

CULTURE, TOURISM & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 39

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Audit of Sports Facilities		
Date of Meeting:	13 November 2008		
Report of:	Director of Environment		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE.

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 An audit of the city's sports facilities has been undertaken with the following main objectives:
- a) Collect basic information about sports facilities in the city e.g. what they provide and who operates them.
 - b) Assess the overall level and quality of the city's provision.
 - c) Identify any weakness or gaps in provision which should be considered as part of the council's future strategic planning.
- 1.2 The audit provides a valuable first examination of the city's facilities base and will undoubtedly stimulate further investigation of the many issues that it raises.
- 1.3 The audit has not been undertaken as an end in itself but as the start of a long process of ensuring that the city is making the most of its resources and maximising the opportunities which it provides to take part in sport.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
- (2) Members are asked to note that the conclusions of the sports facilities audit will be used to inform the review of the sports and leisure strategy.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Methodology

- 3.1 Data was primarily gathered by personal site visits by council officers which were supplemented by information contained in published materials or discussion with site managers. Data analysis was undertaken by Ken Burlton Consultancy in order that an independent perspective could be given of the findings. The exercise has been a considerable achievement and has for the first time created a detailed database of sports facilities in the city.
- 3.2 The audit focussed on facilities which either allowed some form of public access for sporting activity or, if not publicly accessible, had significant specialist sports provision. Primary and junior schools did not meet the criteria but a separate survey was conducted to complement the main audit and separately identify any issue relating to junior sports provision.
- 3.3 As well as the simple collection of information, auditors made an assessment of the condition of facilities and their fitness for purpose. These assessments were to some extent subjective and based entirely on a visual inspection during a visit.
- 3.4 In terms of the number of facilities, the profile of ownership/operation was as follows:

<u>Facility Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>%</u>
BH Council	42	32.3
Private Club	31	23.8
Community Centre	26	20.0
State School	10	7.7
Church/ Religious Organisation	8	6.2
University/ FE College	6	4.6
Independent School	4	3.1
Sports Club	3	2.3
Total	130	100.0

Key results

Quantity

- 3.5 At 130, the total number of sports venues appears high although many of these are small and many – particularly community centres – are not purpose designed. Sports which appear to be particularly well provided for are gyms [29 gyms], squash [39 courts], tennis [106 courts] and cricket [16 pitches]. Provision is low for under 11's football – only 7 pitches in the city –

and some more peripheral sports such as handball, which have been well developed elsewhere, do not apparently have any provision. However, such conclusions should be addressed with some caution as the audit has examined sports facilities and not sports activity in the city and it is possible that many activities are taking place at facilities not specifically designated for them.

Type

- 3.6 One of the most interesting findings of the audit is the balance in type of provision. Because the Council has the biggest, most evident and best used facilities there is a tendency to consider that it dominates provision. However, the audit showed that, in a simple number count, 32.3 % of facilities are Council run, 23.8 % are private clubs and 20.0 % are community centres. If the Council's various park facilities and recreation grounds are taken out, private clubs become the largest sector. A detailed analysis of each sport has shown that schools have also become a significant part of the overall portfolio with many secondary schools now developing substantial on site sports provision. Only 3 sports clubs in the city have their own facilities.

Condition

- 3.7 The highest condition ratings were given for a climbing wall, indoor tennis courts, and for artificial turf pitches. The lowest condition ratings were given for wet changing facilities, dry changing facilities, and for multi purpose rooms.

Fitness for Purpose

- 3.8 This rating gave an insight into the general quality and suitability of what was provided. The highest fitness for purpose ratings were for the Stanley Deason Climbing Wall, for squash courts and for Withdean Stadium. The lowest fitness for purpose ratings were for wet changing facilities, dry changing facilities, and for multi purpose rooms.

Comparison with other authorities

- 3.9 There are no absolute standards of provision with which the audit can be compared and very few authorities have carried out such a comprehensive facilities audit. However, some comparison is useful and, for the purpose of this exercise, facilities in 3 other south coast cities have been examined – Southampton [Pop: 217,000], Portsmouth [Pop: 187,000] and Plymouth [Pop: 241,000].
- 3.10 Brighton and Hove's population is 248,000 so all of these cities offer a broad point of comparison with Brighton and Hove. Using Sports England's Active Places database, which registers all recognised sports facilities, as a point of comparison, and looking simply at the number of facilities within a 5 mile radius of the city centre the following results are shown.

