



LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

INDOOR SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITY STRATEGY

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Integrity, Innovation, Inspiration

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INTRODUCTION

This is the Indoor Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy for the London Borough of Camden (LBC) for the ten year period 2015 – 2025. The strategy recommendations are drawn from the accompanying Assessment Report, researched and prepared between April 2014 – January 2015 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP). The Assessment Report and Strategy have been prepared in accordance with the guidance from Sport England contained in the document 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities (ANOG, Sport England, December, 2014).

The consultant team is most grateful to the lead and contributing officers from Camden Council, Sport England and the Council's Pro-Active London (PAC) delivery partners (NHS Camden, GLL, Central YMCA, Voluntary Action Camden, Volunteer Centre Camden, Jubilee Halls, Sport Aid, London Sport Forum for Disabled People, University College London and London Sport) for the time and ideas they have contributed to the assessment and strategy formulation. All agencies will need to continue to work together to deliver this strategy.

Context summary

Camden is a vibrant inner London Borough. As with many parts of Central London it has areas of very high wealth and extreme poverty. The population is circa 224,962, which will increase by 32,000 persons by 2024 and by an additional 26,000 persons between 2024 and 2037. A third of the population are from a non-white ethnic group. There are a high number of students and young professionals and an increasing number of residents aged over 65's.

Housing growth (circa 1,250 homes per annum) is expected to be delivered in the areas of Kings Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road, Holborn and around the West Hampstead Interchange.

Ensuring the health and well-being of communities, and the delivery of modern, 'fit for purpose' community sports facilities is a key priority for Camden Council, who like many other strategic bodies is keen to ensure that the population takes regular exercise and eats a nutritious and well balance diet to maintain health and well-being. The key message from strategic bodies to unhealthy and unfit residents is 'get active'.

Facilities in which to take part in sport and other forms of physical activity will be increasingly significant in helping deliver the 'get active' message and the opportunity to engage and 'be active'. Currently an estimated 44% of adults participated in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sporting activity per week. Most users are aged between 18 and 46. The most popular activities are working out in a health and fitness gym, taking a fitness class and swimming.

Camden has a range of indoor and built sports provision, provided and managed by several different types of organisations, including trusts, schools, charities, hospitals and private companies (see Appendix 1).

Camden has limited specialist sports facilities; Talacre Community Sports Centre (CSC) provides for gymnastics and currently cannot accommodate the demand from the community. There is a purpose built boxing club, the St Pancras Boxing Club in Kentish Town and several squash court venues. Other sports that ideally require specialist

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facilities are accommodated in multi-purpose sports hall venues, for example fencing, indoor bowls and table tennis.

In broad terms Camden is able to accommodate current demand for swimming and swimming pool activities, health and fitness users and people wishing to attend fitness classes. Health and fitness continues to be an extremely popular activity in all the Camden owned facilities. Throughout Camden the market is highly segmented and there are many commercial health and fitness providers.

There is a significant shortfall in sports hall accommodation, calculated by the Sport England's FPM analysis at 21 badminton courts. This 21 court deficit figure does not include the new sport hall at South Hampstead High School provided by the Girls Day School Trust and the inflatable dome erected over a four courts at Queens Crescent Community Centre in Gospel Oak. The shortfall of sports hall provision is considered to be impacting upon participation in sports hall sports (e.g. badminton, basketball, netball, handball and volleyball). The shortfall is a constraint on club and sports development and casual users.

An emerging trend for schools is to block book facilities to activity providers such as GO Mammoth and Power Play. These companies deliver 'social sporting opportunities' to young professionals and although they contribute to the wider participation levels they also have a negative impact on the voluntary sports club sector which has traditionally provided opportunities for residents to develop their skill and compete in their chosen sport.

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PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework specifies that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs. Planning policy should be based on robust, up-to-date assessments of need for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Sport England reflects this by promoting a planned approach to the provision of facilities and opportunities to participate in sport, in doing so adding value to the work of others and helping to deliver sustainable development goals through:

- ◀ Recognising and taking full advantage of the unique role of sport and active recreation in contributing to a wide array of policy and community aspirations, including leisure, health and education.
- ◀ Using sport and recreation as a fundamental part of the planning and delivery of sustainable communities.
- ◀ The development of partnership working using sport and active recreation as a common interest.

In line with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 73), and as presented in the diagram below, Sport England advocates that at the core of planning for sport should be a robust and up-to-date assessment of the needs for sport and active recreational facilities and opportunities for new provision. The results of the assessment should be developed into a clear strategy for meeting the identified needs and integrated into Forward Planning and applied within Development Management.

Figure 1: Sport England Strategic Planning Model



This Strategy seeks to provide all partners and stakeholders in Camden with a valuable tool that guides internal and external investment decisions, supports applications for external funding and informs key management decisions.

