

<b>Cabinet</b>  <b>2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017</b>	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Debbie Jones, Corporate Director, Children's Services	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-2027</b>	

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Culture</b>
<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Judith St John / Thorsten Dreyer / Lisa Pottinger
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A Great Place to Live, and a Healthy and Supportive Community

### **Executive Summary**

This report introduces the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy for Tower Hamlets.

This Strategy establishes an evidence base and an overall decision making framework for indoor sports facilities in Tower Hamlets over the coming 10 years. The investment implications of this Strategy are expected to be found in subsequent papers provided to Cabinet when individual decisions are taken. It therefore makes no pre-determinations regarding capital projects or asset management.

This Strategy;

- Examines the current supply of indoor sports facilities in the Borough, taking into account public, commercial and dual-use (school site) facilities;
- Compares this to the future demand based on the latest population projections and a nationally recognised modelling tool for specific types of indoor sports facilities;
- Identifies gaps in current and future provision; and
- Assesses the quality, suitability, utilisation, and efficiency of existing indoor sports facilities, with particular reference to resident's different gender, cultural religious and physical needs

This Strategy supports the Community Plan, Strategic Plan, and forms part of the evidence that supports our emerging Local Plan.

It also uses this evidence to establish a set of Strategic Objectives, Guiding Principles and Strategic Options to assist the Council in achieving a more ideal indoor sports facilities network over the coming 10 years.

## **Recommendations:**

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the analysis and strategic objectives identified in the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy.
2. Agree the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy in Appendix 1.
3. Note the importance of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy to the emerging Local Plan.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to have up to date evidence and strategies relating to community infrastructure. The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy is an important evidence document for the Local Plan which is due for adoption in summer 2017. The Council's existing Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy was last updated in 2009 and as such would not be considered an up to date set of evidence for this purpose.
- 1.2 In the context of high population growth and increased demand for community facilities, a refreshed Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy will enable the Council to take future decisions relating to its indoor sports facilities network in a way that is both evidence-based and strategic.
- 1.3 The Strategy offers the Council a set of Strategic Objectives, Characteristics of an Ideal Network, and Strategic Options which can help the Borough achieve a more ideal network of indoors sports facilities over the coming 10 years.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Council could alternatively decide to not adopt the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy. While it is considered best practice for local authorities to develop and refresh strategies for leisure facility provision, there is no statutory requirement. However, Sport England is a statutory consultee on our emerging Local Plan and may raise objections if a Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy is found to be absent.
- 2.2 The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy could be revised differently, but the proposed approach is judged to be the best way to meet national requirements, whilst focusing on what matters locally. Taking a different approach would be likely to require further analysis.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

#### **3.1 *Background***

3.2 The 2009 Leisure Facilities Strategy was successful in its examination of overall indoor sports facilities provision relative to projected demand, identification of gaps in provision, and informing of strategic decisions relating to indoor sports facilities. Perhaps the best example of this was the identification of Poplar and surrounding catchment as an area of both deficiency of indoor sports facilities provision and high forecast population growth. This led to the recommendation and delivery of a retrofitted and re-opened facility at the Historic Poplar Baths. It is a modern, state of the art and fit for purpose leisure centre.

3.3 The Borough is in the process of developing a new Local Plan. The Local Plan contains site allocations for a range of uses including community facilities and more specifically sports facilities. This is informed by the evidence in this strategy. Taking this approach is consistent with the Planning Practice Guidance that accompanies the NPPF. It is also consistent with the requirements of Sport England, a statutory consultee on our Local Plan.

3.4 The Council is currently developing a suite of strategies relating to sports provision which support the Council's overall Strategic Plan and its objectives around both infrastructure and the health and well-being of our population. The Council is preparing an Open Spaces Strategy, an aspect of which is a Playing Pitch needs assessment which addresses the provision of outdoor playing pitches. This and the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy are concerned with infrastructure provision. An overall Physical Activity and Sport Strategy which is due for delivery in late 2017 will set an overall vision for improving rates of physical activity and sports participation in Tower Hamlets.

3.5 The Council's Leisure Management Contract is being extended at the moment and is due for re-procurement in the medium term. Having those negotiations assisted by an overall strategy will help the Borough meet its best value duty.

