



**Executive**  
17<sup>th</sup> November 2008

**Report from the Director of  
Environment and Culture**

For Action

Wards Affected: ALL

**Review of sports facilities within Brent**

Forward Plan Ref: **E&C-** -07/08-038

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report summarises to Members the key findings and recommendations arising out of two strategic documents: a Strategic Review of Sports Centres and the Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy 2008 – 2021.
- 1.2 The Strategic review of sports centres was undertaken to help identify the strategic priorities for sports centre provision in Brent in future years.
- 1.3 The Planning for Sports and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Sport England and their consultants Leisure and the Environment and Genesis. This strategy makes facility provision recommendations and proposes local planning standards.
- 1.4 Both reports include detailed information about current levels and quality of sports provision in the Borough and uses a number of Sport England's planning tools to identify levels of demand and gaps in provision enabling Brent to compare its provision with those of other local authorities and London as a whole.

- 1.5 The strategies recognise that sports facility provision in the Borough is poor and that in order to increase levels of participation, improve the Council's CAA score and help deliver on the Local Area Agreement priorities there is a need to provide additional indoor and outdoor sports facilities within the Borough.
- 1.6 The Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity in Brent 2004 to 2009 is currently being reviewed and developed and it is anticipated that a new strategy will go before the Executive in spring 2009. Information from both the Strategic Review of Sports Centres and the Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy will feed into the new sports strategy which will have a wider remit than just sports facility provision.
- 1.7 It was not the purpose of these two strategies to identify exactly where all new facilities should be located nor how at this stage they could be funded. A significant amount of work will be required in both these areas and separate reports presented to Members.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

The Executive:

- 2.1 Note the findings of the Strategic Review of Sports Centres and the Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy.
- 2.2 Agree that in order to have the greatest impact, the first priority to improve sports facilities in the Borough should be:
- Priority One - the provision of a third swimming pool with other sports, health and fitness facilities that serves the North of the Borough
- 2.3 Agree that the other priorities for Brent's sports centre provision should be:
- New build wet and dry sports hub at Vale Farm sports centre that meets the sporting needs of the area.
  - The provision of a fourth pool with other sports, health and fitness facilities.
  - The provision of additional 'pay and play' health and fitness facilities in the Kilburn area, potentially through the refurbishment of Charteris sports

centre, subject to the provision elsewhere in the area of a sports hall with 'pay and play' community access.

- The redevelopment of the Bridge Park site that results in the provision of a replacement sports centre at or near the existing location of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre.

2.4 Instruct the Director of Environment and Culture to undertake further work to identify potential locations and investigate all potential funding , financing and procurement opportunities that may be available to achieve these priorities and bring forward proposals as to how they will be delivered.

2.5 Agree the strategic approach to improve sports provision as outlined in paragraphs 3.65 to 3.87 and request that the Director of Environment and Culture reports back on any issues that require additional funding.

2.6 Agree the local planning standards as per paragraphs 3.88 to 3.90 that will help the authority achieve its Planning Policy Guidelines for open space, sport and recreation requirements and act as a planning mechanism for assessing local provision.

### 3 **Detail**

3.1 Sport England approached the London Borough of Brent to take part as a pilot Borough to develop a strategic plan that would ensure the co-ordinated, strategic development of formal and informal facilities for sport and active recreation such that it will increase opportunities for participation by all Brent's communities leading to an enhanced quality of life. A working group was established with representatives from the Council's planning, sports and parks services, regeneration and children and families department, the Planning for Sports and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy is the document arising out of this pilot project. One of Sport England's desired outcomes is that the recommendations should be capable of being incorporated into a Supplementary Planning Document, a Sustainable Community Strategy and taken up by the Local Strategic Partnership.

3.2 Running alongside the Planning for Sports and Active Recreation Facilities work a strategic review of Brent's Sports Centres was undertaken by

consultants 'Continuum Leisure Limited' who looked specifically at three of Brent's sports centres, Vale Farm, Charteris and Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre in order to make recommendations in relation to their future provision and the impact of their provision on current and future sporting needs of the Borough.

- 3.3 The Brent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008 recognises that Brent has an ethnically mixed, young population with 43% of residents aged under 30 and 54% of the population from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority Groups. Brent has become the 53<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Borough in England (2007 Index of Multiple deprivation) with the fourth lowest average income levels in London and 37% of households do not own a car. Five key regeneration areas within the Brent are likely to increase the Borough's population by 12,000 giving the Borough a total estimated population of over 305,000 residents by 2016.
- 3.4 The Borough has health inequalities issues with male life expectancy increasing by ten years as one travels from the South East to the North West of the Borough. Nearly 20% of Brent's population is estimated to be obese and Brent has higher than average levels of child obesity. There are high and increasing prevalence of diabetes, HIV and TB within specific communities and areas within the Borough. Over 40% of residents in Stonebridge are estimated to smoke.
- 3.5 Sport and physical activity can contribute to addressing many of the issues above. Sport can help with health improvement, education and lifelong learning, crime reduction and community safety, social inclusion and community cohesion, regeneration and improvements to the environment. Such contributions will assist the Council and its partners deliver against it's Local Area Agreement priorities.
- 3.6 Brent will host various football matches as part of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. Yet Sport England's Active People survey (2006) showed that Brent has one of the lowest physical activity participation rates in the Country and the third lowest participation rate in London, with only 18% of the adult population undertaking 30 minutes physical activity on the

recommended three occasions per week and 56% undertaking no physical activity (Active people survey 2006).

- 3.7 The most popular indoor sports Brent's residents participated in were swimming (9.5%) and gym (9.0%), however both of these were below the London average where 11.5% took part in swimming and 13.5% attended a gym. The most popular outdoor sports were football (5.7%) and running/jogging (5.4%), again both of these were below the London average where 6% took part in football and 7.1% went running / jogging.
- 3.8 Sports Club provision in the Borough is also low compared to most other London Borough's. This is highlighted within the Active people survey where only 20% of Brent adults are members of a club compared to over 26% across London.
- 3.9 Despite low adult participation rates, momentous improvements have taken place in school sport and PE since 2003. In 2003 only 24% of Brent's 5-16 years participated in at least two hours of high quality PE and out of hour's school sport in a typical week, in 2007 this percentage had increased to 83% of pupils. However a large proportion of pupils at the end of Key stage 2 are unable to swim the required 25 metres.
- 3.10 It is estimated that there are over 50,000, 5 to 16 year olds in the Borough, all of whom are experiencing nearly two hours PE a week and there is therefore a need to sustain this interest via clubs or facilities by offering a range of opportunities outside of the school environment, so that an interest gained in physical activity at an early age will continue through into adult life. It is also anticipated that as it gets closer to 2012 more people will be inspired and motivated to participate in sport and Borough's need to be able to accommodate this new enthusiasm so that the legacy of 2012 is achieved.
- 3.11 The strategic review of sports centres and the planning for sport and active recreation facilities strategy recognise that Brent Council is not the only provider of indoor and outdoor sports facilities but highlights that the demographic profile of the Borough may mean that some people may only be able to utilise public pay and play facilities. It also recognises that whilst a

new sports facility such as Willesden sports centre (which is recording on average approximately 1,500 visits per day) provides clear evidence that a quality facility will attract visitors, to ensure that a facility is used by the local community significant sports development resources have to be made to ensure that the facility charges are affordable, the venue is accessible by public transport and facility design and programming recognises the needs of all users and specifically targets low and under-represented groups.

- 3.12 Both strategies considered strategic and external factors that will influence facility provision including the refocusing of the work of Sport England, the increased profile of national governing bodies of sport and the anticipated enthusiasm for sport and legacy opportunities associated with London as the host of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.
- 3.13 Whilst it is recommended that the Borough offers a broad range of facilities in a variety of sports, the Strategy for Sport and Physical activity 2004 to 2009 identified eight priority sports for which development plans have been written. These plans focus on each sports specific areas of need such as the provision of new coaching opportunities, club support and facility improvements. The recommendations from the Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy will help deliver these plans and increase opportunities for participation in many of these sports. The priority sports are: athletics, basketball, cricket, football, martial arts, netball, swimming and tennis.
- 3.14 A significant amount of work was undertaken auditing current indoor and outdoor sports provision in the Borough. Both strategy's made use of Sport England's various sports planning tools, including:
- Sport England's Facilities Planning Model for swimming pools and sports halls which enables the level of demand to be measured which conversely identifies levels of unmet demand. This tool considers facilities provided within neighbouring Borough's and reviews demand based on current and future population projections and evaluates the need for further sports facilities provision and the locations in which the need is greatest

- Capacity ratio's - enables the generation of capacity ratio based upon the frequency of a particular facility per 1000 population. This gives an indication of current provision levels in relation to the existing population which can then be compared with local, regional and national averages. This process is a useful tool to highlight any particular current and future anomalies in relation to levels of provision.
- Accessibility; choice and opportunity - national surveys have identified that the majority of facility users will travel for up to 20 minutes by foot in urban areas to attend a generic sports facility. Thus it is possible to generate catchment maps for each facility based on a 1.6km / 20 minutes travel distance. By using these maps and plotting the catchment of each facility it is easy to see at a glance those areas where people are within easy reach of a specific sports facility and those areas which are not.

3.15 A number of the planning tools refer to different types of use which determines how accessible facilities are to the public. These different types of use are Pay and Play, Sports Club/Community Association, Registered Membership and Private use. The term 'publicly accessible facilities' is used to refer to facilities that are available through the first three types of use listed above.