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SWOT ANALYSIS

The research and consultation phase of the Strategy was outlined within an Assessment Report; which identified the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of sport and leisure provision in the Borough:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Quality of stock – including school provision - is generally good. ◀ There is unmet demand for gymnastics across the Borough driven predominantly by the specialist provision at Talacre CSC. ◀ The Borough has higher than average participation levels although not amongst the hardest to reach communities. ◀ There is a variety of swimming activity across a range of good quality facilities. ◀ There is a good spread of high quality sports facilities across the Borough, with most residents living within 1 mile of a sports facility. ◀ Camden Swimming Club is reported to offer an excellent learn to swim scheme. ◀ The Council has developed 9 outdoor gym facilities across the Borough. ◀ The GLL leisure management contract returns a surplus to the Council to re-invest in maintain and repairing the fabric and structure of the buildings. ◀ Through surpluses GLL is able invest in built sports provision in Camden. ◀ The reach of the Council's leisure facilities is good, with some drawing from a significantly wide catchment. ◀ There is community use of the majority of school sports facilities with many operating extensively throughout the peak period. ◀ The Council is developing an additional community sports hall facility as part of the new Kings Cross Railway Lands development (via Section 106 funding). A flexible space that can accommodate a range of activities will add to the availability in the area of Camden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ The shortfall in the number of sports halls available for community use. ◀ Camden has two sports halls available for daytime use; while it has an increasing older and time rich population who will be more likely to access facilities during the day. ◀ There is limited opportunity to increase the availability of day time access to sports halls. ◀ Camden does not have a healthy club infrastructure as opportunities for club development are restricted by a lack of access to appropriate facilities. ◀ Cost of facilities appears to be a barrier to access for clubs as many operators block book at higher rates to organisations such as GO Mammoth. ◀ Although there is a good range of swimming programmes it is reported that there are limited women only session ◀ The current arrangement for swimming lessons is unique and there are opportunities where responsibility and accountability fall between partners. This is potentially the case at Oasis where there are no junior swimming lessons and very few junior members.

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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Camden has been identified as a potential location for a specialist gymnastics facility; although this would also serve gymnasts from outside of the Borough. The Council has a developer led opportunity to pursue this in Belsize Park. ◀ Given the recent opening of the Pancras Leisure Centre the Council has the opportunity to review the swimming lesson offer across the Borough, but especially at Pancras LC and Oasis SC ◀ Given the potential provision of new sports halls at Kings Cross and at schools; the Council has the opportunity to influence the programming of these to maximise sports development outcomes (e.g. club development) ◀ It has been identified that the lease on the office block in which Oasis LC sits is due to expire in the medium term. The Council has the opportunity to develop a new facility as part of a wider development; offering a fit for purpose facility with improved access arrangements. ◀ The Council has future opportunities to negotiate its leisure management contract in the medium term and it has the opportunity to include key sports development drivers within it; potentially to fund sports development initiatives (especially at non-contracted facilities). ◀ There are opportunities to review the offer at Talacre CSC in order that it becomes a much more financially sustainable facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ There is the potential that new school sports facilities will continue with current practice and focus purely on financial drivers rather than sports development outcomes. ◀ Although there may be an increase in the supply of facilities (especially sports halls) there is a risk that this does not translate into increased participation among targeted groups (especially young people and disadvantaged communities). ◀ High facility hire costs could continue to be a barrier to specific communities' ability to access sports facilities; especially school sites. ◀ The threat exists that organisations such as GO Mammoth and Power Play continue to dominate access to school sports facilities, thus minimising opportunities for deprived communities. ◀ The rising population base and increasing obesity levels will continue to put pressure on Council services and as such, sports facilities; at a time when Council funding is being reduced and there is a need to focus on income generation.

Camden Council is facing significant budget cuts across all service areas. Even though the Council's leisure management contract returns a management fee to the Council, it is the owner of the assets and as such has ongoing financial liabilities associated with this. A key example is the need to address key power supply issues to Oasis Sports Centre which is likely to be in excess of £1 million. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that facilities are as financially efficient as possible and continue to contribute to the wider cost base of the Council as well as delivering physical activity and health benefits to residents.

Access to facilities and opportunities at/in which to participate in physical activity and sport is essential if Camden residents are to have the opportunity to meet the individual activity targets and goals being set nationally; and to make sport or physical activity a part of their everyday lives.

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NHS Activity Targets

To stay healthy, adults aged 19-64 should try to be active daily and should do:

- ◀ At least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity such as cycling or fast walking every week, and muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).
- ◀ 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity such as running or a game of singles tennis every week, and muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).
- ◀ An equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity every week (for example 2 30-minute runs plus 30 minutes of fast walking), and muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).
- ◀ One way to do your recommended 150 minutes of weekly physical activity is to do 30 minutes on 5 days a week.
- ◀ All adults should also break up long periods of sitting with light activity as sedentary behaviour is now considered an independent risk factor for ill health, no matter how much exercise you do.

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ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Policy objectives

To provide a context for the strategy a broad range of national, regional and local policy documentation was reviewed:

- ◀ Sport England: A Sporting Habit for Life (2012 – 2017)
- ◀ Public Health England: Everybody Active, Everyday, October 2014
- ◀ National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- ◀ Camden Plan 2012 – 2017
- ◀ Local Development Framework
- ◀ Pro-Active Camden
- ◀ Camden Joint Need Assessment 2013-14
- ◀ Camden Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives Action Plan 2013
- ◀ CHESS: Somers Town, Queen's Crescent and West Euston

In general terms, these strategies identify a broad set of aims and objectives to encourage:

- ◀ Healthy lifestyles for individuals.
- ◀ Healthier communities.
- ◀ Residents to be physically active through any means not just playing sport.
- ◀ Increasing activity amongst all groups in society, including the very young and the elderly.
- ◀ Residents to be aware and understand the threat that a poor diet and lack of exercise can pose to physical and mental health and the well-being of individuals.
- ◀ Physical activity and sport to become a habit that is maintained throughout life.

Ensuring the health and well-being of local communities and the delivery of sustainable, modern and a fit for purpose range of community facilities has been identified as a key strategic priority for the London Borough of Camden. This is in line with national policy objectives and the aspirations of national governing bodies of sport to help raise physical activity levels.

