

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

**13 November 2008**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Sports Facility Development Planning**

**Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport**

**SUMMARY**

This report seeks to provide a basis for determining the priorities for future investment in community sports facilities by the Council. This is achieved by recommending Highland wide standards for the level of provision of facilities in Highland communities, and measuring existing provision against this standard. The report provides conclusions and recommendations for priorities over the next five years. Planned priorities are a prerequisite for some other funding agencies, particularly **sportscotland**, to become involved as partners in a funded programme.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The current provision of sports facilities is largely an inherited legacy from eight former District Councils and the former Regional Council, which all placed differing emphases on facility provision. Equalisation has always been a goal of Highland Council. One way of achieving this is to use various national standards to identify where the main gaps in provision occur, coupled with an analysis of the condition and fitness for purpose of existing facilities.
- 1.2 The existing policy on investment has tended to be based on taking opportunities where they arose and by supporting community initiatives when they came near to fruition. Future priorities for investment could be based solely on the basis of a strategic analysis. However, it has always been the Council's policy to support and encourage developments through community initiatives. Any new proposal should balance community initiative with identifying the areas in most need. The Highland Council also needs to seek and develop community initiative where priorities are identified.

**2. Measuring Existing Provision**

- 2.1 This report takes as its definition of a Highland community the catchment areas of the 29 Secondary Schools referred to as 'Integrated Learning Communities' (ILCs). This fits well with the **sportscotland** standards for facility provision, which set out the appropriate level of provision in a Secondary School for curriculum and extra curricular activities, and the additional provision required for community use. It also sets out standards for activity space in Primary Schools, which are measured in this report.

- 2.2 Because all schools in Highland are available for community access, all facilities in secondary schools are measured as provision for the community. The one exception is grass playing fields, where the level of use by both schools and communities would render such pitches unusable, separate school and community provision has been allowed for. All weather pitches are treated as dual use.
- 2.3 In addition to measuring the level of provision in the secondary school, and in the ILC as a whole, each individual settlement within the ILC has been measured to ensure appropriate distribution of facilities throughout the ILC.
- 2.4 Appendix One of this report sets out the recommended standards for provision of the relevant sports facilities. The recommended and actual level of provision for each secondary school and ILC, together with a measure of the condition and fitness for purpose of existing Council facilities in each ILC, is set out in a Facilities Planning Analysis Background Paper which can be found in the Member's bulletin. This also provides a list of the recommended developments that would bring an equalisation of service to each ILC. The recommended highest priorities for refurbishment or development are then summarised in Appendix Three of this report as a five year programme.
- 2.5 The **sportscotland** standards for provision do not necessarily reflect the optimum distribution of facilities for the Highlands. This is because the minimum provision of a two court games hall is only considered for a community of population over 3,450. In most of Scotland a community less than this size would be presumed to have ready access to a sports hall in a larger community nearby. However, in Highland there are a significant number of small communities with considerable travel time to other larger settlements with Sports Halls, which are therefore left with no provision within reasonable travelling distance. Making some provision for these communities should therefore be reflected in the priorities, even if it is impractical to provide Sports Halls with high specifications in every community.

### 3. Assessing Priorities for Future Provision

- 3.1 It is clear that the assessment of future priorities will need to take into account the following issues:
- An assessment of priorities derived from the Facilities Planning Analysis
  - The priorities of partner funding agencies, particularly **sportscotland**.
  - Public aspirations and potential partnership projects
  - A timescale appropriate to the Planning periods of the Council and partner agencies
  - The proposed location of major developments as identified in the Council's Development Plan and other planning guidance.
  - The anticipated funding available from the Council's Capital Plan, that of partner agencies, and from potential developer contributions in areas of significant growth..

