

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
FACILITIES STRATEGY**



Darlington **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



A

DRAFT REPORT FOR CONSULTATION

BY

PMP

MAY 2009

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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

- 1.1 PMP was commissioned during November 2008 to develop a Sport and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy for the Borough of Darlington.
- 1.2 This Strategy has been developed alongside a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which considers the provision of pitches for football, rugby, cricket and hockey and evaluates the demand for these facilities in Darlington. The PPS has been developed following the methodology outlined by Sport England in “Towards a Level Playing Field – A Manual for the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies”.
- 1.3 This Strategy is compliant with Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) and considers the provision of a wide range of sports and physical activity facilities in Darlington. Facilities considered include:

Indoor

- Swimming pools
- Sports halls & community halls
- Health and fitness facilities & dance studios
- Other specialist provision eg indoor bowls, squash courts, gymnastics centres, boxing gyms, indoor tennis, ice rinks etc

Outdoor

- Synthetic turf pitches & Multi-use games areas (MUGAs)
- Bowling greens
- Tennis courts
- Other specialist provision eg athletics tracks, golf courses, cycle tracks, adventure play / active recreation etc

- 1.4 PPG17 identifies the minimum range of facility types that must be included in sport and recreation assessments. However, the complete range of facilities assessed in Darlington was agreed by the steering group at the outset of the study and was determined by what makes the most sense locally.

The need for the study

- 1.5 The Government, via PPG17, requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to carry out assessments of open space, sport and recreation facilities as part of their planning process. It requires LPAs to prepare, update and regularly monitor and measure the quality, quantity and accessibility for open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 1.6 The Council completed part of its PPG17 assessment in April 2007 by adopting its Open Space Strategy. An assessment of sport and recreation facilities is now required to:
- provide a robust needs and evidence base to inform the priorities for future provision & to help guide investment decisions
 - inform the development of local planning standards and policy
 - inform the Council’s Local Development Framework (LDF)
 - provide the justification for retaining existing facilities in the Core Strategy and in Development Plan Documents
 - provide evidence to justify the provision of new sport and recreation provision or enhancement of existing facilities

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

- help assess the merits of planning applications and guide planning obligations
 - to support the development of community sport and physical activity in Darlington and help address the health improvement agenda by increasing levels of physical activity.
- 1.7 Ultimately, the aspirations of the authority and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) are to raise participation levels in physical activity across the Borough. It is therefore intended that the findings of this strategy (together with the playing pitch strategy) will help to ensure that the quantity and quality of facilities, and accessibility to facilities, meets the needs of the local population, now and in the future, thus maximising the opportunity for participation.
- 1.8 This strategy is concerned with participation in a wide range of sport and physical activities by adults and young people across Darlington. It is concerned with physical activity in the round as well as opportunities for formal sports participation.
- 1.9 The report presents the key findings arising from extensive survey work, consultation and quantitative analysis, highlighting areas of both concern and opportunity and sets out a strategy for the future delivery of sport and physical activity facilities across the Borough.

SECTION 2
METHODOLOGY

Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology and approach adopted is consistent with government guidance for open space, sport and recreation, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation, and Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17.
- 2.2 The project has been overseen by a Steering Group which has included officers from the Councils Cultural Services, Planning Services and Sport England North East (Planning and Facilities Improvement Service).
- 2.3 In order to meet the study objectives, our work has involved undertaking detailed research and consultation (qualitative analysis) as well the use of Sport England strategic planning tools (quantitative analysis) to ensure a robust and detailed evidence based assessment. The strategy is a rounded approach to try and increase participation in physical activity and subsequently benefit health.
- 2.4 The key elements of this work are set out below.

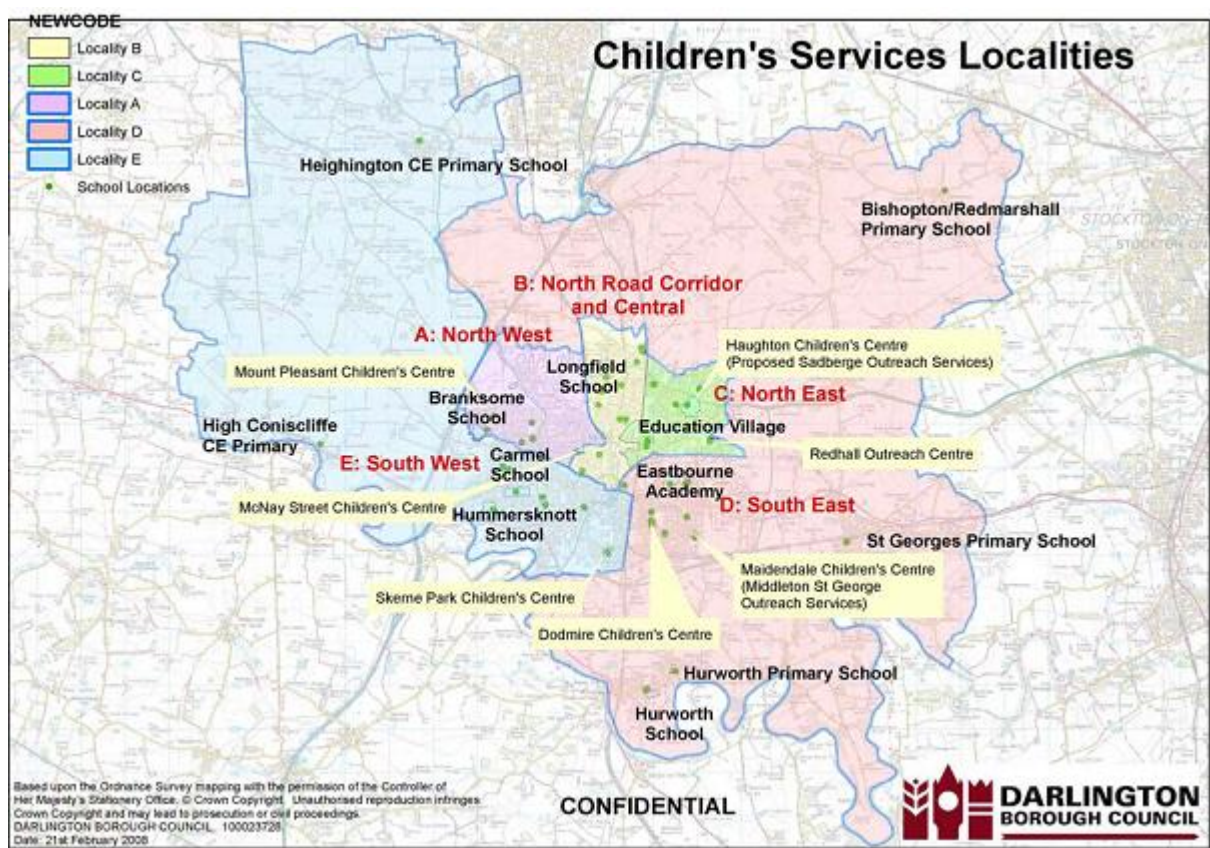
Demographic analysis

- 2.5 The study has also involved undertaking a socio-demographic analysis of the local population to help identify the existing and needs and future potential needs for sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.6 In order to analyse how the views of residents living in different areas of the Borough differ, the geographical area has been divided into five locality areas. The use of these areas is consistent with the Children’s Services Localities which are based on the clusters of schools and Children’s Centres
- 2.7 This approach ensures that the findings of the local needs assessment can be analysed spatially and also provides a broad indication of the distribution of sport and physical activity facilities across the authority. The areas (and the boundaries used to define these areas) are outlined in table 2.1 below and map 2.1 overleaf:

Table 2.1 Analysis area breakdowns

Locality Area	Population	Wards included
A	16,790	Cockerton East, Cockerton West, Faverdale, Pierremont
B	19,960	Central, Harrowgate Hill, North Road, Northgate
C	12,785	Haughton East, Haughton North, Haughton West
D	26,295	Bank Top, Eastbourne, Hurworth, Lascelles, Lingfield, Middleton St George, Sadberge and Whessoe
E	23,645	College, Heighington and Coniscliffe, Hummersknott, Mowden, Park East, Park West
Total	99,475	

Figure 2.1 Analysis area map



2.8 Whilst the facility stock has been analysed by locality area, it was agreed that in Darlington, a boroughwide approach to the analysis of facility stock is more relevant for certain facility types eg swimming pools. The locality approach is most relevant for community based facilities such as MUGAs and community halls/centres.

Identifying local need

2.9 The Companion Guide to PPG17, focuses on assessing needs and opportunities at a local level. Local need for facilities has been identified in several different ways.

Strategic review

2.10 We have undertaken a detailed desk research exercise in order to review all relevant background policy documents that provide an indication of local needs and the priorities for the Borough – the key findings from this work are set out in Section 3 of this report.

Community consultation

2.11 In order to identify the needs of the local community, we have undertaken a household survey, sports club survey, parish council survey, focus groups and a workshop event.

Household survey

2.12 The household survey provides an opportunity for a number of randomly selected households to comment on the current provision, quality and accessibility of sports

SECTION 2 – METHODOLOGY

and physical activity facilities as well as being given the opportunity to comment on any facility specific issues.

- 2.13 5,000 questionnaires were distributed to households across the Borough to capture the views of both users and non-users of sports and physical activity facilities. Officers at the Council provided a database of randomly selected addresses from the electoral register across the boroughs five locality areas. Residents who responded were included in a prize draw.
- 2.14 Random distribution of questionnaires to a geographically representative sample (based on the populations living each of the identified locality areas) of households across the authority ensured that representatives from a broad range of age groups, ethnic groups and gender were given the opportunity to participate. The survey was also made available on-line via a link on the Council's website. A copy of the household survey and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix A.
- 2.15 318 completed postal questionnaires were returned during the survey period. A sample of 300 responses provides results that are accurate to circa +/- 5% at the 94.3% confidence interval. For example, this means that if 70% of the survey sample had said that they think that the quality of swimming pools is good, we can be 94.3% confident that had we interviewed the entire population of Darlington the results would lie between 65% and 75%.
- 2.16 Headline response rates are provided below, and specific information relating to each facility type is found in the later chapters. The survey analysis covers all areas, and where required looks at specific issues within analysis areas.
- 2.17 The responses by locality area are detailed below in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 - Responses by locality area

Locality area	Responses
A	55 (17%)
B	49 (15%)
C	44 (14%)
D	76 (24%)
E	94 (30%)
TOTAL	318 (100%)

Sports club survey

- 2.18 A postal questionnaire was sent to 27 sports clubs included on a club database provided by the Council in order to obtain the views of local clubs and organisations on the adequacy of sports and physical activity provision. (This is in addition to the surveys that were sent to football, rugby, cricket and hockey clubs as part of the PPS). Surveys were also available for completion online via the Council's website. A copy of the sports club survey can be found in Appendix B. 17 completed questionnaires were returned during the survey period (in addition to the 15 returned from pitch sport clubs). Results from the survey are included in the facility specific sections.

Parish Council survey

- 2.19 Surveys were sent to all 12 Parish Councils within the borough in order to investigate views on the current quantity, quality and accessibility of sport and physical activity facilities in the more rural areas. Responses were received from four out of the 12 parishes, namely, Heighington, Middleton St George, Low Dinsdale and Archdeacon Newton. A copy of the Parish Council survey and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix C.
- 2.20 All parishes were invited to a focus group session on the 27th January to discuss and air their views, however this was cancelled due to a poor take up. Only Heighington Parish responded and therefore a separate face to face meeting was held with representatives from this Parish.

Workshop event

- 2.21 A workshop event for clubs and other sporting organisations/individuals was held on the 24th February 2009. This was very well attended with representatives of 40 clubs participating. A full list of attendees can be found in Appendix D.

Focus groups

- 2.22 Focus groups were held with young people via the Youth Service to obtain their views on the adequacy of facilities within Darlington, to identify barriers to participation and to identify what facilities they would like to see in the future.

Stakeholder consultation

- 2.23 The study has also involved undertaking in-depth consultation with key local stakeholders, including Council Officers and representatives from key local and regional organisations. The consultation was conducted using a range of methods, including holding face-to-face meetings, conducting telephone interviews and via email correspondence to obtain their views on current provision – particularly in relation to the quality and accessibility of existing facilities. A full list of consultees can also be found in Appendix D.

Auditing local provision

- 2.24 A comprehensive desktop audit has been carried out to identify all relevant sports and physical activity facilities across the Borough. This included undertaking a review (and update) of the online national databases of sports facilities, Active Places, desk research, telephone research and consultation with Council Officers. In addition, a survey was sent to all schools in the borough to ensure we had identified relevant facilities on school sites. A copy of the school survey and accompanying covering letter can be found in Appendix E and a copy of the facility audit/database is provided in Appendix F.

Site visits

- 2.25 In addition to obtaining information on the quality of facilities from desk research and consultation, site visits were conducted to 68 sites across the Borough. These covered both sport and physical activity facilities and playing pitches.
- 2.26 The site visits were undertaken using a matrix to ensure consistency and enable comparisons to be made between sites – the key aspects considered during the site visits comprised:

- access
- cleanliness
- housekeeping/presentation
- maintenance
- standard of facilities
- provision of information
- overall impression.

2.27 It was agreed at the outset that site assessments were not required to private health and fitness clubs and golf courses. Given the commercial nature of these facilities, it is assumed that these are of adequate quality. Access policies and opening times however have been captured in the facility database.

2.28 A number of sites could not be assessed as they were closed at the time of the visit. The majority of these were community centres/villages halls. A combination of web searches and telephone calls were undertaken in relation to these sites to ascertain exact facility details. Again these are included in the facility database in Appendix F.

2.29 A copy of the site visit matrices can be found in Appendix G.

Supply and demand analysis

Quantity

2.30 Sport England's strategic planning tools were used to assess the theoretical supply and demand balance for facilities. The facilities planning model (FPM) was used to assess the provision of sports halls and swimming pools (now and in 2019). For more details with regards to the FPM and its assumptions see Appendix H.

2.31 The strategic planning tools within Active Places Power were used to compare the amount/number of facilities per 1000 people with national and regional averages and with levels seen in comparator authorities. Coupled with consultation, this helps to assess the adequacy for each type of facility within in Darlington.