3.6 The Mayor has a previously stated commitment to investigate the development of a lido in the Borough. This Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy provides an evidence-based decision making framework for further work in this area.

#### **3.7 *Scope***

3.8 The focus of this strategy is on indoor sports facilities. The Borough's playing pitches will be addressed through a Playing Pitch needs assessment, which will form part of the final Open Space Strategy.

3.9 The strategy places emphasis on indoor sports facilities that are Council owned, however, it takes into account the supply of dual-use facilities (e.g. schools) and commercial facilities (e.g. membership-based gyms). It focuses on the provision of indoor sports facilities within the boundaries of the London

Borough of Tower Hamlets; however, it recognises facilities that are within a 1,200meter (15 minute walk) buffer-zone from the Borough boundary may be the nearest facility for many Tower Hamlet's residents, and these facilities are therefore given due consideration in the strategy's evidence base and strategic options.

- 3.10 In line with nationwide standards and guidance for the development of a Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy, this strategy exclusively relates to sports halls (4-badminton courts), swimming pools (measured in m<sup>2</sup>) and gyms (measured by no. of fitness stations).
- 3.11 ***Needs Assessment***
- 3.12 Sport England recommends that local authorities complete a needs assessment prior to indoor sports facilities strategy development.
- 3.13 This strategy is also supported by the findings of internal and community consultation and engagement. Internal consultation has been completed through the Health and Wellbeing Board and Asset Management Board. External consultation has been carried out using quantitative and qualitative methods. Market research into resident perceptions of indoor sports facilities was carried out through a telephone survey in November 2016. A discussion session was held with the Youth Council. A summary of external consultation can be found in Section 5 of Appendix 1.
- 3.14 The headline findings from the needs assessment were;
- 3.15 Population growth means that our network of indoor sports facilities will become more intensely used, and may ultimately be unable to meet the needs of a significantly larger population by 2027. According to the Sport England standard, we are forecast to need more pools and sports halls by 2027 (See Appendix One Section 6 for more detail). This planning challenge could become more acute by the concentrated and rapid population growth rates in certain parts of the borough.
- 3.16 As part of its approach to the Local Plan, the Council needs effective tools for addressing social infrastructure need to support sustainable development.
- 3.17 Most Tower Hamlets residents have access to either a sports hall or a swimming pool within a 15 minute walk (1.2km) from where they live. The current gaps in provision for both sports halls and swimming pools are in the north-east of the Borough (though this is forecast to be mitigated by better linkages into the Olympic Park), and a smaller gap in provision in the southern part of the Limehouse Ward.
- 3.18 There are also gaps in the provision of sports halls on the Isle of Dogs and in the wards of Weavers and St Peters, though this is somewhat mitigated by the dual-use school halls in those areas.

- 3.19 Recent market research and Annual Residents Survey data illustrates that a majority of Tower Hamlets residents value the Borough's indoor sports facilities.
- 3.20 The needs assessment identified options for further investment to retain the current indoor sports facilities network, however, it noted that any future decisions taken would need to be consistent with the Council's overall financial strategy. Please see Section 6 of Appendix One.
- 3.21 ***An ideal indoor sports facilities network and Strategic Options***
- 3.22 Based on the research and evidence outlined to above, three key strategic objectives have been identified that will form the basis of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy over the next ten years. These objectives are informed by an understanding of the key characteristics of an ideal indoor sports facilities network (taking into account national, regional and local strategic drivers and best practice guidance) and an assessment of the extent to which the existing network is consistent with this ideal model. Broadly speaking, an ideal indoor sports facilities network for Tower Hamlets should:
- a. use available capital to reconfigure and consolidate facilities with a view to revenue saving without loss of capacity
  - b. address gaps in provision now and in the future, in particular for swimming pools and sports halls
  - c. have facilities located in locations where people will use them most and where they will support the ambitions set out in the Local Plan
  - d. provide dry (gym/sports hall) facilities alongside all swimming pools in order to reduce the subsidy requirement
  - e. focus additional sports hall capacity on school sites to maximise value for money, providing this is supported by the analysis and adequate community access can be secured through the development management process
  - f. offer state of the art indoor sports facilities that are fully accessible to all residents, taking into account cultural, religious and physical inclusion needs
  - g. ensure indoor sports facilities are designed to be operationally efficient (including energy efficiency and therefore carbon reducing)
- 3.23 The following table identifies three strategic objectives and options for meeting these objectives, which will enable the council to progress towards an ideal indoor sports facilities network.
- 3.24 The strategy is supported by an action plan for years 1 and 2, which contains more detailed information on the preparatory tasks that will need to be

completed in advance of making formal decision in relation to specific strategic options and specific leisure centre sites. Once these tasks have been completed, separate reports will be presented to the Executive for consideration prior to any options being progressed to implementation.

