

**BRENT COUNCIL INDOOR SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES  
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Executive Summary November 2018

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**Brent Council Indoor Sports and Leisure  
Facilities Needs Assessment**

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**November 2018**

Produced for



**Brent**

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## Introduction

This is the Executive Summary of the *Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment*, a document that has been developed in close consultation with Sport England and is consistent with the 2018 revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which encourages the promotion of planning policies and decisions that aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. Sport contributes to a number of complementary agendas that *The Local Plan* aims to positively influence.

Brent Council recognise that sport and physical activity play a key role in meeting key corporate policy priorities. Following the most up to date guidance from Sport England, this *Needs Assessment* takes a clearly justified and positive approach to planning for sport and leisure. It provides an up-to-date evidence base which has been systematically prepared in line with national guidance and best practice. It will enable Brent Council to present a logical and defensible position for the provision of sport and physical activity both now and for the future.

## Methodology

Sport England's *Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG)* for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities provides the recommended approach to undertaking a robust assessment of need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities to meet the requirements of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

In line with Sport England's guidance, the Consultant Team worked with Brent Council to ensure the assessment was agreed and focused on the needs of the council. It was agreed that whilst Health and Fitness Suites would be included in the assessment, an in-house audit of private facilities had recently been carried out by Brent Council and this information has been used to inform the relevant section of the *Needs Assessment*.

### - Site Audits

Based on a set of agreed parameters, the Consultant Team developed a list of facility sites which would be the subject of a non-technical quality assessment, a list of which along with a full scoring criteria is available in the full report.

## Consultation and Engagement

A thorough consultation exercise was carried out with strategic partners, local sport and community organisations, neighbouring authorities and National Governing Bodies for Sport. Following consultation, a number of priorities have emerged;

- The regeneration growth areas of Wembley, Alperton, Church End, South Kilburn and Burnt Oak and Colindale are the priority areas for Brent Council. However, the emerging areas of Staples Corner, Neasden and Northwick Park are likely to be key development zones in the coming years.
- Brent is a borough with a large number of underrepresented groups living amongst the existing demographic. Any new facility developments need to be affordable and accessible to meet the needs of the local population.
- Regeneration plans across neighbouring boroughs could have varying levels of impact on provision in Brent and the council should look to keep a close relationship with colleagues in these 7 areas.
- Clubs in Brent are generally looking to grow their membership in coming years but there are several examples of quantity and availability of sports hall provision in the borough being unable to satisfy clubs' demand

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## Facility Analysis

The assessment summarises the current supply and demand factors and considers the potential impact of forecast population growth on future facility needs. This **Executive Summary** focuses on provision for swimming pools and sports halls, however a full analysis of all facility types is available in the full report.

### - Swimming Pools

Brent has one of the lowest amounts of water space per 1,000 population across London, comparing poorly to both the London average and the borough's neighbouring authorities.

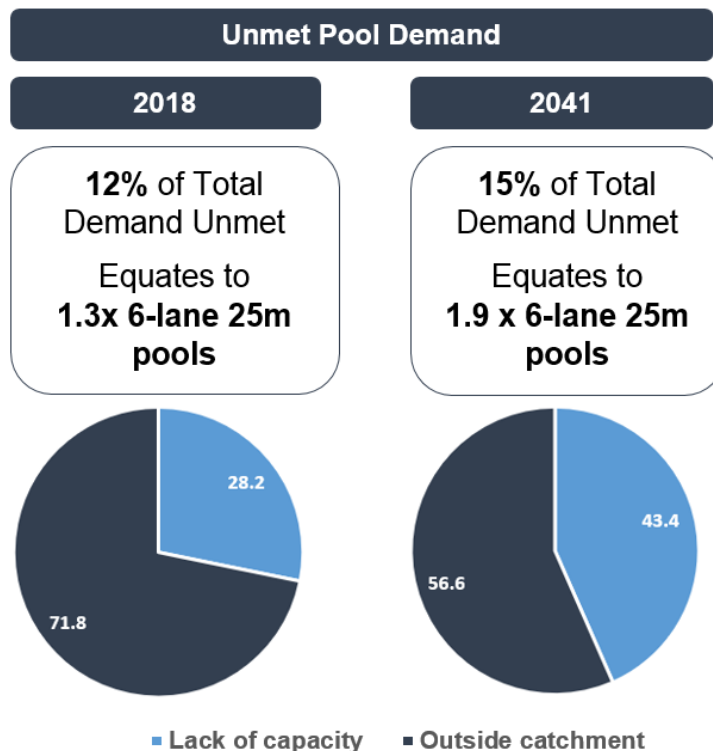
Figure 1 Water Space in Brent and Neighbouring Authorities