Demography

Camden accommodates circa 225,000 residents. Over the next decade this will increase by 32,000 with many new residents being under 24 and over 65. This, alongside the ageing population has implications for the numbers of people wanting access to facilities and the type of activities that will be suitable.

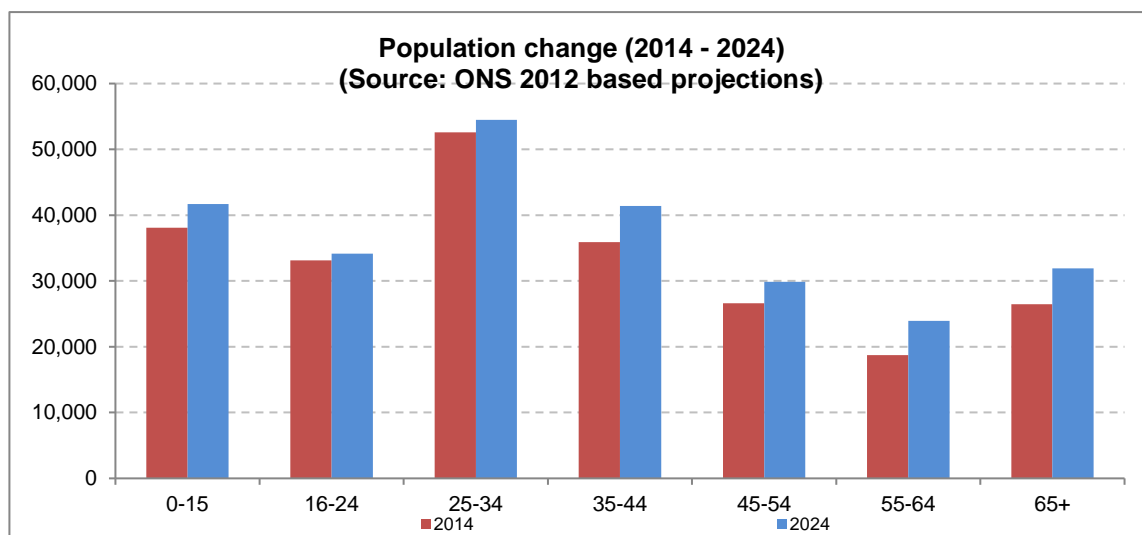
Extreme poverty affects a significant proportion of the population with 45% of residents being in the lowest three bands of deprivation. The potential cost of physical activity will be an issue to many local residents living in deprived areas.

Over a third of the population of Camden is from a black or ethnic minority background; who statistically have lower physical activity levels than white British residents. Increasing participation levels presents different cultural challenges if habit forming patterns of physical activity are to be achieved.

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Figure 2: Population Change 2014 – 2024



The main housing and population growth areas across the Borough will be in areas around Kings Cross, Euston, Tottenham Court Road, Holborn and at West Hampstead interchange. This change in population profile will place additional and different demands on built sport and leisure facilities.

Sporting characteristics

The main Sport England (SE) segments in Camden – which account for 30.6% of the adult population in Camden compared to 18.9% nationally are Settling Down Males, Fitness Class Friends and Sports Team Drinkers; however, this needs to be viewed in the context of 30% of the population of Camden are from non-white ethnic groups.

The most popular sports in Camden are Gym, Swimming, Athletics, Keep Fit Classes and Fitness and Conditioning. In Camden circa 44% of adults participate in 30 minutes moderate intensity sport per week, whereas 56% do not.

Headlines from APS 8 have just been published and nationally it suggests that 36.8% of the population aged 14 and over played sport once a week. There was however a decline of 125,000 people taking part in 30 minutes moderate intensity activity at least once per week than in the same period in 2013.

The biggest drop in participation was in swimming; however, despite this swimming is still Britain’s most popular activity with 2.7million participants per week, followed by athletics (2.2 million) and cycling (2.1 million). Participation rates in golf, tennis, basketball and squash all fell whilst rugby, cricket and netball rose.

It would also appear that there has been a dramatic fall in the numbers of disabled people taking part in sport, down 121,700 in the year. However, in Camden membership of leisure centres by disabled residents are increasing.

Since the survey began in October 2006, it has consistently demonstrated that adults from higher socio economic groups are more likely to take part in sport than people from lower socio- economic groups.

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Core Provision - Sports Halls

There are thirteen, 3+ court sports halls in Camden. The quality of the provision is good or above average. Talacre CSC and Swiss Cottage LC are the only sports halls accessible during the day outside the school holidays. 7 of the sports halls are on school sites and accommodate after school hours community use.

Levels of demand for indoor sports hall facilities cannot be met through existing supply in Camden or its neighbouring authorities. Without investment in new facilities demand for sports hall use is not capable of being accommodated.

The shortfall in supply (estimated by the FPM at 21 badminton courts), is a constraint on demand because there is nowhere for the demand to express itself. This situation is contributing to the weaknesses in the voluntary sports club sector and compounding the shortfall in qualified coaches, and learning and development opportunities. As such there is a lack of significant NGB development schemes and activity within the area, particularly at peak times.

Several sports clubs have expressed demand for specialist indoor facilities:

- ◀ Netball – an indoor court to meet England Netball league requirements (requires the following size sports hall (21.35 m x 34m).
- ◀ Martial Arts – a permanent matted area (Kickboxing members club in Swiss Cottage – no other specialist publicly accessible provision)
- ◀ Fencing – affordable provision (William Ellis School focus of fencing activity in Camden in the multi-purpose hall)
- ◀ Boxing – a second club in the south of the Borough (recommended by ABA Development Officer)
- ◀ Archery – more space and storage facilities. (Hampstead Bowman report limited storage space at The Royal Free Hospital Recreation Club)

Although the clubs have identified a need for specialist facilities, many of these sports can be accommodated within a multi-functional sport hall or ancillary activity room.

