

SUNDERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE – NEEDS ANALYSIS

Introduction

Brief

Following a site visit, a tour of Ladywell Leisure Centre and briefing meetings on 2nd November 2005 John Chapman of Leisure Futures Ltd was commissioned by Lewisham Council to carry out a needs analysis for indoor sports and leisure facilities on a site designated for this use from 2010 at Loampit Vale, Lewisham known as 'Sundermead'.

Objective

The following objective for the needs analysis was agreed:

To produce a robust needs analysis and recommendations as to the mix and scale of indoor swimming and dry sports/fitness facilities that should be provided on the site informing the planning of the new community leisure centre to be included within this major regeneration project.

Scope of Work

The following scope of work was agreed:

Desk based research

1. Review the *Leisure Investment Strategy Review: Final Report (December 2004)* by Capita Consulting and test/update its underlying assumptions in relation to demand and leisure facility provision in the public and commercial sectors serving people living and working in the catchment area of the Sundermead site.
2. Review current proposals for school and community sports facilities on secondary school sites in the Borough in relation to the need for sport hall facilities.
3. Review the *Lewisham Town Centre Strategy* and other relevant forward planning documents (eg Greater London Authority population projections) relating to population change in the Central Lewisham area and its environs (eg. Deptford, Convoys Wharf etc) and the transport/access characteristics of the Sundermead location.
4. Review of the current proposals for *Wavelengths and Forest Hill Pools* together with the final scheme content for the *Downham Lifestyles Centre*, in so far as these facilities are likely to impact on the indoor sports facility needs in the Central Lewisham area.

Consultation

It was agreed that consultation take place with the following individuals to gather relevant information and data and views on the priority demands and facility needs:

- Annette Stead, LBL Head of Sport & Active Recreation
- Ron Huntley, LBL Leisure Contract Client Officer
- John Miller, LBL Head of Planning Service
- Karen West, Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) Regional Director for London (from 19th December) and former Sport England London Region Lead Officer for East London Sport & Physical Activity Partnership
- Tony Farrelly Chair of Saxon Crown Swimming Club
- Ros Band, Community Development Manager, 'Health First'
- John Norton, Lewisham Contract Manager, Parkwood Leisure Ltd

Site Visits

In addition to the visit to the Sundermead site on 2nd November, the existing centres have been visited to assess the scope and quality of existing provision serving the Central Lewisham catchment:

Needs Assessment

Introduction

The needs assesment follows the principles and process recommended in "Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17", that is:-

- Identifying Local Needs
- Auditing Local Provision
- Setting and Applying Provision Standards
- Drafting Strategic Options

It also follows the 'Key Attributes' for sport and recreation provision set out in PPG17 of *accessibility* (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility), *quality* (including better design, management and maintenance) and *quantity* (how much new provision may be needed). Government guidance as set out in PPG17 also emphasises that "well designed and implemented planning policies for ... sport and recreation are ... fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives". These include: supporting and urban renaissance, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development.

The assessment is based on existing local strategies and uses background research previously commissioned by the Council, notably the Leisure Investment Strategy Review produced a year ago in December 2004, updated by information supplied by consultees relating to:

- Changes to the facility investment strategy in the Borough agreed during the last year (eg. retention of a swimming pool at Forest Hill, new community sports halls on secondary school sites)
- Changes to the facility investment strategy of relevance in neighbouring boroughs and in the sub region (eg relating to the London Olympics in 2012) with a focus on competition swimming and diving facilities
- Forecast population growth likely to result from regeneration housing schemes in the relevant neighbourhoods.

Local Strategic Context

As noted in Government guidance, planning (and management) of sports services must take account of local needs and the local strategic context. This will help identify priorities and ensure that sport services meet local corporate objectives. Summaries of the local demography, the most important local strategies and how they inform Lewisham's sports facility needs at Sundermead are given below.

Demography

The population of the Borough is estimated by the Greater London Authority to be approximately 260,000. The Borough ranks 57th out of 354 according to the 2004 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This measure combines information relating to income, employment, education, health, skills and training, barriers to housing and services and crime into an overall measure of deprivation. Lewisham has a rank of 23 in the income measure. This indicates a greater than average need for sports and physical activity services in Lewisham available at accessible (ie affordable) prices.