Quality

2.32 We have used the information gathered from our site visits and consultation feedback to appraise the quality of facilities. Through analysis of the site visit templates, desk research and consultation, we have assessed the quality of existing facilities and have identified where quality needs to be improved.

Accessibility

2.33 Accessibility has been assessed in terms of:

- Opening hours and level of community use
- Physical access to a site
- Preferred mode of transport and journey time to get to a facility.

SECTION 2 – METHODOLOGY

2.34 This has been assessed through the consultation process, information gathered via the site visits and through the use of maps.

Strategic framework

2.35 This strategy is based on the research and consultation findings and sets out the key issues, surpluses and shortfalls, future priorities and opportunities for new or improved sport and recreation provision.

2.36 Section 12 considers the implications of this assessment for future planning policy.

SECTION 3
STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic context

3.1 The strategic context builds a picture of Darlington in terms of population, demographic profile, local and regional issues, aims and objectives.

Local demographics

3.2 The Borough of Darlington is situated in the North East of England in the west of the Tees Valley sub region. The Borough covers an area of approximately 76 square miles and 85% of this area is classified as countryside.

3.3 Darlington comprises of a mix of both urban and rural neighbourhoods. The Borough contains an historic market town with associated urban areas and to the south and west of the Borough are extensive rural neighbourhoods. Darlington Town Centre is recognised as a sub regional centre and the town centre attracts visitors from the neighbouring areas of North Yorkshire and County Durham.

3.4 The age profile, unemployment rates, mobility and ethnic breakdown of Darlington residents all affect their propensity to use sport and physical activity facilities in general. For example, the cost of using facilities is a barrier for using facilities for people with low incomes whilst the locality of provision is a barrier for people without their own transport. Table 3.1 below summarises the key demographic trends and the likely implications on sport and physical activity facility usage across the Borough.

Table 3.1 - Demographic profile

Indicator	Borough of Darlington	Relevance to indoor sports provision
Total population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> total population is 99,475 this population is expected to increase to 109,300 by 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the population increase to 2021 is projected to be 10%. Appropriate facility provision is likely to be required to meet the additional population demands.
Age profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proportion of residents aged 40 and below is less than the national and regional average proportion of residents aged 25-44 is similar to the regional and national average percentage of people aged 65+ is 17%, slightly higher than the national average of 16%, and is set to increase further 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the age profile of the local authority area will be considered within the recommendations for future provision those aged between 25 and 44, is the age bracket most likely to participate in sport and physically activity There is a the need to cater for the ageing population in terms of the facilities provided. eg, older residents are more likely to take part in less strenuous activities.
Ethnic origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relatively low proportion (2%) of ethnic minorities within the local authority area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little diversity in the make up of the Borough. Despite this, consideration must be given to the needs of ethnic groups in terms of accessibility to events and programming (eg single sex swimming).

Indicator	Borough of Darlington	Relevance to indoor sports provision
Economic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment within Darlington (4%) is below the regional (4.5%) average, but above the national average (3.4%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployment in Darlington is marginally above the national average which may impact on the propensity to participate and cost in particular may be a barrier to access. the number of unemployed people should be considered when reviewing pricing for activities.
Car availability by household (mobility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31% of households do not own a car, higher than the national average of 27% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower than average levels of car ownership indicate the importance of providing good public transport links to leisure and community facilities and reflect the need for local facility provision.

3.5 The population projections based on 2006 figures show that in all likelihood, by 2021 there will be a larger total older population (aged around 50+). This changing population structure may impact on the demand for certain facilities, although this change will happen gradually. It is important for facility providers to be aware of these changing demographics and be prepared and able to respond.

3.6 These changes will also be influenced by housing projections and additional developments in the borough which affect the growth of the population. We have used planned housing commitments (supplied by Darlington Borough Council) to estimate where significant population growth is most likely to occur. The greatest population growth is expected to be in locality areas A and D.

Current participation rates - Active People Survey

3.7 The Active People survey conducted in 2005/6 by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Sport England, is the largest ever survey of sport and active recreation to be undertaken in Europe. It was a telephone survey of 363,724 adults in England (aged 16 plus) and is unique in providing reliable statistics on participation in sport and active recreation for all 354 local authorities in England at a local level (a minimum of 1,000 interviews were completed in every local authority in England).

3.8 The data identifies how participation varies from place to place at a local authority level and between different groups in the population. The survey also measures the proportion of the adult population that volunteer in sport on a weekly basis, club membership, involvement in organised sport/competition, receipt of tuition or coaching, and overall satisfaction with levels of sporting provision in the local community – the key findings for Darlington are detailed below.

Headline findings

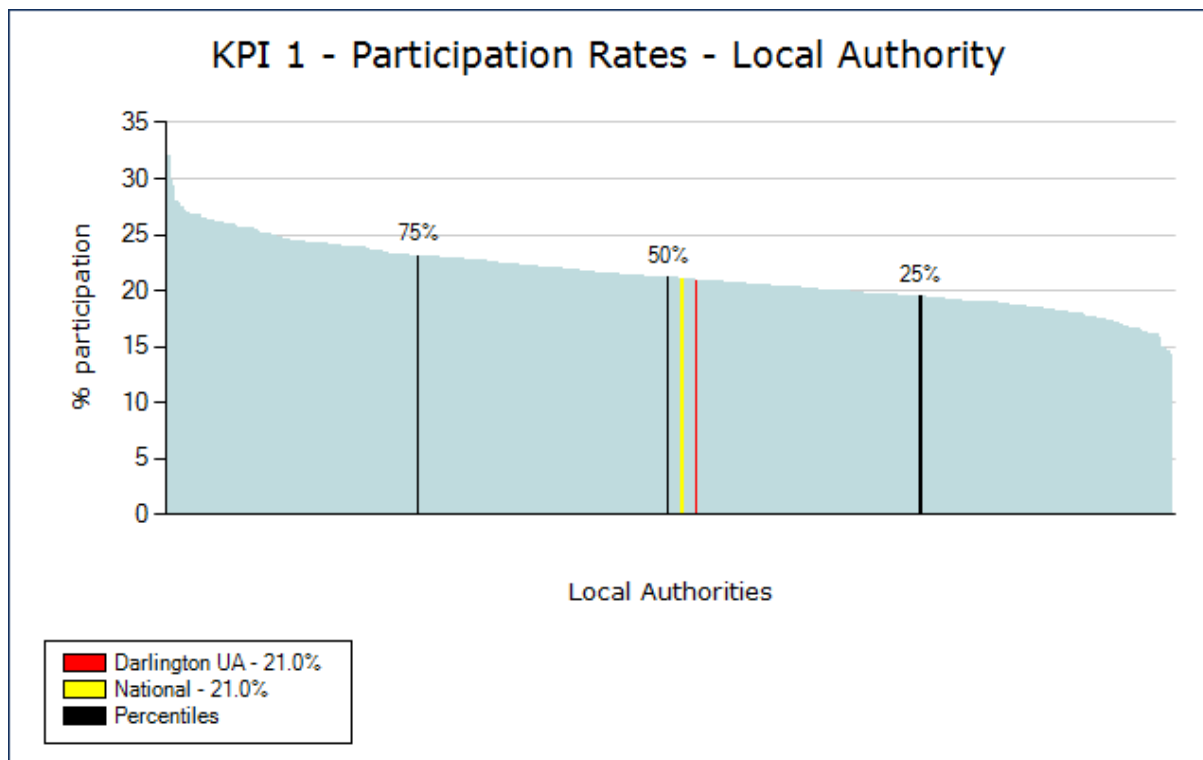
3.9 Active People provides data on six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and operates a simple traffic light system to show immediately whether that level of performance is in the top 25% (green), middle 50% (amber) or bottom 25% (red) quartile – Darlington’s profile is shown in Table 3.2 overleaf against the regional and national average.

Table 3.2 - Active People Survey 1: Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance indicators	Darlington	Regional average	National average
KPI 1 Participation at least three days a week at moderate intensity for 30 minutes.	21.0%	20.5%	21%
KPI 2 At least one hour a week volunteering to support sport.	4.3%	4.2%	4.7%
KPI 3 Member of sports club.	23.8%	23.0%	25.1%
KPI 4 Received tuition from instructor or coach in past 12 months.	16.0%	15.7%	18%
KPI 5 Taken part in organised competitive sport in past 12 months.	12.7%	13.0%	15%
KPI 6 Satisfaction with local sports provision.	76.4%	70.4	69.5%

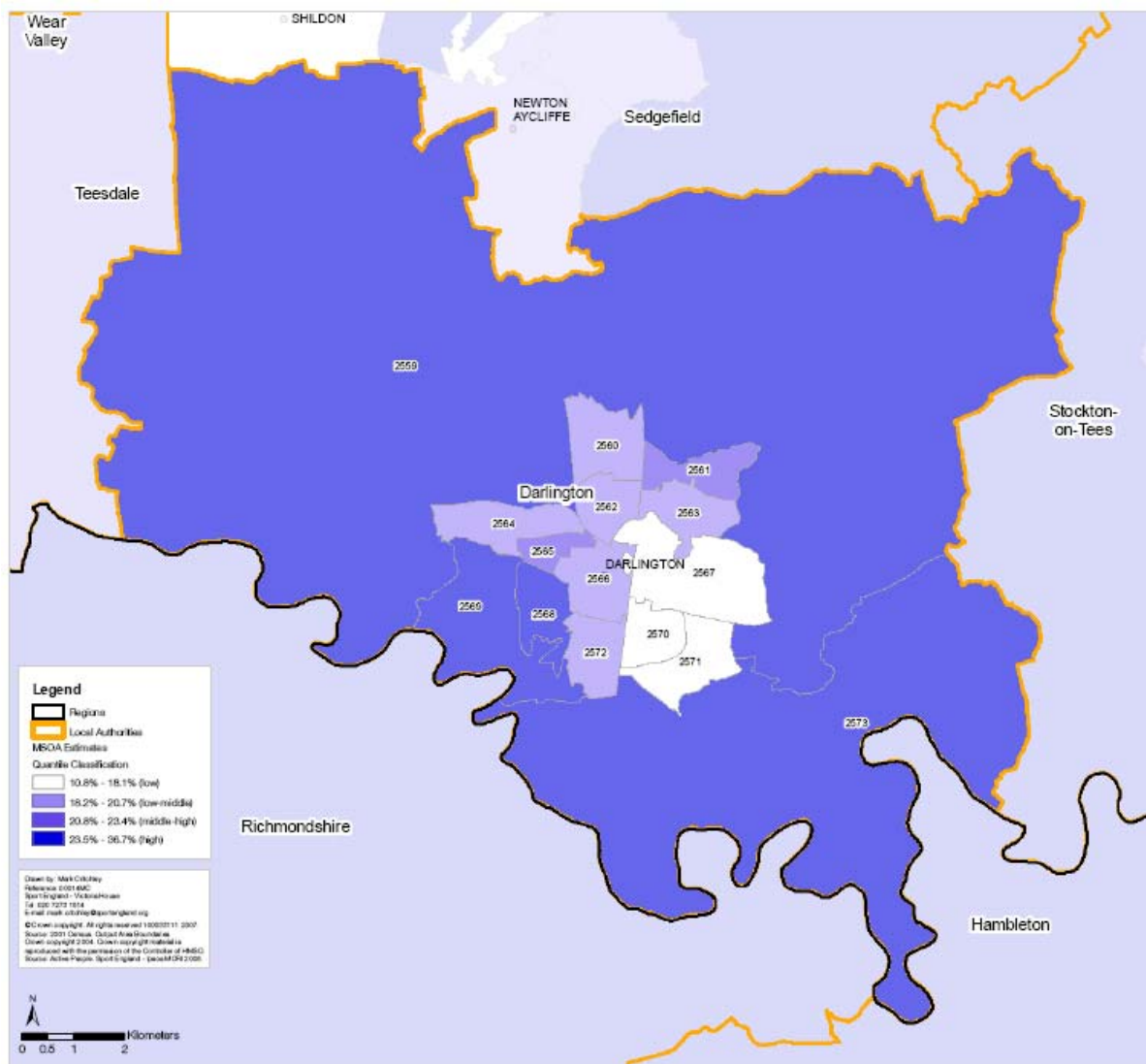
- 3.10 The headline information reveals that Darlington is in the middle 50% nationally for three out of the six KPIs. Although participation is in line with the regional and national average, this is not translating into two of the club-related KPIs – tuition levels and actually taking part in organised sport. Volunteering and membership of a sports club however is similar to the regional and national average.
- 3.11 Interestingly in the context of this study, satisfaction with local sports provision is higher than the regional and national average and is in the top 25% nationally.
- 3.12 Figure 3.1 overleaf shows the performance of Darlington in the first KPI – participation – against the national picture.

Figure 3.1 Participation rates



- 3.13 Figure 3.1 highlights that in terms of overall participation, the proportion of adults in Darlington participating in activities for at least 30 minutes three or more times per week is the same as the national average – 21.0%.
- 3.14 The Active People survey was repeated in late 2008 and headline results have recently been published. These show an increase in participation in Darlington up to 23%, however this increase is not statistically significant. Interestingly, the percentage of those satisfied with sports provision has fallen slightly to 75.2%, however, this is still above both the national and regional average.
- 3.15 Sport England has subsequently undertaken further analysis of the Active People survey data to model participation rates at middle layer super output area (MSOA – ie smaller areas within a local authority). The information from this analysis for Darlington is shown in Map 3.1 overleaf. **The higher rates of participation ie the ‘hot spots’ are shown in the darker colours and the lower rates of participation, ie the ‘cold spots’ shown in white and lighter colours.** The maps clearly show how levels of participation vary across the borough, with lower levels of participation, and hence key target areas in the central and south east areas of the town.