Core Provision – Swimming Pools

The assessment identified 15 pools on 11 sites across Camden. Of these four of the pool sites are defined as fully accessible to the public. These are at Pancras Square Leisure Centre, Kentish Town Sports Centre, Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre and Oasis Sports Centre. The others are either part of commercial leisure clubs where a membership is required or lidos. The outdoor pool at Oasis is included as it has enclosed water space and is available all year round.

The majority of Borough residents live within 1 mile of one of the four public pool locations. The FPM analysis and consultation with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) conclude that Camden has some of the best swimming provision in London and sufficient water space to meet current demand. However projected population growth of 32,000 persons by 2024 and 58,000 persons by 2037 and higher activity levels within the population will lead to increased demand and future shortfalls in water space.

All the pools owned by the London Borough of Camden are managed by GLL and accessible to the community for in excess of 70 hours per week. All the pools provide a mixed programme of lane swimming, general swimming, club access with some sessions

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targeted at specific user groups, for example women, 60+ and disability groups. Swimming is a popular activity and the pools in Camden are busy.

The Oasis Pool is, due to the building configuration, the least accessible pool for disabled users and parents with children in buggies and prams. This affects its use by the disabled, young swimmers and family groups. Utility services to the whole building require upgrading and this is a major challenge for the Council in the short to medium. Consideration will need to be given to cost benefit analysis of investing in a facility which is not 'fit for purpose' or considering a new facility as part of a wider regeneration initiative

There are several swimming clubs, the largest being Camden Swimming Club at Swiss Cottage Leisure Centre. There is a high demand for swimming lessons in Camden. Non-school lessons are delivered by Camden Swimming Club (CSC). This is a unique arrangement, whereby the club is the lesson provider but not the pool operator. This situation creates some strategic and operational challenges, regarding the responsibility and accountability for delivering lessons. This arrangement should be monitored and reviewed annually.

Core Provision – Health & Fitness

Across Camden there are a wide range of providers of health and fitness facilities. The quality of provision in the public sector is good and in many instances competes on an equal footing with the commercial sector offer.

Health and fitness through exercising in a gym or class environment is a very popular form of exercise across Camden, appealing to men and women across a wide range of age groups.

There are many providers of health and fitness facilities in Camden and the market is highly segmented. There are many private providers, where price may restrict some users; however, GLL has focussed on providing good quality fitness provision at affordable prices and offers a range of concessions for residents who may be in receipt of benefits. Demand for these facilities is high which enables GLL to provide a financial return to the Council which appears to offset the cost of other elements of the Leisure Service.

The geographical distribution of the main publicly accessible leisure centres, supported by smaller school and community centre provision and the free outdoor gyms ensures Borough wide access to all residents.

Demand for affordable health and fitness provision will increase if more residents can be encouraged to add exercise to their daily routines. For example, it is projected that the new gym at St Pancras will be operating at capacity within a year of opening. Whilst at Kentish Town demand for studio based fitness classes exceeds supply.

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STRATEGY VISION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following vision and strategic recommendations have been informed by the research undertaken in the delivery of the Assessment Report and identified need across the Borough. A sense of realism and local context has been applied to the recommendations and consideration has been given to the likelihood of certain projects coming to fruition. Therefore, although this is KKP's independent assessment of what Camden Council and its partners need to do in order to provide 'fit for purpose' sport and physical activity facilities and opportunities it does not ignore the local environmental and political issues affecting the area.

Vision

To create high quality, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer vibrant and inclusive services for all; enabling more residents and visitors to participate in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health, well-being and happiness.

The following strategic recommendations have been identified to deliver the above vision over the period 2015 – 2025. They provide strategic direction for the Council's Department of Culture and Environment and the agencies, companies, schools and voluntary sector clubs and organisations who provide facilities and opportunities for residents and visitors to pursue sports and recreation as a means to engage in physical activity. The strategic recommendations are developed in line with Sport England's key facility planning drivers of 'Protect', 'Enhance' and 'Provide'. Each recommendation is supported by a summary rationale, drawn from the Assessment Report.

Recommendation No.1

There is a need to protect existing sports facilities as valued community resources for the benefit of residents and visitors to the London Borough of Camden. Facility owners are encouraged to protect facilities and invest in their long term maintenance, keeping them 'fit for purpose' and where possible providing enhancements to meet changing trends, local demand and customer expectations.

In general the quality of Camden's sports facilities is good; however they are largely in limited supply (sports halls in particular are in short supply) and should be protected from re-development. Maintaining the quality of what is available, regardless of the provider, is important ensuring that facilities keep pace with new trends, consumer demand and customer expectations all of which help to encourage participation.