Broadly, the borough's 18 electoral wards divide into four neighbourhoods:

1. Neighbourhood North – Brockley, Evelyn, New Cross, Telegraph Hill (Pop. 63,000)
2. Neighbourhood Central – Blackheath, Ladywell, Lee Green, Lewisham Central (Pop. 53,000) *Sundermead is located at the north end of Lewisham Central.*
3. Neighbourhood South & East – Catford South, Downham, Grove Park, Rushey Green, Whitefoot (Pop. 71,000)
4. Neighbourhood South & West – Bellingham, Crofton Park, Forest Hill, Perry Vale, Sydenham (Pop. 74,000)

Characteristics of the population of particular relevance to leisure provision at Sundermead are:

Household structure changes – increase in smaller household units, single occupancy and couples, particularly in the North and Central neighbourhoods most relevant to Sundermead.

Ageing population – this is a national trend reflected in Lewisham although in the North and Central neighbourhoods the population is young compared to the borough and London averages

Increases in child obesity - again a national trend but particularly marked in areas of low income which in Lewisham Borough are concentrated in the North (Deptford, New Cross) and the South East (Downham)

Growing black & minority ethnic population – this demographic trend is relevant in planning sports and leisure services that are accessible to all ethnic groups by responding to particular cultural requirements

The greatest demographic change in the Borough is taking place in the North and Central neighbourhoods, most particularly in the north around the river at Convoys Wharf and in Millwall. There is major investment in regeneration in these areas with a focus on new housing. According to GLA estimates, the impact of development and other demographic changes in the Borough over the next 15 years will be to increase the population to around 300,000. 56% of the increase is forecast to be in the North and Central neighbourhoods of greatest relevance to Sundermead.

Lewisham's Community Strategy

The Lewisham Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy 2003-2013 has 10 priority issues under three broad themes:

Improve the wellbeing of the people of Lewisham

1. Crime

- Make Lewisham a safer place and reduce the fear of crime

2. Health

- Sustain and improve the health and wellbeing of local people

3. Education

- Raise educational attainment, skill levels and employability

4. Enterprise and Business Growth

- Foster enterprise and sustainable business growth including the creative industries

5. Cultural vitality

- Develop cultural vitality by building on Lewisham's distinctive cultures and diversity

6. Regeneration

- Secure the sustainable regeneration of Lewisham – its housing, transport and environment

7. Welfare dependency

- Reduce welfare dependency, promote independence and increase the life chances of vulnerable members of the community

Develop and engage local communities

8. Engage local communities

- Help local communities to develop the capacity to support themselves, act independently and participate in providing services and wider support to the borough

Improve public sector performance and delivery

9. Equity in service delivery

- Design diversity into local institutions and design out discrimination, ensuring equity in service delivery

10. Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of local public services

- Improve the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of local public services; optimise investment in infrastructure; and improve the management of assets.

The proposal for investment in a new leisure centre at Sundermead contributes to most of these strategic priorities and, in particular, numbers 2 (Health), 6 (Regeneration), 9 (Equity) and 10 (Effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of local public services).

Lewisham's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

The Lewisham Strategic Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2002-2005 focuses on the overarching need for neighbourhood renewal in the most deprived communities – Downham, Deptford and New Cross - and in securing and channeling funding to address the needs of these communities and the causes underlying their multiple deprivation (employment, education and skills, health, community safety, etc).

The impact of this strategy is to prioritise the need for sports services in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, i.e. Lewisham's sports services and facilities should be accessible from Neighbourhood Renewal Areas NRAs). Clearly, the new centre under construction in Downham addresses accessibility for swimming and health and fitness facilities from the Downham NRA. The excellent accessibility of the Sundermead site by public transport means that the proposed sports facilities here will help complement those in Millwall

(The Lions Centre) and in Deptford (Wavelengths) in serving the growing population in the Deptford and New Cross NRAs.

Lewisham's Sports & Physical Activity Strategy

The Council's Sports & Active Recreation Service has devised a five-year strategy focussing on creating a healthier community by widening opportunities for participation in any physical activity, enabling the Lewisham community to develop its potential in sport and leisure. The strategy has three aims:

- To increase participation in sport and physical activity by residents
- To enhance personal and social development of individuals and groups by promoting the principles of sports equity
- To allow people to raise their levels of achievement in sport

One of the objectives in relation to the increase in participation aim is for the Council to work with public private and voluntary sectors to ensure appropriate sport and leisure facilities are available across the Borough. The strategy for facility improvement and enhancement is informed by the following:

1. In 2002, a major consultation was carried out with residents across the Borough, entitled 'Spotlight on Sport'. Key findings of relevance to this facility needs analysis for Sundermead were:

- *Swimming and keep fit/aerobics fitness activities area the most popular*
- *Just under a quarter of those surveyed do not participate in any form of sport or physical recreation*
- *Strong support for health suite provision in Lewisham (Central Neighbourhood) to replace Turkish Baths formerly operated at Ladywell*
- *Support for improved creche facilities*

2. In 2004 a Facility Audit concluded there are a number of qualitative and quantitative gaps in provision. As far as *quantity* is concerned the gap with regard to swimming was in the South & East Neighbourhood (now addressed by Downham Lifestyles Centre, the replacement for the derelict Downham Pools). Gaps in facilities for indoor dry sports were identified in all four of the Borough neighbourhoods. These are being addressed, primarily, by means of the secondary school site investment programme.