- 3.2 Each ILC and each facility, has been scored in three ways in the Facilities Planning Analysis, a background paper to this report:
- Whether there is a gap in facility provision when compared to the **sportscotland** based standard
  - The current condition of the facility where provision exists
  - Whether the current provision is fit for purpose
- 3.3 Discussions have taken place concerning the Facilities Planning Analysis with the Council's Sport and Activity Working Group and **sportscotland** representatives. The following factors affecting the assessment of priorities emerged:
- The timescale over which the capital planning process, and the formulation of priorities, is likely to be relevant for both the Council and **sportscotland** is approximately five years.
  - **sportscotland** is likely to be able to partner three larger projects, or perhaps a combination including some smaller projects within that timescale
  - **sportscotland** is likely to concentrate its funding on 'generic' facilities such as sports halls and playing fields (with all-weather pitches currently being the priority given the greater capacity they can sustain in the Scottish climate).
  - Given their finite resources, **sportscotland** is unlikely to offer partner funding to lower specification facilities in small communities such as "Sports Barns". However, more conventional Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), or covered small all-weather (3<sup>rd</sup> generation) pitches may be considered as part of a wider strategic 'package', especially if they are located where existing Primary School sports provision is inadequate.
- 3.4 The current ECS capital programme has an allocation of £1m per year over 4 years for Community Learning and Leisure facilities. However, this covers developments in a wide range of facilities including, for instance, libraries. Experience shows that significant proportions of this funding are required for emergency renovations. For example, a high proportion of recent capital expenditure was spent to rescue the Sutherland Swimming Pool when structural problems were discovered, and more recently emergency provision has had to be made for the failure of Invergordon Leisure Centre roof. It is inevitable that progress to achieve a five year facility development plan, including drawing in external partnership funding, will be repeatedly compromised by unforeseen repairs and replacements of existing facilities at current levels of capital investment. This will necessitate a regular review of future years projects to ensure clarity of priorities.
- 3.5 In addition to the general capital funding for Community Learning and Leisure Facilities, £275,000 has been set aside for Caithness Sports Facilities, and £100,000 for the Dornoch Sports Hall. These are legacy funds from the Highland Year of Culture. It is intended that these sums can be considerably increased by drawing in partnership funding, mainly from **sportscotland**.
- 3.6 Appendix Three outlines the recommended priorities for the next five years, based on the potential funding available, priorities identified from the Facilities Planning Analysis (a background paper to this report), existing priorities identified by ECS Committee for the Capital Plan, and compatibility with **sportscotland** priorities.

They assume the probability of drawing in reasonable levels of partnership funding to augment the available Council Capital funding. The Chairman of the Sport and Activity Working Group has asked that options be outlined should an opportunity for additional funding present itself. These are also identified in Appendix Three.

- 3.7 A further source of investment in facilities is through the direct provision or contribution towards delivery as part of major development schemes. Developers in areas of high growth (albeit that all areas are subject to a slowdown at the present time) will be encouraged to make provision in line with Council policy. The sports facilities model is a very important tool to evidence these requirements and thereby to justify levels and types of contributions. This approach is widely used elsewhere in Scotland and the U.K.

#### **4. Swimming Pool Provision**

- 4.1 Swimming Pool provision has been treated separately from other sports facilities in this report because the high capital and revenue costs make it unlikely the Council can aspire to make provision in every ILC in current and foreseeable circumstances, and the larger catchment areas for swimming pools mean they can effectively serve more than one ILC where journey times are less than 20 to 30 minutes.
- 4.2 The issues for determining whether new swimming provision should be a priority over the next five years are contained in Appendix Two of this report. The recommendation of this report is that no new swimming pool provision requiring financial support from the Council should be considered in the next five years.

#### **5 Conclusion**

- 5.1 Equalisation of services is a goal of Highland Council. This report provides a rationale for measuring where there are the most acute gaps in provision, including where gaps are identified because of poor condition or fitness for purpose of existing facilities. It provides an opportunity to take a planned approach to the provision of community sport facilities in order to address issues of equalisation. It takes into account the Council objective of joint school and community use of most facilities. When priorities are established, discussions can begin with funding partners to establish a programme of partnership investment.
- 5.2 It is impossible to envisage complete equalisation of sports facility provision in each ILC resulting from current, or even significantly increased Council capital investment. However, speed of progress towards that objective will depend on the level of capital investment committed. A background paper to this report provides a comprehensive list of the developments that would be needed to equalise provision in each ILC. Appendix Three suggests the principal priorities that could be advanced, dependant on differing levels of capital investment. The speed of advancement of these projects will vary from year to year according to other factors such as unforeseen emergencies, availability of partnership funding, and as firm costs emerge from quantity surveyors and final tenders.

