population which is retained in the district. This will further increase the demand for studios – at peak times.

Overall the assessment is that there is need for two dedicated studios in their own right and to create more critical mass for the new Bexhill leisure centre project.

Timescale – short term 2015 - 2020

Lead responsibility – Rother District Council

SQUASH	
PROTECT	<p>SQ 1. Retain the existing squash court provision for both pay and play and membership access</p> <p>The justification for this recommendation is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 3 squash court venues in Rother with a total of 8 courts; Cooden Beach Sports and Social Club has three courts and there are 2 courts at Bexhill Squash and Social Club, however membership of the latter is very low. • Bexhill Leisure Centre is a pay and play public access venue, whilst Cooden Beach is membership access. In effect there is one venue in Rother for pay and play and one club based membership venue. • Participation in squash across Rother appears to be holding up at around 1% of the adult population playing at least once a month. Participation at regional level and England wide has been in steady decline for several years and is around 0.8% of adults playing. • Loss of the Bexhill Leisure Centre courts would mean there is no venue which offers pay and play and recreational/casual use access. The Bexhill Leisure Centre courts have 100% occupancy at peak times of weekday evenings 6pm – 9pm but virtually no use outside of these times (a problem for all squash venues) • Without the Bexhill Leisure Centre venue, squash participants – new or the casual player would have to join the Cooden Beach club and take out a membership. Casual players are unlikely to take out a membership and so there could be a fall in participation. <p>There is no issue about threat of loss of these courts because the venue is owned by the District Council and so it can retain the courts</p> <p>Timescale – ongoing</p> <p>Lead Responsibility – Rother District Council (as a watching brief to consider how demand for the squash courts changes at Bexhill Leisure Centre and the continuing need for the courts).</p>
PROVIDE	<p>SQ 2. Consider the provision of 2 squash courts as part of the Bexhill new Leisure Centre (with recommendations SH 3, SP 3, HF 2 and S 1)</p>

This recommendation is to consider this provision because of the need to retain a pay and play and casual use access venue for squash in Rother and against a trend of maintained participation. This does however, have to be set against the cost and most sports effective provision overall for the new centre. Squash has to be the most marginal of the five facility types assessed and recommended for the new centre.

Each squash court at Bexhill Leisure Centre has 100% occupancy of 15 hours a week but are virtually unoccupied at other times. As set out under SQ 1, if the courts were not provided it would mean loss of pay and play access for a sport with steady participation levels and would mean participants taking membership of a club to play. Some will but participation is likely to decline.

Overall the recommendation is to consider the provision of 2 courts for pay and play and casual use at the Bexhill new Leisure Centre. However, to review this as a part of the detailed feasibility for the new centre in terms of what is the most sports and cost effective type and scale of provision for the new centre. A design which allows for flexibility of use of the squash courts by use of movable walls does allow for the space to be used for other activities - such as exercise classes or table tennis at non-squash peak times should be an integral part of the facility mix for the design brief.

Timescale – ongoing

Lead Responsibility – Rother District Council

6: Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 Priorities will change over time as the strategy is delivered and new issues and challenges emerge. Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate the implications of actions taken and the knock-on effect on the overall strategy. While the strategy direction and recommendations should therefore remain, there is a need to be dynamic and responsive to change.
- 6.2 The lifespan of the strategy is to 2025 but it does need to be reviewed based on the points set out below. Also if there are any major changes in the Rother District Core Strategy Local Plan which has a lifespan until 2028.
- 6.3 Monitoring and review of the strategy should be undertaken as follows;

- **Ongoing monitoring of changes to the facilities database.** This is usually regarded as an onerous and tedious task. However for all five facility types included in the strategy Sport England does update the database regularly and this is available on line to the District Council. In effect therefore it is not about reviewing and updating data but much more about ensuring that an officer in the Council is: aware of the Sport England Active Places Power (APP) database; has access to it (which is organised through Sport England and set out in the APP section of their web site); understands how the database works and can interrogate the data.

In effect, it is an electronically updated source of data for the facility types in the strategy (and other facility types), which can be accessed and manipulated for any particular purpose from now on. The purpose of using the APP database is if the District Council should wish to undertake a review of any findings for any facility type then it will be important to use the latest database. This is not an onerous task as Sport England does review and update the database on an annual basis.

- **Assessing the impact of demographic changes and new population estimates.** The needs assessment and strategy is based on the 2015 population in Rother District and then projected forward to 2025 for both genders and in five year age bands. Should the population projections change significantly – a very unlikely occurrence - then the assumptions about demand changes from assumptions about the active population and this would need to be reviewed
- **Reviewing participation/frequency of participation rates.** The needs assessment is based on Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport participation and frequency of participation rates. The strategy is based on the trends in these participation rates since 2006 and then projecting forward based on this knowledge and the anticipated population changes

It is possible to monitor participation trends for specific sports and for specific facility types for each local authority area through the Sport England Active People Survey. It is also possible to monitor changes by age and gender across all sports for 14 +, also at each local authority area level

Overall it is possible to put annual change into a longer time perspective. The findings in the strategy on facility needs are valid within a 5% change in participation up or down over 2015 – 2025. In effect this is almost a 0.5% annual change in participation up to 2025. It will still be important however to monitor the changes in the rates and frequencies of participation as there can be specific changes caused by the popularity of particular activities, for example the growth of spinning classes. This can create pressure for more access and facility time at venues. These changes can usually be absorbed by programming changes and not require additional provision of facilities

- **Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action.** This is the most important part of monitoring and, in effect, it is monitoring the delivery of the strategy. It is assumed that Rother District Council will take the responsibility for doing this. There is a specific recommendation regarding maintaining a watching brief on the continuing demand for squash for pay and play at Bexhill Leisure Centre. This can be done through the contract management and if there is a decline in the use for pay and play use then alternative use of the courts should be considered. In terms of the review of the strategy itself it should be a mid-strategy review in 2020 to determine if the key drivers for the Council of regeneration are taking place and there is an increase in the working age population and a wider skill and employment base. Best done by monitoring how changes in participation (as set out in Appendix 2 assessment report) have changed 2015 – 2020. If there is a more than 5% increase or decrease then the recommendations for each facility type should be reviewed based on the changes in participation and any changes in facility supply. A 5% change is the level at which the recommendations can start to change. It is very unlikely that a change in participation of this level will occur over a five year period. Participation changes less than that means the recommendations in the strategy will hold good for the strategy period to 2025. The life span of the strategy is to 2025 and the projects reflect that timescale
- **Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities.** The needs assessment report does provide a profile of adult participation in sport and physical activity and a facility needs assessment. This can be used as the evidence base to support grant aid applications. They are adaptable reports and which can be used to support not only local authority major bids for new projects but also to support individual schools and clubs for grant aid to upgrade changing accommodation. Familiarity with the content of these needs assessment reports does provide the evidence base to support grant aid bids. The hard work is done; the part now is for officers and sports clubs/organisations to use the data.