3. In December 2004, Capita Consulting carried out a 'Leisure Investment Strategy Review'. The review endorsed the Council's draft proposals to invest in community swimming facilities in the following priority areas:

- Downham – The Lifestyles Centre with swimming and fitness facilities
- Deptford & New Cross – extended provision at Wavelengths
- Lewisham & Ladywell – *replacement of the Ladywell Leisure Centre with facilities with improved accessibility for the disabled and other minority groups in a new, more sustainable leisure centre at Sundermead*

In the South & West Neighbourhood, Capita concluded that the pools at Forest Hill might not be viable in the long term due to a range of factors including its overlapping catchment with the Bridge Centre and with pools in other boroughs. However, the Council has subsequently decided to retain a swimming facility in this location.

With regard to sports halls and fitness facilities, the Capita review endorsed the Council's overall strategy to focus investment on secondary school sites maximising the funding opportunities available through the Government initiatives 'Building Schools for the Future (BSF)' and the 'Private Finance Initiative PFI' and the national lottery (NOF/Big Lottery Fund). Capita identify the potential of this strategy to maximise the value of the investment through enabling out-of-hours community use. However, Capita emphasise that, for this access to be achieved and sustained, the parameters must be agreed from the outset so that community access is facilitated by the design and robust community use agreements must be put in place.

Summary of Existing and Proposed Provision

Existing Swimming Pool Provision by Neighbourhood

North – The wards in the north of the borough are served by the Wavelengths Leisure Pool. Although a modern pool of good quality, this facility has no lane swimming and is very limited for swim teaching. This pool currently attracts approximately 110,000 annual swim visits.

Pools in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary in the north include: The Seven Islands Pool (25m) in Bermondsey (serving parts of Evelyn Ward), the Peckham Pulse 25m and learner pools (New Cross Ward) and Dulwich Leisure Centre's 3 lane 27m pool built in 1900 (Telegraph Hill Ward).

Central – Ladywell Leisure Centre comprising a 36 2/3 yd 6-lane pool, spectator provision and a teaching pool serves the central wards. This Centre, due to close in October 2007 to accommodate a new school, currently attracts approximately 120,000 annual swim visits.

Pools in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: The Arches Leisure Centre in Greenwich with its 4 lane 33m pool and leisure pool and the private members David Lloyd Club at Kidbrooke (Blackheath Ward) which has a 4 lane 20m pool and children's splash pool.

South & East – At present this neighbourhood is poorly served. Swimming provision is limited to a 12m 4-lane pool in a private health club, LA Fitness, on the Borough boundary in Grove Park and a 30m 6-lane pool with limited public access at St Dunstons College in Rushey Green. Cost of membership at these facilities restricts accessibility to many in this neighbourhood. In Downham, the Council has procured a new 25m 6-lane pool with spectator provision and a separate learner pool. This centre is under construction and will replace the former public pool on the same site.

Pools in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: The Pavilions Leisure Pool in Bromley Centre (Whitefoot Ward).

South & West – This neighbourhood is served by the Forest Hill Pools – currently a 25m main pool and a 27m x 10m teaching pool in a 1886 building– and by a 3-lane 25m pool

and 18m x 7m learner pool at The Bridge Leisure Centre on the Sydenham/Bellingham borders close to the Borough boundary with Bromley. These pools attract about 100,000 and 115,000 annual swim visits respectively. There is also a private health club with a 20m pool in Sydenham (Bannantynes).

Pools in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: The National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace with its 50m competition and diving pools and spectator provision. This centre is shortly to be refurbished and serves parts of Sydenham Ward. Parts of the adjacent Bellingham Ward are similarly served by the Beckenham Spa, a new 25m 8 lane competition pool with spectator provision and a separate learner/warm down pool owned by Bromley Council.