**6. Recommendation**

6.1 It is recommended that:

- a) the principle of equalisation of sporting facilities across ILCs, taking into account population and travel times, be adopted
- b) the five year priority list, recommended in appendix three, be agreed,
- c) no new swimming pool provision requiring financial support from the Council is brought forward as a priority in the next five years
- d) meetings are held with partner organisations and colleagues from across the Council, to discuss external funding and bring progress reports to future meetings of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee
- e) further work is undertaken to determine the full costs of equalisation and progress reports are brought to future meetings of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee.

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Ref:

Background Papers:

**A link to the Facilities Planning Analysis is provided here.**

**[Report - Sports Facility Planning Analysis.doc](#)**

## **Appendix One**

### **Minimum standards for the level of provision of generic 'dry' sports facilities in Highland Secondary Schools, their catchment communities (ILCs) and their constituent settlements.**

#### **Sports Halls:**

(Sports Halls are referred to in terms of badminton court sizes)

Secondary School 201 – 300 pupils requires a 2 court hall

Secondary School 301 - 400 pupils requires a 3 court hall

Secondary School over 400 pupils requires a 4 court hall

Community over 3450 requires a 2 court hall

Community over 5175 requires a 3 court hall

Community over 6900 requires a 4 court hall

Community over 10350 requires a 6 court hall

Individual settlements within ILCs require the same provision.

#### **Activity / Community Halls:**

(normally one badminton court size)

Secondary School up to 200 pupils requires an Activity Hall

Secondary School over 300 pupils requires a subsidiary activity hall, in addition to the Games Hall standards above.

Primary School up to 170 pupils requires one movement studio (may be less than one badminton court size).

Primary Schools with 171 - 360 pupils require one activity hall.

Primary Schools with 361 pupils or more require one activity hall and one movement studio.

Communities require activity halls with one badminton court of space for each 1725 persons in excess of the Games Hall standard above.

Each settlement without a Games Hall requires activity halls with one badminton court of space for each 1725 persons.

#### **Dance Studios:**

Secondary School over 600 pupils requires a Dance Studio in addition to the above standards.

Communities require access to Dance Studios provided through this standard.

#### **Fitness Rooms:**

Secondary School over 800 pupils requires a Fitness Room with one station for each 180 pupils.

Communities and settlements over 3000 persons require a Fitness Room with one station for every 180 persons.

### **Sports Pitches (Grass and All-weather):**

Secondary School up to 200 pupils requires 1 grass pitch

Secondary School 201 - 300 pupils requires 1 synthetic pitch

Secondary School 301 - 400 pupils requires 1 grass pitch and 1 synthetic pitch

Secondary School 401 - 1000 pupils requires 2 grass pitches and 1 synthetic pitch

Secondary School 1001 - 1200 pupils requires 3 grass pitches and 1 synthetic pitch

Primary School with up to 360 pupils require 1 seven-a-side area (grass or synthetic)

Primary School with 361 or more pupils require 2 grass seven-a-side areas or one synthetic area.

For Grass Pitches, community requirements are additional to the minimum provision at Secondary Schools

Community requires 1 grass pitch for up to each 1200 persons, rounded up or down to nearest whole number.

Community requires 1 synthetic pitch for each full 6000 persons

The community requirement should be dispersed so that each settlement has sports field provision at this standard.

### **Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAS):**

These areas are surfaced and fenced with permanent goals, and can be used for a variety of sports, typically 5-a-side football, hockey and basketball. There is no set standard for these but ideally there will be one in each ILC, but with priority to installing them in the locations where existing provision for outdoor sport at Primary Schools is poor, and at locations with the highest index of multiple deprivation.

