



HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL INDOOR & BUILT FACILITIES STRATEGY

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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INTRODUCTION

This is Halton's Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy for the period 2018 - 2028. The strategy recommendations are drawn from the Indoor Built Facilities Needs Assessment Report, researched and prepared between June and August 2017 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd (KKP). Work has been developed collaboratively with key partners, including those of the Active Halton Sports Partnership, NHS Halton, Merseyside Sport and Sport England.

Needs Assessment work was undertaken in accordance with Sport England's ANOG (Assessing Needs & Opportunities Guide) which examined Halton's (public and private) supply of indoor sports facilities under the key themes of quality, quantity, accessibility and availability. Demand for Halton's facilities was examined in respect of 'live' booking data and also modelled through the use of Sport England's Facility Planning Model (FPM) 2017 national run for swimming pools and sports halls. Consultation was undertaken with key senior Council officers from health, leisure and regeneration teams, as well as national governing bodies of sport and community sport clubs, ranging from swimming to gymnastics.

Why is the Strategy being developed?

Halton Borough Council faces a number of acute challenges in respect of its indoor sports facilities; primarily that Council owned swimming pools and sports halls are old and of poor or below average quality and that Halton is significantly under-provided for in terms of water space compared to regional and national indicators, highlighted later on in this strategy. This strategy will provide the evidence base in respect of the Authority's built facilities so that:

- ◀ There is a clear strategic approach to deliver the Borough's vision for its sporting facilities and address health inequalities as outlined in its Strategic Core Local Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy;
- ◀ A clear framework exists for the improvement, maintenance and development of existing and new sports facilities in the Borough in response to current and future need;
- ◀ It will offer a clear investment strategy through priority facility interventions identified in the action plan;
- ◀ It complies with recent Sport England guidance and will support sports providers (such as NGBs and Sport England) when seeking funding for improvements to sports facilities;
- ◀ It can inform any modifications or updates to Halton's Core Strategy Local Plan or other Local Authority strategic documents;
- ◀ It will assist the Council to prepare a robust and up to date assessment of the need to meet all of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, especially paragraph 73 and assist, where appropriate, the implementation of paragraph 74;
- ◀ The Council will have a robust evidence base to negotiate and apply provision at the major growth sites that may be proposed in the Core Strategy Review.

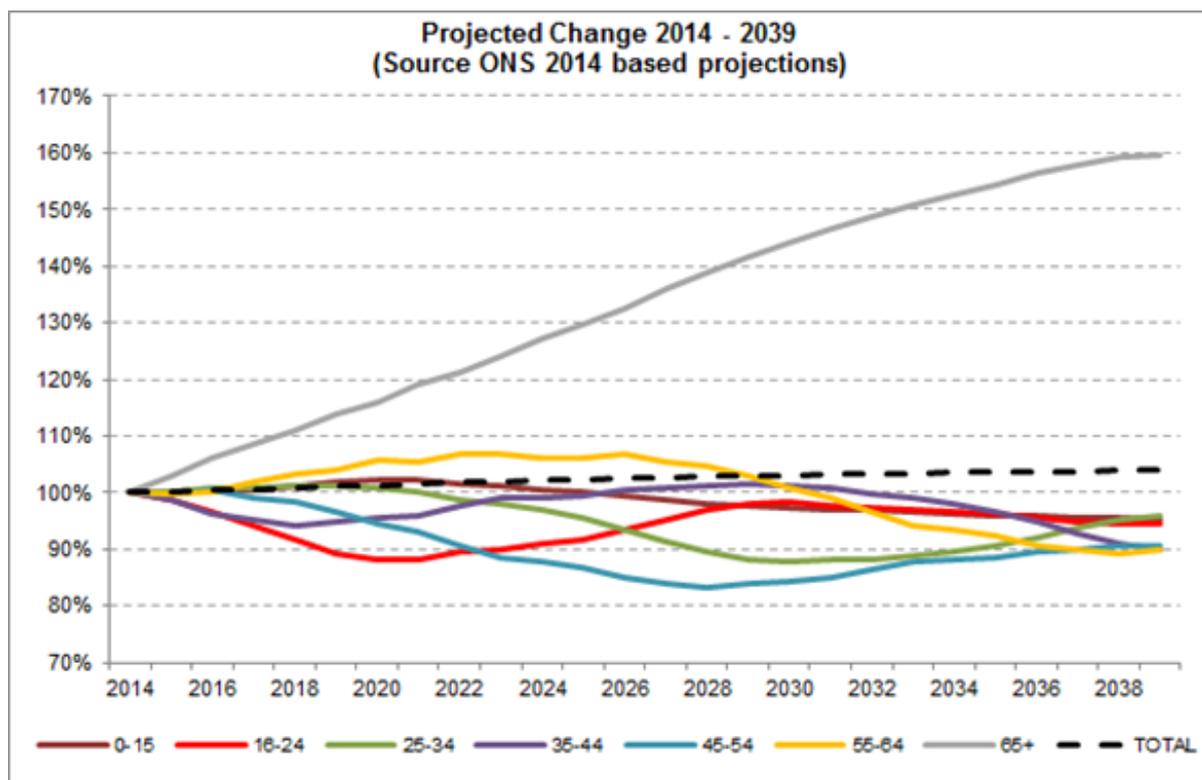
This is against the backdrop of the following demographic and social trends in the Borough:

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An ageing Borough population

It is anticipated that the overall population growth from 2014 to 2039 in Halton will be relatively marginal at 4%, rising from around 126,000 to 131,000. As demonstrated in Figure 1, this growth is projected to be driven overwhelmingly by those aged 65 and above, with all other age cohorts projected to experience decreases in population. Consequently, with an increase in this cohort, any future facility developments need to reflect the requirements of the changing population with respect to design (e.g. dementia friendly), appropriate ancillary facilities, disability access and programming.

Figure 1: Population trends in Halton



High levels of deprivation.

Over half (56.5%) of Halton's residents live in 20% most deprived areas in the country. Health deprivation is also a concern; data indicates that 60% of residents live in the areas of highest health deprivation again compared to a national average of 20%. The dark blue areas in Figures 2 and 3 indicate where these areas of deprivation exist.

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Figure 2: Index of multiple deprivation

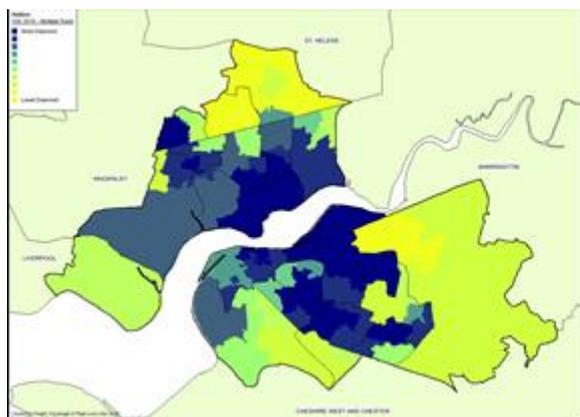
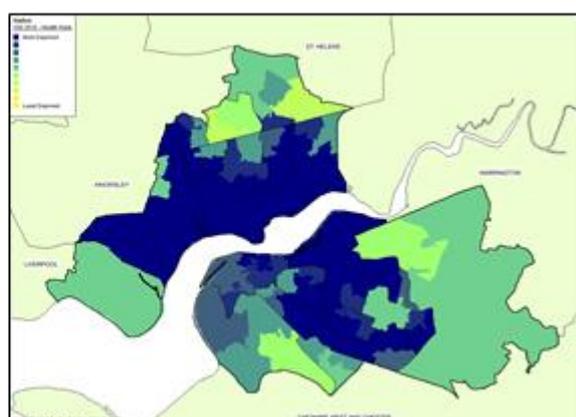


Figure 3: IMD Health deprivation



Socio economic characteristics

Mosaic 2016 is a segmentation product which classifies all 25.2 million households into 15 groups, 66 household types and 238 segments. This data is used to paint a picture of UK consumers in terms of their social-demographics, lifestyles, culture and behaviour. The top five mosaic classifications in Halton compared to the country as a whole are shown below. These five segments represent just under two thirds (64.4%) of the total borough population. The 'Family Basic Group' is the largest segment with 16.3% of the population.