Map 3.1 - Participation rates at Middle Super Output Area in Darlington

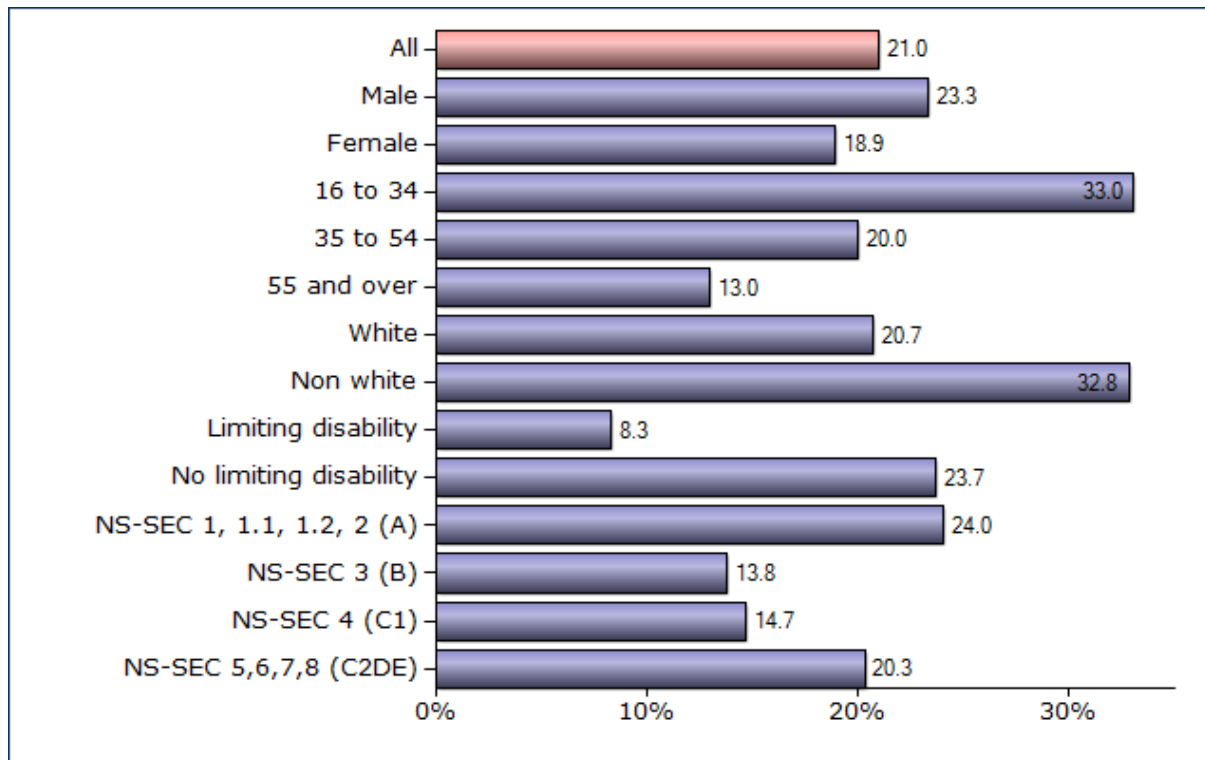


3.16 However, the effectiveness of deliverers and policies can be more effectively measured by assessing the local authority’s expected participation rate, which is calculated by considering the key local socio-economic factors such as unemployment, rate of home ownership, or ethnic minority population, which are known to be linked to rates of participation.

3.17 The expected participation rate for Darlington from Active People is 21.13%, which is similar to the actual levels of participation reported. Figure 3.2 further breaks down the current participation data to show that, in line with trends nationally, rates of participation are generally lower amongst:

- women
- older people
- those from NS-SEC 5,6,7 and 8 (C2, D and E social groups).

Figure 3.2 Participation breakdown – three times a week x 30 minutes



3.18 Participation rates amongst residents in Darlington are similar to the national profile in terms of participation by gender, age, ethnicity and social class.

Market Segmentation

3.19 Sport England has developed nineteen sporting segments to help us understand the nation’s attitudes and motivations – why they play sport and why they don’t. This is particularly important to understand in order to ensure that the facilities in Darlington cater for the needs and expectations of local residents.

3.20 The research builds on the results of Sport England’s Active People Survey, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s Taking Part survey and the Mosaic tool from Experian. It informs Sport England’s Strategy and Business Plan 2008-2011 and helps ensure that money is invested into areas that will have the greatest impact.

3.21 Residents are classified according to their key characteristics and analysis of the dominant market segments provides an indication as to the type of facilities that may be required if certain groups are to become active. The key characteristics of some of the dominant population groups in Darlington are illustrated in Table 3.3

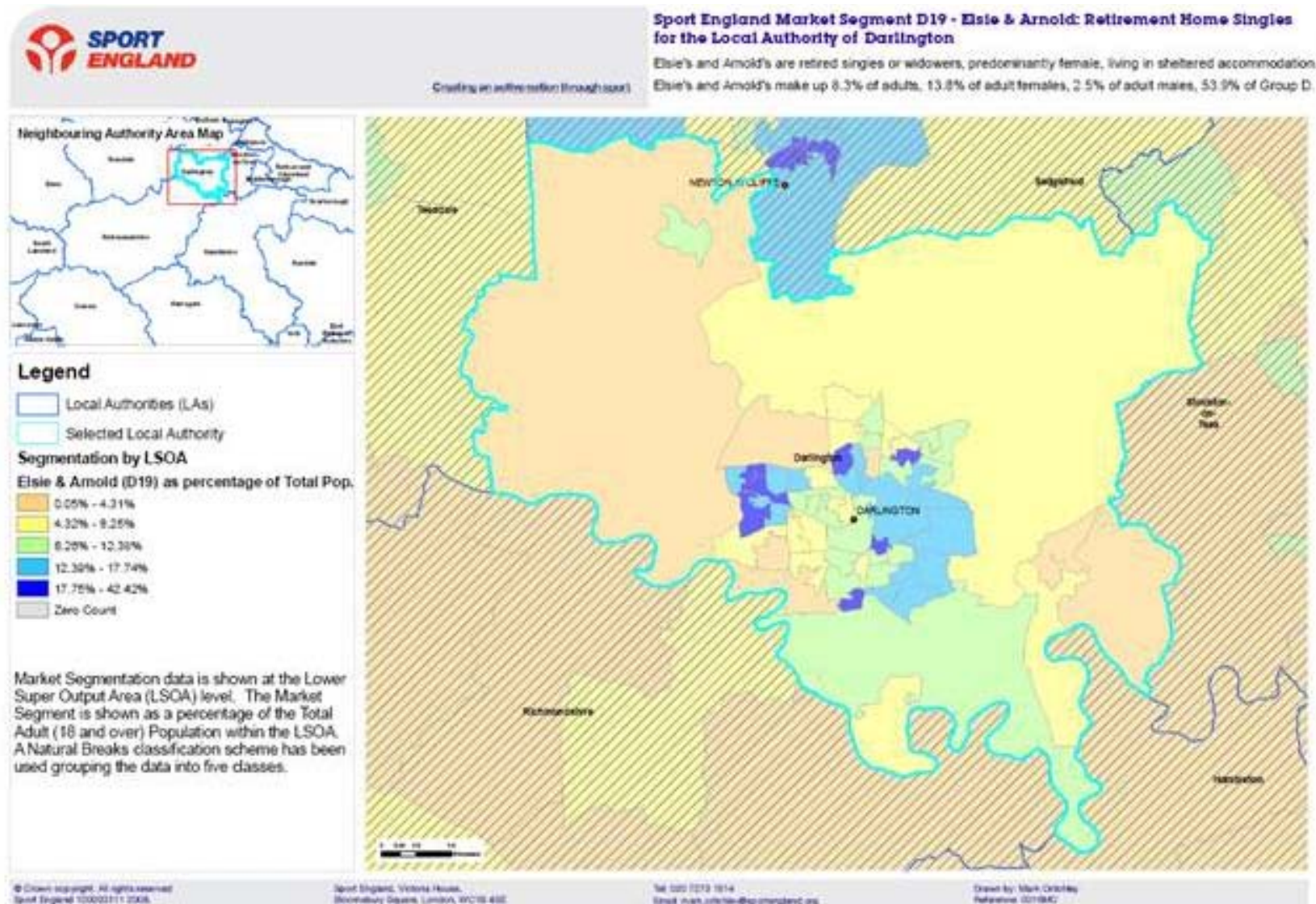
3.22 Market segmentation shows that ‘Elsie & Arnold’ is the most dominant market segment. Other dominant market segments in Darlington and their typical characteristics are outlined in table 3.3 overleaf.

Table 3.3 – Dominant market segments in Darlington

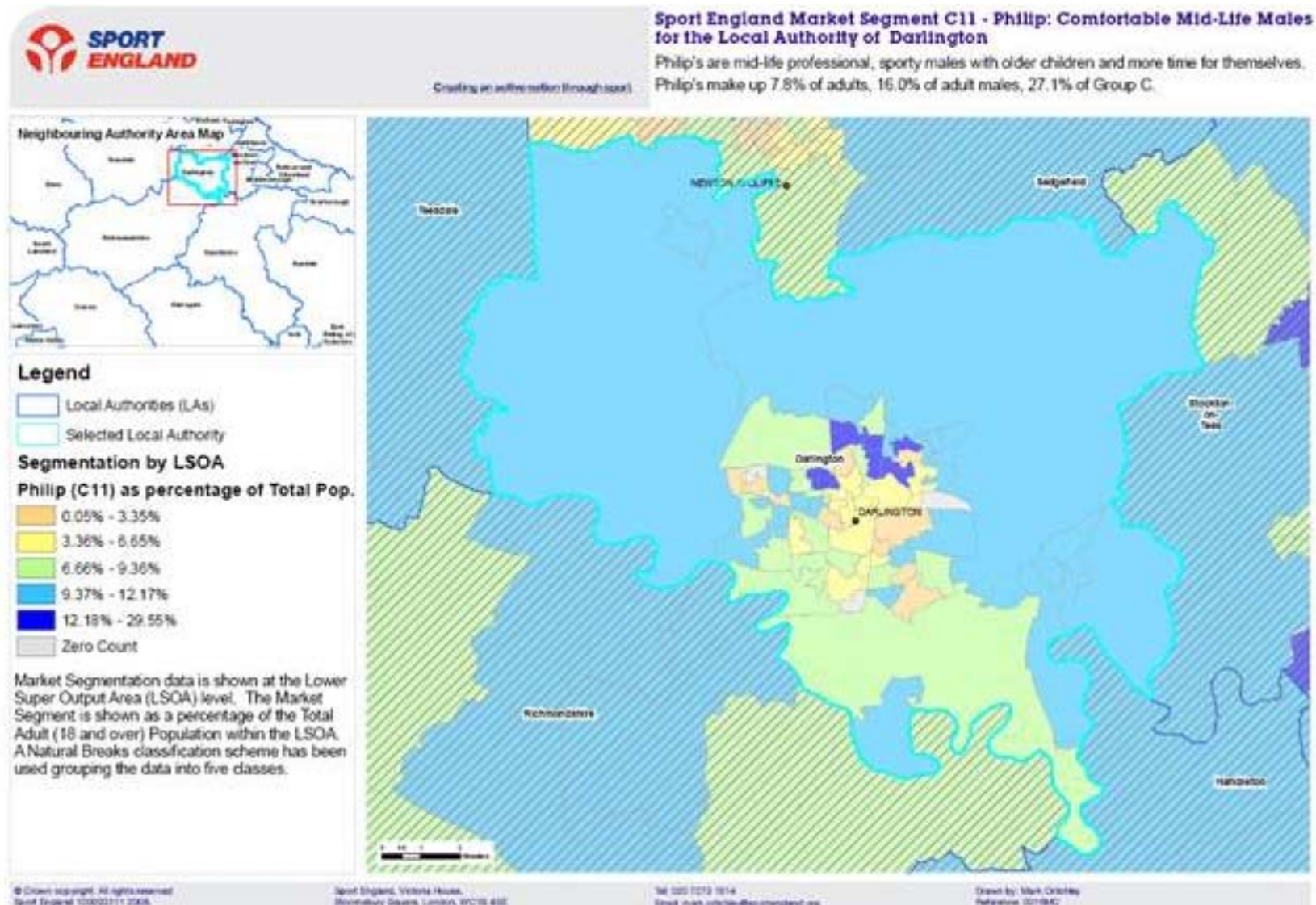
Label	Age	Status	Characteristics
Elsie and Arnold (Segment 19)	66+	Widowed Retired	<p>Lowest participation of the group with health problems and disability being major inhibitors to activity.</p> <p>Those that do participate tend towards low intensity activities, such as walking, bowls or dancing (traditional ballroom).</p> <p>Safes environments would encourage this group to walk more often.</p> <p>Organised low impact and low intensity events would be welcomed.</p>
Philip (Segment 11)	46 – 55	Married Professional	<p>Most active type within this peer group, enjoys participating in a number of activities including team sports, racquet games and technical sports.</p> <p>Member of fitness or sports clubs and takes part in competitions.</p> <p>Motivations to participate include meeting friends, taking the children, improving performance and enjoyment.</p> <p>Help with childcare might encourage this type to participate more.</p>
Elaine (Segment12)	46 – 55	Married Professional	<p>Reasonably active type enjoying swimming, exercise classes, going to the gym and walking. Team sports do not appeal.</p> <p>Motivation for participation includes keeping fit, losing weight and to help with injury.</p> <p>Longer opening hours, having more time and people to go with would encourage more participation.</p>
Tim (Segment 6)	26 – 35	Single/Married Professional	<p>A very active type enjoying high intensity activities.</p> <p>Enjoys technical sports such as skiing and water sports as well as team games and individual activities.</p> <p>Motivations to participate include to improve performance, keep fit and make friends.</p> <p>Busy lives are a barrier to participating more.</p>

3.23 Maps 3.2 - 3.5 on the following pages show where the four dominant groups are primarily located within Darlington. This information has informed the Strategy and should be used to help the Council with the programming of facilities and invest into areas that will have the greatest impact in increasing participation.