## **Appendix Two: The Case for Swimming Provision**

Education, Culture and Sport has worked with **sportscotland** and Edinburgh University to map the unmet demand for swimming in Highland, based on population figures (taking into account the age and gender mix), by comparing the distribution of Highland swimming facilities with national statistics of swimming demand. For an average population, to ensure adequate capacity a pool should have 1sqm of water space for each 144 persons in the catchment area. Demand is assessed on the basis of a 16 square km grid of the Highlands, so is not directly comparable with ILC boundaries, but these can be matched to a reasonable degree. Statistics are based on swimming provision provided by Highland Council, other community operators, and the private sector where there is public access to pools greater than 80 sq m.

Swimming Pool provision has been treated separately from other sports facilities because:

- Swimming Pool capacity can generally cater for the demand in more than one ILC, provided it is accessible to them.
- The high capital and revenue cost of new swimming provision. Although there are examples of the capital cost of new provision being largely externally funded, the high revenue costs falling to Highland Council make it impractical to consider swimming provision in every ILC.
- **sportscotland** guidance suggests that people are willing to travel further for swimming provision. The catchment area for a conventional swimming pool is 70% of people travelling by car / transport for up to 20 minutes, while 30% walk up to one mile. For Leisure Pools this is extended to 30 minutes by car and 1.5 miles walking.

The Facilities Planning Model for swimming cannot give a definitive answer as to whether increased swimming provision in Highland should be a priority, as this depends on local interpretation of cost to benefit, taking into account a wide range of other demands on the Council. Neither can it give a definitive answer as to the highest priority location of any new swimming provision, as this depends on the importance placed locally on the differing issues affecting prioritisation. It can, however, provide certain facts (albeit based on assumptions drawn from national statistics) to inform decisions. The decision for future swimming provision may be to maintain the status quo and maximise access to existing facilities. If, however, it is deemed desirable to aspire to increase swimming facility provision by one over the next 5 years, then the following factors could be taken into account:

Because 30% of demand for swimming derives from people who walk to the facility, the largest concentration of unmet demand for swimming in Highland is in parts of Inverness. The highest 32 square kilometre concentration of unmet demand is in the Millburn Academy ILC and other northern parts of the city. Although a specific study has not been carried out, it is highly likely that the highest throughput for any additional pool in Highland would be achieved if it were placed at Millburn Academy, and this would be the highest priority if that were the most important consideration. However, Inverness Leisure and other private operators do provide alternatives, with adequate capacity, for those with access to transport or public transport, and there is a possible strategy for increasing

swimming provision in north-east Inverness should proposals for the UHI Campus develop.

If the priority is to provide new swimming provision within an area that is outwith both the walking and the 20 minute vehicular travel catchment of an existing facility, then the area of greatest unmet demand is the Eastern Black Isle, including the settlements of Cromarty, Fortrose, Newhall and Avoch. Some parts of the Fortrose ILC lie within the vehicular catchment area of other pools, including Dingwall, Inverness and Alness. A **sportscotland** study of likely throughput at a Fortrose Pool, taking into account both national and user statistics in Highland, suggests 25,000 per year, which would be greater than pools in Alness and Tain, and similar to that at Ullaspool.

It could be argued that the highest priority for new swimming provision should be in the ILC that is the most remote from existing provision, and is therefore the most disadvantaged. Ardnamurchan and Kinlochbervie ILCs could claim this. Ardnamurchan ILC, has a higher population overall, though the settlement of Kinlochbervie is slightly larger than Strontian, and the walking catchment has an effect on attendance. The subsidy per person for swimming provision in remote areas would clearly be high, but Highland Council generally upholds the principal that people should not be denied services because of rurality issues, whenever practicable.

The likely revenue implications for the Council are £120,000 per pool per year.

The choice for Members comes down to:

- Whether the unmet demand for swimming at any location in the Highlands justifies a new swimming pool.
- Whether the commitment of ongoing revenue funding for a new pool can either be afforded in the current economic circumstances of the Council, or be justified in terms of being a priority compared to other demands for services faced by the Council.
- If a new pool is being considered in the Highlands, whether the most important factor for deciding location is either the highest potential throughput, the highest potential throughput out-with Inverness, or the community, even if relatively small, that is currently most disadvantaged in terms of accessing swimming provision.
- Whether the presence of an enthusiastic community group willing to work with the Council to achieve new pool provision should affect decisions about developing additional provision, or the location of any facility.