Table 1 Mosaic – main population segments in Halton

Mosaic group description	Halton		National %
	#	%	
1 – Family Basics	20,768	16.3%	9.8%
2 – Municipal Challenge	20,431	16.0%	5.0%
3 – Aspiring Homemakers	16,141	12.6%	4.3%
4 – Suburban Stability	14,083	11.0%	12.6%
5 – Transient Renters	10,895	8.5%	5.9%

It is also important to note that three of the five segments above (i.e. Family Basics, Municipal Challenge and Transient Renters) are all significantly higher than the national average and are characterised as having limited disposable income and fewer employment options. Therefore, it is important that appropriate mechanisms and interventions are in place to ensure these residents can access sport and physical activity opportunities.

High levels of childhood & adult obesity.

Adult and child obesity rates in Halton are above national and regional averages. The Adult obesity rate¹ is currently 33.7%, which is significantly higher than the regional and national averages (25% and 24% respectively). The Child obesity rate² is also higher (22.8%) than the national (19.8%) and regional (20.6%) levels.

¹ National Obesity Observatory

² National Child Measurement Program

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It should also be noted that in addition to NHS costs there are significant costs to industry in terms of days of productivity lost due to back pain etc. These are costed in CBI reports and are of similar magnitude to those cited by the NHS. The annual cost to the NHS of physical inactivity³ in Halton is estimated at £2,622,201. This figure is 17% above the national average.

As a consequence of Halton figuring prominently in terms of health deprivation statistics, the area is the focus of several jointly commissioned initiatives focussing on health improvement. These present the potential for co-ordination of resources in respect of sport and leisure. Some examples include:

- ◀ Cheshire and Merseyside Women and Children's Services (Vanguard Care Model): The vanguard will look at addressing challenges around workforce faced by women and children through organisations working together. In addition, the vanguard is engaging with more people who use its services so it can better understand needs and create more personalised or targeted support.
- ◀ Well North: Well Halton: this project includes a number of partners working alongside each other to create better environments within specific communities, with a focus on improving wealth and reducing inequalities.
- ◀ Healthy New Towns: Halton Lea. Runcorn is one of 10 areas in the UK which was chosen to become a Healthy New Town. The project aims to reduce obesity, dementia and develop community cohesion by improving connectivity through urban design and technology. It is about creating a changed focus, by encouraging health and active lifestyles as a norm through urban design. Other proposals include downloadable apps that reward walking with discounts at shops, an urban obstacle course connecting public gym equipment and sprinting tracks marked out on safe pavements.

Significant levels of inactivity.

Borough activity levels are below both the regional and national averages, as identified by Active Lives and its predecessor, Active People Survey (APS)⁴. APS identified that 31.0% of adults participated in at least 1 x 30 minutes moderate intensity sport per week. This was below the national average (36.1%) and the regional average (35.7%).

Active Lives incorporates a broader definition of sport and physical activity including walking, cycling for travel and dance. Its 2016-17 survey⁵ identifies that 28.4% of adults aged 16+ in Halton are doing less than 30 minutes moderate intensity activity per week. This is a higher level of inactivity than the regional (26.6%) and national (25.6%) averages.

Housing growth

Housing growth in Halton is currently identified in the Core Strategic Local Plan. To achieve the objectives listed in the Local Plan there will need to be an increase in housing stock. The Housing Strategy for Halton 2013 to 2028 states there will be an annual increase of 466 new homes per annum (until 2028) with 100 of these being affordable. The need for housing will not only accommodate increases in population, it will also stem net outward migration to support economic development projects.

³ The British Heart Foundation (BHF) Promotion Research Group

⁴ Active People Survey 10: October 2015-October 2016

⁵ Active Lives Survey: Year 2: 2016-17

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Facility Accessibility

Catchment areas for different types of provision provide a tool for identifying areas currently not served by existing indoor sports facilities. The normal acceptable standard is a 20-minute walk (one mile radial) for an urban area and a 20-minute drive time for a rural area. Due to Halton's urban nature, a 20 minute (1 mile radial) walk time was applied for sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness suites. In addition, analysis was also undertaken to calculate the percentage of people who live within areas of high deprivation within the same catchment calculation.