Local Authority	Water Space per 1,000 (m <sup>2</sup> )	
	2018	2041
<b>Brent</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Barnet	10.5	8.8
Camden	14.6	12.5
City of Westminster	15.3	13.1
Ealing	10.1	8.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	17.6	12.3
Harrow	7.9	6.9
Kensington and Chelsea	9.4	8.4

Source – Sport England Facilities Planning Model Report for Brent, August 2018

12% of total demand for water space in Brent is not met by the borough, a percentage that is projected to rise to 14.5% by 2041. Figure 2 shows how this relates to actual swimming pools and illustrates that the majority of unmet demand is a result of residents living outside the catchment of a swimming pool.

Figure 2 Unmet Water Space Demand in Brent



Source – Sport England Facilities Planning Model Report for Brent, August 2018

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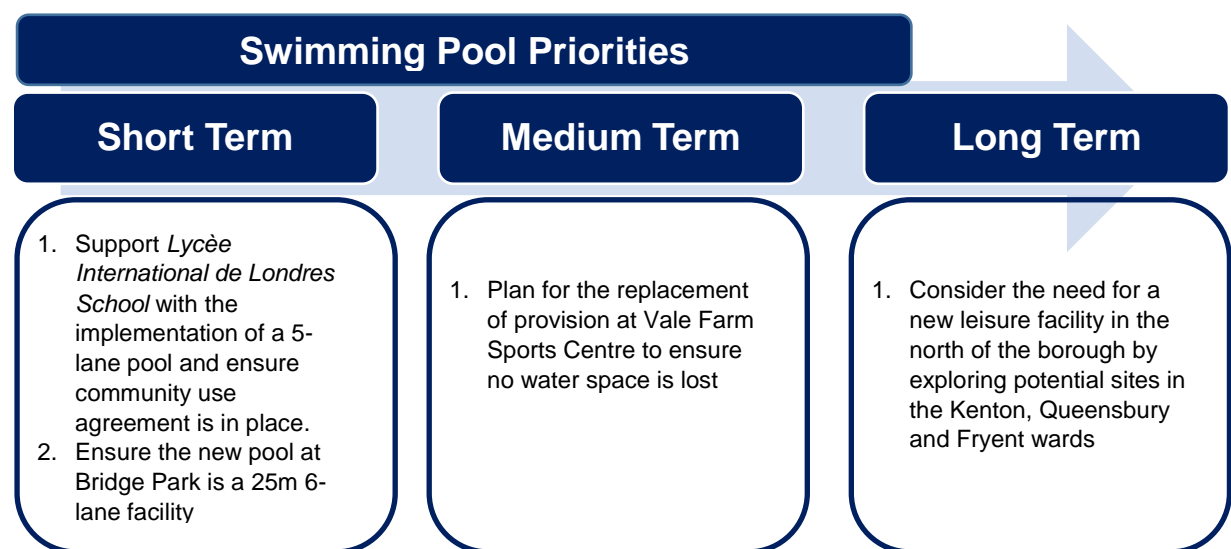
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The Sport England FPM highlights that unmet demand is highest in the centre and south east of Brent. In 2041, if there were to be no changes to supply, forecast changes in the population the highest area of unmet demand would shift to the part of Brent that is south of Wembley Leisure Centre to the Ealing borough boundary.