3.16 The detailed analysis and audits of current and future sports provision is given within the Planning for Sports and Active Recreation Facilities strategy. The key issues arising from this strategies and audits is shown below.

### **Sports Centres**

3.17 There are five sports centres in Brent and these are the foremost places where sport and physical activity take place. Four centres are owned by Brent, two of which are managed in-house and two of which are managed via contracts. The fifth is owned and managed by the City of Westminster although it sits within Brent's Borough boundary. The indoor facilities included within the sports centres (e.g. sports hall, swimming pool etc) have been included in the analysis of the specific facility types detailed below.

Map 1 - the location and catchment areas of sports centre's in Brent



- 3.18 Willesden Sports Centre opened in November 2006 under a 25 year PFI contract and was the first new sports centre in the borough in over 35 years. Purpose built the centre offers wet and dry facilities including an indoor and outdoor running track. Usage of the centre continues to increase and is much higher than initially anticipated. Willesden sports centre was not included in the review of sports centres because of its recent construction but the impact of the Centre has been considered within the borough-wide facility analysis.
- 3.19 The Strategic Review of Sports Centres which looked specifically at Vale Farm, Charteris and Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre highlighted the poor physical state of the existing sports centres and that despite investment and some refurbishment in recent years the three centres which are 22 to 28 years old are likely to become more expensive to operate and maintain as they reach the end of their economic life. As a result the cost effectiveness of



the centres will worsen and with limited ability to increase prices for an inferior product, usage and customer satisfaction is likely to fall and participation levels are unlikely to significantly increase.

### **Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre (BPCLC)**

3.20 Located in the Stonebridge ward, BPCLC is over 20 years old and is a conversion of a former bus garage. The BPCLC site is very accessible both by car and public transport. It is located close to the North circular between the railway line, a breakers yard and the Unisys site which is privately owned and has been derelict for 8 years. The centre provides indoor sports facilities plus conference, function and business units. The centre is a well liked public facility which is reflected in its high levels of user satisfaction. Sports usage has increased significantly since the centre was brought into Environment and Culture. Over £1million has been spent over the last three years to make the centre better fit for purpose and compliant with changes in health and safety and other legislation. However, the centre was not designed as an indoor sports centre and as such the potential for income generation is limited and operational efficiency is poor compared to the design of a more 'typical' purpose built sports centre.

3.21 BPCLC was previously owned by the GLC. The GLC covenants for this building dictate that any change of use or disposal would require the council to pay back 7/18<sup>th</sup> of the open market value. It is unlikely that GLC administrators would waive this fee however the re-provision of leisure facilities on this site may be possible without having to pay back the full fee.

### **Charteris Sports Centre (CSC)**

3.22 Located within a residential area within Kilburn ward the centre is around 24 years old. It is a converted former factory and therefore the sports layout is poor and the ceiling height is restricted by trusses. The centre is a neighbourhood community facility with over 50% of users walking to the centre in less than 10 minutes. The centre was brought back in-house in November 2006 and since this time usage levels have been increasing and user satisfaction levels remain high. The site constraints, design and layout

inhibit the centre considerably and current design is not conducive to high usage, good income generation or cost efficiencies.

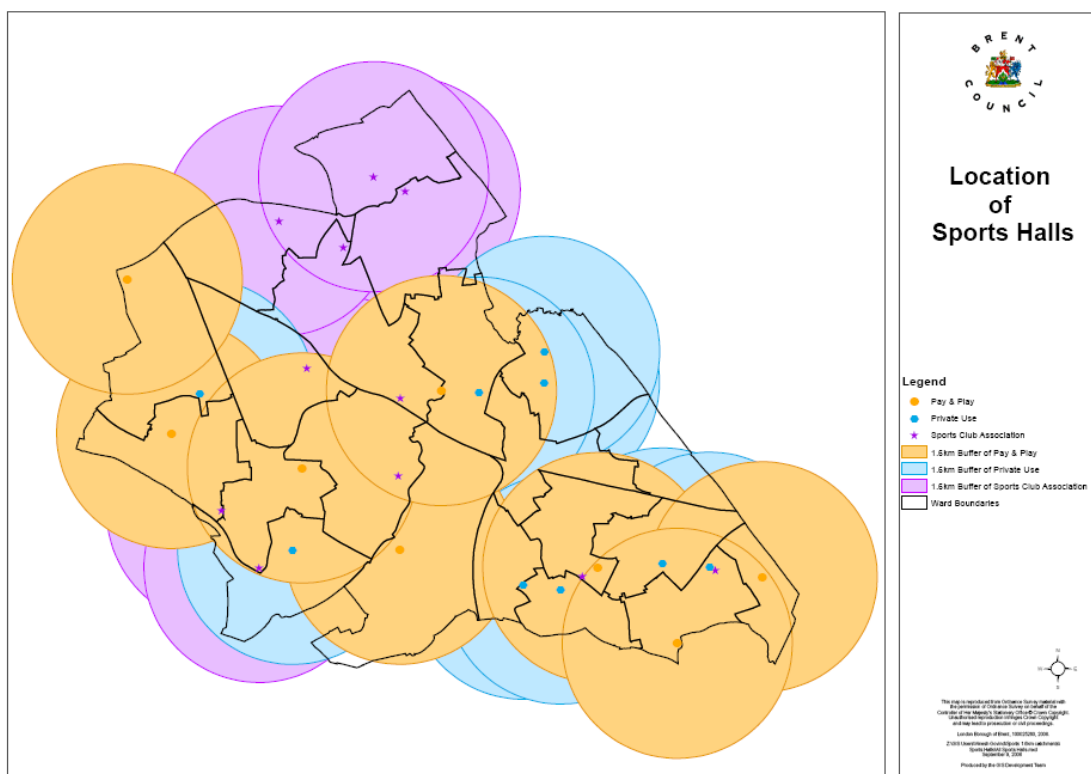
### **Vale Farm Sports Centre (VFSC)**

- 3.23 Built as a purpose built leisure centre in 1979 within Vale Farm Recreation Ground, the large mixed use wet and dry side centre is located in North Wembley in Sudbury ward. Vale Farm sports centre is managed by Leisure Connection under a five year contract. The centre's external appearance ages the building and whilst there has been considerable investment over recent years along with regular redecoration the building is aging and looks tired and out of date. The layout of facilities within the building is also poor due to its piecemeal development over time which means poor use of space and is therefore not a very efficient building.

### **Sports Hall provision**

- 3.24 Brent has 28 sports halls providing a total of 108 badminton courts. Sixteen (57 %) of these sports halls provide a hall space of at least 4 badminton courts which is large enough to accommodate other indoor sports such as netball, basketball and volleyball. Across the 28 locations 8 (29%) are available on a pay and play basis and 71%% for sports club/community association.
- 3.25 The Facilities Planning Model (FPM) run for 2007 identifies that the capacity of all Brent's sports halls is above the London average, however when including only those which are publicly accessible, demand outstrips capacity.
- 3.26 The map below plots the location of these facilities by access type and highlights those areas that are not within close proximity to a pay and play facility.

Map 2 - the location and catchment areas of sports halls in Brent



3.27 The majority of the Borough's sports halls are over 30 years old and although by 2016 an additional four sports halls are planned to be provided there are likely to remain issues regarding facility access and quality, such that theoretically an additional 21 badminton courts are required to meet future demand but this could be provided through a mixture of increasing community access as existing facilities, upgrading existing facilities as well as providing new facilities.

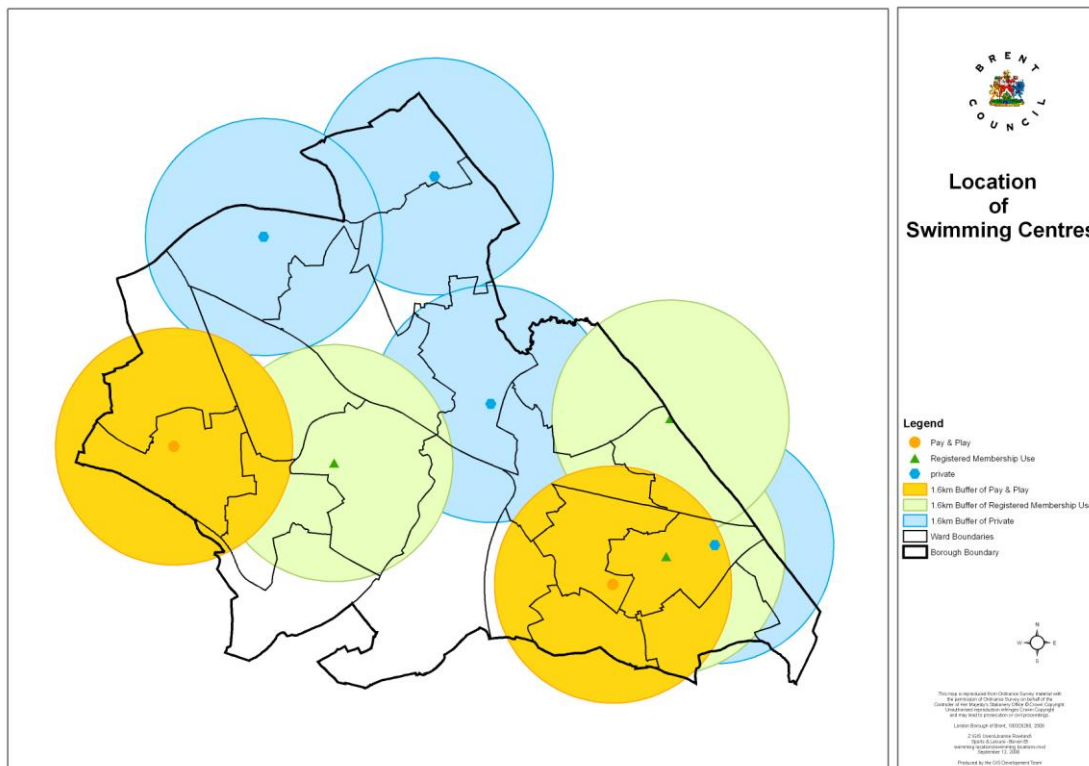
3.28 In the context of the three sports centres reviewed in the Strategic Review of Sports Centres, all three play an important role in satisfying sports hall demand now and in the future. Reduction of sports centre sports halls through facility closures would have a significant impact on supply levels and hence would increase the level of unmet demand.