Recommendation No.2

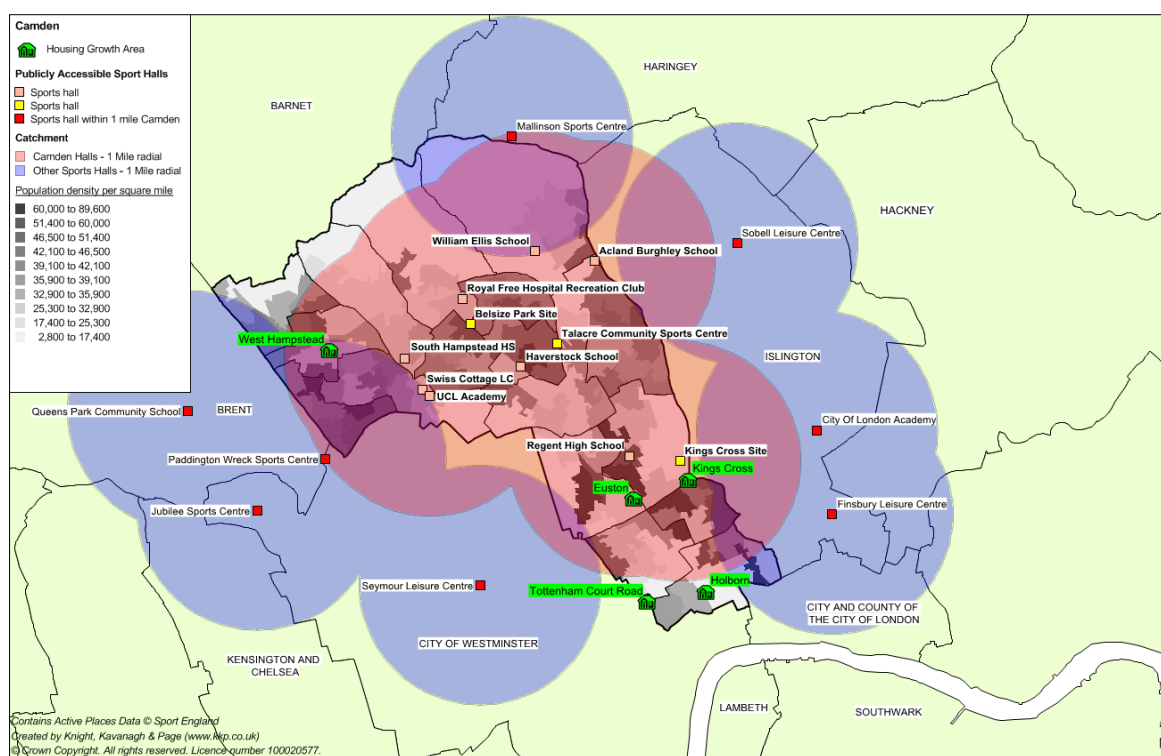
Camden Council should continue to support the development of new sports halls across the Borough, and work with providers to facilitate public access to support the voluntary club sector, through the provision of community use agreements. A key geographical area for new provision is south of the Euston Road and the Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange area.

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There is a significant shortfall in sports hall provision throughout Camden, the equivalent of 21 badminton courts according to Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model (FPM). This shortfall in provision is a constraint on recreational play in some sports as well as the development of the voluntary club sector. Existing provision is unable to accommodate latent and unmet demand for space to play indoor sports that are played in a sports hall environment.

The area south of the Euston Road is, with the exception of the YMCA Club on Tottenham Court Road, bereft of publicly accessible indoor sports hall facilities. Similarly, the area around the Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange area also appears to have limited supply of facilities. However, the FPM analysis indicates that in general all areas can accommodate additional sports hall provision.

Figure 3: Accessible sports hall provision for Camden’s residents



Recommendation No.3

Any plans for the re-development of school sites (predominantly secondary) in Camden should at the outset investigate opportunities to provide indoor sports facilities for long term community use and sports development. Any such use should be secured via a Community Use Agreement.

The Assessment Report identifies that there is a gap in understanding and internal working between the Department of Leisure and Communities and Planning, Property Services, and Children’s Schools and Families. The result is a lack of focus on community access to existing and new school sports facilities and the wider benefits of sports development.

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Any re-development of secondary school sites* in Camden should make provision for community use. A condition of any planning permission should be that the school enters into a Community Use Agreement. It is recommended that Camden Council adopts something akin to:

- ◀ Use of facilities will be charged at an affordable level that takes account of charges made for GLL managed facilities and the 'sports development' or 'community value' of activity provided.
- ◀ The need for schools to generate a 'rate of return' which is justified in the context of their wider commitments and responsibilities.
- ◀ A central and strategic entity should provide guidance and an order of priority with regard to the most suitable clubs/groups to which high demand programme time should be offered; for example, giving Clubmark clubs priority booking to prime peak time booking slots. Ideally this should be an organisation with insight into the voluntary clubs sector (i.e. LBC Sports Development Team).

*Potential school re-building / re-development schemes that have emerged during this study are at Maria Fidelis Roman Catholic School near Euston and at Parliament Hill School near Parliament Hill Recreation Park.

Recommendation No.4

Camden Council should ensure that the resources committed to securing the sports hall and community fitness facilities at the new Kings Cross sports facility contribute to the development of indoor sports and Borough voluntary club needs, whilst generating sufficient revenues to be sustainable.

The assessment of need has identified that the voluntary club structure in Camden is weak as a result of clubs not having access to enough and appropriate facility time in order to grow participation opportunities. Clubs would benefit from support to help provide sports development initiatives and to be signposted to appropriate facilities across the Borough. The new sports hall at Kings Cross presents an ideal opportunity for the Borough to engage with the voluntary club sector and offer support to help drive sports development initiatives and growth in club membership.

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Recommendation No.5

Camden Council should investigate the potential of developing specialist sports facilities in line with NGB priorities and club development opportunities across the Borough e.g.