Figure 4: Sports Halls Accessibility

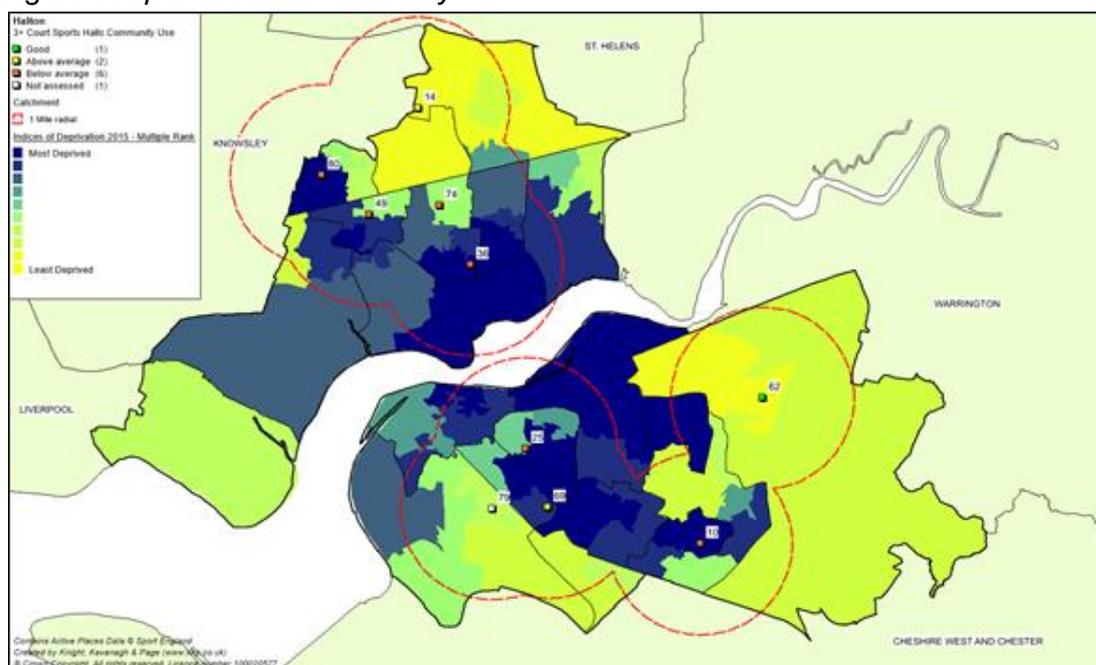
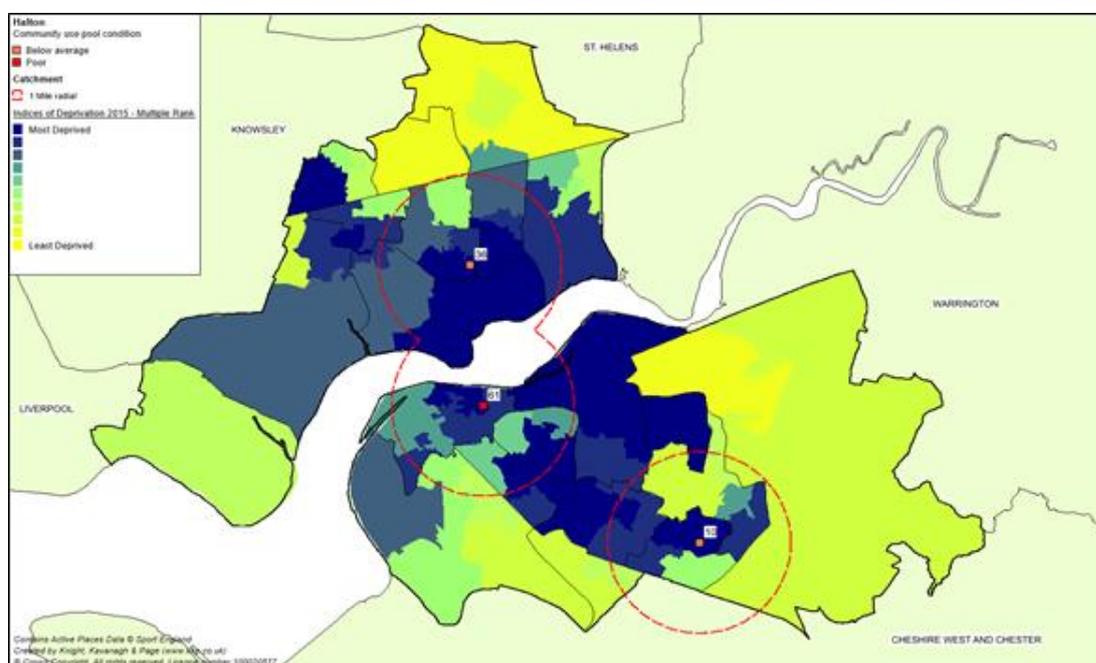
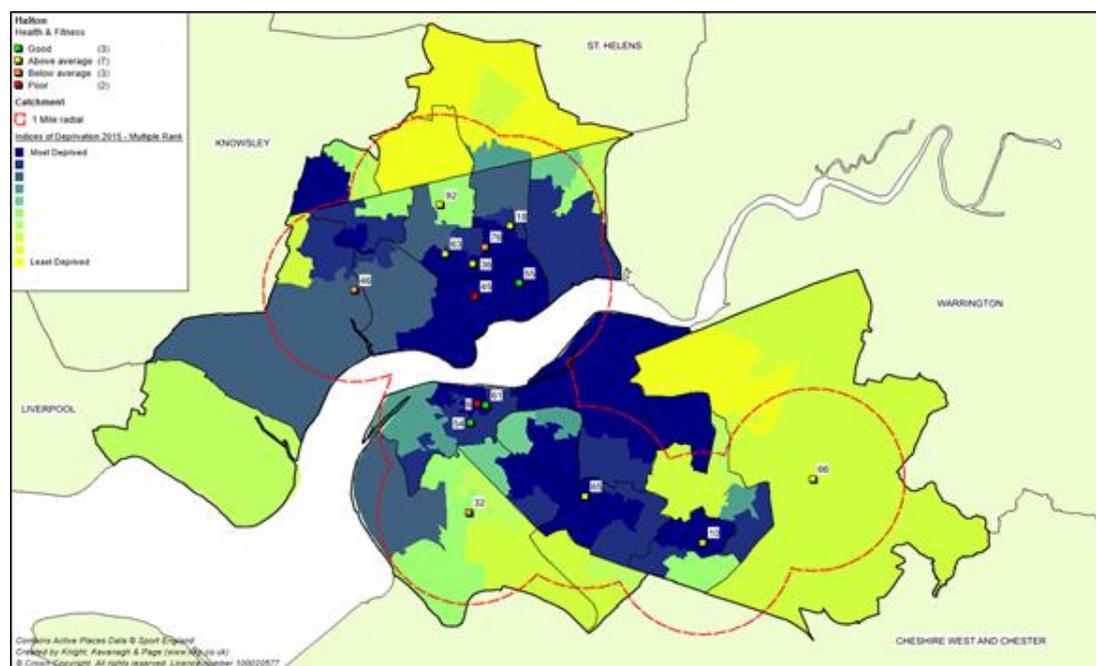


Figure 5: Swimming Pool Accessibility



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Figure 6: Health and Fitness accessibility

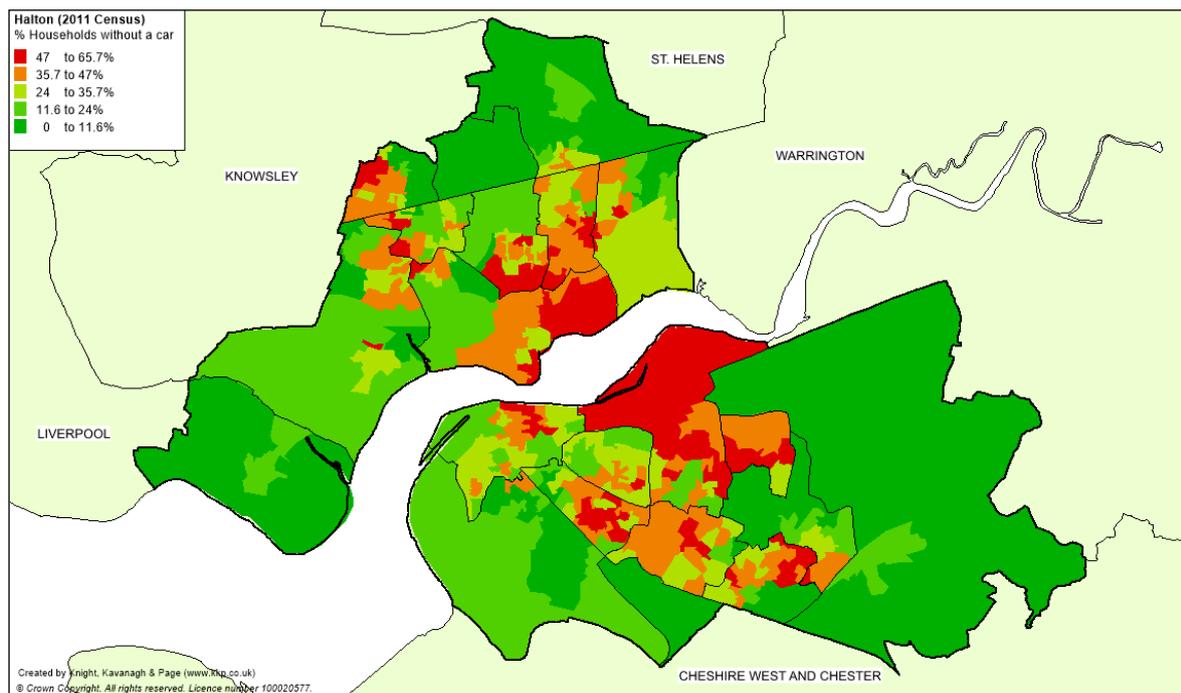


Accessibility is good when analysing both sports halls and fitness facilities, with 80% of Halton's residents living within a 20-minute walk (one mile) of both a sports hall and health and fitness facility. However only 40% live within a 20min walk (one-mile radius) of a community accessible swimming pool. Of those living in areas of high deprivation (top 20% cohort) 88% live within a 20 minute walk (one mile) of both a sports hall and health and fitness facility, but only 50% live within a 20 minute walk (one mile) of a swimming pool.