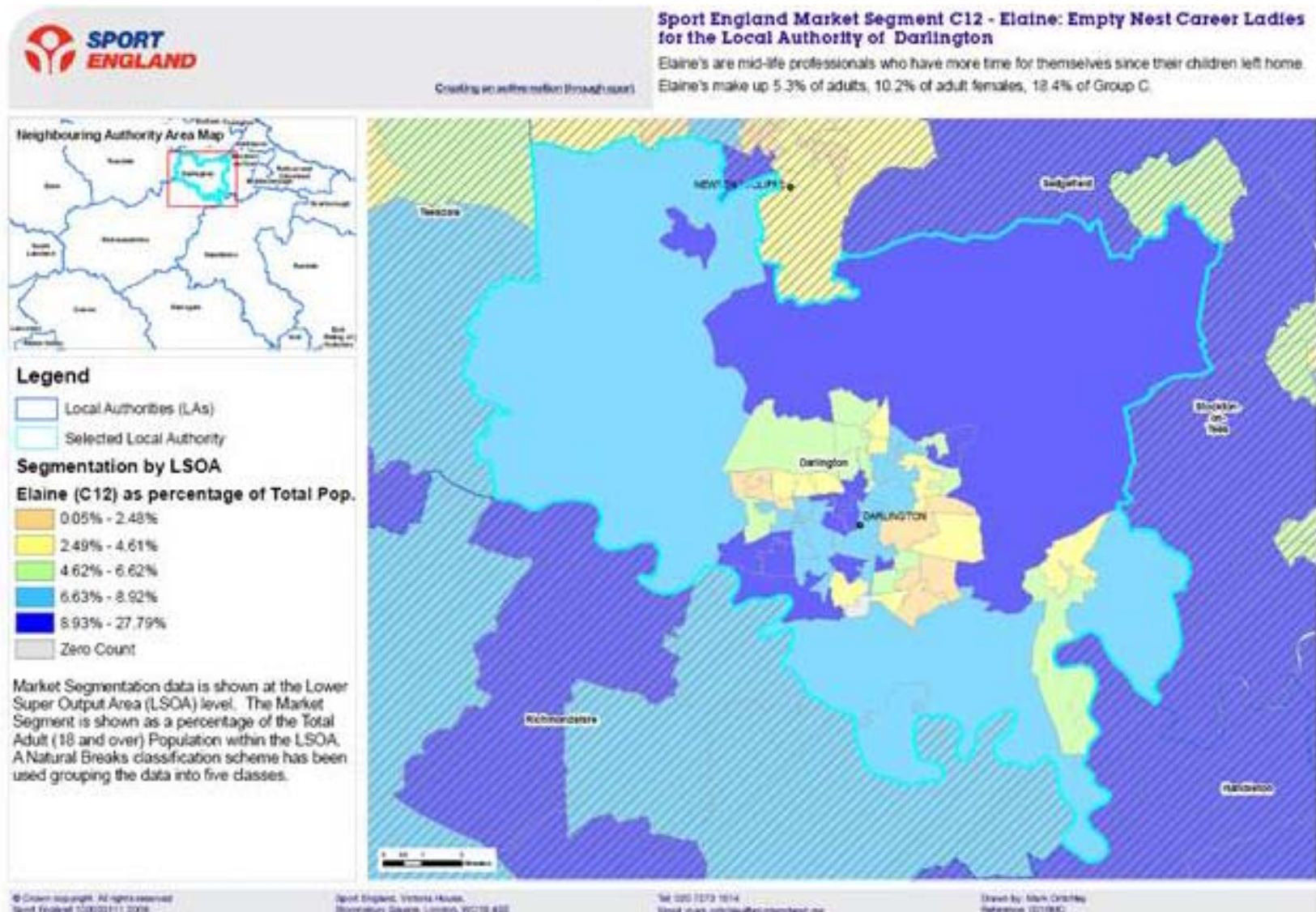
Map 3.2 Location of dominant segment 19: Elsie and Arnold



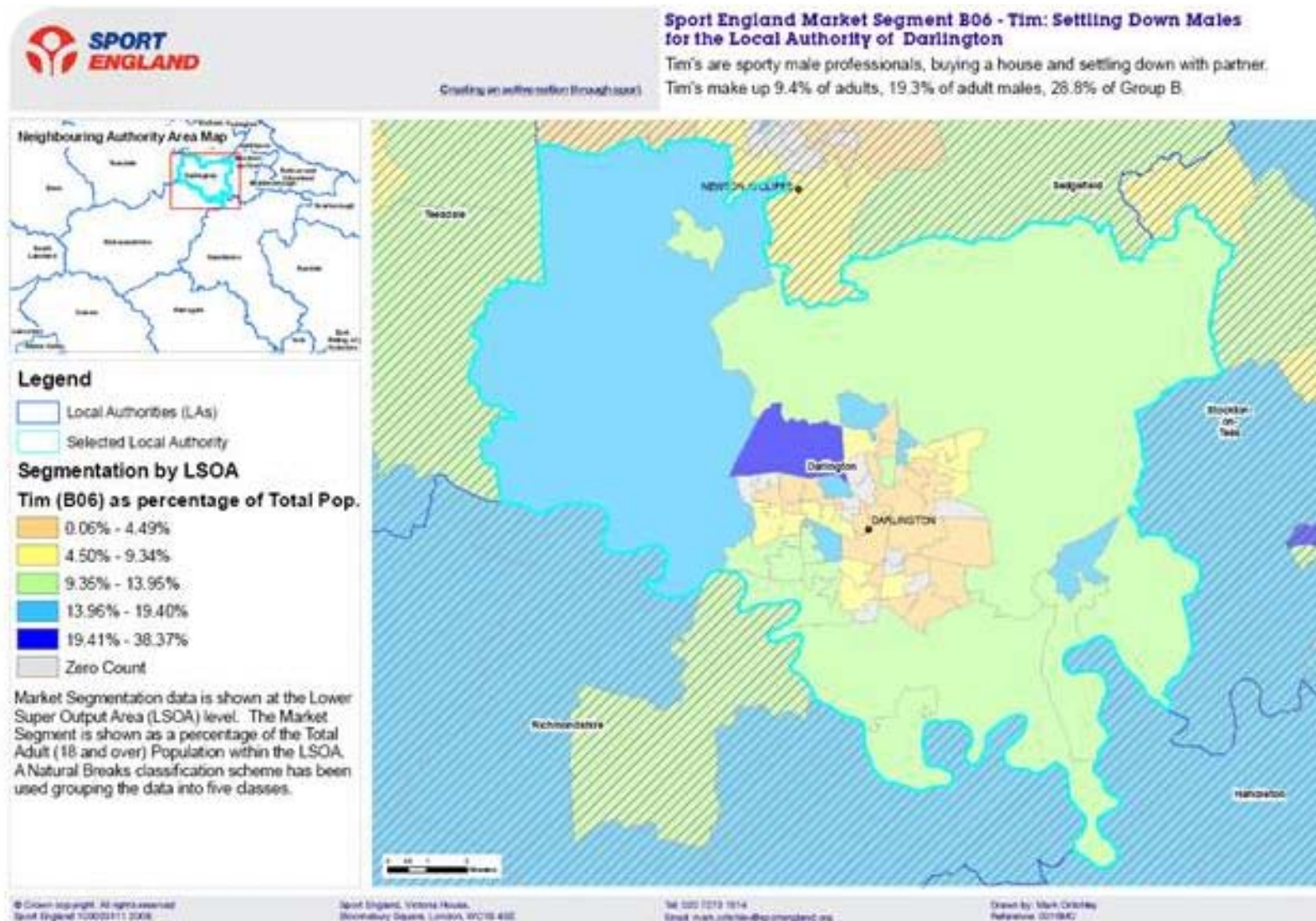
Map 3.3 Location of dominant segment 11: Philip



Map 3.4 Location of dominant segment 12: Elaine



Map 3.5 Location of dominant segment 6: Tim



Document review

- 3.24 We have identified and reviewed a wide range of policies, strategies, key actions and activities from a range of cross cutting services and organisations at a local, county, regional and national level that will have an influence on sports and physical activity provision in Darlington – a summary of the key documents reviewed is set out on the following pages.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
National strategies & plans		
Sport England's National Strategy (2008-2011)	<p>The overarching aim of the Strategy is to create a world-class community sports system in England. They plan to achieve this through three key outcomes – Excel, Sustain & Grow.</p> <p>The strategy indicates that Government, Sport England, NGB's and other elements of the sporting landscape should focus around a clear goal – maximising English sporting success in all its forms.</p>	<p>There is an identified need for new thinking in developing opportunities for all. All young people should be given a range of opportunities. Developing the girls and women's game, disability sport and reaching out to diverse communities is a vital part of what NGBs will be required to do.</p>
Be Active, Be Healthy – A plan for getting the nation moving' Department of Health February 2009	<p>This plan establishes a new framework for the delivery of physical activity aligned with sport for the period leading up to London 2012 and beyond. It largely focuses on adults and sets out new ideas for local authorities and primary care trusts to help determine and respond to the needs of their local populations, providing and encouraging more physical activity, which will benefit individuals and communities as well as deliver cost savings.</p>	<p>This strategy will set out the needs of the local populations, as identified through a robust consultation exercise. This will be used to inform future development and enhancement of facility provision.</p>
Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives (2008)	<p>This highlights governments key aims to ensure that children grow up with a healthy weight through eating well and enjoying being active.</p> <p>There is a commitment to reviewing the approach to physical activity to ensure there is a clear legacy of increase in participation pre and post 2012 and to ensuring all individuals and families are able to exercise regularly and stay healthy throughout their lives.</p>	<p>A quality facility infrastructure that is affordable and accessible to all will go some way to help increase participation levels of physical activity.</p>
Choosing Health, Making Healthier Choices Easier 2004	<p>This document highlights the key challenges to the health of the nation, namely, the proportion of deaths from cancer, coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke and inequalities in health between affluent and deprived communities. It recognises the need to offer children and young people more affordable, stimulating and accessible things to do outside the school day, at weekends and during school holiday's that develop skills and extend healthy choices. A fundamental aim is to create a society where more people, particularly those in disadvantaged groups or areas, are encouraged and enabled to make healthier choices.</p>	<p>This strategy will aim to ensure that facilities are affordable, stimulating and most of all accessible at all times of day to extend healthy choices and help develop skills.</p>
Choosing Activity: A Physical Activity Action Plan	<p>This is another key strategic document which outlines the key steps government will take to deliver against Choosing Health, with relevance to physical activity. The strategy recognises that physical activity as part of our everyday lives has been in overall decline, not least as a result of</p>	<p>This strategy will aim to ensure that choice of opportunities and a range of facilities and activities are provided so that people can be active on a daily basis. This will help to increase physical activity</p>

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
National strategies & plans		
	<p>changes in the level and the nature of manual work and active travel and that any strategy to increase the levels of physical activity undertaken needs to link with broader work to tackle inequalities.</p> <p>Choosing activity dictates that a 'culture shift' needs to be developed in order to increase physical activity levels in England.</p>	locally and also help to meet national targets.
Lightening the load: tackling overweight and obesity	<p>This places further emphasis on government action to tackling the rising obesity problem which is highlighted as a particularly high priority. The strategy highlights that strategic health authorities will need to have a strong focus on designing and developing services for increasing physical activity.</p> <p>In order to tackle obesity, there should be a focus on increasing the uptake of physical activity and sports with sports sessions built into the curriculum and after school and on physical activity and fitness campaigns targeting at risk groups.</p>	The Strategy will help the Borough to achieve targets as set out in Healthy Darlington. It will aim to ensure that appropriate facilities are in place in which a range of activities can be programmed to help increase participation levels and thus reduce health inequalities. Access to facilities on school sites are particularly important.
PE and Sport Strategy for Children and Young People (2008)	There is a commitment from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to create a new 'Five Hour Offer' for young people to engage in sport and physical activity per week within the PE and Sport Strategy for Children and Young People (2008) which leads on from the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL) (DfES, 2003). This builds on the achievement of 86% of young people engaging in two hours of sport within and beyond the curriculum each week.	This again provides rationale for the needs analysis for Darlington to identify gaps in local provision and identify the needs of local communities to help develop the five hour offer locally.
Sport Playing Its Part: The Contribution of Sport to Building Safe, Strong and Sustainable Communities (Sport England, 2005).	<p>This is one of a series of documents published by Sport England outlining how sport can enrich people's quality of life, raise self-esteem and confidence levels and provide enjoyment to individuals. Sport and active recreation also has the potential to contribute to strengthen community involvement, engagement, identity and civic pride</p> <p>Sport and other cultural (or leisure) services can be powerful tools to engage all sections of the community and break down barriers between them. Marginalised groups are often more willing to engage with such activities than other government funded activities.</p>	The provision of high quality sports facilities in the right location is clearly an important component in driving forward the health and physical activity agenda and increasing participation nationally. This strategy will guide the effective distribution of facilities across Darlington and seek to maximise opportunities to meet local, regional and national objectives.