Proposed Swimming Pool Provision by Neighbourhood

To ensure sufficient *quantity* of good *quality* opportunities to learn to swim, swim for health and fitness and for fun are *accessible* to all residents in the future, the Borough Council's current strategy is to provide subsidised pools in each neighbourhood as follows:

North – To add a conventional pool to the existing leisure pool at Wavelengths addressing existing demand from local schools and the community for a facility in this neighbourhood better suited for swimming teaching, for lane swimming for fitness and for groups with special needs. This strategy recognises the likely increase in future demand in this neighbourhood resulting from major new regeneration housing schemes planned in the Convoys Wharf and Millwall areas of Evelyn Ward in particular. In assessing the need for swimming facilities at the Sundermead site, we have assumed that this conventional pool will be provided. *Although strictly outside the remit for this report, we have carried out theoretical demand modelling calculations of the scale of the need for public swimming water at Wavelengths based on both existing population levels and GLA forecast population levels for 2021. (See tables 3 and 4 appended).*

Central – In recognition of the need to close the Ladywell Leisure Centre in 2007 to make way for a new BSF school on the site, the strategy provides for a new, replacement swimming facility serving the wards in the Central Neighbourhood. The Sundermead location (at the northern end of Lewisham Central Ward) has been selected for the replacement pool partly for its excellent public transport links. The site is accessible by bus from all parts of the Borough and also by train and DLR to residents commuting out of the borough to work or study.

South & East – The new pool at Downham is designed to meet swimming needs in this neighbourhood.

South & West – The strategy is to retain the relatively new pools at the Bridge with either a refurbishment or a new build smaller replacement at Forest Hill in order to improve the quality of this provision in this location and to sustain it long term. When completed, the future swimming facility needs of this neighbourhood will be met.

Determining a Standard for Swimming Facility Provision at Sundermead

In order to establish the scale of the swimming facilities needed within the replacement for Ladywell at Sundermead, we have applied the following demand modelling techniques:

1. Historical Sport England planning 'standards' for swimming pools - ie. 5m water area per 1,000 head of resident population in a catchment area
2. The more sophisticated 'Facility Planning Model' (FPM) planning approach now advocated by Sport England. The FPM is based on analysis of the distribution and potential catchment 'draw' of swimming facilities against the capacity of pools at peak times and researched participation rates by gender and age.

We have then tested and interpreted the outcome of these approaches against views gathered in consultation with the Council's Sports & Recreation Officers and representatives of the Saxon Crown Swimming Club, Parkwood Leisure, Sport England London and the Amateur Swimming Association.

Table 1 (appended) shows the detailed workings and assumptions we have applied in carrying out Standards and FPM analyses for Swimming at Sundermead assuming the current population levels and the addition of the conventional pool at Wavelengths.

Planning Standards suggest that there is a need for around 295 sq m of water space at current population levels – roughly equivalent to a six lane pool - while the Sport England Facilities Planning Model for Swimming Pools indicates a need for more water area in this location – 496 sq m – to meet demand during the 'peak demand' hours. This is equivalent to a full competition size six-lane pool plus a learner/warm down pool.

Table 2 repeats the analysis at the population levels forecast for 2021 in the latest projections produced by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Assuming levels of swimming participation remain at the levels used by Sport England in the FPM, at the population levels forecast, the water area needed in this location increases to 325 sq m (a full competition size 6-lane pool) under the Standards approach and to 544 sq m under the FPM approach. This is equivalent to an 8-lane competition pool and a learner/warm down pool.

6-lane or 8-lane Main Pool?

Unsurprisingly, the preference of the ASA and the swimming club is for the larger 8-lane main pool should it be affordable and feasible within the constraints of the available site. The 8-lane option offers the following main advantages over a 6-lane pool:

- Greater capacity and flexibility of use at peak evening and weekend times - eg. better able to accommodate club training or swim lessons and public sessions simultaneously
- Greater capacity and flexibility of use during the day in term time – school swimming and public lane swimming simultaneously (provided separate group changing is available for use by school classes)
- Better able to accommodate the growing demand for swimming lessons – the Saxon Crown Club reports a membership of 200, a waiting list of 70 and a target to grow to around 800 members in 5-6 years.

- Performance development – an 8-lane pool would provide future elite squad swimmers with opportunities to train and compete locally in a facility at (or close to) national short course competition standard.

However, the local case for an 8-lane pool is not reinforced by sub-regional strategic considerations. Sport England and the ASA consider that while Lewisham falls within the new East London Sub-Region for Sport & Physical Recreation, the barrier of the River Thames dictates that Lewisham residents are far more likely to travel to regional competition pools in neighbouring boroughs south of the river than to existing and proposed competition pools in the Sub Region on the north side such as the new Olympic Aquatic Centre in Hackney. The ASA and the Saxon Crown Swimming Club both acknowledged in our discussions that there are two existing high quality 8 lane pools to national short course standard in the neighbouring borough of Bromley - Crystal Palace NSC and Beckenham Spa – which are reasonably accessible to Lewisham residents for occasional galas at this level. It was also acknowledged that, provided adequate programme time is made available at Sundermead and Downham at reasonable costs, the future training and competition needs of the club can be met within 6-lane pools at these two sites.