Car Ownership

It is also important to note the levels of car ownership within the authority as any new provision would also need to consider this. Figure four (overleaf) illustrates areas where car ownership is low (areas of orange and red). These areas are focused around the towns of Runcorn and Widnes. Of the total population, over a quarter (27%) do not own a car and 43% own one vehicle.

Figure 4: Car ownership in Halton



Mersey Gateway Crossing

The Local Authority has a natural barrier, the River Mersey, which splits the Borough into two towns: Widnes and Runcorn. Since 1961, the silver Jubilee Bridge has been the only form of link between the two areas. Due to the bridge's age and increased traffic numbers, a second bridge across the Mersey was opened in autumn 2017. It is anticipated that the Mersey Gateway Bridge will improve connectivity and lead regeneration and investment throughout Halton and the North West. Following the opening of the Mersey Gateway, the deck of the Silver Jubilee Bridge will be reconfigured to become the local sustainable transport link, with dedicated cycle lanes and pedestrian access.

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RESEARCH FINDINGS

Swimming pool provision

Using the ANOG guidance, only pools which are greater or equal to 20m and are **community accessible** are assessed as part of the needs assessment audit. Other community accessible pools which also play a significant role in developing swimming are also included. Community accessible refers to sites which have the option of pay and play access, and are not membership restricted. Consequently, the four pools below, across three sites were assessed.

Table 2: Community accessible swimming pools within Halton

Site Name	Access Type	Condition	
		Pool	Changing
Brookvale Recreation Centre, Runcorn	Pay and Play	Below average	Below average
Kingsway Leisure Centre, (main pool) Widnes	Pay and Play	Below average	Below average
Kingsway Leisure Centre, (learner pool) Widnes	Pay and Play	Below average	Below average
Runcorn Swimming Pool, Runcorn	Pay and Play	Poor	Poor

Swimming provision in Halton is centred on three of the Local Authority operated pools at Kingsway Leisure Centre, Runcorn Swimming Pool and Brookvale Recreation Centre. Runcorn Swimming Pool and Brookvale Recreation Centre are located in Runcorn, with Kingsway located in Widnes. All three sites are assessed to be of below average or poor quality and also have significant on-going maintenance requirements as highlighted in HBC condition surveys supplied as part of the research. Consultation with Halton Swimming Club and Swim England indicated that if investment is not made in the facilities, long term participation and club development will be affected.

In terms of supply of swimming pools, Halton has significantly less water space per head of population than its neighbouring local authorities or in comparison to national figures. Provision is also relatively inflexible, with one eight lane facility (Kingsway) in Widnes, and two four lane pools in Runcorn which do not have dedicated learner pools. This does not however restrict the Borough swimming lesson programme as the majority of lessons are delivered at Brookvale Recreation Centre. According to usage figures, Brookvale is the busiest pool, with its circa 75,762 annual visits translating to an estimated used capacity of 100% reported by the FPM. Kingsway LC's 149,570 visits meanwhile place it operating at around 60% of its total capacity. Runcorn pool is the least used pool, with its 48,186 visits translating to a used capacity of around 43% according to the FPM.

There are six swimming pools within two-mile radial distance of the Halton Borough boundary, Halewood Leisure Centre in Knowsley and Great Sankey Leisure Centre (Warrington) being the nearest accessible pools to the North of Widnes town centre. There are none located, within this catchment, to the south of the Borough, in Cheshire West and Chester.

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Sports hall provision

Sports Halls were also assessed using the ANOG guidance (3 courts or more which offer community access). Table 3 illustrates all community accessible 3 court halls in Halton.

Table 3: Community accessible sports halls in Halton

Site Name	Crts	Assessment Condition	
		Court	Changing
Brookvale Recreation Centre, Runcorn	6	Below average	Not assessed**
Cronton Sixth Form College, Widnes	4	Above average	Not assessed**
Grange School, Runcorn	6	Below average	Not assessed**
Kingsway Leisure Centre, Widnes	8	Below average	Poor
Ormiston Chadwick Academy, Widnes	4	Below average	Not assessed**
Sandymoor School, Runcorn	4	Good	Above average
St Chad's Catholic & C Of E High School, Runcorn	4	Above average	Above average
St Peter & St Paul Catholic College, Widnes	4	Below average	Not assessed**
The Heath School*, Runcorn	3	Not assessed	Not assessed*
Upton Community Centre & Sports Hall, Widnes	3	Below average	Below average
Total	46		

*Site not assessed due future site refurbishment

**Changing facilities not assessed due to safeguarding limitations.

In Halton there are a total of 11 x 3+ court sports halls, with all but one (Wade Deacon High School) offering community access. Overall, the quality of community accessible sports halls is below average or poor, with only one site rated as good (Sandymoor School). The Local Authority sports halls are over 30 years old and this is reflected in their below average quality rating.

Halton has 4.7 sports halls per 1000 population which is around average when compared to its neighbouring local authorities and national figures provided by the FPM. Although there is good access to 3+ courts sports halls in the authority, levels of accessibility vary with a greater percentage of smaller facilities (one or two court halls) located in Widnes compared to Runcorn.

Daytime accessibility to sports halls across the authority is restricted to the two non-education sites (Kingsway Leisure Centre and Upton Community Centre) both of which are located in Widnes, with no daytime access to a facility in Runcorn. Kingsway Leisure Centre sports hall's bleacher seating has been condemned; however, this doesn't restrict the facility staging competitive events as temporary seating tends to be introduced when required. Generally, evidence from booking sheets and consultation with facility managers suggests that usage across sports halls is high with the most popular Council owned site being Upton Community Centre. No site, however, operates at capacity. Popular sports offered in sports halls include indoor football and netball. Demand for competitive badminton has declined in Halton, but pay and play remains popular amongst residents.

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Health and fitness provision

Health and fitness facilities are normally defined and assessed using a base scale of a minimum of 20 stations. There are 14 20+ station health and fitness suites in Halton with a total of 1,180 stations. Runcorn Swimming Pool has also been included due to its community importance; therefore, 15 sites have been investigated with a total of 1,193 stations.