**FACILITIES PLANNING MODEL REPORT  
REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF RECOMMENDED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

**Recommended Capital Projects at existing levels of CLL Capital Funding – Projects with Revenue Consequences:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Possible Year</b>	<b>Estimated Revenue Consequences (per annum)</b>
Wick Swimming Pool: refurbishment of air handling unit	£75,750	2009-10	None
Lochaber High School: Provision of additional sports pitches (2 grass or 1 all-weather following further consultation and advice from <b>Sportscotland</b> on which option, if any, they may be prepared to fund). Total project cost estimate £800,000. Contributions anticipated from sportscotland and other ECS capital.	£200,000	2009-10	£6,000
Acharacle: construction of playing field. Total project cost £300,000. Contribution anticipated from sportscotland.	£200,000	2009-10	£3,000
Lochaber Leisure Centre: extension to form Dance Studio and internal redesign of circulation areas	£700,000	2009-10	None
Lochaber Pitch Improvements at An Aird, Kilmallie Pavilion and Jubilee Park	£97,750	2009-10	None
Dornoch Academy: Provision of Sports Hall. Additional contributions anticipated from partner agencies eg sportscotland	£200,000	2010-11	£60,000
Northern Meeting Park: Roof Repairs	£50,000	2010-11	None
TRACC: renovations to changing, reception, office, and toilet facilities	£200,000	2010-11	None
Wick Swimming Pool Changing Rooms: renovations to cubicles	£20,000	2010-11	None
Thurso and Wick High Schools: Renewal of indoor sports provision to include 6 court Games Halls, changing rooms for outdoor facilities, Fitness Rooms and, at Wick High School, a Dance Studio to replace the school swimming pool (school now makes use of the town swimming pool). Total project costs estimated around £11 million. Contributions anticipated from sportscotland, Highland 2007 legacy, and other partners.	£1,000,000	2011-12	£180,000
Thurso Swimming Pool: extension to provide additional changing capacity and quality	£600,000	2012-13	£15,000
Plockton High School: repairs or replacement of Sports Hall roof	£150,000	2013-14	None
Wick and Thurso High School Playing Fields: drainage and renovation	£350,000	2013-14	None

### Possible Future Years Projects

Project	Capital Cost Estimate	Possible Year	Revenue Consequences (per annum)
Gairloch High School: renovation of grass pitch	£150,000	2009-10	None
MUGAs or quarter-size covered 3 <sup>rd</sup> generation playing fields (according to consultation and partnership funding) at medium or large Primary Schools where existing outdoor sports facilities are inadequate, and there are considerable distances to alternative sports facilities, at: Lairg and Aviemore	£300,000	2009-10	None
Ballachulish and Portree – resurfacing	£180,000	2010-11	None
Broadford	£150,000	2011-12	None
Portmahomack-Tarbat	£150,000	2012-13	None
Durness	£150,000	2013-14	None
Kilchuimin High School, Fort Augustus: Playing Field improvements, grass or all-weather according to consultation with community access	£800,000	2010-11	£3,000
Kingussie High School/Badenoch Centre: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2011-12	£3,000
Golspie: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2012-13	£3,000
Grantown Grammar School: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2013-14	£3,000



**Additional projects with revenue consequences if capital allocation increased to £3m per annum:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Capital Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Possible Year</b>	<b>Revenue Consequences (per annum)</b>
Alness Academy: renewal of all-weather pitch	£600,000	2009-10	£3,000
MUGA building programme extended into communities of social housing with high to medium index of multiple deprivation, at a distance from a similar facility, at: Nairn-Moss-side and Dingwall-Central	£300,000	2009-10	None
Helmsdale & Kinlochleven	£300,000	2010-11	None
Melvich	£150,000	2011-12	None
Thurso-Ormlie South	£150,000	2012-13	None
Smithton-South	£150,000	2013-14	None
Dornoch Academy: addition of Fitness Room and all-weather pitch to Sports Hall.	£900,000	2010-11	£3,000
Culloden Academy: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2011-12	£3,000
Aviemore: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2012-13	£3,000
Invergordon Academy: provision of all-weather pitch	£800,000	2013-14	£3,000