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
National strategies & plans		
Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme	<p>This is the largest investment into school estates for over 50 years and offers the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modernise and enhance school facilities, ensuring they are fit for purpose • create and enhance school club links and provide home grounds for more sports clubs (provided there is no direct cost to BSF) • facilitate the growth of youth sports • support and improve opportunities to play sport in school. 	<p>Darlington was originally allocated to start their BSF project in Waves 10-12 (BSF is currently in Wave 5-6). However, following the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) consultation on the second half of the BSF programme, there will be a reallocation exercise of those local authorities not yet in the programme. The revised list will be published early in 2009 and opportunities specific to the BSF programme are considered in this strategy.</p>
Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation (2005)	<p>This document sets out Sport England’s intention to provide advice on what type of sports facilities are needed for communities in the future and to advise on how to protect and improve the current stock of facilities.</p> <p>Sport England sees the new UK spatial planning system as an opportunity to deliver its own aspirations for sport and recreation, whilst contributing to the goals of partners in public, private and voluntary sectors. With this there is the opportunity to deliver a planned approach towards the provision of facilities helping to reach sustainable development goals.</p>	<p>This strategy provides a robust evidence base for the future planning of sports facilities. It has had Sport England involvement throughout.</p>
Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).	<p>Planning Policy Guidance Notes set out the government’s policies on different aspects of planning.</p> <p>PPG17 states that “the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities”. The policy guidance highlights the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space, sport and recreation to be informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision.</p>	<p>This strategy has followed PPG17 guidance and incorporates assessment of qualitative, quantitative and accessibility of facilities.</p>

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
Regional/sub-regional strategies & plans		
North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), July 2008	<p>The RSS is the planning framework for North East England which sets out the long term strategy as to where, when and how development will be encouraged in the region. The overall vision for the North East is to be:</p> <p>“a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be a vibrant, self reliant, ambitious and outward looking Region featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment, and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential”.</p>	<p>In spatial planning terms, Darlington is classed as a sub-regional centre. It is also identified as Strategic Public Transport Hub which means that it would potentially meet the requirements in terms of being a potential location for a regional sports facility.</p>
North East Regional Facilities Strategy (RFS) 2008	<p>This strategy provides a tool for improving the quantity and quality of sports facilities in the region. In headline terms it identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an ageing stock of facilities • less water space per head than national average • a greater role in facility provision by the public sector compared to the national average • stretched local authority budgets due to the combination of an ageing stock and the more limited private sector role • a lack of facilities for some sports at elite level • a need to secure community access to facilities on education sites. 	<p>This strategy has been developed in the context of the RFS but provides a more localised assessment of provision within Darlington. The level of provision within the borough has been compared against regional and national averages.</p>
Tees Valley Sport Sub Regional Facilities Strategy (2009)	<p>The sub-regional strategy builds upon the RFS and identifies what facilities currently exist in Tees Valley, where there are gaps in provision, issues with current provision, what the sporting infrastructure should look like in the future and what opportunities are available for investment. In Tees Valley as a whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming pool supply well above national average and utilised capacity is lower than average • Many pools are of an age/condition that is worse than the national average • Sports hall supply is in line with the regional average but there are some access issues on school /college sites • Low provision per 1000 of STPs & health & fitness gyms, high number of indoor bowls rinks 	<p>This strategy has been developed in the context of the sub-regional strategy but provides a more localised assessment of provision within Darlington. The level of provision within the borough has been compared against sub-regional averages.</p>

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
Local strategies & plans		
Young People - Our Future: Darlington's Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2006	The LAA outlines four areas of priority for improvement in Darlington. The two areas of most relevance to this study are safer and stronger communities and healthier communities	This strategy will help to meet targets set out in the LAA by improving the quality of life for people, increasing the number of children and young people that are positively engaged in their free time by providing accessible facilities and improving health by raising levels of participation in physical activity.
Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 – 2021	Providing quality sport and physical activity facilities is a key area for the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed. It has the potential to contribute to its five delivery themes: Prosperous Darlington, Aspiring Darlington, Healthy Darlington, Greener Darlington and Safer Darlington. The clearest link is considered to be with Healthy Darlington.	This strategy will help to address the health improvement agenda by improving the quality, quantity and accessibility to sport & physical activity facilities which should subsequent have a positive impact on physical activity levels and thus and health improvement.
Darlington Local Plan (adopted 1997)	The Local Plan for Darlington was adopted in 1997 and contains several policies on recreation, leisure and community facilities. Over time the LDF will replace the Local Plan. It will implement the spatial planning elements of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and will consist of the Core Strategy which has as an objective 'to safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of sporting and recreational facilities to contribute to the happiness, fulfilment and well-being of people who live and work in the Borough, including children and young people'.	The findings of this strategy will provide a robust evidence base in which to develop future policies in relation to sport and physical activity facilities.
Darlington - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	NHS Darlington and the borough council have teamed up to produce the community's first ever JSNA. The document outlines the present state of public health locally and highlights key areas where services for residents of all ages can be enhanced. The study included an assessment of people's lifestyle choices, including physical activity levels.	Its findings will be used to inform how services are delivered for adults, children and young people over the next three years. The JSNA can be used in conjunction with this strategy to help to improve services and determine how they will be delivered in the future.
Darlington Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2007 – 2011	The Council's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy (2007-2011) reflects the themes outlined in the Sustainable Community Strategy in its strategic development priorities which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to increase participation in sport and physical activity • to develop a high quality sporting infrastructure 	Development of a robust sport & physical activity facilities strategy will ensure that the borough can improve the infrastructure of its facility stock by having an evidence base that identifies local need and ensures priorities are set for future improvement. Improving the accessibility to

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Document reviewed	Key points	Links to Sport & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy
Local strategies & plans		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that residents have access to health enhancing sport and physical activity opportunities • to enhance the take-up of sport and physical activity by 5-16yr olds, and • to contribute to the provision of safer and stronger communities. 	facilities, as well as the quantity and quality, is likely to increase participation levels across the borough.
Darlington Open Spaces Strategy 2007 – 2017	The aim of the strategy is to provide, protect and enhance a variety of high quality, accessible open and green spaces in the Borough. Policy 11 recommends that all residents in the urban area should be within 1000m of outdoor sports facilities.	The Open Spaces Strategy provides the context for the preparation of this more specific related sport & physical activity facilities strategy. It will inform the LDF in allocating new land for sports facilities as appropriate.
Darlington Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011	The plan identifies five priorities for improvement including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting positive health and wellbeing • enabling children and young people to aspire, to have fun and maximise their full potential through learning • enabling children and young people to contribute to their community and environment. 	New and improved sport & physical activity facilities will provide greater opportunities for young people to take part in physical activity, promoting positive health & well being.
Darlington Play and Free-time Strategy 2007-2012	Enhancing opportunities for children to sport and physical activity is also identified as important in the recently published Play Strategy for the Borough. The strategy expects increased numbers of children and young people to access play and free time provision in parks and natural places by July 2011. A priority is identified to increase access for children and young people from areas of deprivation and children with disabilities.	Providing more accessible sport & physical activity facilities will enhance the opportunities for children to take part in physical activity, promoting positive health & well being.

- 3.25 Darlington's LSP and the local authority are aspiring to increase physical activity levels amongst residents, and as a result, hope to reduce health inequalities and incidences of poor health that are associated with leading a sedentary lifestyle eg obesity.
- 3.26 In order to do this, it is fundamental that the right amount of high quality facilities are provided in the right places that are accessible to all. It is important that the stock of facilities not only meets the needs of the population now, but also in the future. Given that the aim is to increase participation levels in the future, it is important that more capacity is built in to the existing stock.

- 3.27 Now that we understand the context in which sport and leisure facilities are being provided within, it is important to understand ‘where we are now’ in terms of the sports facility infrastructure. The following sections set out the adequacy of existing sports facilities across the borough. Each section details the current position for that particular facility type, summarises the findings from consultation and from use of theoretical strategic planning tools, in relation to that particular type of facility and identifies any issues in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility. It then sets out some of the opportunities that are available to address the issues identified and implications for the planning process.

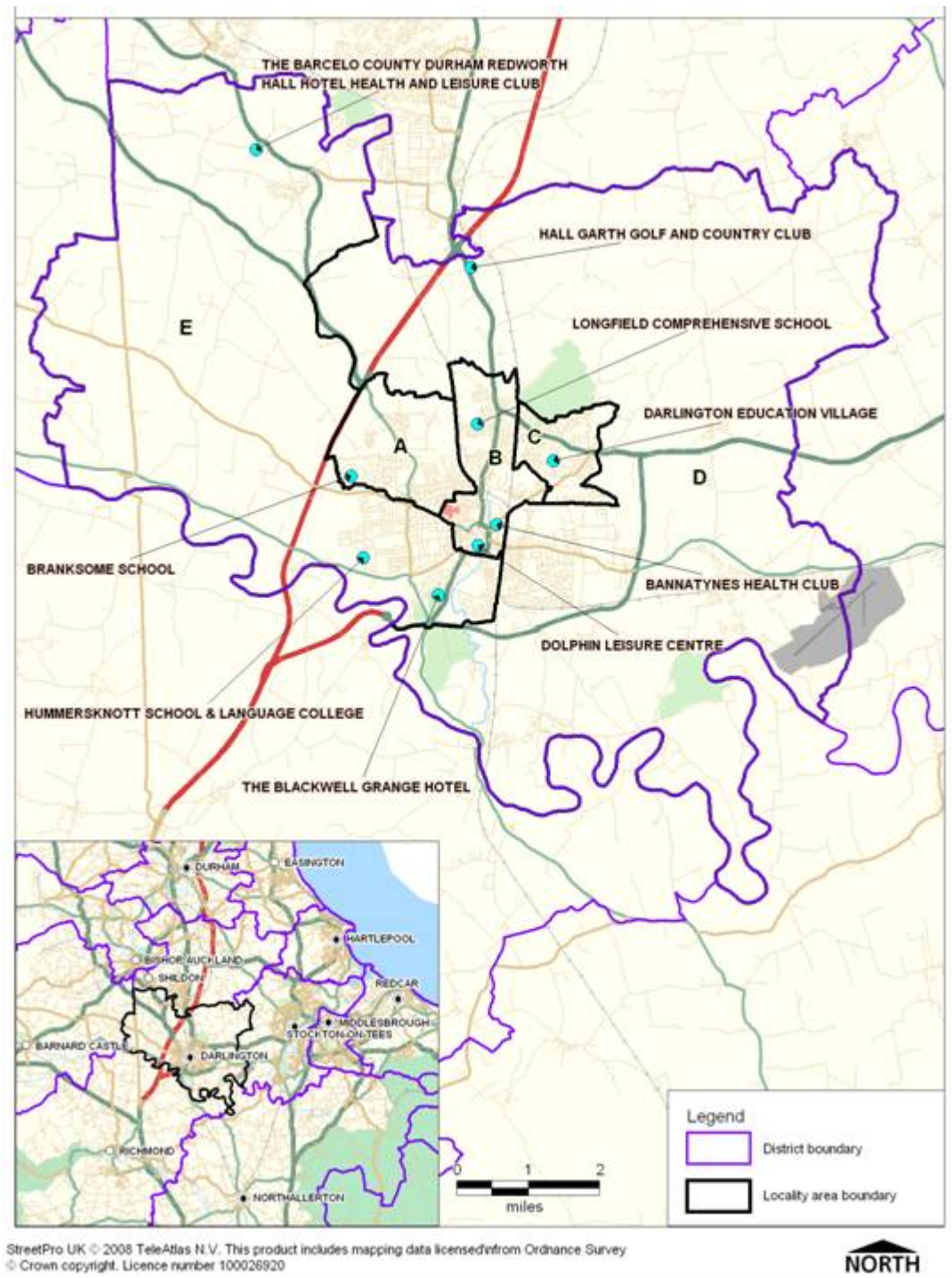
SECTION 4
SWIMMING POOLS

Swimming pools

Current provision

- 4.1 There are currently nine swimming pool facilities in Darlington. Map 4.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 4.1 Swimming pools in Darlington



SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

- 4.2 The facilities outlined in Map 4.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of swimming pools within Darlington.
- 4.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online search of private facilities and consultation with key stakeholders.
- 4.4 Table 4.1 below provides more detail with regards to the pool facilities identified in the audit.

Table 4.1 Swimming pool facility details

Site Name	Locality	Size of pool	Accessibility	Year built & refurbishment details
Branksome School	A	25x8m	Club use	1972
Bannatynes Health Club	B	20x6m	Membership	2001/2004
Dolphin Leisure Centre	B	3 - 25x18m, 25x10m & diving pool	Pay & play, membership & club use	1982/2006
Longfield Comprehensive School Sports College	B	20x8m	Club use	1968
Darlington Education Village	C	25x9m and hydro pool	Club use	2006
Hall Garth Golf And Country Club	D	12.5x6m	Membership	1993/2007
Hummersknott School & Language College	E	20x8m	Club use	1965/2008
The Barcelo County Durham Redworth Hall Hotel Health & Leisure Club	E	13.5x7.5	Membership	1990/2003
The Blackwell Grange Hotel	E	10x4m	Membership	1990

- 4.5 There is only one facility, the Dolphin Centre that is fully accessible to the public; this provides two pools and a diving pool. There are also four pools provided on school sites that offer a level of access to clubs and the community. There is no casual access of these facilities however. There are also four pools that are provided at private health and fitness facilities/ hotels.
- 4.6 No planned facilities have been identified that will have an impact on the future provision of swimming pools in Darlington.

Adequacy of current provision

Active Places Power analysis

- 4.7 We have used the strategic planning tools within Active Places Power to assess the current level of swimming pool facilities in Darlington per 1000 people compared to the national average, regional average and that of its ONS nearest neighbours. This provides us with an initial indication as to whether this is an under or oversupply of provision.

- 4.8 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 19.7m² of water space per 1,000 population. Table 4.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 4.2 Comparison of swimming pools per 1000 population

	Swimming pools per 1000 (in m ²)
England	18.99
North East	16.86
Stockton on Tees	17.97
Chesterfield	19.91
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>19.68</i>
Dover	14.04
North Tyneside	12.78

- 4.9 The table shows that the amount of swimming pool provision in Darlington is above the regional average and national average. With the exception of Chesterfield, Darlington also has more water space per 1000 than its nearest neighbour authorities.
- 4.10 This analysis suggests that, in Darlington, the amount of water space per 1000 people is sufficient. The adequacy of swimming pool provision, however, can be interrogated further using Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model. The findings of both these analyses must be combined with the results of the consultation exercise.

Facilities planning model (FPM) analysis

- 4.11 Sport England has undertaken an analysis of the FPM data for Darlington’s swimming pools based on the national facilities audit.
- 4.12 The FPM has been developed as a planning tool to inform the process of deciding if and where new or improved community facilities are required. It provides an objective assessment of the relationship between the level of facilities provided against the level of facilities required to meet the estimated demand from the population in a given area during the peak period. It factors in spatial distribution, condition, travel patterns and cross boundary relationships.
- 4.13 The model makes a number of key assumptions in the way it handles supply and demand. These assumptions are detailed in Appendix H.
- 4.14 The following FPM Parameters are set in relation to swimming pools:
- all facility data is drawn from Active Places 2009
 - single pools of less than 160sq.m (tanks) or 200sq.m (leisure pools) are excluded from model unless they are ancillary to a main pool of the minimum size
 - private sector provision is included
 - pools are considered to be at full capacity when utilisation reaches 70%. This is called the comfort factor.

SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

Quantity (2006 position)

- 4.15 The FPM identifies eight pools across six pool sites. The sites are Dolphin Centre, Bannatynes, Branksome School, Education Village, Hummersknott School and Longfield School. The hotel pools at Hall Garth, Barcelo and Blackwell Grange are excluded from the FPM because of their size.
- 4.16 Darlington's pools are able to satisfy 92.5% of demand for water space. This compares favourably to the national average which stands at 90.8%, the regional average 85.8% and the Tees Valley average of 88.5%. Darlington's level of satisfied demand is the second highest in the region. Only Hartlepool at 94.3% has a higher level.
- 4.17 Darlington residents have 16.9 sqm of water space available per 1000 population. Again this compares favourably to the national average of 12.9 sqm, the regional average of 13.1 sqm and the Tees Valley average of 13.7 sqm Darlington residents enjoy the third highest amount of water space per 1000 population in the region (behind Berwick and Hartlepool).
- 4.18 The more meaningful comparison is to look at personal share of water space relative to demand in the local area. Personal share looks at the amount of a facility participants would enjoy if they turned up to their local facility at peak time (ie it ignores both capacity and location). Darlington's residents have 1.54 compared to the national figure (1.30), the regional figure (1.27) and the Tees Valley average (1.20). Darlington residents therefore enjoy a personal share which is 19% higher than the national average (the NE is 6% lower, while the Tees Valley is 8% lower).
- 4.19 Unmet demand for water space is not a significant issue in Darlington. It equates to 425 visits per week in the peak period. In physical terms this equates to only 75 sqm of water space. Darlington's stock does not however satisfy all the demand for water space and it is worth considering the reasons behind this.