Diving facilities?

Provision of specialist deep water for diving is not considered to be a need. There is provision nearby at Crystal Palace NSC. It has been confirmed recently that this facility is to be retained and refurbished. The ASA recognise the high costs associated with providing and sustaining diving pools and the dearth of diving coaches. Accordingly, their strategy at the borough and sub-regional level is to focus resources on retaining and refurbishing facilities where there is an established coaching infrastructure. In this area, Crystal Palace NSC is the focus for existing resources in support of diving. Elsewhere in the East London sub-region, new resources for diving will be directed to the Olympic Aquatic Centre. The ASA acknowledge that Ladywell Leisure Centre has not been used for diving for many years and there is no local coaching infrastructure to retain.

Competition facilities?

The question as to whether the replacement swimming facilities at Sundermead need to be suitable for competition use at all needs answering in light of the provision of the new competition facilities at Downham Lifestyles Centre from next year. While many boroughs and districts have just one pool suitable for competition swimming, there is a strong case to be made in Lewisham for a second at Sundermead. The key factors are:

- *Accessibility* – Downham is on the boundary of the borough with Bromley and will address demand in the south of Lewisham Borough for the swimming club's elite squad training and for school galas. However, this location is not easily accessible to residents and schools in the central and north neighbourhoods. The new Downham facility on its own is not an adequate replacement for the loss of competition facilities at Ladywell from October 2007. Sundermead is much more accessible and therefore suited as the 'flagship' location in the Borough for competitive swimming with Downham serving as a satellite for squad training and local galas (eg. schools and Kent Junior League).

- *The impact of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games* – ensuring the new pool at Sundermead can accommodate competition use when completed in 2010 will help ensure that the Council is able to capitalise on the growth in interest in competitive swimming likely to result from the London Games in 2012.

Conclusions – Swimming Facilities

Based on the analysis and consultations summarised in this report, we draw the following conclusions:

Sundermead - The minimum need is for a main pool of 25m x 12m (although preferably 13m wide) plus a learner pool of 17m x 8m (although preferably 20m long to allow competition warm down and to facilitate group use). The main pool surrounds should be 3m at the start end and 2m at the turning end and on both sides. The learner pool and associated changing should be designed in such a way groups can swim without being overlooked by other swimmers, other users, from outside the building or by staff. The design should also allow for the water in the learner pool to be maintained at a higher temperature than the main pool.

In light of the prime, accessible location of Sundermead from all parts of the Borough and from outside the Borough, it is highly desirable that the facility should be designed so that it can be used for swimming competition to a minimum of county league standard. This higher level of specification would require consideration of wider pool surrounds and fixed bench or bleacher style seating to accommodate up to 180 competitors and officials on poolside plus the provision of spectator seating for 150 minimum, electronic timing equipment and a control room.

If space and affordability allows, there is a good demand case for the provision of a wider main pool (25m x 16.4m) and a moveable floor in the learner pool (20m x 8m) to maximise programming flexibility and use. If provided, the capacity of the ancillary changing, spectator, circulation and plant areas need to be increased accordingly.

Wavelengths - Although outside the remit of this report, we conclude that at current population levels the standards based and FPM assessments show a marginal case for additional water space. However, when considered in relation to the likely future population growth, particularly to the north of the Centre around the Convoys Wharf area in Evelyn Ward, there is a strong needs based case for addition water. In order to address the learn to swim and fitness swimming needs not adequately met by the leisure pool, this additional water area should be in the form of a conventional pool of at least 20m x 8m and, preferably, 25m in length.

Current Sports Hall & Fitness Provision by Neighbourhood

North – The Lions Centre (managed by Millwall Football in the Community Scheme) is the main community sports provision in the north of the borough. This recently extended facility comprises a four-court sports hall, an indoor football centre, floodlit synthetic turf pitch and ancillary facilities. This sports centre has extensive programme time accessible to the community. However, access to Lewisham Borough residents is restricted by its location on the northern boundary and poor accessibility by public transport or on foot. The strategic value of this facility is likely to grow alongside the growth in housing in the immediate area. In addition, there is community access to a number of smaller community sports halls in the voluntary sector and some restricted community access to clubs and groups to school and college sports halls and gymnasia for example at Lewisham College in New Cross (three badminton court hall), at Deptford Green, Addey & Stanhope schools and at Haberdashers Askes Hatcham Academy. Sports Halls in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: The Seven Islands Centre in Bermondsey (serving parts of Evelyn Ward).