### Swimming Pool provision

3.29 There is a major deficiency in swimming pool provision across the Borough and Brent is significantly deficient in swimming pool water space compared to other London Borough's. There are two publicly accessible pools in the Borough and three commercial facilities. The majority of Brent's residents live outside the recommended 1.6km catchment of a publicly accessible

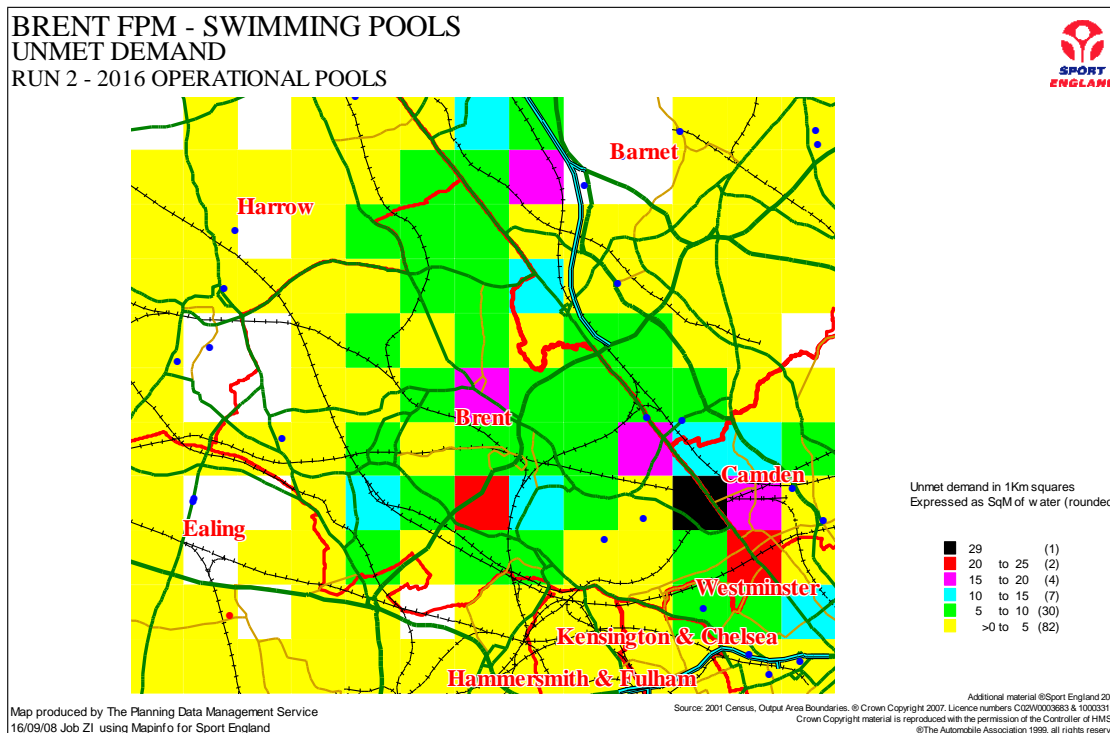
swimming pool with just under 50% of the population outside the catchment area of any pool.

Map 3 - the location and catchment areas of swimming pools in Brent



3.30 Despite a planned increase in pool provision by 2016 in neighbouring Borough's the increase in capacity does little to reduce Brent's unmet demand. Residents in the North of the Borough live furthest from existing water space. Whilst the south of the Borough shows a level of unmet demand it is the consultants opinion and that of the facilities planning model report that any additional provision should focus on providing additional water space first in the areas with greatest distance to publicly accessible facilities i.e. a pool that serves the North of the Borough as this will have greatest impact on Brent residents and new swimming facilities have recently been provided at Willesden sports centre and Swiss Cottage leisure centre.

Map 4 - Facilities Planning Model for swimming pools in 2016 – unmet demand



- 3.31 The FPM confirms the importance of public access water space at Vale Farm and Willesden sports centres as the only 2 public facilities in the Borough. Any reduction in this provision would significantly increase levels of unmet demand.
- 3.32 It is the view of officers that since swimming is the most popular sporting activity within Brent (Active people survey), that attracts participants of all ages, in order to increase participation levels in the Borough an additional swimming pool should be the key priority and provided before the redevelopment of existing provision. A new pool will generate increased participation levels by enabling new people to take part in swimming. The redevelopment of an existing facility is only likely to increase the capacity of the pool and is unlikely to result in a large number of new people taking part in swimming.
- 3.33 The Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) was established in March 2007 as the elected voice of young people in Brent. Their three priorities for Brent are: crime and safety, health and well being, sports and leisure. One of the main issues affecting young people under the ‘sports and leisure’ theme, which is

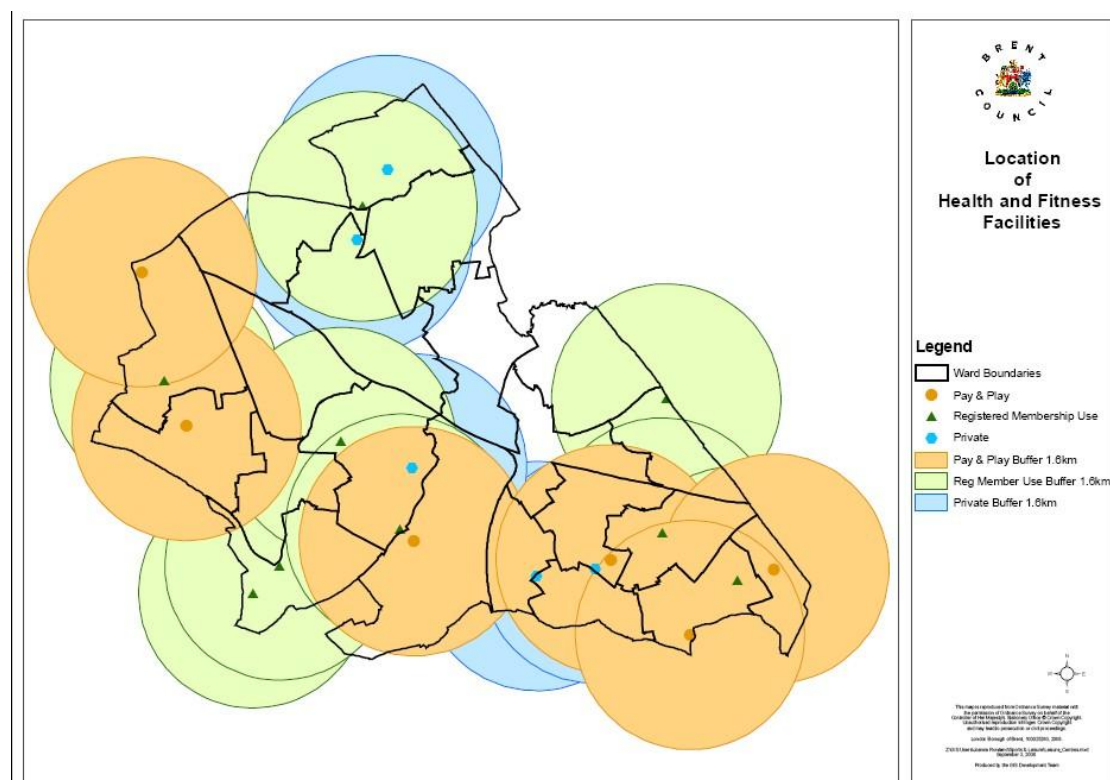
highlighted in their manifesto is that BYP feels that more swimming pools are needed in Brent.

- 3.34 The Amateur Swimming Associations Swimming Plan for London also identifies Brent as being deficient in pool space and in need of an additional public access pool.

### Health and Fitness provision

- 3.35 Across the Borough there is an under provision of health and fitness facilities provided by both the private and public sector. Publicly accessible facilities (there are only 299 (23%) fitness stations available on a pay and play basis ) are mainly located toward the southern periphery of the Borough therefore creating a shortfall in the central, north central and east areas of the borough.

Map 5 - the location and catchment areas health and fitness facilities in Brent



- 3.36 Capacity ratio comparisons show that there are 4.77 fitness stations per 1000 population in Brent which compares to a London average of 6.19 fitness stations per 1000 population. In Brent there are 22,105 health and fitness memberships. The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has stated that nationally, 12% of the population currently have a health and fitness

membership which is set to continue to grow. In Brent the level of membership is only an 8% conversion of the population. However, the FIA state that London membership rates are on average 33% higher than the rest of England, and using these calculations by 2016 an additional 14,543 memberships would be expected. This would require an additional 827 fitness stations. Currently the areas which are furthest from any health and fitness provision are in the Dudden Hill, Welsh Harp, and Preston wards.