Quality and accessibility (2006 position)

- 4.20 Utilised capacity looks at how well the swimming pool stock is used. Stock in good condition, which is well distributed and has good hours of availability scores highly in this respect.
- 4.21 The average utilised capacity in Darlington is 50.8% which is slightly below both the national and regional average. Darlington's average figure, however, masks significant variations in utilised capacity across the stock.
- 4.22 The pools at Education Village and Bannatynes are both operating at capacity, while at the other end of the scale, Longfield is only operating at 28% of capacity. The performances of pools at either end of this scale relate to their attractiveness rating (as well as to a lesser extent, their location and availability).
- 4.23 Being new pools means that Bannatynes and the Education Village both have high attractiveness ratings, while Longfield only scores 40%. Recent refurbishment works at Hummersknott School have boosted the pool's attractiveness rating from 36% to 83%. Accordingly Hummersknott's throughput (the amount of visits that the model anticipates the facility will deal with over a year) more than doubles.

SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

- 4.24 The Dolphin Centre, which supplies more capacity than the other Darlington pools, has an attractiveness rating of 69%. The centre has had recent substantial refurbishment works in the form of upgraded changing accommodation but the tanks themselves have not been affected.
- 4.25 Overall it should be noted that the effect of the attractiveness weighting on the capacity of Darlington's pools reduces capacity by 25.2% and by comparison it has a greater effect than both at national level (-17.9%) and regional level (-20.5%).
- 4.26 One final point to note is that the distribution and amount of Darlington's water space means that it draws in demand from neighbouring authorities. Darlington is a net importer of demand for water space and 18.6% of demand is drawn from its neighbours.

FPM - 2019 Projection

- 4.27 In addition to assessing the current situation, Sport England has also run the FPM up to 2019. This is in order to analyse how an ageing pool stock copes with population change. The population in 2019 is based on ONS projections and this is the major variant in the exercise, with Darlington's population rising to 107,922.
- 4.28 The run does not highlight significant issues for swimming provision in Darlington in the next ten years. Satisfied demand remains healthy at 92.4 %, while unmet demand only equates to 79sq.m of water space.
- 4.29 The quantity of Darlington's water space, combined with its accessibility (spatially and hours) stands it in good stead despite the condition of its stock.

Consultation

- 4.30 A wide-ranging consultation process was undertaken, which included a household survey, sports club survey, workshop event and consultations with key stakeholders and council officers.

Household survey

- 4.31 The main finding from the household survey relating to swimming pools were as follows:
- Quantity - The majority of respondents (46%) stated that they think the amount of swimming pool provision is about right or more than enough
 - Quality - 65% rated the quality of swimming pools as excellent or good
 - Accessibility - 47% of respondents would expect to drive to a swimming pool, 36% expect to walk, and 14% use public transport. Two thirds of those who would prefer to drive to swimming pools would expect to travel 5 to10 minutes.
- 4.32 In terms of differences between responses from locality areas, residents that responded from locality B are most satisfied with both the quantity and quality of provision, those in D are least satisfied with quantity and those in A with quality. More people in locality C would expect to travel to a swimming pool by car or public transport whereas more people in D would want to go by car or bike and more people in E would prefer to walk.

SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

- 4.33 Literal comments suggested that residents would like to see more lanes dedicated to fitness and more adult only sessions for the full time employed. A comment that was made on several occasions was that the Dolphin Centre is crowded at peak times and that there is often conflict between serious swimmers (lane swimming) and fun swimming.
- 4.34 Other comments made were mainly in relation to cost, in that swimming at the Dolphin Centre is expensive compared to neighbouring boroughs, especially when parking charges are considered.

Sports club & NGB feedback

- 4.35 There are two swimming clubs in Darlington, namely, Darlington Amateur Swimming Club (ASC) and Darlington Dolphins Masters Swimming Club. Darlington Swimming Club is Swim 21 accredited and caters for swimmers and divers of all ages and all abilities. Darlington Dolphins Masters caters for swimmers aged 18 and over who wish to train in a club environment either for fitness or to enter competition.
- 4.36 Both clubs responded to the survey. Darlington ASC stated that their membership numbers have remained stable whilst the Masters have seen a decrease in membership. Darlington ASC however has a waiting list of 30 people to join their club.
- 4.37 Both clubs rated the quantity of swimming pools as average. Currently, both clubs use the Dolphin Centre and Darlington ASC also use the pools at the Education Village and Longfield School.
- 4.38 In relation to quality of provision, both clubs rated it as good, specifically stating that the authority is actively promoting sport in Darlington and providing positive support. In terms of accessibility, the majority of club members travel to the pools by car with a journey time of between 10-19 minutes.
- 4.39 The main issues affecting the clubs were identified as a lack of internal funding, a lack of, and access to local training facilities, and a local of voluntary assistance. Darlington ASC wish would like to access more pool time at the Dolphin Centre however, recognises that it is a public amenity and in big demand.
- 4.40 Clubs were asked what they would prioritise if new/improved sports facilities were to be provided; Darlington ASC stated it would be high specification facilities, organised coaching and keeping prices low whilst the Masters stated that they would prioritise cleanliness and maintenance, ease/security of parking and a town centre location.
- 4.41 The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) provided the following feedback in relation to swimming provision in Darlington:
- Quantity – identified as good, recognising that there is the Dolphin Centre which provides two pools and a diving pool as well as a number of school pools that are either 20m or 25m long
 - Quality - The Dolphin Centre is able to meet the needs of the organisation and offers a quality environment to the pool users. The Dolphin Centre is also able to cater for competitive events in swimming and diving. Concerns would be with the majority of the school pools as they are an aging stock, and some will soon be in need of repair

SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

- Accessibility - Cost of pools for clubs is always an issue, with rising costs clubs have to increase their training fees to their members. A further issue around some school pools is the lack of access pre and post school hours. Due to the fact that the school pools are aging, there is also an issue with disability access at some of the sites.
- 4.42 In terms of strengths, the ASA stated that Darlington has a large amount of water space to offer a variety of aquatic activities, including diving. The Dolphin Centre itself is said to be good for both recreational and competitive swimming and it is an Institute of Swimming (IOS) centre and can therefore deliver a range of education courses. It is also helping to deliver the National Plan for Teaching Swimming (NPTS). The relationship between facilities and the ASA and ASA clubs is strong which is seen positively. Similarly strong school-club links exist.
- 4.43 The main weaknesses from the ASA perspective are whether the water time is used efficiently to offer a full range of activities. The key ASA priorities for improving swimming provision within Darlington are said to be:
- to maintain and develop the Dolphin Centre and the links it has to the clubs based there
 - ensure affordable access to water space for clubs
 - more access for the swimming club to the Dolphin Centre
 - increase the amount of diving activities that are taking place
 - establish water polo and synchronised swimming initially through the NPTS stages 7,8 and 9.
- 4.44 Looking forward, there are a number of key sports development initiatives for swimming which might affect the need for pool facilities in Darlington in the future. These include:
- development of the aquatic disciplines – to do this there is a need for more water space (or access to more water space) to allow activities and clubs to develop
 - Swim21 accreditation programme – an understanding of the accreditation programme within the authority and perhaps a discount scheme on facility hire for clubs that successfully accredit
 - development of the workforce – greater access to facilities for delivery of courses
 - health – supporting the introduction of free swimming, culture change of facilities to encourage retention of new customers.

Conclusions

4.45 Table 4.3 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for swimming pools in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 4.3 Swimming pools – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of water space per 1000 is higher than the regional and national average & higher than that of 4 out of 5 of its ONS nearest neighbour authorities • High levels of satisfied demand compared to the Tees Valley, regional and national average • Personal share of facilities is higher than the Tees Valley, regional and national average • Unmet demand is not a significant issue – equates only to 75 sqm of water • Satisfied demand remains healthy in 2019 with no significant issues for swimming provision identified • Amount of provision rated as about right / more than enough by majority of household survey respondents • Amount of provision rated as good by the NGB and average by the two clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the amount of water space in Darlington to accommodate participation growth due to sports development initiatives and projected increases in population
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good quality public provision at the Dolphin Centre • 65% of household survey respondents rated the quality of swimming pools as good or excellent • Ageing school stock pool stock with disability access issues at some of the sites • Utilisation of some facilities is low – due to poor condition (plus location and access) • Attractiveness/quality of pools in Darlington significantly reduces the capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the quality of provision at the Dolphin Centre including cleanliness & maintenance of the changing facilities • Upgrade the school pool facilities at Hummersknott Longfield and Branksome (in priority order) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure they are disabled friendly - improve overall quality of facilities including changing rooms.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents would like to see more lanes dedicated to fitness and more adult only sessions • Dolphin Centre is often crowded at peak times • Conflict between serious swimmers (lane swimming) and fun swimming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the swimming pool programme at the Dolphin Centre to try to and address crowding & conflicts of use. A revised programme should aim to incorporate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More fitness/adult only sessions

SECTION 4 – SWIMMING POOLS

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darlington ASC would like to access more pool time at the Dolphin Centre • The majority of household survey respondents would expect to drive to a swimming pool, with a journey time of 5 to 10 minutes. Club members may be willing to travel further – up to 20 minutes • Lack of access to school pools pre and post school hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun only sessions - More pool time for Darlington ASC (not necessarily at the Dolphin Centre) to reduce the current waiting list • Improve access to school pool facilities - priority Hummersknott then Longfield, to ease pressure at the Dolphin Centre, to allow activities and clubs to develop and for the delivery of workforce development courses • Revisit the potential for alternative management of Hummersknott School sports facilities as a satellite community based leisure centre at evenings and weekends. Longer term, investigate the potential for Longfield to also become a satellite community based leisure centre • Consider development of a hub and spoke model where the Dolphin Centre is the hub, and the school pool facilities are the spokes • Ensure affordable access to water space for clubs – work with the ASA to explore a facility hire discount scheme to Swim21 accredited clubs.

4.46 In addition to the above facility related recommendations, the Council should continue to work with the ASA and local swimming clubs to increase the range of aquatic activities taking place in the borough eg more diving and establishment of water polo and synchronised swimming.

SECTION 5

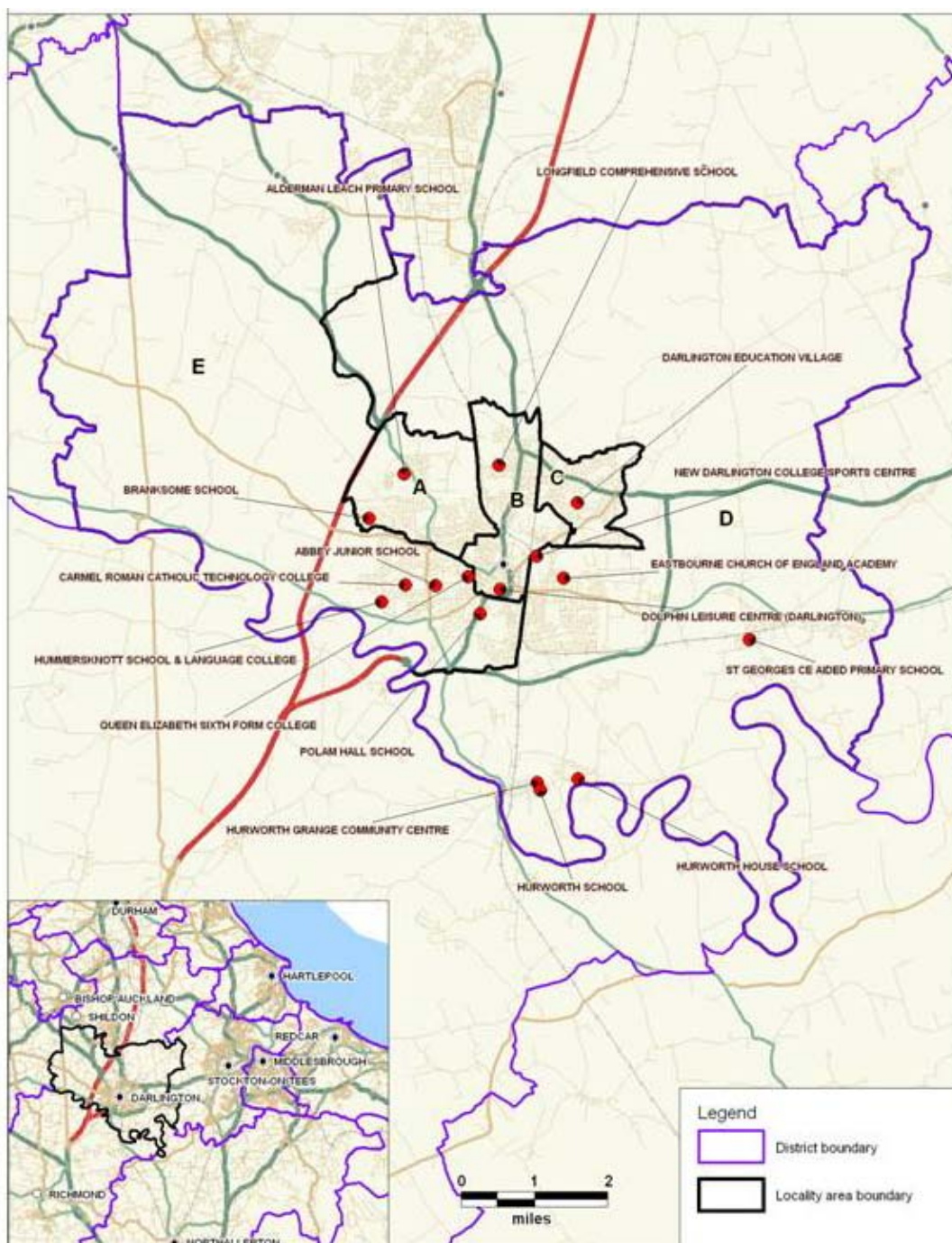
SPORTS AND COMMUNITY HALLS

Sports halls

Current provision

5.1 There are currently sixteen sports hall facilities in Darlington. Map 5.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 5.1 Sports halls in Darlington



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SECTION 5 – SPORTS HALLS & COMMUNITY HALLS

- 5.2 The facilities outlined in Map 5.1 were located via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of sports halls within Darlington.
- 5.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online search of private facilities and consultation with key stakeholders.
- 5.4 Table 5.1 below provides more detail with regards to the sports hall facilities identified in the audit.