Central – The Central wards (Blackheath, Ladywell, Lee Green and Lewisham Central) are not well served by sports halls offering public access. This has been the case since the closure some years ago of the community sports hall in the Lewisham Shopping Centre. As in the North of the borough, there are some voluntary sector halls and some access to school halls for pre-booked groups (eg. St Joseph's College, Blackheath and Northbrook School, Lee). The Central neighbourhood is also served by a small number of small private membership fitness club facilities. The most significant of these is Fitness First in Lewisham Central. Until it closes in 2007, residents in this neighbourhood also have the fitness suite in the foyer of the Ladywell Leisure Centre offering 50 stations.

Sports Halls/fitness facilities in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: The Arches Leisure Centre in Greenwich (Blackheath Ward) with an 100 station fitness gym, the David Lloyd private members tennis and fitness facilities adjacent to Roan School near Blackheath Park and facilities at Colfe's School in Lee.

South & East – St Dunstons College, a private school in Rushey Green, has a 4-court sports hall. This sports hall currently offers quite limited community access despite being part funded by the lottery. Prendergast, an LEA school in Ladywell, also has a sports hall with limited access to clubs and groups. Also of relevance are facilities at Haberdashers Askes Knights Academy (formerly Mallory School) on the borough boundary with Bromley and at Bonus Pastor School, both in Downham. The South & East neighbourhood is well served by private membership health and fitness clubs (three in total including LA Fitness Sydenham with a 75 station gym) for those able to afford the fees.

Indoor dry sports facilities in neighbouring boroughs serving residents close to the Lewisham Borough boundary include: the Pavilions Centre at Bromley.

South & West – The South & West Neighbourhood is relatively well served with dry sports facilities although gaps exist. Key venues include the Council owned Bridge Centre with sports hall and fitness facilities and a voluntary managed indoor bowls centre nearby and Bellingham Leisure & Lifestyle Centre, managed by Greenwich Leisure Ltd, offering specialist gymnastics and fitness facilities. Crofton School has a large 8-court sports hall, gym, squash court and floodlit synthetic turf pitch with a community use programme run by the Council. Schools at Forest Hill and Sedgehill also have indoor sports facilities offering limited community use. The Girls Day Schools Trust's Sydenham High School hires out its 4-court sports hall to a limited number of groups.

Proposed Sports Hall Provision by Neighbourhood

The detailed proposals and programme for indoor sports facilities to be provided on school sites under the BSF, NOF and PFI funding initiatives and the extent of community access that will be afforded remains unclear and is the subject of work being undertaken currently by the Council and consultants Capita Symonds. Our understanding of the proposals is as follows:

North – The BSF programme for the Borough includes a new 4-court sports hall with community use within redevelopment proposals for Deptford Green School programmed for completion around the same time as the Sundermead Leisure Centre (2010). There is also potential for a smaller 2-court hall with community access as part of BSF at Addey & Stanhope School in New Cross.

Central – The St Joseph's Academy in Blackheath is likely to be redeveloped with private sponsorship under the City Academy programme. There are no known proposals for indoor sports facilities for community use at present within this scheme. The Northbrook School in Lee is also in the BSF programme and likely to include new indoor sports facilities with some community access although the final decision on the site for the project has still to be made. *Of most relevance to the Sundermead proposals is the Ladywell School BSF project which will include a sports hall with some community access on the current swimming pool site.*

South & East – The main proposals of relevance in this neighbourhood are: i) for a 4-court sports hall with community access as part of the BSF project at Catford Girls School, ii) for the Bonus Pastor School currently on split sites to be consolidated on one site under the BSF programme and to include sports facilities with community access to be determined and iii) the lottery funded sports hall with community access at the former Mallory School (now Knight's Academy) to be demolished and re-provided with a new community use agreement as part of the improvement of this school under the City Academy initiative.

South & West – Forest Hill School is due to have a new sports hall in 2006 provided under the New Opportunities Fund and BSF initiatives. This will be followed by a PFI project to redevelop the Crofton School. This project will entail the replacement of the existing 8-court hall and ancillary facilities at the end of their usable life with a new 4-

court hall and as yet unspecified ancillary facilities. These will have community use together with the floodlit synthetic turf pitch (part funded by the sports lottery) to be retained. In Sydenham, a PFI redevelopment of Sydenham Girls School is in the overall improvement strategy and may also offer some indoor sports facilities to community groups in the future. Sedgehill School on the boundary with Bromley at Beckenham Hill is part of the BSF programme and will have sports hall. This facility is close to the specialist gymnastics and gym facilities at the Bellingham Leisure & Lifestyle Centre and may therefore be linked in terms of community use and management.