Table 4: Health and fitness suites (20+) in Halton (Including Runcorn Swimming Pool)

Site Name	Stns	Condition	Access Type
Body F X, Runcorn	50	Poor	Reg. mem**
Brookvale Recreation Centre, Runcorn	55	Above average	Pay and Play
DW Sports Fitness, Widnes	184	Above average	Reg. mem**
Heath Leisure, Runcorn	28	Below average	Reg. mem**
Kingsway Leisure Centre, Widnes	60	Above average	Pay and Play
Muscle & Figure, Widnes	85	Poor	Reg. mem**
Optimum Fitness, Widnes	90	Below average	Reg. mem**
Pure Gym, Runcorn	85	Good	Reg. mem**
Pure Gym, Widnes	250	Good	Reg. mem**
Runcorn Swimming Pool, Runcorn	13	Good	Pay and Play
Select Security Stadium Halton, Widnes	51	Above average	Pay and Play
Active Nation, Runcorn	109	Above average	Reg. mem**
Spindles Health & Leisure (Warrington)	23	Above average	Reg. mem**
Stones Gym, Widnes	60	Below average	Pay and Play
Widnes Tennis Academy, Widnes	50	Above average	Sports Club / CA
Total	1193		

** Registered membership

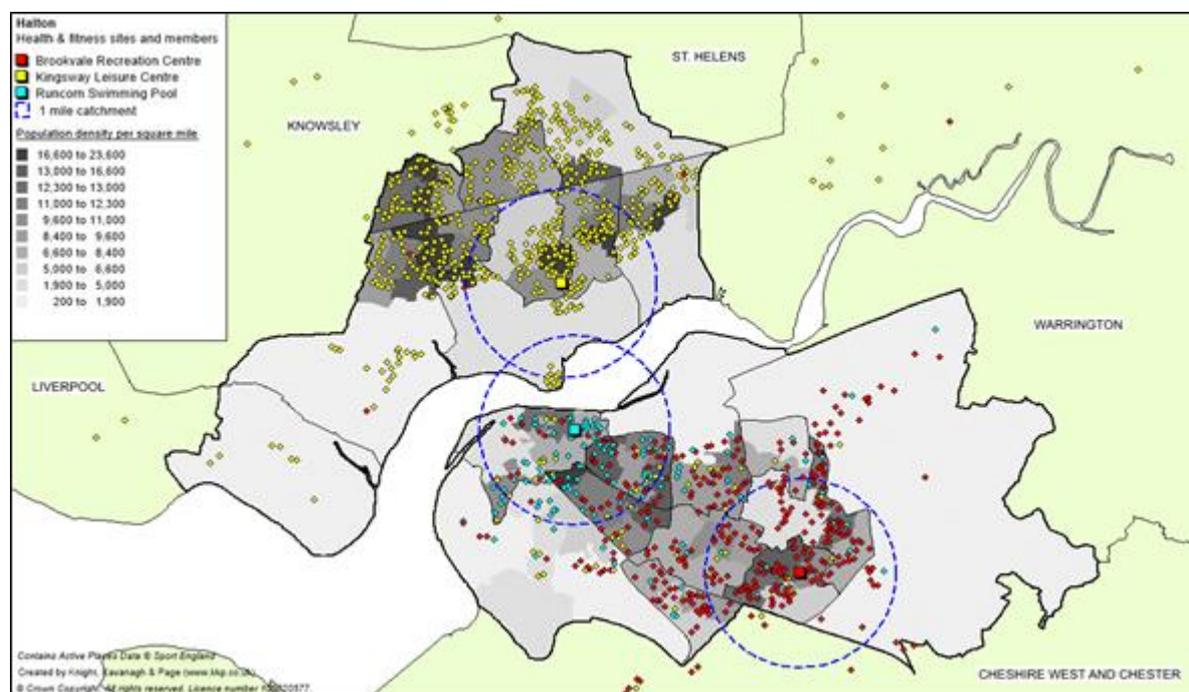
The majority of the health and fitness sites are either rated good or above average quality, with all local authority provision falling into the higher quality ratings. There are four sites managed by Active Halton, two in Runcorn and two in Widnes. The largest Active Halton facility is in Kingsway Leisure Centre, which has 60 stations. Health and fitness membership data from three Active Halton sites suggests that pricing (under £20 pcm) is reflective of the economic profile, with a healthy level of membership from those who live in the most deprived areas surrounding each site. Membership pricing was also analysed amongst the private sector gyms with the most expensive being the DW Fitness in Widnes (£30 pcm). On the other side of the spectrum, there are a number of gyms offering less than £20 pcm for membership, including two Pure Gyms (one in Runcorn and one in Widnes).

Although there is an even spread of sites in Runcorn and Widnes in relation to population density, the facilities audit noted there are significantly more fitness stations in Widnes than in Runcorn currently, with a stronger private sector and budget gym presence. Further, when UK penetration rates are applied this results in an oversupply of stations in Widnes and a slight undersupply of stations in Runcorn. This undersupply could suggest people having to travel to Widnes to use facilities from Runcorn. This is demonstrated in the membership data taken from Active Halton. Figure 5 (overleaf), illustrates there are a number of members (in yellow) residing in Runcorn but using Kingsway Leisure Centre.

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Dance studios are also a very important element of the wider health, fitness and conditioning market. Income derived from them helps to offset the cost/underpin the viability of other aspects of leisure provision, especially swimming. The Borough has 17 studios at 14 sites; three are rated as good quality, nine are rated as above average quality with five rated as below average. None are rated as being of poor quality.

Figure 5: Home location of Active Halton health and fitness members



Other key facilities and indoor sports

Halton Stadium - the Halton Stadium is a regional centre for Table Tennis. The Centre, which is located in the west stand of Halton Stadium, was developed through a Sport England grant submitted through a partnership between ETTA (English Table Tennis Association), the local authority, and the local club (Halton Table Tennis Club) when the stadium was built. The Club supports over 600 members.

Widnes Athletics Stadium- Located at Wade Deacon High School, the track is an 8 lane synthetic track with a small club house. The facility is used by both Wade Deacon High School and Saint Peter and Paul Catholic College during the day for curriculum delivery, and for community use in the evening. It supports a local athletics club (Halton and Frodsham Harriers) once a week and also a number of participatory programmes which are delivered by Active Halton. These include a popular Couch to 5k initiative.

Gymnastics - there are two dedicated gymnastics facilities in the Borough. The main one is located in Widnes (Focus Gymnastics Centre). The Centre is a very popular venue, which has over 300 members plus waiting list of a similar proportion. The second dedicated facility is Widnes Gymnastics facility. Both are located in former industrial units. Sandymoor School and Kingsway Leisure Centre also support the delivery of the sport. It must be noted that Focus Gymnastics has ambitions to deliver satellite provision at other sites to reduce its waiting list, namely within Local Authority provision. However, it is concerned that the poor

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quality of these venues will not enable it to offer a high quality gymnastics experience and to satisfy demand in the area.

Widnes Tennis Academy is the only indoor facility in the Authority. It has two indoor courts and six outdoor courts. It supports a local club (Lane Tennis Club) and also has pay and play opportunities. The indoor courts will be resurfaced in October 2017. Saint Peter and Paul Catholic College also has access to the site during the day for curriculum use.

Frank Myler Pavilion although built as a facility to support local football and rugby teams, it also plays a significant role for the delivery of other physical activity programmes in the Borough. The pavilion has a studio which is used for a range of activities delivered by both Active Halton and private enterprises. The sports offer at the site includes: yoga, boxing and aerobics.