Table 5.1 Sports hall facility details

Site Name	Locality	No of Courts	Accessibility	Year built / refurbished
Alderman Leach Primary School	A	1	Club use	2005
Branksome School	A	1	None	1972/2004
Dolphin Leisure Centre (Darlington)	B	8	Pay & pay	1982/2006
Longfield Comprehensive School	B	1	Club use	1968
Darlington Education Village	C	4	Club use	2006
Eastbourne Church Of England Academy	D	1	Club use	1936
St Georges CE Aided Primary School	D	1	Club use	2006
Hurworth Grange Community Centre	D	1	Pay & pay	1975/2007
Hurworth House School	D	2	Club use	1980
Hurworth School	D	1	None	1960
New Darlington College Sports Centre	D	4	Club use	2006
Hummersknott School & Language College	E	4	Club use	1965/2005
Polam Hall School	E	1	Club use	1960
Carmel Roman Catholic Technology College	E	4	Club use	1960
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College	E	4	None	2004
Abbey Junior School	E	1	Club use	2008

- 5.5 The main public sports hall in Darlington is at the Dolphin Centre. It provides the only eight court hall in the borough. All the four court sports halls in Darlington are based on school/college sites and the majority (with the exception of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College) are accessible by clubs and community associations by prior booking. There is no casual access to facilities on these sites.
- 5.6 The remaining halls are one or two courts in size and are either at schools or community centres. Of particular note is the lack of an adequate sports hall at Longfield School. Longfield has specialist sports college status and is only one of two specialist sports colleges in the country without (at least) a four court sports hall.
- 5.7 There are also two other secondary schools with only a one court gymnasium, these are Branksome and Hurworth.

5.8 There are plans for a four court sports hall at the new Eastbourne Academy. With the exception of this, no other confirmed plans for new sports hall facilities have been identified. However, Longfield Sports College has recently secured some government funding to improve their sports facility provision. It is possible that this will be used as partnership funding for development of a sports hall, however, this has not been confirmed at the time of writing.

Adequacy of current provision

Active Places Power analysis

5.9 We have used the strategic planning tools within Active Places Power to assess the current level of sports halls in Darlington per 1000 people compared to the national average, regional average and that of its ONS nearest neighbours. This provides us with an initial indication as to whether this is an under or oversupply of provision.

5.10 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 99.5m² of sports hall space per 1,000 population. Table 5.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 5.2 Comparison of sports halls per 1000 population

	Sports halls per 1000 (in m ²)
England	78.90
North East	105.27
Stockton on Tees	98.93
Chesterfield	77.07
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>99.47</i>
Dover	79.06
North Tyneside	91.12

5.11 The table shows that the amount of sports hall space in Darlington is below the regional average but above the national average. Darlington also has more sports hall space per 1000 in comparison to its nearest neighbour authorities (ie those with a similar geographic and demographic profile).

5.12 This analysis suggests that, in Darlington, the amount of sports hall space per 1000 people is sufficient. The adequacy of provision, however, can be interrogated further using Sport England’s Facilities Planning Model. It is vital that the findings of both these analyses are combined with the results of the consultation exercise.

Facilities planning model (FPM) analysis

5.13 Sport England has undertaken an analysis of the FPM data for Darlington’s sports halls based on the national facilities audit.

5.14 The FPM has been developed as a planning tool to inform the process of deciding if and where community facilities are required. It provides an objective assessment of the relationship between the level of facilities provided against the level of facilities required to meet the estimated demand from the population in a given area during the peak period. It factors in spatial distribution, condition, travel patterns and cross boundary relationships.

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5.15 The model makes a number of key assumptions in the way it handles supply and demand. These assumptions are detailed in Appendix H.

5.16 The following FPM Parameters are set in relation to sports halls:

- all facility data is drawn from Active Places 2009
- single halls of less than 3 courts are not included unless they are ancillary halls on a site with a four court hall
- Halls are considered to be at full capacity when utilisation reaches 80%. This is called the comfort factor.

Quantity (2009 position)

5.17 The FPM identifies five sites offering sports halls. The sites are the Dolphin Centre, Education Village, Carmel College, Hummersknott College and Darlington College. Ancillary halls at the Dolphin Centre and Hummersknott are not included as they are now used for an alternative purpose. The remaining halls identified in the audit are excluded from the FPM because of their size. Measured in terms of courts these sites offer a total of 31 badminton courts.

5.18 With the comfort factor applied and taking into account the distribution of facilities, court space satisfies 87% of demand. This is below the national average of 89.9%, the regional average of 89.6%, and the sub regional average of 90.4%.

5.19 Darlington residents have three courts available per 10,000 population, which again is below the national average of 3.8, the regional average of 5.3 and the sub regional average of 5.3.

5.20 Personal share looks at the amount of a facility participants would enjoy if they turned up to their local facility at peak time (ie it ignores both capacity and location) Darlington's figure stands at 0.92 – still less than the regional and sub regional figures of 1.16 and 1.15 courts respectively but higher than the national figure of 0.9 courts. Accordingly Darlington's residents personal share of hall space is 2% higher than the national average.

5.21 There is some unmet demand in Darlington. With the comfort factor built in this equates to four courts. Further analysis of the figures gives some indication as to whether this arises from the capacity of the stock or its condition.

Quality and accessibility (2009 position)

5.22 Utilised capacity looks at how well the sports hall stock is used. Stock in good condition, which is well distributed and has good hours of availability scores highly in this respect.

5.23 Darlington only fully utilises 55.9% of its hall capacity, but this is higher than the regional and sub regional average (at 50% and 49.9% respectively). At national level the average stands at 66.6%.

5.24 This figure masks significant variations across Darlington's hall stock. Both the Education Village and Dolphin Centre are being used close to capacity. The other three hall sites are being utilised at a much lesser level. A combination of age/condition (at Carmel and Hummersknott) and low level of facility promotion on education sites mean that capacity utilisation is as low as 21% at Carmel, only rising

up to 39.2% at Darlington College.

- 5.25 The attractiveness weighting can also result in a reduction in the capacity of an area's sports hall stock. Darlington's capacity is reduced by 28.9% in this way. This figure is below the national, regional and sub regional averages (33.9%, 35.6% and 36.4% respectively) and so is not considered to be a notable issue for Darlington.
- 5.26 One final point to note is that despite Darlington's relatively self-contained nature, Darlington is a net exporter of demand for hall space with 19.1% of all demand exported to neighbouring authorities. The most likely destination for the demand would be the facilities in Newton Aycliffe.
- 5.27 The main changes that have occurred in Darlington since the previous FPM run (in 2008), are the loss of ancillary halls at the Dolphin Centre and Hummersknott School. This has had a significant impact on the unmet demand for hall space. Darlington halls are unable to satisfy demand despite (in relative terms) being in better condition, and being better utilised. The degree of unmet demand in Darlington means that additional hall capacity is needed.
- 5.28 Additional hall capacity is likely to arise from the new four court hall at the Eastbourne Academy and the refurbishment of Hummersknott's existing four court hall.
- 5.29 Additionally the data collection process for this study has revealed that a well located and relatively new four court hall exists at the Queen Elizabeth VI Form College which does not, at present, allow any community access.
- 5.30 It is anticipated that the addition of these two halls to Darlington's sports hall stock will significantly boost hall supply and go some way to reducing unmet demand. It is recommended that their impact be closely monitored.

FPM - 2019 Projection

- 5.31 In addition to assessing the current situation, Sport England has also run the FPM up to 2019. This is in order to analyse how an ageing hall stock copes with population change. The population in 2019 is based on ONS projections and this is the major variant in the exercise, with Darlington's population rising to 107,922.
- 5.32 Surprisingly, there is no change in satisfied demand or unmet demand for sports halls in 2019. What is apparent, however, is that there is an increase in the average utilised capacity of the hall space. Unfortunately the extra demand does not just distribute itself to the halls with the spare capacity. The effect of the extra demand means that the Education Village and Dolphin Centre halls would be full.
- 5.33 Without the additional hall stock outlined above, Darlington would have difficulty increasing participation year on year through activities based at sports halls.

Consultation

- 5.34 A wide-ranging consultation process was undertaken, which included a household survey, sports club survey, workshop event and consultations with key stakeholders and council officers.

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Household survey

- 5.35 The main finding from the household survey relating to sports halls were as follows:
- Quantity - almost a third (32%) of respondents stated that there is not enough sports hall provision in Darlington, 15% think there is nearly enough whilst 41% of respondents stated that they think the amount of provision is about right or more than enough
 - Quality - 56% rated the quality of sports halls as excellent or good, 44% rated the quality as average or poor
 - Accessibility - 47% of respondents would expect to drive to a sports hall, 38% expect to walk, and 13% use public transport. More than two thirds (69%) of those who would prefer to drive to a sports hall would expect to travel 5 to 10 minutes.
- 5.36 There were no significant differences in responses from the different locality areas in relation to quantity. Residents that responded from locality B are most satisfied with the quality of sport hall provision whilst those in A are least satisfied. More people in locality C would expect to travel to a sports hall by car or public transport whereas more people in D would want to go by car or bike and more people in localities A and E would prefer to walk.
- 5.37 Literal comments suggested that there is a lack of availability of sports hall space due to block bookings and that a lot of usage is for 5-a-side football. Related to this is a reported lack of activities after 6pm. Many respondents identified a lack of dedicated indoor space for football and also a lack of provision for indoor cricket nets.
- 5.38 Many respondents recognised that there are plenty of village/community halls in Darlington but stated that they rarely offer sporting activities. Coupled with this, there is a lack of awareness of what is available at these smaller venues but also what is available at the main sports hall facilities. Other comments made were mainly in relation to cost of hire.

Sports club & NGB feedback

- 5.39 Several clubs that responded to the survey make use of sports hall facilities in Darlington. This includes for volleyball, netball, football, cricket and use by one of the swimming clubs. The main hall sport clubs ie volleyball and netball, both make use of the sports hall at the Education Village. Other clubs use sports halls across the borough where they are available. Carmel School was the facility mentioned most for use by cricket clubs for indoor net training.
- 5.40 The junior netball club stated that their membership numbers have decreased in recent years due to a lack of links with the primary schools which is preventing recruitment of new members. The volleyball club stated that their membership numbers have remained stable. Both clubs however, are aiming to increase their membership numbers in the future which may increase the demand for more sports hall time.
- 5.41 Both clubs rated the quantity sports hall provision in Darlington as good and stated that their main issue with facilities is access to sports hall space. Other issues affecting the clubs were identified as a lack of internal and external funding and prohibitive cost of facility hire.

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- 5.42 Clubs were asked what they would prioritise if new/improved sports facilities were to be provided; they stated it would be keeping prices low, having a high specification facilities, ease/security of parking, cleanliness and maintenance having a range of activities on offer. One of the main issues identified by both football and cricket clubs is a lack of facilities in Darlington for training.
- 5.43 Feedback of facility provision in Darlington was received from the NGBs for basketball and badminton (in relation to sports halls). Feedback was as follows:
- England Basketball (EB) - there is no Regional Manager or County Development Officer in post for this area therefore EB is unsure of the specific local demands/opportunities for facility usage. It stated that there are no affiliated junior or senior basketball club based within Darlington and that the nearest large basketball club is Durham Wildcats who play out of Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre (just over the Darlington boundary). Whilst there may be some local demand for basketball provision, as far as EB is aware it is not large enough to warrant basketball being identified as a priority sport in order for the provision of new/or more basketball facilities
 - Badminton England (BE) - is heavily investing its time and resources into specific local authority areas over the next two years. Darlington is not yet a priority area and therefore BE has not engaged with providers in the area. The NGB has few pre-conceptions of the need and supply for badminton facilities in Darlington. However, it would encourage new or refurbished facilities to consider badminton's design requirements where possible.
- 5.44 In addition to the above NGB feedback, Durham County Cricket Board has produced an indoor facility report which identifies the need for more cricket provision in this area of the county. There are no four lane indoor centres at present for cricket in Darlington. The only two lane centre that is used by focus clubs is Carmel School, used by Darlington CC. However, Darlington RA CC has to travel outside of the area (Sedgefield) for training. The Durham Cricket Board indoor facility report identifies the requirement for a quality indoor facility within the south west districts of the County, this encompasses Darlington, Sedgefield, Teesdale and Wear Valley. The facility would require a minimum of four net lanes to cover our Player Pathway Programme and serve the demands of eight Focus Clubs.
- 5.45 Consultation has suggested that Darlington Cricket Club may be looking to develop an indoor cricket facility. It is important that the clubs' aspirations are aligned with those of the NGB and the borough council to ensure that the best solution for development of an indoor cricket facility is identified and explored.

Workshop event

- 5.46 At the workshop event for sports clubs and organisations, held on the 24th February 2009, a number of comments were raised in relation to the quantity, quality and accessibility of sports hall provision in Darlington. Firstly, it was identified that three indoor facilities have been lost in recent years due to development and that this has led to a lack of indoor space, especially for football.
- 5.47 In relation to accessibility, it was identified that not all school sports halls are available for community use and those that are, are often fully booked. The increasing amount of time that school sports halls are used for exams is also limiting the space available for community sport. The quality of school sports halls was also raised as an issue, Longfield, Carmel and Branksome specifically were identified as needing new/improved sports hall facilities.