Determining a Standard for Sports Hall & Fitness Provision at Sundermead

Sports Hall

The application of the standards and FPM demand modelling approaches in determining a standard for sports hall provision in the Sundermead location is far more problematic than for swimming pools. The extent of likely future provision and of community access within the BSF, NOF and schools PFI programmes in the Borough is not yet fully defined. In light of this, we have considered the demand case for a sports hall at Sundermead on the following bases:

- i) Assuming the current level of provision and population levels
- ii) Assuming the proposed level of school/community provision as set out above with good levels of community use secured within community use agreements and 2021 forecast population levels

In both cases, a 1.5km catchment area has been assumed as Sport England research shows that people are prepared to travel less distance or time to access a sports hall than for swimming pools (2km).

Under the standards approach, the historical Sport England standard of one 4-court sports hall per 25,000 head of population within the catchment area has been assumed.

Table 5 (appended) shows the detailed workings and assumptions we have applied in carrying out Standards and FPM analyses for a Sports Hall at Sundermead assuming the current population levels and the current level of provision of 4-court sports halls with community access. At a 1.5km catchment, the Lions Centre does not overlap with Sundermead. Therefore the only current provision taken into account is the sports hall at St Dunstan's College. The hall provides only limited community access under its lottery community use agreement. Unsurprisingly, given the very limited provision of this scale of sports hall in this part of the Borough at present, the FPM analysis shows a good case for including a sports hall within the proposals for Sundermead.

Table 6 (appended) shows that the case for including a sports hall at Sundermead is not made, even at the increased population levels forecast, in the event that the proposals for including sports halls with community access on new and upgraded school sites take place. The sports hall proposals of most relevance to Sundermead are those for the Deptford Green School (and, possibly Addey & Stanhope School) to the north, at Ladywell on the site of the existing Leisure Centre to the south and at St Joseph's Academy in Blackheath to the east.

Our consultations reinforced this uncertainty as to the case for a sports hall within the development at Sundermead. The key factors identified in discussions were the extent of sports hall provision planned on school sites and the contribution made by existing facilities - community halls, private school facilities, a commercial 5 a side centre, a specialist gymnastics centre, a floodlit athletics track and fitness training facilities, floodlit synthetic turf pitches, multi use games areas - in addressing demand for sports traditionally programmed in a leisure centre sports hall (eg. badminton, trampolining, 5 a side football, netball, basketball, table tennis, athletics training).

Conclusion – Sports Hall

Given the extent of existing and planned provision, the provision of a further sports hall at Sundermead to be available at all times of the day is not a priority.

Health and Fitness Facilities

There are no established national standards of provision for fitness facilities and most facility planning approaches focus on the commercial potential and the proportion of people in the more affluent social groups not served by existing health and fitness clubs.

We have considered existing provision of both Council owned fitness facilities and commercial gyms in the Sundermead catchment area (both within the Borough and just outside) and draw the following conclusion:

The inclusion of high quality fitness facilities within the leisure centre at Sundermead will be important for the following reasons:

- To replace the gym facilities to be lost at Ladywell Leisure Centre from 2007
- To meet existing unmet demand (there is limited commercial provision drawing on the catchment)
- To address growing demand resulting from the forecast population growth
- To encourage those not currently exercising (a quarter to the Borough's adult population in the 'Spotlight on Sport' consultation) to take up exercise for health
- To provide facilities in this highly accessible location for the delivery of local health promotion strategies including exercise referral for people with poor physical or mental health

We also consider it important that the Centre should include a good quality health spa with treatment rooms to respond to expressed demand for health spa facilities to replace the former Turkish Baths in the 'Spotlight on Sport' community consultation and to reflect trends in demand for treatments and alternative therapies.

The overriding rationale for inclusion of both fitness gym and health spa/treatment facilities in the Centre is to underpin the revenue performance and financial sustainability of the leisure centre in operation.

Support Facilities

The standard support facilities of changing rooms, showers, WCs, plant, first aid, offices and staff rooms will need to be provided in accordance with Sport England and ASA standard specifications and guidance.

In addition, special consideration should be given at the facility planning stage to the following support facilities:

Creche

In accordance with the Council's equalities policies and health promotion aims, the Centre will need to include high quality, secure creche facilities, ideally with indoor and outdoor areas.