Squash - There are a total of five courts across three sites in Halton. Widnes Rugby Union Club is the only known competitive club in the Authority, however, there is also a strong internal squash ladder at Kingsway Leisure Centre.

Boxing - There is no dedicated facility in the Borough, however, the sport is very popular with five affiliated clubs. All clubs report healthy memberships and healthy numbers of carded boxers. Although there is no dedicated facility, Halton Riverside has a dedicated space in Optimum Fitness Gym and other clubs hire smaller venues.

Martial Arts - There are a number of mixed martial arts (Taekwondo and Karate) sessions operating throughout the authority delivered by clubs and individuals. The majority operate in smaller venues, such as studios or community halls. Examples include Runcorn Taekwondo School which is based at St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School and Supreme Taekwondo Academy delivered at Upton Community Centre.

Village Halls and Community facilities - Within Halton, smaller venues are used extensively to offer a range sports and physical activity. Data supplied by Active Halton indicates that there are over 60 sites delivering a range of activities. Accessibility to these village halls and community centres is good, with just under 70% of the population living within 800m of a facility. These sites are important as they can provide local accessible activities, particularly when larger venues may not be available or appropriate for a specific activity.

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VISION AND OBJECTIVES

This is Halton's suggested vision for sport and leisure provision in the area that builds on the conclusions identified in the Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities Assessment Report and additional stakeholder consultation. This Strategy sets the vision and objectives for Halton's physical infrastructure for the period 2018 to 2028. It considers all of the area's community sport and leisure assets required to ensure the Council and its partners serve the people of Halton:

Halton's vision is:

To create a network of high quality, accessible and sustainable facilities capable of supporting sport, health and wellbeing, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling the inactive to become active and more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and well-being.

The following key objectives should be considered in delivering this strategy:

- ◀ HBC should look at options for replacing Kingsway Leisure Centre and its Runcorn Swimming Pool with modern, fit for purpose leisure facilities capable of delivering on Halton's Health Agenda.
- ◀ HBC should ensure where possible, that physical co-location of services is considered in any proposed new leisure centre provision. In particular, opportunity for co-location of health services in the new Runcorn facility as part of Halton Lea Healthy New Town should be explored by HBC in partnership with the NHS.
- ◀ Refurbish Brookvale Recreation Centre, ensuring that its capital maintenance requirements are met in accordance with its recent condition survey.
- ◀ HBC should refurbish Upton Community Centre's sports hall and changing facilities and identify the facilities' capital investment requirements in the short, medium and long term in order that the site is retained for community use.
- ◀ Encourage Village halls and community facilities continue to support Active Halton's objectives of addressing health inequalities and increase physical and mental wellbeing by ensuring facilities remain accessible for health programmes.
- ◀ HBC should maintain relationships with education sites in respect of sports hall provision which currently offer community access to ensure that this is maintained and expanded in the long term.
- ◀ HBC should work with private facility operators to encourage these to continue to provide opportunities for all and reduce health inequalities within HBC.

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STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The strategy objectives are now considered in more detail to identify the specific rationale and focus for delivering individual objectives.

HBC should look at options to replace Kingsway Leisure Centre and Runcorn Swimming Pool with modern, fit for purpose leisure facilities capable of delivering on HBC's health improvement priorities.

Kingsway Leisure Centre is the hub leisure site in the Authority which offers a range of activities and currently hosts a number of sports clubs, including Halton Swimming Club. HBC should replace Kingsway to provide a modern hub facility for Halton which should feature the following:

- ◀ 25m x 8 lane swimming pool with a learner pool.
- ◀ Circa 150 swimming pool seating provision.
- ◀ 100 station health and fitness provision.
- ◀ 4/ 6 court sports hall.
- ◀ A minimum of 2 multi-purpose/flexible studio spaces.
- ◀ Complementary facilities.
- ◀ Health consultation rooms.
- ◀ Café/ social space.

Swimming pool provision should be replaced on a like for like basis to provide an attractive base for Halton Swimming Club and the local authority's Learn to Swim programme. Providing seating will also ensure the facility can support regular swimming competitions, supporting the performance requirements of the club.

Current sports hall provision is proposed to be replaced on a slightly reduced basis in order to retain a central day-time accessible community sports hall in the Borough. Dry side spaces at Kingsway should be augmented by flexible studio and activity provision which will be appropriate in respect of addressing the issue of inactivity in Halton. Complementary facilities such as clip and climb/ soft play meanwhile could provide regular revenue streams to reduce Local Authority subsidy requirements and this will need to be explored further.

All new sites need to be accessible, due to high levels of deprivation and low car ownership. In addition, due to the Borough's ageing population, facilities should be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Runcorn Swimming Pool

Current swimming provision in Runcorn is not fit for purpose, and requires replacement with a larger community pool and learner provision. It is proposed that a new facility should become the Runcorn Healthy Living Centre, capitalising on the potential for co-located health and leisure provision and options to deliver this as part of the Halton Lea Healthy New Town should be explored. As the Brookvale Recreation Centre should be refurbished, the replacement facility in Runcorn should comprise the following elements:

- ◀ 25m x 6 lane swimming pool plus learner provision.
- ◀ 80-100 station health and fitness suite.
- ◀ Health consultation rooms.
- ◀ Multi-purpose/flexible studio space.
- ◀ Complementary facilities.

◀ Café/social space.

A new swimming pool will help to address the water space shortfall within the authority, and also provide a potential new base for swimming clubs. It is also proposed to increase the health and fitness provision, which will help to address the shortfall in fitness provision south of the river.

Runcorn pool's current site in the Old Town is constrained and not conducive for redevelopment, with limited parking and no room for expansion; therefore a new site needs to be identified. As mentioned earlier, there are plans to redevelop certain parts of Halton Lea as part of Runcorn NHS's Healthy New Town project. An option is to consider a new site as part of the New Town Project, which could incorporate certain facilities such as a doctor's surgery, a pharmacy or other community provision. Any additional provision/ complementary facilities have the potential to also generate revenue. Private sector/ NHS investment or partnerships for delivering this facility should be explored.

HBC should ensure that physical co-location of services is considered in new leisure centre provision. In particular, opportunity for co-location of other Council, public or health services in the new Runcorn facility as part of Halton Lea Healthy New Town should be pursued by HBC.

Co-location of leisure facilities with new health facilities in Halton offers the potential to deliver on the Council's policy aim of improving the health of its residents through physical activity. This is particularly relevant given the borough's ageing population. Co-location of services within the facility mix would also be a pre-requisite of any successful bid to Sport England's Strategic Facilities Fund.

Strategy consultation with HBC Officers confirmed the potential for new leisure provision to be included in proposals for Halton Lea Healthy New Town at the existing Runcorn hospital site. It is therefore vital that this and options for co-located leisure and health facilities should be explored during the master planning process.

Refurbish Brookvale Recreation Centre, ensuring that its capital maintenance requirements are met in accordance with its recent condition survey.