- 3.37 The potential to increase the health and fitness capacity within the existing centres or as part of any new development should be explored particularly in relation to Charteris and BPCLC where the socio economic status of local residents dictates a demand for public sector provision to ensure affordability.

#### **Other Indoor facility provision**

- 3.38 There is one indoor bowling green in Brent in Preston which places Brent marginally above the London average.
- 3.39 Brent has no specialist indoor tennis courts and based on capacity ratio's Brent would need an 8 court indoor tennis centre to meet the average in London. However this calculation doesn't take into consideration facilities in other boroughs which may be satisfying Brent's demand and or that the London average is not necessarily the correct level of provision.
- 3.40 There are 7 squash courts in the Borough provided at two sites, both in Sudbury. Usage levels show that there is greater capacity than demand but squash courts can provide multi functional space.
- 3.41 There is no Sport England planning tool measure for specialist facilities such as an indoor running track, but according to the UK Athletics target of one indoor training centre per 500,000, the provision at Willesden sports centre meets the demand within Brent and there are other facilities within a short travelling distance in other parts of North and West London.

### **Outdoor facility provision**

- 3.42 An audit of Brent's outdoor facilities was undertaken by Ashley Godfrey Associates. The audit looked at the quantity, quality and access to sports pitches, courts, ball courts / Multi use games areas (MUGA's), changing and ancillary facilities. The audit was undertaken during the winter season and only included pitches that were marked out and appeared to be in use, rather than spaces which were informal, were not obvious that they were used during the summer and/or could accommodate pitch sports.

### **Pitch provision**

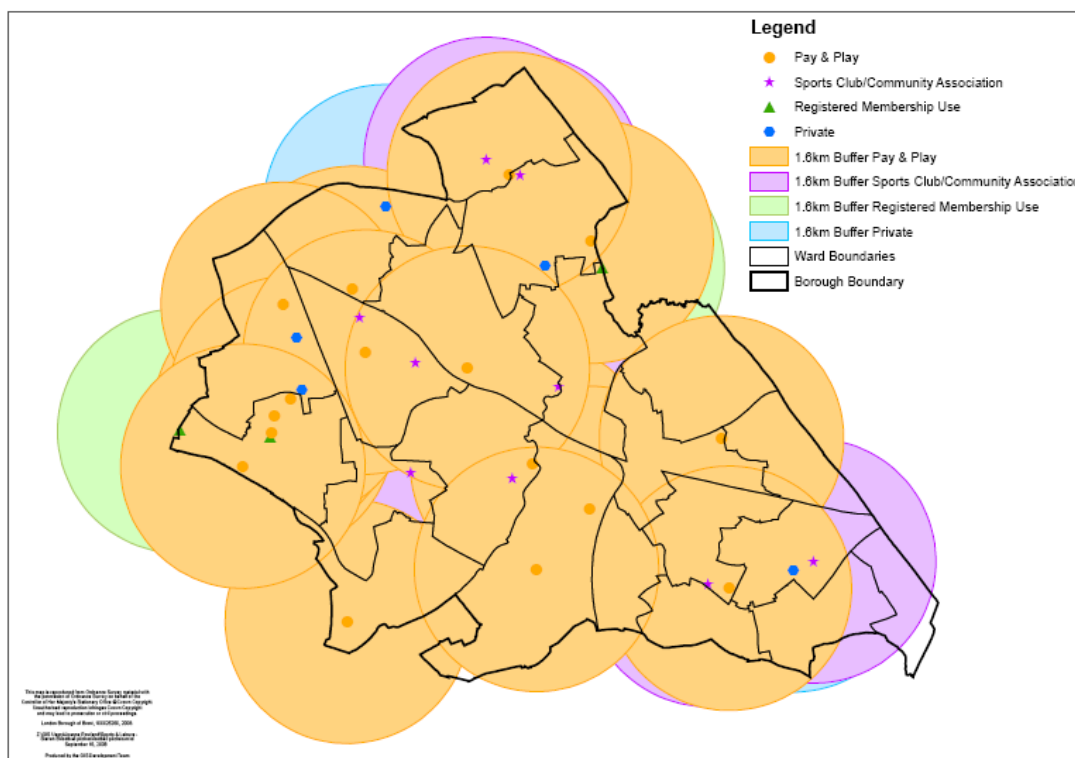
- 3.43 The audit inspected 89 pitches; 46 pitches on local authority sites (including Queens Park), 30 pitches on education sites, and 13 pitches on 11 private and 1 housing association sites. Very few education sites have their own sports pitches with only 8 of Brent's 14 Secondary Schools and 5 of the 60 Primary Schools having sports pitches.
- 3.44 The quality of pitches and changing rooms were assessed in accordance with a modified Sport England Visual Quality Assessment (VQA) and the vast majority of pitches in the borough are of average, below average, or poor quality. Only about one third of pitches have changing rooms and this assessment showed that just over half of the council managed facilities were in good condition whilst three quarters of the private use playing pitches have changing room facilities which are mainly of average condition.

### **Football pitch provision**

- 3.45 Much of the borough is within a 20 minute walking distance (1.6km) of a football pitch. In the South East of the borough there are only football pitches on school sites.



Map 6 – the location and catchment areas of outdoor football pitches in Brent.

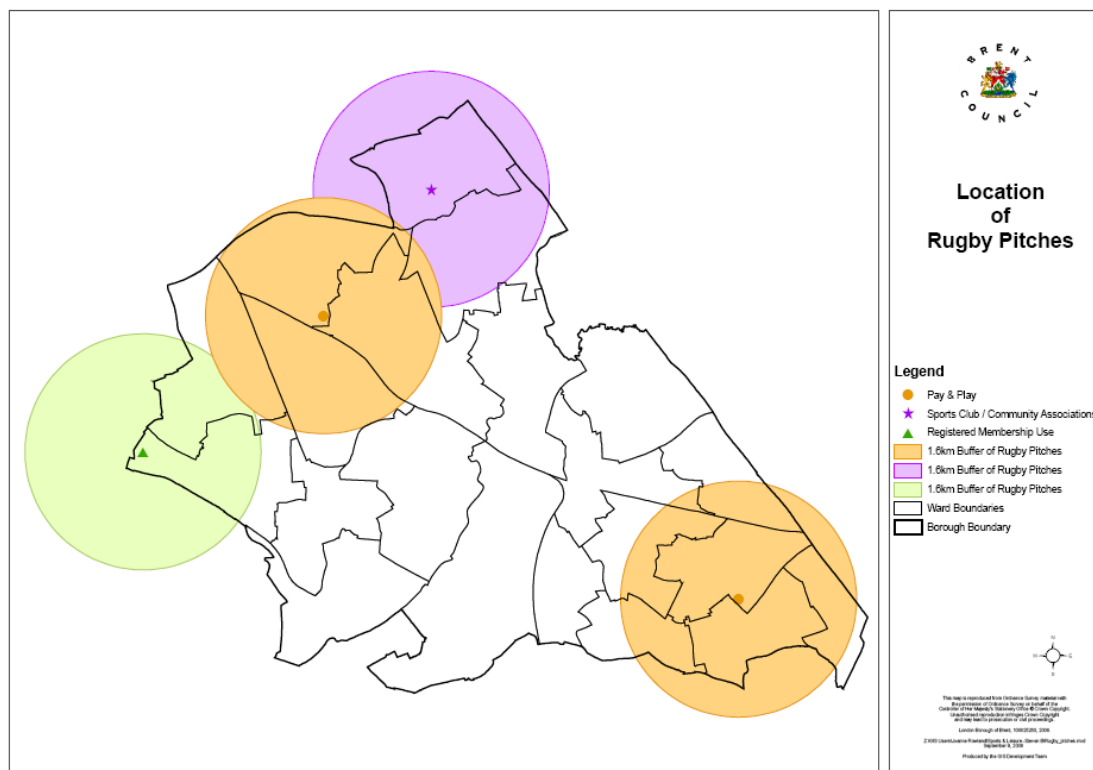


- 3.46 5.7% of Brent residents (16yrs+) played outdoor football in the 4 weeks preceding the Active People Survey which means that Brent's football participation rates are similar to both London and National levels. However the FA's records on number of teams playing in Brent indicate the number of football games played in the borough is far below London-wide levels. This may be explained in part by teams playing in the borough that are not affiliated to the FA and therefore do not appear on the FA's database or the poor quality of pitches and lack of associated changing rooms in the borough may mean that demand for pitches is displaced to neighbouring boroughs as teams choose to play elsewhere in London.
- 3.47 London-wide conversion rates show that Brent is significantly deficient in pitches based on estimates of demand including latent demand. Some of this provision could be accommodated by making improvements to the existing pitches which will increase pitch capacity. Where there are areas of under provision but no available space on which to create additional pitches, community access of school pitches should be investigated.

### Rugby Pitch provision

3.48 The audit surveyed 4 rugby pitches in Brent. These included two local authority sites, 1 education site and 1 privately owned site. Peak demand for rugby pitches is on Saturday afternoons and at the time of the survey there was demand calculation shortfall of one pitch during peak playing period. However, a new pitch is being brought into use at Gladstone Recreation Ground together with floodlit training facilities which will help meet demand and will become the new base for one of Brent's rugby clubs.