- 3.25 It is important to note that the objectives and options above should not be considered in isolation, as there are many interdependencies between them, and they will always sit within the overall strategic and financial context of the Council.

### 3.26 *Figure 1: Strategic Objectives and Options*

<b>Strategic Option</b>	<b>Strategic Objective:</b>
1. Investigate any opportunities for adding indoor sports provision as part of the Bishopsgate Goods Yard development, potentially as a joint venture with partners, including neighbouring councils.	Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets
2. Investigate any opportunities to develop indoor sports provision as a joint venture with partners, including neighbouring councils.	Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets
3. Explore provision of Whitechapel Sports Centre with an enhanced facilities mix (pitch and sports hall, plus possibly a pool) on the existing or an alternative site as part of the wider re-development of the Whitechapel area.	<p>Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets</p> <p>Re-provide indoor sports facilities with improved provision that is consistent with best practice guidance</p> <p>Improve economic efficiency and energy efficiency of indoor sports facilities</p>
4. Investigate options for increasing community access to sports halls on school sites and other dual-use facilities.	Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets
5. Investigate options for a lido in the borough to provide additional swimming pool capacity in line with the Mayor's pledge.	Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets
<p>6. At York Hall, the council should explore either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment of York Hall with the existing facilities mix (excluding Mayfield House), or;</li> <li>• Re-development of the site including Mayfield House and retention of the historic York Hall building, with pool provision and potentially enhanced facilities mix and housing development, or;</li> <li>• Re-development of the site including Mayfield House and retention of the historic York Hall building and the event function / boxing hall, with housing development, but with pool provided elsewhere.</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets</p> <p>Re-provide indoor sports facilities with improved provision that is consistent with best practice guidance</p> <p>Improve economic efficiency and energy efficiency of indoor sports facilities</p>

<p>7. The council should investigate either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The retention/refurbishment of the St George's Pool, with the addition of a sports hall, with an option for housing development on the site, or;</li> <li>• The addition of new facilities at John Orwell Leisure Centre, including a swimming pool, of high design quality, to replace any lost provision at St George's and new facilities such as 5-a-side playing pitches. St George's could then be redeveloped to help fund the new facilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets</p> <p>Re-provide indoor sports facilities with improved provision that is consistent with best practice guidance</p> <p>Improve economic efficiency and energy efficiency of indoor sports facilities</p>
<p>8. The council should explore options to improve the facility mix of the Tiller Leisure Centre by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigating if the adjacent proposed school sports facilities could be brought into the footprint of the leisure centre. This could include the redevelopment of Tiller Leisure Centre to create a more financially viable and attractive provision in a high growth area.</li> <li>• Investigating the inclusion of alternative site allocations for the Isle of Dogs in the Local Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Increase the overall supply of publicly accessible sports halls and swimming pools in Tower Hamlets</p> <p>Re-provide indoor sports facilities with improved provision that is consistent with best practice guidance</p> <p>Improve economic efficiency and energy efficiency of indoor sports facilities</p>
<p>9. Continue to support the implementation of the council's Carbon Management Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan</p>	<p>Improve economic efficiency and energy efficiency of indoor sports facilities</p>
<p>10. Work with the council's equalities forums to evaluate the accessibility and suitability of the council's indoor sports facilities for people of all protected characteristics</p>	<p>Re-provide indoor sports facilities with improved provision that is consistent with best practice guidance</p>

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

4.1 The adoption of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy will provide the framework within which delivery plans for the initiative outlined can be developed. There is a strong focus within the Strategy on indoor sports facilities and the use of capital to reconfigure and consolidate facilities with the aim of achieving revenue savings without a reduction in capacity.