Based on demand expressed within the FPM, and its contribution to the supply of health and fitness and sports hall provision in Runcorn, Brookvale Recreation Centre should be retained within the Borough's stock of leisure provision. The venue is very popular and currently hosts Active Halton's Learn to Swim programme, meanwhile the sports hall supports a number of activities including netball and archery. It is recommended that the pool's current club tenant, Runcorn Reps Swimming Club should transfer to the new Runcorn community pool on completion. This will create more flexibility in the programming of Brookvale Recreational Centre's pool, allowing it to offer more activities and expand Active Halton's Learn to Swim programme.

This strategy recommends that short term investment priorities highlighted in the Halton's Sports Facilities Review (2015) be undertaken, including the replacement of the sports hall floor and also structural upgrade to the roof of the building. Medium to long term investment of on-going maintenance would be required to ensure the facility continues to attract high levels of utilisation.

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Refurbish Upton Community Centre's sports hall and changing facilities. HBC to identify the facilities' capital investment requirements in the short, medium and long term in order that the site is retained for community use.

Upton Community Centre's sports hall (with integrated climbing wall), is a well-utilised venue and should be retained particularly as it represents one of two sports halls in the Borough which offer daytime community use. Further, the facility is an existing example of a facility mix that can successfully co-locate services in Halton capable of addressing health inequalities, up-skilling local people and serving an ageing population which is likely to produce increased demand for facilities during the day.

Given the facility's age, investment is nevertheless required in the short term in order to bring changing rooms, and the general sports hall environment up to modern standards (facilities are currently rated as below average).

Encourage Village halls and community facilities continue to support Active Halton's objectives of addressing health inequalities and increase physical and mental wellbeing by ensuring facilities remain accessible for health programmes.

Tackling inactivity is acknowledged to be a complex and multi - faceted task for Local Authorities and third sector community organisations alike to undertake. Activities for this client group should be designed around the particular needs of the audience, taking note of where on the behaviour change journey people are located and should be 'reframed' away from traditional sport messaging to stress wider lifestyle and social benefits.⁶ In this respect access to a suitable physical activity offer in smaller community facilities such as the Frank Myler facility will be vital in Halton, particularly in designing age appropriate interventions to the boroughs older population.

Research such as that supporting 'Towards an Active Nation' emphasises the role that more informal spaces such as village halls and community spaces can play in engaging inactive groups, particularly older people. Furthermore, consultation indicated that smaller venues are well used by both Active Halton and private enterprises providing a range of activities, ranging from yoga to boxercise classes.

Population growth amongst older people is likely to lead to an increase in demand for facilities during day time hours. To ensure a high level of activity continues to exist, HBC should undertake an audit of all facilities and those which may require improvement, such as toilets, flooring and lighting that could be addressed through Sport England's Community Asset Fund (CAF). Small scale investments such as these can make significant improvements to the customer experience of physical activity and sport whilst enabling greater impact on residents' social and physical well-being. HBC should, in tandem with community providers identify where support is required in the identification of capital improvements and in support of potential funding bids to CAF.

⁶ See <https://www.sportengland.org/media/11250/tackling-inactivity-what-we-know-executive-summary.pdf>

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HBC should maintain relationships with education sites in respect of sports hall provision which currently offer community access to ensure that this is maintained and expanded in the long term.

Secondary schools play an important part in the sports offer within Halton. All sites, with the exception of Wade Deacon High School, offer community use, with a variety of sports being delivered at the sites, ranging from netball to archery. KKP's consultation illustrated that there is spare capacity at education sites, with none operating at full capacity, indicating some flexibility in the programme for clubs and casual users.

This strategy recommends developing an agreed approach and a Halton definition of community use (a community use agreement) to which all schools/academy trusts sign up, with a view to recognising the importance of and embedding well-organised collectively programmed community use in school sports halls across the authority.

HBC should work with private facility operators to ensure that these continue to provide opportunities for all and reduce health inequalities within HBC.

Facilities such as those at Widnes Tennis Academy (owned by Lanes Tennis Club) and the Focus Institute of Gymnastics centre provide specialist single sport provision not available elsewhere in the Borough. In both of these cases, provision is operated from the private sector which offers a more sustainable business model than would be the case under Council operation. Nonetheless, it is in the interests of HBC to try and ensure that as large a proportion of its residents as possible are able to access such facilities should they wish to.

Through initiatives such as the Active Halton Sports Partnership, HBC should engage with private sector facilities to determine whether opportunities may exist to offer targeted opportunities for lower income groups for example. External funding may then be required to ensure venue revenue is maintained.

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FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY

The Strategy has not addressed in detail how proposals and recommendations will be funded. It is anticipated that there will be no single funding source; rather a mix of sources and solutions will be required to deliver the Strategy vision and ambitions. These solutions will include:

- ◀ Further development and implementation of the HBC developer contributions process associated with the development of urban extensions. It should be noted that planning contribution will significantly help with funding for future facility provision and enhancement.
- ◀ In the light of the potential co-location of facilities at Halton Healthy New Town, there may be potential to attract NHS investment into leisure proposals.
- ◀ Use of capital receipts from land disposal, where applicable.
- ◀ Asset rationalisation and use of revenue saving and/or future liabilities to pay back borrowing aligned to capital investment in other sites.
- ◀ Prudential borrowing where an 'invest to save' justification can be made, particularly for longer-term proposals which may be considered in light of the Council's future borrowing strategy.
- ◀ External funding sources aligned to specific facilities and/or sports (e.g. Sport England funding, other charitable grant awards and funding streams).
- ◀ 3rd party borrowing where a suitable, robust business case exists (although this will be more expensive than prudential borrowing).

New leisure centre developments are almost without exception undertaken so as to develop new, better quality, facilities which are more economical to operate. Furthermore, a new facility mix can, in many instances, enable the operator to deliver revenue efficiencies (i.e. operate the facility at zero subsidy or better) which can be used to fund part or all of the capital repayment. A similar approach is taken to the refurbishment of existing facilities where increased income offsets the annualised cost of the outlay of capital.

It is likely that a combination of the above approaches will be developed for the wide range of projects identified in Halton Borough Council. This will require a robust approach to business planning to ensure that all investment is financially sound. Furthermore, delivery of HBC priorities around tackling inactivity will be dependent on securing external revenue funding such as that offered by Sport England's various 'themed rounds' such as the active ageing and families funds.

Sport England Strategic Facilities Fund

In respect of capital funding for major sports facilities, Sport England has recently relaunched its Strategic Facilities Fund which is aligned to its new 2017-21 'Active Nation' strategy. Rather than being an open application process, applications are instead solicited, be requesting between £500,000-£2,000,000 and will have usually been identified within a Local Authority Built Facility strategy.

Within the assessment criteria, emphasis is placed on firstly establishing through local insight into need and demand 'what' the offer within any new facility might include, in order to then determine 'how' outcomes such as improved physical and mental well-being might be achieved. As with all investment linked to the Active Nation strategy, proposals will need to demonstrate how the investment will contribute to behavioural change in relation to sport and physical activity, specifically towards the KPI's of:

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- ◀ An increase in people undertaking sport and physical activity at least once per month.
- ◀ A decrease in the percentage of local people who are physically inactive (measured through the Active Lives survey).

All projects are required to demonstrate a cross sector 'shared vision' of how they will contribute to local priorities which could mean how services such as health, social care and education may be integrated alongside leisure on the same site. Business planning should evidence how efficiencies can be achieved, possibly through wider facility rationalisation and also how the new facilities will be sustainable in the long term.