Brighton and Hove

Radius	Number of facilities	% of 5 miles
5 miles	106	100.0
4 miles	77	72.6
3 miles	61	57.5
2 miles	38	35.8
1 mile	10	9.4

Portsmouth

Radius	Number of facilities	% of 5 miles
5 miles	111	100.0
4 miles	95	85.5
3 miles	61	54.9
2 miles	37	33.3
1 mile	18	16.2

Plymouth

Radius	Number of facilities	% of 5 miles
5 miles	116	100.0
4 miles	99	85.3
3 miles	65	56.0
2 miles	42	36.2
1 mile	13	11.2

Southampton

Radius	Number of facilities	% of 5 miles
5 miles	123	100.0
4 miles	97	78.8
3 miles	64	52.0
2 miles	33	26.8
1 mile	13	10.6

- 3.11 The most interesting analysis is the geographical distribution from the city centre where Brighton and Hove has the distinct characteristic of a much wider distribution of facilities. Fewer of its facilities are within one mile of the city centre and a much higher percentage [27.4 % compared with 14.5% in Portsmouth] are between 4 and 5 miles from the city centre. There may be specific population distribution reasons for this but it suggests that Brighton and Hove is better at placing facilities within residential districts, creating a more immediate access for users.
- 3.12 These results should also be placed in the context of the Sport England Active People survey of 2006 which identified that 25.1 % of Brighton and Hove residents spent at least 30 minutes 3 times a week on exercise of moderate intensity and 4.2 % regularly volunteered at least 1 hour a week to support sporting activity. These were the best results of any of the four cities. Plymouth, for example, was the worst performer in the whole of the south west region with 18.6% regularly exercising and 3.6% volunteering. Brighton and Hove may have fewer facilities but it has higher levels of activity.
- 3.13 Despite attempts to create ideal models and points of comparison, it is extremely difficult to answer the question of how Brighton and Hove compares to provision elsewhere. In terms of general quantity and type of facilities, Brighton & Hove alone is broadly comparable but what it clearly lacks in comparison are major modern facilities and true centres of excellence for specific sports. Generally Portsmouth, Southampton and Plymouth's main leisure centres are bigger and newer than Brighton & Hove's but more marked are the high level specialist facilities which each city has.
- 3.14 The challenge for Brighton and Hove is not only to modernise and expand its portfolio of mainstream sports and leisure provision but to improve sports development opportunities in the city. This could be achieved by beginning to build an expanded network of specialist sports facilities allowing individual sports to expand their impact and to raise their standards.

Conclusions

Overview

- 3.15 The Council has carried out an exceptional exercise in gathering together a large amount of information about sports provision in the city. This information shows that Brighton and Hove is a thriving sporting city with good levels of participation and a wide range of facilities.
- 3.16 However, many of these facilities are old, many are not purpose built and many do not have high levels of public access. In particular, the city lacks high profile facilities and a much needed network of specialist sports facilities which could form the focus of a major sports development programme.
- 3.17 These issues are already being addressed and projects are being developed which will begin to transform the pattern of sports provision in the city. These include the proposed ice arena at Black Rock, the new Community Stadium and the new King Alfred Sports Centre in Hove. But more work needs to be done on a sport by sport basis, working in partnership with local clubs, to expand opportunities for specialist sports developments.
- 3.18 Any move to open up the increasingly significant school facilities in the city would have an impact on general levels of participation by creating easy local access to activities. Whilst it is accepted that there are many practical and financial issues to be resolved in doing this, the portfolio of school facilities is substantial and use is generally limited to daytime and term time. More evening and holiday use by organised groups and sports clubs could produce substantial local benefit.

Priorities

- 3.19 In terms of strategically planning the future of sports facility development in the city, the audit suggests that the following issues should be given priority:-
- Full implementation of proposals for Community Stadium, Black Rock Ice Arena and King Alfred Sports Centre
 - The need for a purpose built gymnastics hall and a purpose built martial arts dojo
 - Increasing club and public access to school facilities
 - A programme of converting more tarmac tennis courts to acrylic/ artificial grass surfaces
 - Taking every opportunity to provide and/ or increase access to sports facilities for under 11's

- Encouraging new sports such as handball by simply making pitch markings available for them

3.20 Apart from the new facility plans already in place and the possibility of additional pitch and court markings, there is no immediate and ready answer to any of these issues. All require planning and funding in order to be delivered. However, although there may be no instant solutions to call on, it is still important that these issues are integrated into the strategic planning of the council so that when future opportunities do arise to take action, there is a clear sense of the priorities which have to be met.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation was undertaken with facility operators throughout the process of the audit to help inform the results.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications from this report, however, there will be a need to identify additional funding should the recommendations be implemented.

Finance Officer Consulted: Derek Mansfield 23rd October 2008

Legal Implications

5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Bob Bruce 23rd October 2008

Equalities Implications

5.3 A wide range of accessible sports facilities across the city will reduce inequality of opportunity.

Sustainability Implications

5.4 Any new sports facility development will require the appropriate sustainability requirements to be met for new buildings.

Crime & Disorder Implications

5.5 Projects have shown that providing sporting opportunities can help reduce crime within geographical areas. Therefore a strategic provision of sports facilities could have a positive impact on the reduction of crime in the city.

5.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

A strategic approach to facility provision would help to ensure that the most appropriate locations are identified for such facilities to maximise usage.

5.7 Corporate/Citywide Implications

Strategic planning of sporting facilities will help ensure access to facilities by communities across the city.

6. **EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

6.1 None

7. **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Members are being asked to note the report as the results of the audit will be utilised to inform future decision making on facility provision.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None