Map 7 - the location and catchment areas of rugby pitches in Brent

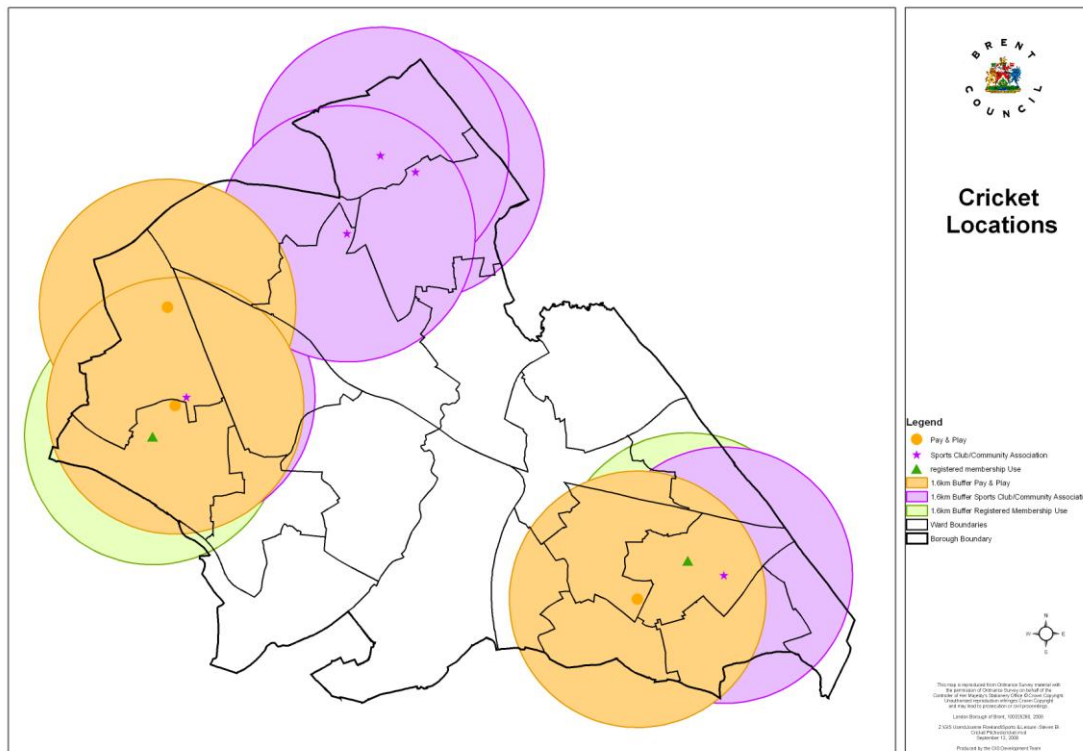


### Cricket pitch provision

3.49 There are 17 cricket pitches in the Borough on 11 sites, 4 on education sites which are available to the public to hire, 8 local authority pitches and 5 private sports club pitches which are available for use by clubs members only. The quality of all the pitches is good although the local authority pitches are generally not as good. However improvements are currently taking place on pitches at Sudbury Court and new pitches are being provided at King Edwards VII in Willesden, John Billam and Gladstone Recreation Ground.

3.50 Cricket is a locally popular sport with 1.5% of Brent's population playing cricket which is above the London and national average (both 0.9%). Calculations show that there appears to be sufficient overall supply of cricket pitches to meet minimum demand estimates however there are areas within the Borough outside the 20 minute catchment. Community use of the 3 pitches on school grounds is limited and the quality of some of the authority's pitches needs to be improved.

*Map 8 - the location and catchment areas of cricket pitches in Brent*



The new pitches at John Billam and Gladstone Recreation Ground are not included on this map as they were not operational when the audit was undertaken.

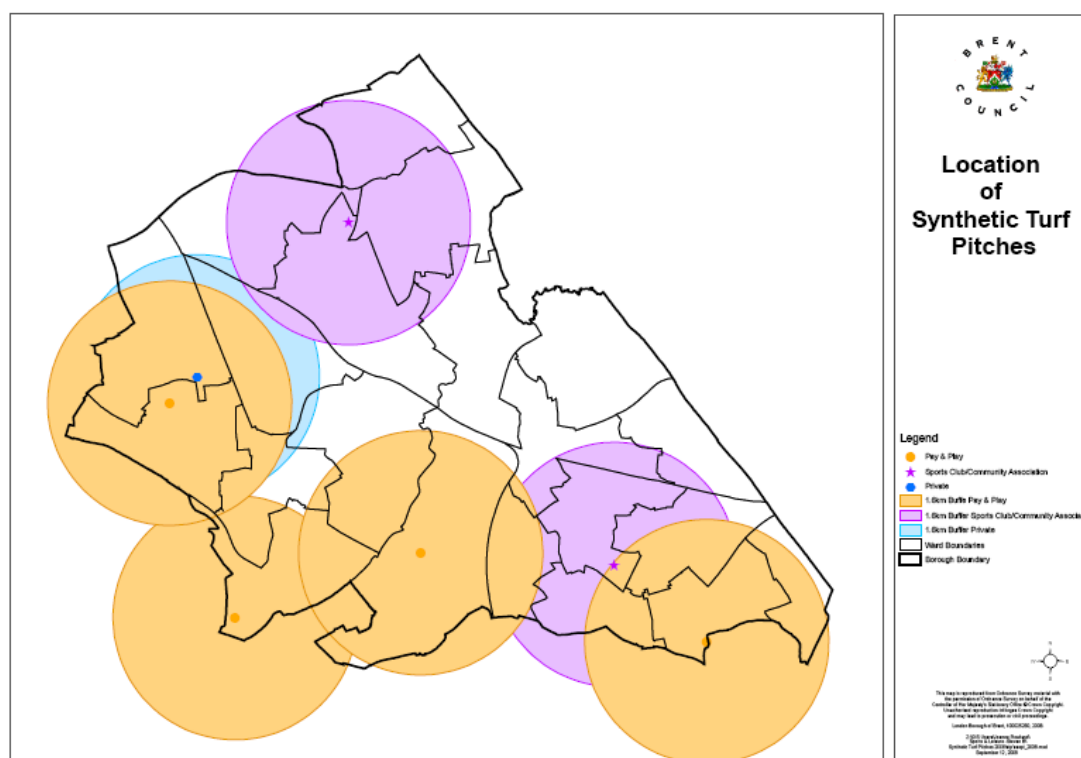
### **Gaelic football provision**

3.51 There are 5 Gaelic football pitches all within the ownership of Brent Council at Northwick Park, Church Lane Recreation Ground and John Billam. A new pitch is being developed at Gladstone Park.

### Synthetic Turf Pitches (STP) provision

3.52 There are seven STP's, sites nearly all of which have changing facilities and in good condition. Sport England's STP criteria is based solely on full size facilities with floodlights, this excludes the small sided facilities at Goals and Moberly and the unlit pitch at Wembley High. Using Sport England's criteria Brent is slightly deficient in STP's and will be deficient by one in 2016. The centre of the Borough, Dollis Hill and Welsh Harp are the areas where most people live outside a 20 minute walk catchment from an STP. However since this audit was done, Claremont school have been given planning permission for an STP which, if providing community access, will further satisfy demand although not reducing travel times to those areas already furthest away.

Map 9 - the location and catchment areas of STP's in Brent



### Athletics Track provision

3.53 An outdoor track is provided at Willesden sports centre (WSC). Whilst Brent's provision is below the London average the demand for an additional facility currently appears to be minimal and Willesden Sports Centre has the capacity to accommodate greater athletics use. There are several athletic track facilities in close proximity to Brent, just outside the Borough boundary and it

is recognised that users of specialist sports facilities are willing to travel greater distances, reducing the need for a second athletics track in Brent.