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/3686/strategic-facilities-prospectus.pdf>

Sport England Community Asset Fund

Sport England's Community Asset Fund (CAF) is a programme dedicated to enhancing the spaces in local communities that give people the opportunity to be active.

The fund intends to support organisations that have not necessarily received lottery funding before and has a flexible application process with applications welcome year round for projects ranging from £1,000 - £150,000 in terms of grant request. CAF has been very popular since its launch in January 2017 with a high volume of applications received by Sport England and has the following objectives.

- ◀ Improve and protect existing sports facilities that support the needs of local communities
- ◀ Invest in new and different places that meet the needs of local communities, which include our target audiences
- ◀ Ensure our capital investment reaches organisations who have not accessed our funding before
- ◀ Create a more resilient, sustainable, less grant dependent sport sector

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/11425/community-asset-fund-guide-january-2017.pdf>

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Indoor and Built Facilities Strategy identifies the investment and actions required to deliver and maintain a high quality built facilities infrastructure for HBC.

It is important that it is a live document, used in a practical manner to prioritise investment, develop key work programmes and partnerships, guide planning, gain investment and ensure that built sports facilities are a vital component in the quality of life of Halton's residents.

Production of the Strategy should be regarded as the start of the strategic planning process with a requirement for all partners to engage in ongoing dialogue and review in order to ensure that a strategic approach is adopted throughout the life of the strategy.

It will be important for Halton Borough Council and its partners to develop a related action plan and for this to be monitored and reviewed annually. This process should not only review progress against the original action plan, it should also assess the knock-on impact of any changes that occur and identify any potential adjustment to the supply and demand equation for facilities across the Authority. This is, in part, proposed on the basis that the Strategy is as much about how facilities are used as it relates to ensuring that the infrastructure is of a good quality.

In particular, the annual review process should include:

- ◀ A review of annual progress on the recommendations of the action plan; taking into account any changes required to the priority of each action (e.g. the priority of some may increase following the delivery of others).
- ◀ Lessons learnt throughout the year.
- ◀ Any specific changes of use of key sites in the Borough (e.g. sport specific specialisms of sites, changes in availability, etc.).
- ◀ Any specific changes in demand at particular facilities and/or clubs in the area (e.g. reduction or increase in club numbers, new housing growth).
- ◀ New formats of traditional sports that may need to be taken account of.
- ◀ Any new or emerging issues and opportunities.

The outcome of the review will be to develop a new action plan for indoor and built sports facilities across the Borough.

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ACTION PLAN

The following actions link with Halton's strategic aims and objectives.

Objective	Rationale	Actions	Partners	Cost	Priority
Replacement of Kingsway Leisure Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Current swimming pool and sports hall are beyond their useful lives. ◀ Consultation indicates that lack of investment will affect participation levels. ◀ Without investment, this will no longer be the strategic site for sport and leisure in Halton. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Undertake detailed feasibility to confirm replacement facility mix. This should include community consultation. ◀ Outline design development and masterplan exercise accompanied by business planning. ◀ Community consultation to confirm proposed facility mix. 	HBC, Sport England, local clubs, educational sites.	£12 million - -£15 million	High
New Runcorn facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ The current swimming pool in Runcorn is not fit for purpose, is of poor quality and does not meet minimum DDA requirements. ◀ There is limited access to the current facility due to size of car park. ◀ Health and fitness provision is limited, restricting the offer in Runcorn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Undertake detailed feasibility to confirm replacement facility mix and location. This should include community consultation. ◀ Develop a partnership approach with Halton NHS to investigate options for a new leisure facility as part of the Healthy New Towns project. ◀ Outline design development and masterplan exercise accompanied by business planning. 	HBC, Active Halton, NHS Halton, Sport England, local clubs,	£8 million - £10 million	High
Physical co-location of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Co-location of health and leisure facilities within the Halton Healthy New Town initiative offers a unique opportunity to deliver on HBC health improvement priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ HBC to integrate master planning for Halton Lea Healthy New Town with design development of replacement Runcorn Pool. 	HBC, Active Halton, NHS Halton, Sport England	n/a	High

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Objective	Rationale	Actions	Partners	Cost	Priority
Refurbish Brookvale Recreation Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Certain elements of the facility require an upgrade to ensure long term use of the facility. ◀ Due to the current high level of utilisation for both the pool and the sports hall, this may restrict other users from using the facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Address maintenance issues highlighted in the Halton's Sports Facilities Review, which includes the replacement of the sports hall floor and a structural upgrade of the roof. ◀ Consider relocating certain programmes and activities to other locations to create more flexibility at the venue. An example could be to transfer demand of indoor football to outdoor 3G provision. ◀ Continued investment to maintain the facility to the best standard possible. ◀ Explore and review Service Level Agreement with OBA. 	HBC, local sports clubs	£500,000	Medium/High
Refurbish Upton Community Centre and consider long term redevelopment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ A refurbishment of the sports hall and changing facilities are recommended to create a more modern environment. ◀ The sports hall is operating at capacity according to the FPM, which may restrict utilisation of the sports hall for certain groups. ◀ The facility is located in an area of high health deprivation; therefore the challenge is to ensure that the facility attracts local residents addressing the health inequalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Short term maintenance improvements to improve quality. This will include refurbishment of its changing facilities and address the ventilation in the sports hall. ◀ Due to the utilisation issue of the hall, consider relocating indoor football to near-by 3G provision, which will provide more flexibility for other activities in the hall. ◀ Ensure that the facility continues to address local health inequalities via targeted programming. 	HBC, local sports clubs	£250-£500,000	Medium

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Objective	Rationale	Actions	Partners	Cost	Priority
Village Halls and community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ To ensure that facilities remain accessible to residents and that programming is reflective of local needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Continue to deliver a varied health and wellbeing programme across the authority. ◀ Undertake a review of these facilities to see which have the physical space and operational management capacity/ flexibility to take on an increased physical activity programme. ◀ Consider whether/how those facilities which are potentially available might add value to the current offer. 	HBC, third sector agencies, village hall owners.	n/a	Medium
Maintain and expand relationships with education sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Ensure that schools continue to provide for the community by offering access to key facilities. ◀ There is limited community access at Wade Deacon High school. ◀ If Kingsway LC is to reduce its sports hall provision, as proposed, providing opportunities at educational sites will be required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Ensure the Grange School, with its new sports hall, continues offering good levels of community access. ◀ Develop a community use standard to which all partners sign up, with a view to embedding well-organised collectively programmed community use in school sports halls across the Authority. ◀ HBC to approach Wade Deacon High School to identify opportunities for its facilities to open to the community, e.g. key holder /site management. 	HBC, Schools, Academy Trusts	n/a	Medium / High

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Objective	Rationale	Actions	Partners	Cost	Priority
Work with private facility operators (Widnes Tennis Academy, Focus Gymnastics) to ensure that these continue to provide opportunities for all and reduce health inequalities within HBC.	◀ Whilst being commercially driven, these facilities have a role to play in meeting the Council's priorities around inactivity in key sports.	◀ Through initiatives such as the Active Halton Sports Partnership, continue to engage with facilities to develop programmes to support increasing participation. Funding may be required to ensure venue revenue is maintained.	HBC, third sector agencies, private venue operators.	n/a	Medium