4.2 The financial implications of the areas identified in the strategy both as individual proposals and in aggregate will need to be assessed and included as part of the Council's capital strategy to determine how the priorities for

facilities improvements sits alongside the Council's other capital aspirations together with an associated financing strategy that considers the overall affordability of the Council's capital needs.

## **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 There is no statutory requirement for the Council to have an Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy. However, the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and which was published on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities. An element of the Framework is Promoting Healthy Communities and as part of that councils should through their planning policies deliver social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.
- 5.2 There is no statutory requirement to consult but the NPPF does provide that the Council should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and as this Strategy will be used as important evidence document for the Local Plan then a proportionate level of consultation will be required and therefore the common law duty to consult arises. This common law duty imposes a general duty of procedural fairness upon public authorities exercising a wide range of functions which affects the interests of individuals. The report advises that regard has been has to consultation responses in preparing this draft Strategy and paragraph 3.13 of the report advises that consultation was both internal and external. Further a summary of external consultation can be found in Section 5 of Appendix 1. However, such consultation must comply with the following common law criteria:
- (a) it should be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
  - (b) the Council must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;
  - (c) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
  - (d) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.
- 5.3 With regard to the above, before approving the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy the Mayor in Cabinet will be required to consider whether the consultation was appropriate and the Mayor must conscientiously take into account the consultation responses.
- 5.4 The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy does not form part of the Council's Policy and Development Framework and its approval is an Executive Decision.

- 5.5 When deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposals, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't (the public sector equality duty). To inform the Council in discharging this duty there is some information in the report relevant to these considerations in paragraph 6 below.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main purpose of the Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy is to ensure continued access to high quality indoor sports facilities to all sections of the community in the context of a rapidly growing population and subsequent increased demand on existing indoor sports facilities. As such it is consistent with the Council's duties to promote equality in all protected characteristics.
- 6.2 Indoor sports facilities provide one of the main ways Tower Hamlets' residents can engage with healthier lifestyles and the impact of this service infrastructure on tackling health inequalities and community integration issues cannot be under estimated. Recognising the need to provide facilities in the most accessible locations for all residents, the Strategy focuses recommends on the provision of potential facilities in town centre locations and close to transport hubs.
- 6.3 The Strategy aims to address geographical deficiencies in the distribution of indoor sports facilities and recognises that gaps in the network correlate to some extent with areas of lower levels of participation in physical activity. It identifies such areas as key locations for potential facilities in order to positively impact on participation levels.
- 6.4 Furthermore, the Strategy makes proposals at a high level and aims to support future growth in the Borough. Strategic options are largely demand driven (based on population growth modelling). The Strategy draws on the significant amount of consultation already undertaken, as well as targeted market research into the perceptions of the existing indoor sports provision that can be broken down by equalities groups.
- 6.5 The strategic options within the Strategy will form part of the Local Plan suite of documents and residents will be able to comment on high level proposals as part of the relevant consultations in the spring of 2017. The development of individual solutions will include further project-specific consultation with residents to inform design, accessibility, and the services to be provided.
- 6.6 When individual projects are presented to Council, a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out

## **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy forms an important investment prioritisation framework to help make the Council's network of indoor sports facilities more operationally efficient while continuing to meet the needs of residents. As noted in 3.24, the Strategy guides future decisions on indoor sports facilities to improve economic efficiency. This is directly supportive of the Council's best value responsibilities

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 Many indoor sports facilities by their very nature have high energy demands. The Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy identified the need to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's indoor sports facilities where possible. Energy surveys are regularly undertaken to underpin the strategic objective to make Tower Hamlet's indoor sports facilities more operationally efficient and therefore carbon reducing.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 All of the strategic options arising from this strategy will be subject to individual risk assessments as part of their own detailed appraisal process. The main risk in relation to the overall delivery of any of the proposed solutions will be the availability of project development and capital funding. Individual risk implications will be reported to Members on a project by project basis as strategic options are presented for further detailed decision making

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Indoor sports facilities and other community infrastructure are recognised to have a positive effect in improving rates of crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly among youth. Sport England notes that when sporting participation is increased among targeted populations; youth offending can fall. By its very nature this Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy supports the Council's strategic aims around crime reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour by supporting the provision of an effective indoor sports facilities network.

## **11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 N/A

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- None

### **Appendices**

- The Tower Hamlets Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2017-2027
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Large Scale Maps

### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012**

- None

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

N/A