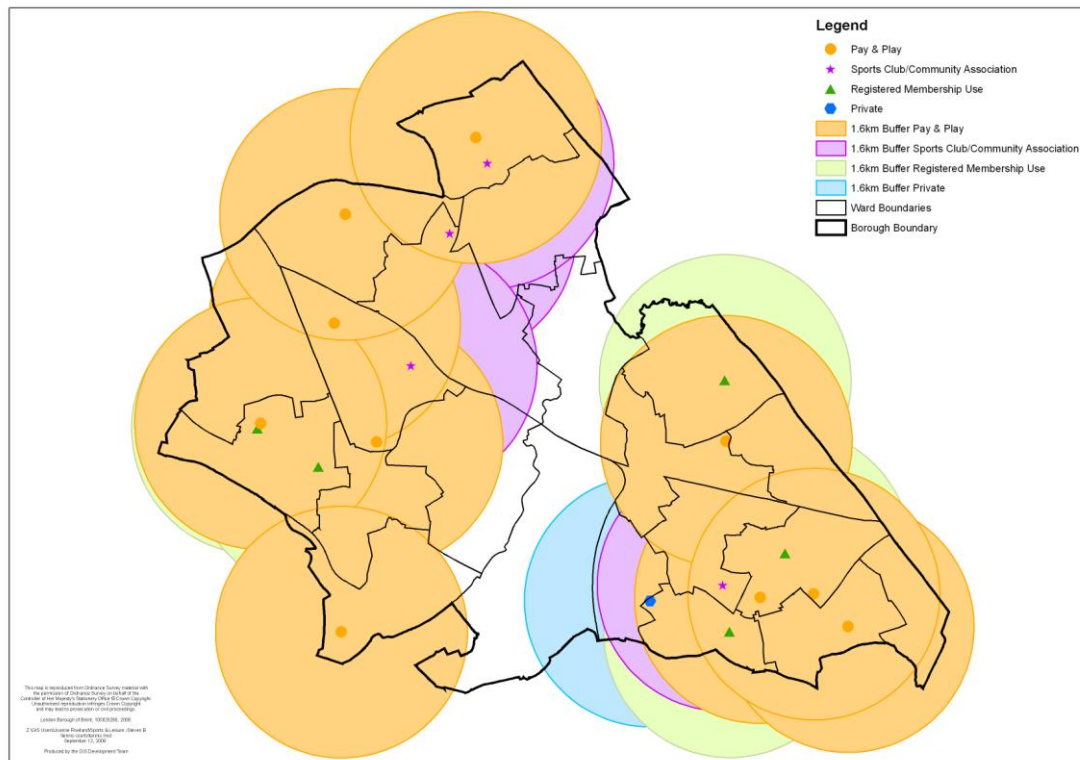
### **Outdoor bowls provision**

- 3.54 There are 9 outdoor bowling greens in the borough, 7 maintained by the local authority and 2 privately owned. The provision of bowling greens is concentrated in the North and South East of the borough. Declining participation rates in the borough reflects a London-wide trend and there does not appear to be demand for increased bowling green provision, although improvements should be made to the pavilions at the existing site to meet the needs of current demand.

### **Tennis court provision**

- 3.55 Brent has a total of 74 tennis courts. 35 of these tennis courts are located within local authority sites, 17 within secondary school sites, and 22 on 5 privately owned/long term leased club sites. The courts which are on the privately owned/ long term leased sites are in the best condition. The local authority tennis courts vary in quality and some are in need of significant investment. Tennis courts are distributed fairly evenly across Brent, however some central and southern areas of the borough are more than 20 minutes walking distance from a tennis court. Since the audit was conducted 3 tennis courts are being provided at Queens Park Community school and will be available for community use by prior arrangement.

Map 10 - the location and catchment areas of tennis courts in Brent



3.56 Tennis participation rates in Brent (2.1%) are lower than the London rate of 3% and our neighbouring boroughs. Using Sport England’s participation rate calculations the Borough is deficient in approximately four tennis courts to meet demand but this includes courts which are currently unplayable so the position is worsened.

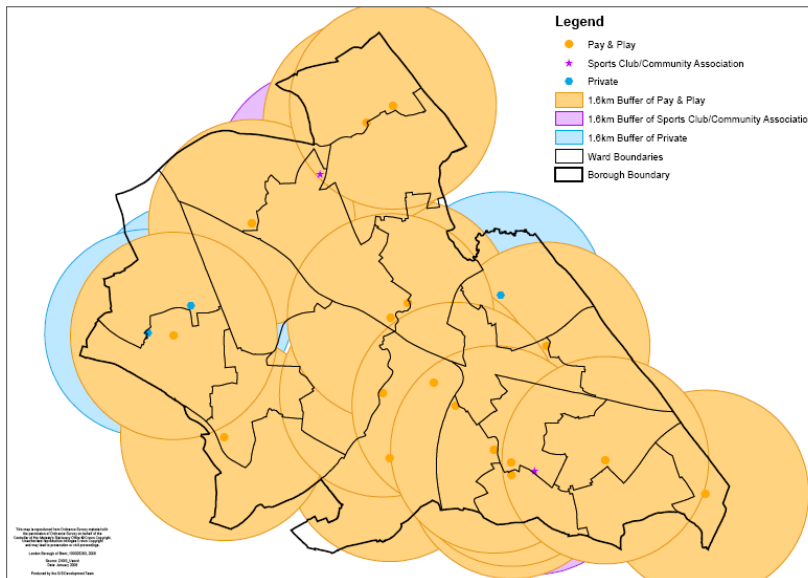
### Netball court provision

3.57 There are currently no netball courts within Brent’s Parks and only limited provision within Brent’s schools. However, five new netball courts are planned at Gladstone Park and netball can be played inside 4 badminton court sports halls. There is no recognised standard for netball court provision, however it is a sport predominantly played by females and therefore provision should be encouraged particularly within schools where these facilities should be made available to the community / sports clubs. Since the audit was conducted one netball courts is being provided at Queens Park Community school and will be available for community use be prior arrangement.

### Ball courts / multi use games areas provision

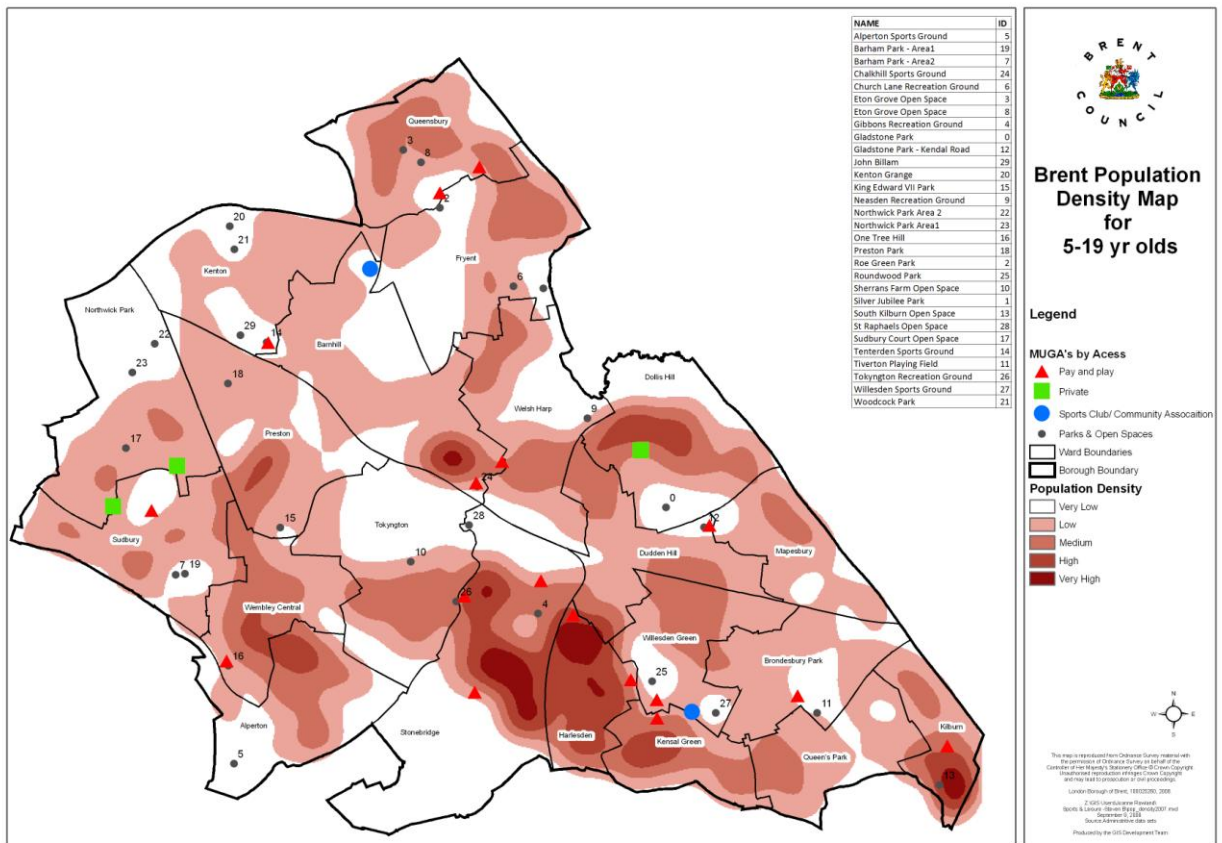
3.58 Multi-use game areas (MUGA) / ball courts is the generic name for purpose built outdoor facilities for multiple sports. MUGAs are primarily used by young people, usually for basketball, football, tennis, hockey or netball. There are currently 21 ball courts / MUGAs located at 19 sites and plans for four further facilities by spring 2009. The MUGAs are mainly located in Parks and on school sites.

Map 11 - the location and catchment areas of MUGAs / ball courts in Brent



3.59 The majority of MUGAs are relatively new and of good quality. There is no recognised standard for MUGA provision, however as they are popular with young people the location of a MUGA should focus on areas with the greatest density of young people.

3.60 The map below shows young population density levels and locations of existing MUGA facilities and parks and will be used to identify future sites.



### Cycling provision

3.61 Nine per cent of Brent's population undertake cycling for 30 minutes at least once a month. There are a number of cycle routes and networks around Brent as part of the London Cycle Network. There is also a disused BMX track in Chalkhill. Following the 2008 Olympic success cycling is likely to become increasingly popular and Brent should be looking to increase opportunities particularly areas for safer cycling that young people can take part in.

### Watersports provision

3.62 Welsh Harp (or Brent Reservoir as it's formally known) is located on the Kingsbury / Hendon borders. The reservoir is two kilometres long and in its south westerly point is the base for a number of water sport clubs providing activities in sailing, kayaking, canoeing and windsurfing. Welsh Harp is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which means that any developments on the site are subject to conditions that prevent damaging



impacts on the SSSI. There are no recognised levels of provision but the success of Great Britain's 'sailing' team at the 2008 Olympics should be used as a tool to encourage greater participation.