Reception/Foyer

In this location, the Sundermead Centre should serve as the Borough's flagship venue for swimming and as a key venue for community health promotion. Accordingly, the reception and foyer areas should be sufficiently spacious to accommodate school and club groups for competition and to serve as an information point for residents and visitors. In line with the Borough's health promotion strategy this area will be used for health promotion and should therefore be able to accommodate information displays and promotions and as a gathering point for programmes like 'Health Walks'.

Catering

The minimum requirement will be for a high quality vending service and seating area. In accordance with local health promotion strategies the vending offer should be healthy snacks and, in view of the swimming use, hot drinks.

Given the highly accessible location and frontage and the proposed status of the Leisure Centre as the Borough's flagship swimming pool, if feasible, it would be appropriate and highly desirable to provide cafe style catering with views of the activities as part of the exercise promotion strategy. (To maximise accessibility a breast-feeding area should be provided within the cafe).

Meeting Space

It is also highly desirable that the Centre include a flexible space for a range of community meeting and consultation uses requiring privacy such as health MOTs for individuals by 'Health Trainers', community health promotion 'clinics' on subjects like stopping smoking, healthy eating, 'drop-in' services such as young people and sexual health, debt counselling etc

Parking

School and club groups and parents will need to have adequate, safe provision for drop-off and pick-up by coach and by car near to the facility entrance. There will also need to be adequate provision for disabled persons parking including groups travelling by

minibus. While the bus station is close by, in order to maximise use by bus and reduce the need for car parking, a bus stop should be provided as close to the facility entrance as possible. *From an operational viewpoint, the number of on site car parking spaces provided should be maximised within the constraints of the site and affordability.*

Recommendations

Based on the research and consultations detailed in this report, we make the following recommendations as to the mix and scale of indoor swimming and dry sports/fitness facilities that should be provided within a Leisure Centre to replace Ladywell Leisure Centre on the Sundermead site:

1. The **minimum** provision should comprise:

Swimming - A 6-lane 25m x 13m swimming pool with a 17m x 8m learner pool. The main pool surrounds should be 3m at the start end and 2m at the turning end and on both sides. The learner pool and associated changing should be designed in such a way groups can swim without being overlooked by other swimmers, other users, from outside the building or by staff. The design should also allow for the water in the learner pool to be maintained at a higher temperature than the main pool.

Health and Fitness – a large equipped fitness studio (to accommodate a minimum of 100 fitness stations, a reception desk, a warm up area, a free weights area and a health screening/consultation room). A separate studio of at least 125sq m suitable for aerobics, dance, yoga, martial arts etc. A health suite with spa, sauna, steam, rest area and two treatment rooms.

A Creche – A minimum of 75 sq m

Reception/Foyer – a light, spacious foyer and reception area able to accommodate at least 60 people comfortably with vending, seating for at least 25 and space for information displays

Parking – spaces for the disabled, coach and car drop off and pick up points with a bus stop sited as close as possible to the entrance.

2. Should site and/or affordability allow the following **enhancements to the minimum provision** are recommended in priority order:

- On site car parking spaces for users
- A serviced cafe
- A flexible meeting space

- Wider pool surrounds and fixed bench or bleacher style seating to accommodate up to 180 competitors and officials on poolside plus the provision of spectator seating for 150 minimum, electronic timing equipment and a control room.
- Increase the learner pool to 20m
- A second studio for dance, martial arts etc
- Introduce a moveable floor to the (20m) learner pool
- Increase the main pool to 8 lanes (16.4m minimum) and increase the capacity of the ancillary changing, spectator, circulation and plant areas accordingly
- A 4-court sports hall

3. It is recommended that planning and cost/value appraisals be undertaken on the following 6-lane and 8-lane pool options:

Option 1

*A **6-lane** 25m x 13m main swimming pool with surrounds and fixed bench or bleacher style seating to accommodate up to 180 competitors and officials on poolside plus the provision of spectator seating for 150 minimum, electronic timing equipment and a control room.*

A 17 x 8m learner pool (as minimum recommended above).

A Health and Fitness Suite (as minimum recommended above).

A Creche (as minimum recommended above).

Reception/Foyer (as minimum recommended above).

Serviced Cafe

Option 2

*An **8-lane** (25m x 16.4m minimum) main swimming pool with the capacity of the ancillary changing, spectator, circulation and plant areas increased accordingly.*

A 20m x 8m learner pool

A Health and Fitness Suite (as minimum recommended above).

A Creche (as minimum recommended above).

Reception/Foyer (as minimum recommended above).

Serviced Cafe

4. It is recommended that the planning and cost/value appraisals include consideration of the following alternatives with regard to car parking: a) with 5-6 on site disabled car parking spaces only, and b) with 5-6 disabled spaces plus 50-60 additional car parking spaces.