Site audits revealed that whilst Brent has a low supply of swimming pools in comparison to surrounding areas, the quality of those facilities is above average. Potential improvements at individual swimming pool sites have been identified which could increase attractiveness to users and capacity for community use in the future.

- **Priorities for Swimming Pools**

Figure 3 Swimming Pool Priorities



- **Sports Halls**

Physical activity takes place in a variety of indoor hall settings across Brent, including dedicated *Main* sports halls with markings for sports such as badminton, volleyball, indoor football and basketball and other halls, referred to here as *Activity* halls – these facilities can include smaller community halls or school assembly halls.

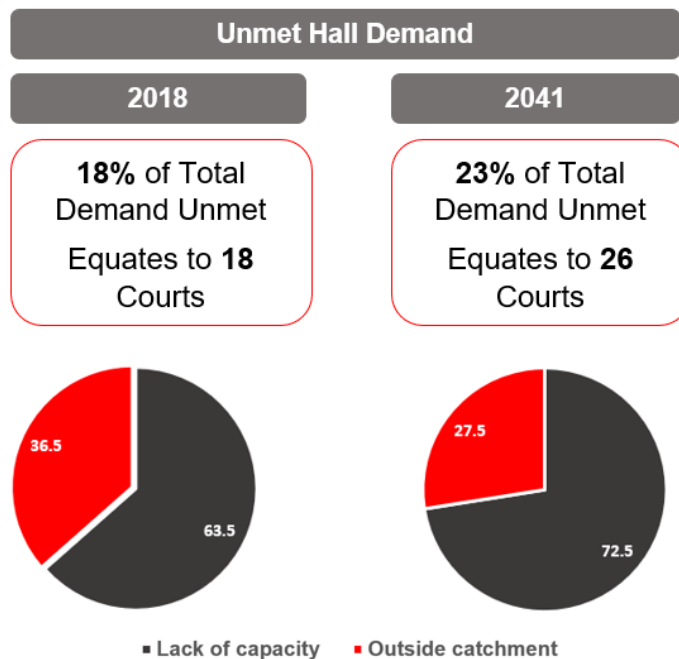
Assessing the number of badminton courts per 10,000 population allows for a comparative analysis between local authority areas. Brent has 2.9 courts per 10,000 residents, falling to 2.4 in 2041 assuming no changes in supply. This is a larger supply of courts in comparison to nearby areas and is in line with the London average (3 courts per 10,000).

Whilst supply in the borough is high in comparison to neighbouring authorities, the densely populated nature of London boroughs means that unmet demand is inevitable as demonstrated in Figure 4.

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Figure 4 Unmet Sports Hall Demand in Brent