- ◀ **Netball – an indoor court to meet England Netball league requirements (requires the following size sports hall (21.35 m x 34m).**
- ◀ **Martial Arts – a permanent matted area (Kickboxing members club in Swiss Cottage – no other specialist publicly accessible provision).**
- ◀ **Fencing – affordable provision (William Ellis School focus of fencing activity in Camden in the multi-purpose hall).**
- ◀ **Boxing – a second club in the south of the Borough (recommended by ABA Development Officer).**
- ◀ **Archery – more space and storage facilities. (Hampstead Bowman report limited storage space at The Royal Free Hospital Recreation Club).**

These club specific facility issues were reported in the Club survey carried out as part of the Assessment Report. They present an opportunity for Camden to influence club development and to enable clubs to increase participation. In order to fully support the development of a specialist sports facility Camden Council and its partners must be clear that it delivers increased participation in the specific sports.

Recommendation No.6

Camden Council should pursue the development of a purpose built specialist gymnastics centre (ideally to a regional standard). A potential site has been identified in the Belsize Park ward. How gymnastics provision is managed and delivered at Talacre CSC or at a new facility should be explored with Camden Sports Development Unit (current providers) and GLL (London Borough of Camden Borough leisure contractor).

Gymnastics is an extremely popular activity for children across London; Camden with a potential market base of 38,000 under15's is no exception. Current provision at the Talacre CSC is over-subscribed and the Camden Gymnastics Club, also based at Talacre is the home base for talent development.

Moving gymnastics from Talacre CSC in Kentish Town to Belsize Park would provide an opportunity to increase gymnastics provision to meet unmet and latent demand and further develop the gymnastics talent pathway. However, the facility would need to be the size of a regional centre and have additional provision for recreational and introductory level gymnastics, where demand is highest. In order to ensure financial sustainability the option exists to add a further fitness facility to the mix. The potential site in Belsize Park is developer led.

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Recommendation No.7

Aligned to Recommendation 6 there will be a need to determine the longer term role of Talacre CSC; given that gymnastics will potentially be accommodated elsewhere. Therefore, Camden Council should undertake a detailed feasibility and business plan to determine what additional facilities can be accommodated at Talacre CSC to improve the long term financial viability and sustainability of the centre.

Emerging options to investigate include:

- a) Four court sports hall***
- b) Updated and expanded soft play centre***
- c) Bounce trampolining***
- d) Combination of above***
- e) Other uses***

Re-locating gymnastics from Talacre CSC would facilitate either the re-instatement of the gymnastic facility to a four court sports hall or enable new facilities to be added that may improve the financial viability of the centre. Activities for young people should remain the focus at Talacre CSC, which is one of the two sports centres in Camden, open to the public during the day, which will be available to meet demand from the growing population. The key challenge for this feasibility will be to balance the need for sports halls with the requirement for the facility to operate on a sound financial footing. Therefore this study will need to be undertaken at the appropriate time (e.g. following the addition of other sports halls) and consider the Council's financial pressures at that time.

Recommendation No.8

The re-location of gymnastics to an alternative site may be some years away. In the short term a business review of Talacre CSC should investigate how the sports centre can become financially viable.

The viability of leisure and cultural facilities across Camden is, in this climate of austerity and budget pressures of paramount importance and a key driver for the strategy. Up to date youth provision is important to maintain young people's interest in participating in physical activity and developing an interest in sport.

The short to medium term financial performance of Talacre CSC should be reviewed and options considered to make it more financially viable. This could include the expansion of the soft play facilities aligned to an improved catering offer, or alternatively it could consider changes to the operating model and delivery of gymnastics coaching.

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Recommendation No.9

Camden Council, Camden Swimming Club and GLL should meet to review annually all non-school swimming lesson provision in all the Borough swimming facilities to ensure that the teaching and lesson needs of all residents are being met through provision at a different venue, at a variety of times and on different days.

The tri-partite arrangement for swimming lessons is unique and one which has a number of challenges. As an example, the lack of swimming lessons at Oasis was viewed in part as a result of its location (i.e. within the business district). However, it is apparent that the decision not to offer swimming lessons is down to Camden Swimming Club. As a result there is very little use by young people at Oasis and it has essentially become an adult only facility. This example raises a number of challenges about swimming lesson provision across the Borough, such as:

- ◀ Which organisation is responsible for ensuring that there is a sufficient swimming lesson offer across all pools?
- ◀ If demand exceeds supply, which organisation makes the decision to set aside more programming time for lessons?
- ◀ How does the provision of increased swimming lessons affect the financial cost of the leisure management contract or the swimming lesson contract?
- ◀ If there appears to be insufficient demand, which organisation makes the decision that this is correct and that all 'development' avenues have been exhausted?

The above are significant challenges as it should be noted that a successful learn to swim programme contributes to the future market development of swimming across the area. This is on the basis that you need the confidence and skill to swim to make demands on the service in future years.

The above does not seek to question the quality of swimming lesson delivery, which has been identified as excellent. However, it does reflect a number of strategic and operational challenges with respect to responsibility and accountability for increasing participation in the sport.

Recommendation No.10

Camden Council should commit to undertaking a feasibility study to establish the options for the long term future of the Oasis Sports Centre.

Oasis Sports Centre is a unique, iconic and popular London swimming facility. It is one of few publicly accessible sports facilities in the heart of London meeting daily demands from residents, commuters and visitors to the City.

Oasis is accessible to disabled users however the configuration of the building and provision across a number of levels makes accessibility quite difficult, especially for wheel chair users. Children's swimming is not popular at this centre. The difficult access together with the central London location may be a barrier to use by specific sections of the community (e.g. pushchair, pram and buggy users).