### **National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's)**

- 3.63 A number of National Governing Bodies of Sport have developed facility strategy's which identifies their wish for improved and increased facilities at which their specific sport can be played. Some of these strategies are seen as 'wish lists' and assume high levels of participation.
- 3.64 With the refocusing of the work of Sport England their new strategy identifies NGB's as key partners in the delivery of their strategy and have made up to £120m available each year to NGB's to help Sport England achieve their strategic goals. Forty six NGB's are currently going through a competitive application process for funding to enable delivery of their plans. There may be opportunity within these plans for closer working with local authorities in terms of sports development and potentially facility development (this won't be known until the plans are released).

### **Key findings**

- 3.65 There has been very little investment in the Borough's sporting infrastructure over the last twenty years. This now means that in general Brent has aging, poor quality sports facilities, low levels of satisfaction, low levels of provision in some facility types and some of the lowest levels of participation in London.
- 3.66 The adult 3 x 30 participation score is one of the National Indicator set of measures. In order for the Council to improve under the Comprehensive Area Assessments there will need to be a major improvement in 3 x 30 participation levels. Whilst general improvements to outdoor sports facilities and targeted programmes of activity can have a small impact on participation levels, the greatest number of people participating in sport will be at a sports centre. If the current level of provision is maintained it won't enable any significant improvements to this National Indicator.

### **Key recommendations arising from the facilities audit**

- 3.67 Using Sport England's many strategic planning tools the audits highlight the importance of Brent's existing sports centres, at or very near to their current locations, in providing much needed publicly accessible facilities and meeting the sporting demands of Brent residents.

#### **Sport hall recommendations**

- 3.68 To meet projected demand there is a need for 21 badminton courts which should be provided through a combination of new facilities, refurbishment of existing facilities and increased access to existing provision. Any new halls on school sites should have enforceable affordable community access arrangements designed into the layout of the school and implemented through appropriate community access management agreements.

#### **Swimming pool recommendations**

- 3.69 Lack of swimming pool provision in Brent is a major issue and there is a need for two pay and play swimming pools (minimum 6 lane each) in the Borough. The provision of at least one pool that serves the North of the Borough should be the Borough's key priority. A second pool should be provided at an easily accessible location near the Centre of the Borough where there is good public transport access and a significantly increasing population.

#### **Health and fitness recommendations**

- 3.70 There are significant shortfalls in the provision of health and fitness facilities with a need for an access to an additional 827 fitness stations. There is an opportunity for this provision to be made by the private sector in some parts of Brent and via the local authority in areas where affordable pay and play access is essential to enable use by the local community.
- 3.71 Increasing capacity at any redeveloped or new built facility should include substantial health and fitness provision as a priority. (Such provision is also likely to cross-subsidise other facilities such as a swimming pool.)

- 3.72 Education sites that have health and fitness facilities should be encouraged to make such facilities available to club / community groups similar to their bookings for sports halls.

### **Specialist indoor facility recommendations**

- 3.73 There is no additional demand for indoor bowls, indoor athletics or squash courts but the existing level of provision should be retained.
- 3.74 Statistically there is a demand for indoor tennis facilities and consideration should also be given to the provision of an indoor cricket centre to support the high level of cricket participation in Brent.

### **Football pitch recommendations**

- 3.75 FA calculations show an under-provision of football pitches. The borough requires an additional 24 adult, 5 youth and 21 mini football pitches, some of this should be provided by the creation of new pitches, others by improvements to existing pitches.
- 3.76 The quality of existing pitches needs to be improved and additional changing accommodation should be provided. Existing changing rooms should be at least of good standard and capable of use by both genders and different age groups at the same time.
- 3.77 Where there is no open space to provide new pitches e.g. South East of the Borough, schools should be encouraged to offer some use of their pitches to the community

### **Gaelic Football recommendations**

- 3.78 Clubs currently operate at 7 Gaelic pitches in the borough. An additional pitch will be opening at Gladstone Park. It is believed that there is local demand for expanded facilities at Silver Jubilee Park to accommodate more Gaelic sports.

### **Rugby pitch recommendations**

- 3.79 With the provision of a new pitch at Gladstone Park together with a floodlit training area there appears to be sufficient provision. However if levels of participation increase an additional pitch may be required.

### **Cricket pitch recommendations**

- 3.80 Current levels of cricket pitch provision must be retained and pitch quality improved. By 2016 there will be a shortfall of one public cricket pitch to meet minimum demand estimates. If levels of participation increase or access to pitches on school sites reduces further additional pitch provision will be required.

### **Synthetic turf pitch recommendations**

- 3.81 STP provision meets demand but residents in some areas of the Borough have further to travel than others and any new provision should focus on those areas currently at greatest distance from existing facilities.

### **Multi Use Games Areas / ball court recommendations**

- 3.82 Any further MUGA provision should be located in areas with greatest young person population densities.

### **Tennis court recommendations**

- 3.83 There is demand for 4 additional tennis courts in the Borough. There should be greater community access to the courts on school sites. Local authority courts in poor condition should be refurbished.

### **Specialist outdoor facility recommendations**

- 3.84 There is no additional demand for outdoor bowling greens or athletics tracks.

### **Cycling recommendations**

- 3.85 More safer cycling areas e.g. cycle routes in Parks and well signposted routes that link different areas within Brent are needed. The feasibility of reinstating and improving the rundown BMX track in Chalkhill should be investigated.

### **Watersports recommendations**

- 3.86 The clubs on Welsh Harp should be supported to improve their facilities to provide greater access and hence greater participation opportunities to Brent residents to take part in a range of watersport activities.

### **National Governing Bodies of Sport**

- 3.87 Brent welcome working with all national governing bodies of sport, particularly in sports which can bring resources and help achieve our strategic objectives. When considering providing specialist facilities, provision within neighbouring Borough's must be assessed as demand may be satisfied through local provision outside the Borough.

### **Local Standards**

- 3.88 Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy also proposes local standards as a mechanism for assessing local provision and identifying whether or not Brent is deficient and what is required to meet the needs of population growth. It also helps the authority achieve its PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation requirements to set standards locally for open space, including indoor and outdoor sport and recreational activities.
- 3.89 As well as specific facility quantity standards the strategy enforces that the council needs to:
- ensure facilities are adaptable and imaginative to meet the requirements of the borough, its diverse ethnic and cultural communities and its changing population.
  - encourage facilities that provide access by all sections of the community and adoption of sports equity policies.
  - ensure that public sector facilities include resources to ensure that the facility charges are affordable, that programming recognises the needs of all users and low and under-represented groups are specifically targeted.
  - ensure there is development of facilities of sufficient quality and distribution to encourage increased levels of participation.

- ensure the adoption of quality standards in design, construction and energy efficiency.
- ensure facilities are accessible by public transport, bicycle and foot to ensure good practice in sustainable development.
- ensure planning conditions require new sports facilities on school sites to provide accessible, affordable community access through agreed facility management arrangements.
- only fund / contribute to improvements in school sports facilities where clear management plans and design practice maximises sporting use outside of school hours.

3.90 The strategy then proposes the following local standards for facility provision:

#### Summary of Local Standards for Indoor Sports Provision

Indoor Sport Facility	Standard per 1,000 population	Facility per 1,000 population	Access
Swimming Pools	5.6m <sup>2</sup>	1 lane per 9,000 <sup>1</sup>	Community use pool within 1.6km or 20 mins travel time
Sports Halls	44m <sup>2</sup> (large sports hall)	1 court per 3,500 <sup>2</sup>	Community use 3-4 court hall within 1.6km or 20 mins walk or a 1-2 court small sports hall suitable for badminton within 15mins walk
Health and Fitness	6.7 stations	1 station per 150	Pay & play in areas of multiple deprivation, membership/registered membership use elsewhere. Community use of school facilities out of hours. Access within 1.6 km or 20 minutes walk

#### Summary of Local Standards for outdoor sports provision

Outdoor Sports Facility	Standard per 1000 population	Local Standard	Quality Standard	Access
Synthetic Turf Pitches	0.02 pitches or 0.02 ha/200sqm	1 per 50,000	Full size floodlit STP of good or excellent quality	Publicly accessible within 1.6km or 20 minutes walk
Athletics Tracks	0.02 lanes	1 lane per 50,000	Good or excellent quality	Retain existing provision and

<sup>1</sup> To consist of a minimum of four 6-lane pools

<sup>2</sup> Preference for 4-court sports halls

Outdoor Sports Facility	Standard per 1000 population	Local Standard	Quality Standard	Access
				accessibility
Football Pitches	0.4 ha	1 ha of grass pitch per 2,500 population	Good or excellent quality	Publicly accessible within 1.6km or 20 minutes walk
Gaelic football Pitches	0.03 pitches or 0.06 ha/600sqm	1 pitch per 34,000	Good or excellent quality	Located to maximise club development
Tennis Courts	0.34 courts or 0.028 ha/280 sqm	1 court per 3,000	Good or excellent quality	Publicly accessible within 1.6km or 20 minutes walk
MUGAs	0.13 MUGA or 150 sqm	1 MUGA per 8,000 population	Good or excellent quality	Publicly accessible within 800m or 10 minutes walk in areas of high young person population density
Cricket Pitches	0.04 pitches or 0.08ha/800 sqm	1 pitch per 27,500	Good or excellent quality	Publicly accessible within 1.6km or 20 minutes walk
Bowling Greens	0.03 rinks or 90sqm	1 bowling green per 33,300	Good or excellent quality	Retain existing provision and accessibility
Rugby Pitches	0.003 pitches	1 per 300,000	Good or excellent quality	Located to maximise club development
Netball Courts	0.13 court or 130 sqm	1 per 7,500	Good or excellent quality, floodlit.	Provision linked to schools and sports centres.
Changing Rooms	All outdoor sports facilities with 2 or more grass pitches.	All outdoor sports facilities with 2 or more grass pitches.	Of good or excellent quality. Accommodate use at the same time by different age & genders. Provide toilet facilities. Larger pitch sites to provide enhanced facilities in the form of a pavilion.	Publicly accessible adjacent to sports pitches (2 or more pitches).