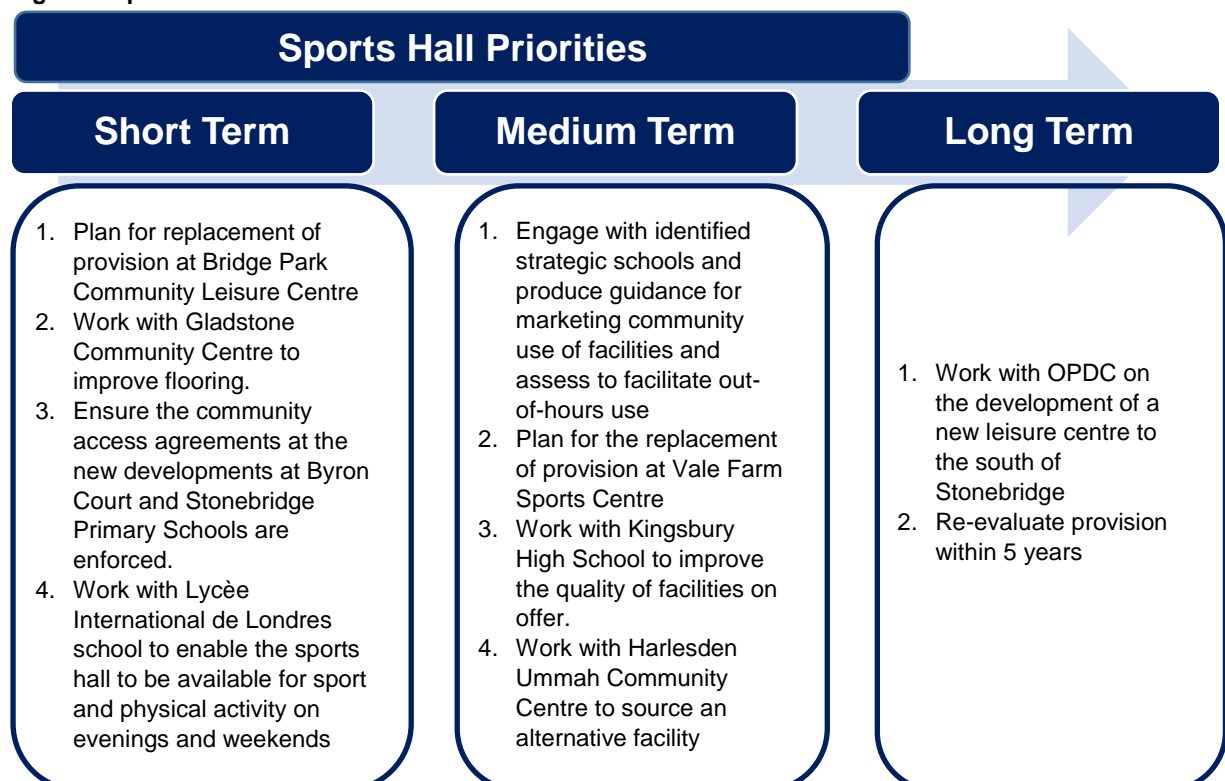


Source – Sport England Facilities Planning Model Report for Brent, August 2018

The Sport England FMP analysis states that unmet demand for sports halls in Brent can be relieved through increased community use of existing school facilities, demonstrating the importance of educational establishments to activity levels in the borough. The full report identifies the strategic activity halls in the borough that, with engagement from Brent Council and other partners, have the potential to alleviate some of the unmet demand for halls and contribute to the drive to increase activity rates in Brent.

- **Priorities for Sports Halls**

Figure 5 Sports Hall Priorities



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## Next Steps

The development of this *Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities Needs Assessment* provides a timely opportunity for Brent Council to present the existing facility stock in relation to the needs identified through consultation with the local community, partners and stakeholders. Whilst the number of pools and available sports halls are priority issues for Brent, both have the potential to be addressed either through existing plans or coordinated and targeted engagement.

The proposals for a new centre, with a 6-lane pool, at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre along with the proposed pool at Lycée International de Londres, will impact positively on unmet demand for water space in Brent. Some of the future demand will be addressed through outline proposals for a new pool in the south of Barnet along with a new facility in Old Oak North as part of the OPDC development.

With regard to sports halls, planned new facilities at 3 schools in the borough will alleviate some of the unmet demand in Brent. Furthermore, it is recommended that Brent Council focuses efforts on engaging with the identified strategic schools to maximise community use of existing facility stock.

The future of Vale Farm Sports Centre will need to be addressed by Brent Council within the next five years. Consultation has identified that the centre is coming to the end of its usable life and existing provision will need to be replaced within the next 10 years. Brent Council should prepare to explore the options for the centre, including an expansion of water space and the potential to increase the number of important sports that use the site.

The priorities identified in the *Needs Assessment* will contribute directly to the strategic priorities of Brent Council and key partner organisations through increasing opportunities to be active, and reducing health inequalities by developing long term sustainable community approaches that enable residents to build physical activity into the fabric of their everyday lives. This *Needs Assessment* has put forward options for the best way to provide opportunities and activities which support these policy areas at a local level and clearly has the potential to support work to bring about a sustained increase in participation by residents of the borough.