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Oasis has some significantly costly site energy servicing issues that will need to be addressed in the near future. This will equate to in excess of £1 million investment to relocate services with operational disruption to the operator and users. This will not provide any noticeable benefit or enhancement to the quality of experience for users and will not improve the facility's energy efficiency rating.

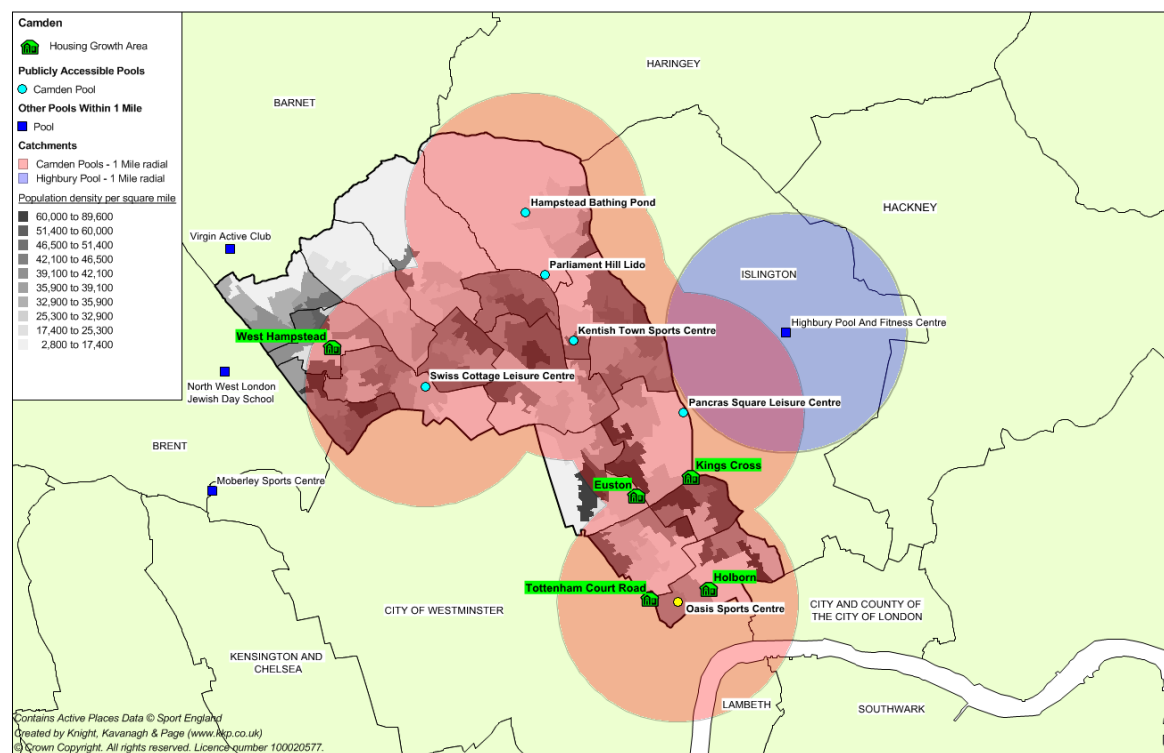
The opportunity exists to consider how the facility could be replaced as part of a wider regeneration project aligned to office accommodation and housing. This could take the form similar to that of Pancras Leisure Centre with the Council achieving the development on the back of planning gain.

Recommendation No.11

Camden Council should identify a site suitable for the development of an additional community swimming pool (and fitness facility) to meet increased demand from the growing population over the next 10 to 15 years. The recommended site search area is Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange.

Although Camden has some of the best swimming pools of all the London Boroughs the increased population over the next 10 to 15 years will put additional pressure on existing pools; and as such supply will not meet demand. Therefore, in order for Camden to meet the swimming and physical activity needs of its residents it will need to consider adding another community swimming pool to its current stock. The following map identifies the catchment of the current stock and clearly identifies the Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange area to be the key area not covered by a community swimming pool.

Figure 4: Accessible swimming pools for Camden's residents



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PRIORITIES AND ACTION PLAN

Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
1.	There is a need to protect existing sports facilities as valued community resources for the benefit of residents and visitors to the London Borough of Camden. Facility owners are encouraged to protect facilities and invest in their long term maintenance, keeping them 'fit for purpose' and where possible providing enhancements to meet changing trends, local demand and customer expectations	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Develop a dialogue with key facility providers. ◀ Maintain an ongoing relationship with key colleagues in the Camden Planning team and ensure the need to protect facilities is built into the Local Plan. 	Camden Council	Immediate
2.	Camden Council should continue to support the development of new sports halls across the Borough, and work with providers to facilitate public access to support the voluntary club sector, through the provision of community use agreements. A key geographical area for new provision is south of the Euston Road and the Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange area.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Engage in dialogue with Education facility providers to build awareness of the need for additional community provision. ◀ Maintain dialogue with other potential partners, for example YMCA, The Royal Free Hospital, Jubilee Halls, UCL to understand and potentially influence sports facility development plans. 	Camden Council	Immediate