### **The Future of Brent's Sports Centres**

3.91 As part of the review of Brent's sports centres the consultants were asked to consider a range of options to provide a best-fit solution for future provision that considered the key issues of borough-wide and local need, value for money and long term planning. As part of this process the consultants came up with costed options that included 'do minimum' to the existing facilities, closure of the existing facilities, refurbishment of the existing facilities and new

build sports facilities in situ or very close to their existing locations. Officers have considered these options; how they will increase participation levels, improve satisfaction, improve efficiency and create opportunities for income generation as well as looking at the financial costs and best value implications of each option. Officers therefore propose the following options for each centre. These estimated financial costs of all the options are shown in Appendix two.

### **Vale Farm Sports Centre**

- 3.92 The Vale Farm Sports Centre site is allocated as public open space in the 2007 Local Development Framework. This land classification currently prohibits any enabling development at the site other than for the retention (or possible redevelopment) of the existing sports facilities.
- 3.93 Vale Farm with its expanse of open space and nearby private sports clubs provides an ideal location for a 'sports village' concept. The site has great potential as a multi sports hub site but a change of land classification is likely to be required to enable there to be any flexibility on land use which might provide some capital receipt to fund any redevelopment.
- 3.94 As one of only two pools in the Borough the timings of any option are critical to ensure that at least the current level of water space is maintained (i.e. a third pool in the Borough should be provided first). It is recommended that this centre is rebuilt as a wet and dry leisure centre, to be built next to the existing centre which would then be demolished once the new centre is operational so minimising inconvenience to users and allowing continuity of provision.

### **Charteris Sports Centre**

- 3.95 The review has highlighted the key role that the centre plays in providing publicly accessible sports hall and health and fitness provision in the area. In particular if sports hall provision were to be reduced at Charteris and not provided elsewhere then there would be a significant level of unmet demand.
- 3.96 Future development options at the existing site are limited as the site is totally constrained by surrounding buildings and there is no opportunity to acquire



land or change land use in the immediate surrounding area. The existing site is assessed as having a land value of between £500,000 and £900,000 based on the development of residential units.

- 3.97 It is recommended to provide additional 'pay and play' health and fitness facilities in the Kilburn area, potentially through the refurbishment of Charteris sports centre. This option potentially assumes part closure of the centre possibly for 12 months. However this option potentially removes the sports hall and hence significantly reduces sports hall provision in the area.
- 3.98 This option is only recommended if a publicly accessible sports hall opens nearby, possibly as part of any developments in the Kilburn area or as part of the South Kilburn New Deal for Communities programme. St Augustine's school in the City of Westminster wishes to build a sports hall as part of its Building Schools for the Future programme. The only suitable land available is within Brent and for a shared level of subsidy the sports hall would be made available to the local communities on a pay and play basis as well as booked to community groups / sports club bookings. If this were to proceed it may require use of some of the £500k S106 monies to provide the capital investment to upgrade the facility so that it can offer pay and play opportunities. Consideration should be given to use the remaining S106 to refurbish Charteris to provide a health and fitness facility and / or monies help subsidises the sports hall pay and play element at the school.

### **Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre**

- 3.99 The review identified a strong need for a sport and leisure facility on or very close to the existing site, with a larger health and fitness facility providing greater capacity for the young local population.
- 3.100 The Planning Service recognises the need for change on this site, recognising the potential for mixed use residential / leisure / community complex development although the site is on an area of high flood risk identified by the Environment Agency. From a planning perspective justification for the closure and relocation of the centre would be acceptable as long as re-provision of the sports and some community facilities were made. There is potential for raising significant capital to fund future proposals at the site and the inclusion of the

Unisys site would enable a significant regeneration project within Brent and links to the proposed plans to regenerate areas along the North Circular.

- 3.101 There are complex issues with the BPCLC site and adjacent land but there is the potential to generate a significant capital receipt to reinvest in new sports provision. However there are a number of areas such as the GLC covenant that require further clarification.
- 3.102 It is therefore recommended that should the opportunity arise for the redevelopment of the Bridge Park and/or Unicys site, this must be accompanied by the provision of a replacement sports centre at or near the existing location of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre. Clarification would be required regarding the GLC covenant repayment.

### **Strategic Priorities for Brent's Sports Centres**

- 3.103 Officers therefore recommend that Members agree the following strategic priorities (the officers priority order is slightly different to those put forward by the consultants as officers do not propose to wait for the 'opportunistic options' to be realised before progressing with other priorities) to enable the long term provision of 'fit for purpose' indoor sports facilities within the Borough and that officers will investigate all opportunities to enable these priorities to be realised.
- 3.104 **First priority - Provision of a third public swimming pool that serves the north of the Borough** together with sports, health and fitness facilities which will help reduce revenue subsidy levels.
- 3.105 **Other priorities**
- **New build wet and dry sports hub facility at Vale Farm sports centre.**  
This will protect the ongoing provision of sports facilities in particular the publicly accessible water space until the new facility is available for use. A new build will enable more efficient and effective design principles to be introduced making the facility more cost effective and able to meet the demands of the local populations. Additional facilities should be considered for inclusion within this facility which may also be more

attractive to a private sector operator such as indoor tennis, indoor cricket, climbing wall. The key issue with this option is identifying sources of funding or enabling development that will result in a capital receipt that will enable this priority to be realised.

- **The provision of a fourth swimming pool** in the Borough with other sports, health and fitness facilities
- **The provision of additional ‘pay and play’ health and fitness facilities in the Kilburn area**, potentially through the refurbishment of Charteris sports centre, subject to the provision elsewhere in the area of a sports hall with ‘pay and play’ community access.
- **The redevelopment of the Bridge Park / Unicys site** that results in the provision of a replacement sports centre at or near to the existing location of Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre. This is a more opportunistic option and will be lead by the Council’s Planning service. The timing of this redevelopment will be determined by enabling opportunities that arise.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The aging stock of the three sports centres means that the opportunity for making efficiency savings is limited and there is likely to be increasing revenue and capital costs associated with ongoing repairs and maintenance to ensure the centres can remain operational.
- 4.2 The estimated costs of the options for the three sports centres are included within Appendix two of this report, however, these are only estimates based on mid to upper range new build costs to ensure conservative estimates and a significant amount of additional work would be required to determine more detailed costs.
- 43 It is possible that enabling capital may be available for developments at Bridge Park through the development of some or all of the site but the position regarding repayment of the covenant to the GLC would need determining.
- 4.4 The Sports Service has a net expenditure budget of £2.8million. This budget enables the operation of four sports centres and provides a sports development and leisure client function. To realise the recommendations of

this report there will be a need for both large capital investment and additional revenue funding to cover the maintenance costs of additional outdoor facilities and subsidy for the indoor sports facilities. Officers will need to identify different procurement and financing options as well as applying for external funding to achieve these priorities and recommendations.

4.6 Officers will also work with planning officers to maximise opportunities through regeneration and housing schemes as well as section 106 funds to provide facilities that will benefit a significant proportion of the Borough's residents.

4.7 Opportunities to develop publicly accessible facilities as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme should be assessed although at present this scheme does not provide funding for new swimming pools or health and fitness related facilities.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Council has power pursuant to section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit. This power includes the power to provide buildings, equipment and assistance of any kind.

5.2 The Council should consult, as appropriate, on any proposals which may lead to the temporary or permanent reduction or closure of any facilities.

5.3 Any site acquisitions or disposals required to facilitate any of the actions referred to in this report will be subject to further decisions by officers or members if necessary, as will the procurement of any services, works or supplies. Any such procurement, acquisition or disposal will be conducted in accordance with all relevant EU and domestic legislation and the Council's Standing Orders.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity identifies a number of key target groups who are under-represented in terms of sports participation. These groups are: young people, people from black and minority ethnic groups,

disabled people, older people plus women and girls. The development or refurbishment of a new facility would consider the needs of all Brent's local communities to encourage participation through facility design. All facilities would be accessible to everyone including those with disabilities and would be fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

6.2 The local standards highlight the need for facility provision to adopt sports equity policies to encourage facilities to provide for all sections of Brent's communities.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

7.1 Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre and Charteris sports centre and managed by the Council's Sports Service and redevelopment or refurbishment of the site in the future may affect staff if the centres have to be temporarily closed.

### **Background Papers**

Strategic Review of Sports Centres in Brent - January 2008.

Planning for Sport and Active Recreation Facilities Strategy – September 2008

Facilities Planning Model for sports halls and swimming pools - 2007

### **Contact Officers**

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