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Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
3.	Any plans for the re-development of school sites (predominantly secondary) in Camden should at the outset investigate opportunities to provide indoor sports facilities for long term community use and sports development. Any such use should be secured via a Community Use Agreement.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Prepare an information note to Cabinet and Elected Members to highlight the issues of supply and demand. ◀ Develop a resource library of advice for schools and community sports clubs to help facilitate greater community access to schools. ◀ Liaise with Education to ascertain the new school building programme over the next 5 years. ◀ Liaise directly with any schools developing new PE and sport facilities in order to influence design and community access arrangements. ◀ Work with Planning, Education and Sport England to ensure all school sports facility developments require a Community Use Agreement. 	Camden Council	Years 1 - 5
4.	Camden Council should ensure that the resources committed to securing the sports hall and community fitness facilities at the new Kings Cross sports facility contribute to the development of indoor sports and Borough voluntary club needs, whilst generating sufficient revenues to be sustainable.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Develop links with key community sports clubs requiring access to sports halls. ◀ Work with clubs to produce a 5 year sports development plan aligned to access to the sports hall at Kings Cross sports facility. ◀ Develop a sports hall programme for the facility which is cognisant of club needs and recreational opportunities for the local community as well as the financial sustainability of the facility. 	Camden Council	Immediate

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Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
5.	<p>Camden Council should investigate the potential of developing specialist sports facilities in line with NGB priorities and club development opportunities across the Borough e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Netball – an indoor court to meet England Netball league requirements (requires the following size sports hall (21.35 m x 34m). ◀ Martial Arts – a permanent matted area (Kickboxing members club in Swiss Cottage – no other specialist publicly accessible provision). ◀ Fencing – affordable provision (William Ellis School focus of fencing activity in Camden in the multi-purpose hall). ◀ Boxing – a second club in the south of the Borough (recommended by ABA Development Officer). ◀ Archery – more space and storage facilities. (Hampstead Bowman report limited storage space at The Royal Free Hospital Recreation Club). 	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Continue dialogue with NGB's and Clubs to further understand needs. ◀ Investigate with clubs opportunities to deliver identified needs at non-specialist facilities (e.g. aligned to new school developments). ◀ Work with NGBs to determine if LB Camden is a priority area for the development of their sport. ◀ Review Sport England funding opportunities with key clubs and NGBs. 	Camden Council NGBs / Clubs	Years 2 - 4

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Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
6.	Camden Council should pursue the development of a purpose built specialist gymnastics centre (ideally to a regional standard). A potential site has been identified in the Belsize Park ward. How gymnastics provision is managed and delivered at Talacre CSC or at a new facility should be explored with Camden Sports Development Unit (current providers) and GLL (London Borough of Camden Borough leisure contractor).	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Undertake dialogue with colleagues in Planning and developers to determine any potential planning gain contribution to the development. ◀ Continue dialogue with British Gymnastics to determine the design and technical specification of the facility given its recreational and performance focus. ◀ Assess the potential for external funding sources to support the delivery of the development. ◀ Consider the wider management options for the delivery of recreational gymnastics at the facility. 	Camden Council	Years 2 - 4
7.	<p>Aligned to Recommendation 6 there will be a need to determine the longer term role of Talacre CSC; given that gymnastics will potentially be accommodated elsewhere. Therefore, Camden Council should undertake a detailed feasibility and business plan to determine what additional facilities can be accommodated at Talacre CSC to improve the long term financial viability and sustainability of the centre.</p> <p>Emerging options to investigate include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Four court sports hall ◀ Updated and expanded soft play centre ◀ Bounce trampolining ◀ Combination of above ◀ Other uses 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Commission a feasibility study at the appropriate time to determine the options for Talacre CSC. ◀ Take into account other planned developments and community club needs in the Borough within this assessment. ◀ Ensure that the feasibility study for the facility balances both the Council's financial need and the wider sports development and physical activity needs across the Borough 		Years 2 - 4

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Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
8.	The re-location of gymnastics to an alternative site may be some years away. In the short term a business review of Talacre CSC should investigate how the sports centre can become financially viable.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Undertake a mini feasibility and business review to identify potential short term improvements to the facility which will improve its financial viability. 	Camden Council and GLL	Year 1
9.	Camden Council, Camden Swimming Club and GLL should meet to review annually all non-school swimming lesson provision in all the Borough swimming facilities to ensure that the teaching and lesson needs of all residents are being met through provision at a different venue, at a variety of times and on different days.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Liaise with Swiss Cottage SC and GLL to determine the best way forward for swimming lesson provision across all Camden's swimming pools. ◀ Develop a detailed implementation plan for swimming lessons which delivers growth in the number of lessons year on year for the next 5 years. ◀ Agree key assessment criteria and KPIs for the initiative. 	Camden Council GLL Swiss Cottage SC	Year 1
10.	Camden Council should commit to undertaking a feasibility study to establish the options for the long term future of the Oasis Sports Centre.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Determine timescale for investment to resolve utilities supply issue. ◀ Identify opportunity to redevelop the site as part of a wider office, housing and leisure development. ◀ Determine the potential for this to be delivered as part of a regeneration initiative and planning gain. ◀ Commission a detailed feasibility to determine the facility mix and financial performance of the centre (i.e. capital and revenue). ◀ Determine need to offer a temporary facility throughout development period. 	Camden Council	1 – 2 years

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Priority order	Recommendation	Priority	Action	Lead Agency	Timescale
11.	Camden Council should identify a site suitable for the development of an additional community swimming pool (and fitness facility) to meet increased demand from the growing population over the next 10 to 15 years. The recommended site search area is Kilburn/West Hampstead interchange	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Liaise with Council asset management and regeneration team to identify potential sites to accommodate a community swimming pool, sports hall and fitness facility as a minimum. ◀ Identify the development of the new facility as a strategic priority for planning gain from housing developments in the area. ◀ Assess the potential of developing a facility on a similar basis to Pancras LC. 	Camden Council	7 – 10 years