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- 5.48 From a football perspective the lack of training facilities in Darlington, both indoor and outdoor, was raised as a significant issue and in particular the lack of dedicated 5-a-side facilities. Several comments were made about having to travel out of the authority eg to Stockton to use facilities such as Soccer Sensations and Powerleague. Consultation suggested that there is demand for a similar dedicated football facility in Darlington.
- 5.49 Other sports that specifically identified a need for indoor training facilities were cricket and athletics. In relation to athletics, no specific indoor training facilities for the sports which means the club is limited in terms of the training it can undertake, especially in winter. Darlington Harriers in particular are reaching national standard and are therefore in need of an indoor facility which includes Olympic weightlifting equipment.

Stakeholder consultation

- 5.50 The main issue raised by stakeholder consultees was the inconsistent access and pricing policies across school sites. Currently only the Education Village has a formal community use agreement in place for use of its facilities. Whilst other school facilities are used by the community, both access and pricing varies from site to site.
- 5.51 The Councils Children's Services directorate, together with Cultural Services has already recognised this as a significant issue and is currently undertaking a piece of work to look in to how this can be addressed in the future.
- 5.52 Access to school sites out of school hours is not only important for community sport but is also vital in terms of meeting the Extended Services agenda and helping to achieve the '5 hour offer'. This is the Government's overarching aim to ensure that all 5-16 year olds have access to two hours high quality PE and three hours of sport beyond the curriculum and that 16-19 year olds have three hours of sport outside of the curriculum. Collectively this is referred to as the '5 Hour Sports Offer'.
- 5.53 Some secondary schools, however, only have limited hall facilities (in the case of Longfield, Branksome and Hurworth, a one court gymnasium) and whilst they do offer some community access, the quality of facilities, including changing provision, does not necessarily lend itself to community use. All secondary schools (with the exception of the Education Village) currently operate their facilities via a caretaker system and do not have separate reception/entrance areas for the leisure facilities.
- 5.54 Consultation with facility/lettings managers suggests significant usage of school sports halls for 5-a-side football and stated that it is often difficult for both casual users and clubs to access indoor sports facilities at peak times due to pre-existing block bookings. This is consistent with findings from the club survey and network event.
- 5.55 The Council sports development team highlighted the difficulties it sometimes has in securing (some) indoor facilities for sports development activities. This relates to the inconsistent access policies across school sites. In terms of sports development, accessibility and affordability for clubs was seen to be the most important factors.

Conclusions

5.56 Table 5.3 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for sports halls in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 5.3 Sports halls – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longfield School is only one of two specialist sports colleges in the country without (at least) a four court sports hall • Lower levels of satisfied demand and less court space per 10,000 compared to the Tees Valley, regional and national average • Personal share of facilities is lower than the Tees Valley and regional average but higher than the national average • Unmet demand currently equates to 4 courts with no theoretical change in satisfied demand or unmet demand by 2019 • New four court hall planned at Eastbourne Academy - opening of this hall together with increased access to the hall at QEVI College is expected to significantly boost hall supply & reduce unmet demand • Amount of provision rated as not enough/only nearly enough by 47% of household survey respondents, 41% think there is about right / more than enough • Respondents reported a lack of dedicated indoor space for football and a lack of provision for indoor cricket nets, especially since the loss of a number of facilities in recent years • Good network of village/community halls but they rarely offer sporting activities • Clubs are aiming to increase their membership numbers • No indoor training facilities for athletics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the new sports hall at Eastbourne Academy is fully accessible for the community once open • Work with the VI Form College to negotiate access to its sports hall for community use • Whilst the FPM calculations alone do not suggest the need for any more sports hall space in Darlington (in addition to the new Eastbourne Academy), we would recommend that support is given to the development of a sports hall (minimum 4 courts) at Longfield Sports College for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Longfield area is identified as a strategic development area & there is a significant amount of new housing planned for the future - there are no other sports halls in this part of the borough - the Sports College is severely limited in terms of the activities it provides (in curricular, extra curricular and out of school hours) due to the lack of a quality sports hall - it will help the school and the authority to meet the Extended Services agenda and help to achieve the '5 hour offer' - it will help develop pathways from schools to clubs and therefore help achieve targets relating to the development of school-club links - there is an NGB need for indoor cricket provision in Darlington - the LSP and borough council is proactively aiming to increase participation levels across Darlington which is likely to increase the demand for sports facility provision in the future. • Consult with NGBs and local clubs to ensure the specification of

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	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
		<p>a new hall at Longfield meets the needs for individual sports. Ensure there is a formal community use agreement for the hall out of schools hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a sports hall at Longfield offers the opportunity to fill the gap in terms of indoor cricket provision in this area of the county, as identified by Durham County Cricket Board – school/council should consult with the NGB to explore the opportunity to fill this gap • Explore the potential to develop a dedicated 5-a-side facility in Darlington in conjunction with the private sector (this is likely to be an outdoor facility rather than indoor) • Wider & targeted promotion and delivery of sports development activities across the borough eg increase usage of community/village halls for physical activities • Consult with England Athletics to explore the options for providing indoor athletics training facilities in Darlington – or providing access to facilities elsewhere in the Tees Valley.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractiveness/quality of sports halls in Darlington significantly reduces the capacity • Quality of some school sports halls is poor – consultees specifically identified Longfield, Branksome, Carmel & Hurworth • Mixed views on quality of provision from household survey • Quality of sports hall provision at the Dolphin Centre is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of sports hall provision at secondary school sites, potentially via BSF– priority is Longfield but other secondary school sites also in need of better quality sports halls • Explore the potential to deliver improved quality sports facilities on school sites through the planning system eg Sec 106 agreements/developer contributions • Maintain the quality of sports hall facilities at the Dolphin Centre
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of some facilities is low – due to poor condition and access • Inconsistent access and pricing policies across school sites • Club survey respondents report access to facilities as their main issue rather quantity or quality • There is no pay & play access to school sports hall facilities & no formal community use agreements are in place (except at the Education Village) • Not all school sports halls are available for community use and those that are, are often fully booked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to school sports hall facilities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revisiting the potential for alternative management of Hummersknott School sports facilities as a satellite community based leisure centre at evenings and weekends (& longer term Longfield) - exploring the potential to provide a consistent approach to lettings/bookings at all secondary school sites with a tiered pricing approach dependant on quality of facility in the short term - promoting joint and partnership working across secondary schools (and council leisure centres) through the development

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	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household survey respondents reported a lack of availability of sports hall space due to block bookings • There is currently no community access to the sports hall at Queen Elizabeth VI Form College • The majority of household survey respondents would expect to drive to a sports hall, with a journey time of 5 to 10 minutes • Cost of hire reported as a barrier by some clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of a joint working group. The group should involve key stakeholders such as secondary school head teachers, Cultural Services including sports development, Childrens Services, the PDM and key clubs - ensuring the new Eastbourne Academy has a formal community use agreement • Liaise with Queen Elizabeth VI Form College to explore the potential to open up its sports hall for community use • Consider development of ‘specialisms’ where one sports hall caters primarily for cricket for example, another for badminton etc, and the facilities are programmed accordingly • Ensure affordable access to sports halls for clubs – work with NGBs to explore a facility hire discount scheme to Clubmark accredited clubs.

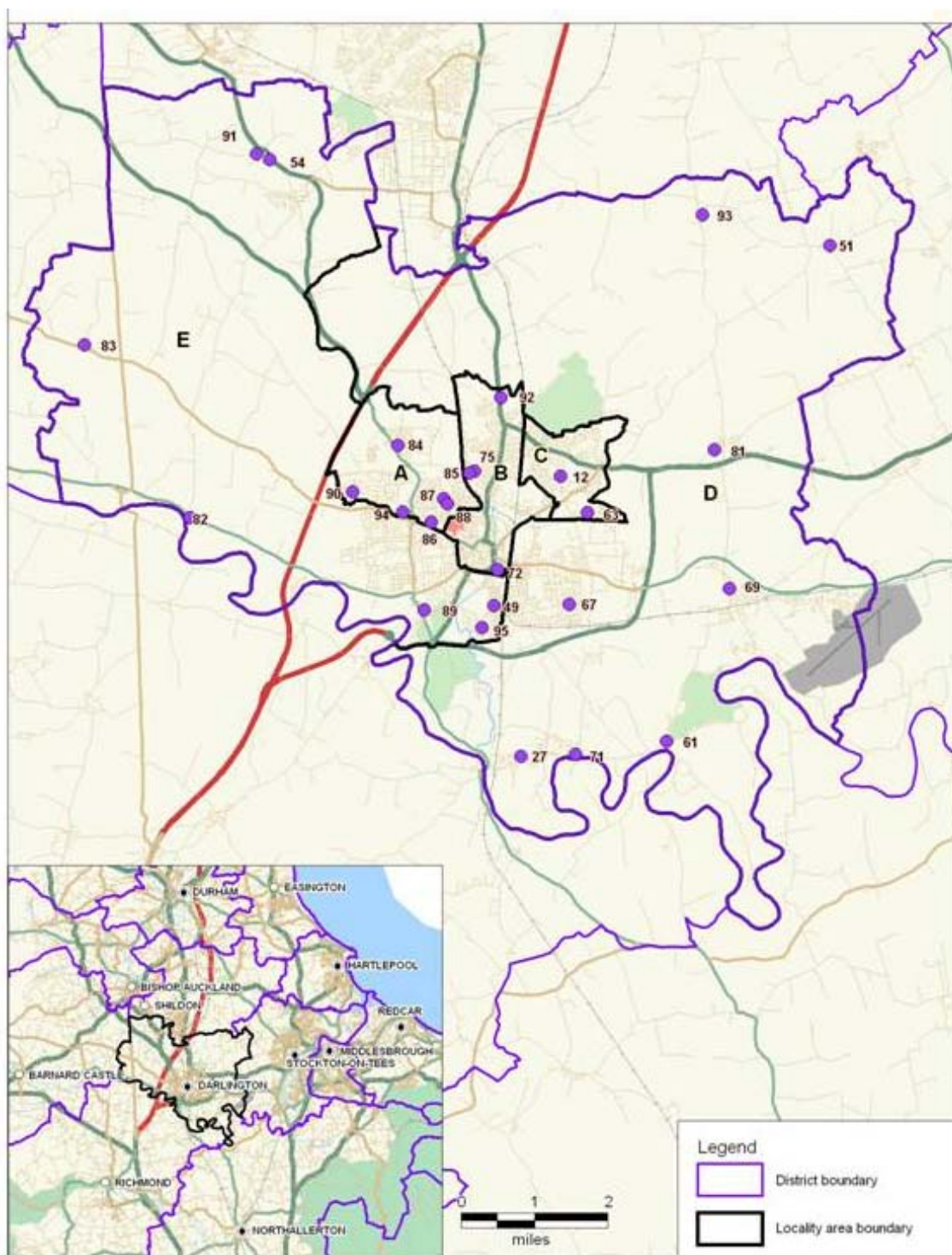
- 5.57 In addition to the above, consultees identified a lack of awareness with regards to the activities provided within sports hall facilities, especially smaller halls at community centres and village halls. Consideration should be given by the Council to revisiting its marketing plan ensuring that activity and club information is available at a range of public facilities such as libraries, schools, GP surgeries, job centres and other council buildings in both the main town and in rural areas.
- 5.58 A more co-ordinated and proactive approach to accessing sports halls and delivery of activities within sports halls on school sites by the Council, in conjunction with schools, is likely to increase both the capacity of sports halls but also the demand for facilities.

Community halls / village halls

Current provision

5.59 In addition to the sports halls identified above, 27 community halls/community centres and village halls have been identified in Darlington. Map 5.2 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 5.2 Community halls/centres and village halls in Darlington



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Table 5.4 Community halls/centres and village halls in Darlington

Site ID	Site Name	Locality area
12	Darlington Education Village	C
27	Hurworth Grange Community Centre	D
49	Clifton Centre & St Columbas	E
51	Bishopton Village Hall	D
54	Heighington Village Hall	E
61	Neasham Reading Room & Club	D
63	Red Hall Community And Childrens Centre	C
67	Firthmoor Community Centre	D
69	Middleton St George Community Assoc	D
71	Hurworth Village Hall	D
72	Park Place Community Centre	B
75	The Phoenix Centre	B
81	Sadberge Village Hall	D
82	High Coniscliffe Church Hall	E
83	Summerhouse Village Hall	E
84	St Mary's Community Centre	A
85	King's Centre	B
86	Holy Trinity Youth And Community Centre	A
87	The Links	A
88	The Willow Road Community Centre	A
89	All Saints Millenium Centre	E
90	Branksome Community Centre	A
91	Redworth Village Hall	E
92	Whesoe Parish Hall	B
93	Great Stainton Village Hall	D
94	St Mary's Church Hall	A
95	The Coldridge Centre (Inc Skerne Park Primary School)	E

- 5.60 The facilities outlined in Map 5.2 and Table 5.4 were identified via a comprehensive audit. The audit comprised an online search of facilities, analysis of existing Council records and through consultation with key stakeholders. In addition to the above, the majority of the schools in Darlington have some form of hall which potentially could be used for recreational activities. This further enhances the supply of community hall facilities across the borough.
- 5.61 Map 5.1 shows a good spread of community hall facilities across Darlington. As identified earlier, these provide important local facilities especially in the more rural areas of the borough. The majority of them have small hall facilities, many of which are suitable for activities such as yoga and aerobics.
- 5.62 The facility database in Appendix F sets out more information with regards to the suitability of the community halls/centres for recreational activities.
- 5.63 The main finding from the household survey relating to activity halls were as follows:

SECTION 5 – SPORTS HALLS & COMMUNITY HALLS

- Quantity - 45% of respondents stated that there is not enough activity hall provision in Darlington, 30% think the amount of provision is about right or more than enough
 - Quality - 32% rated the quality of activity halls as excellent or good, 68% rated the quality as average or poor
 - Accessibility - Almost half (48%) of household survey respondents said they would expect to walk to an activity hall with a journey time of 5-10 minutes. This reinforces the importance of a good spread of local community hall facilities.
- 5.64 In terms of differences between responses from locality areas, residents that responded from locality B are most satisfied with both the quantity and quality of provision, those in C are least satisfied with quantity and those in E with quality. More people in locality C would expect to travel to an activity hall car or public transport whereas more people in B and D would want to go by bike and more people in A and E would prefer to walk.
- 5.65 Consultation however, suggested that limited use is made of these types of facilities for recreational activities and/or people are not aware of the types of activities that are provided in them.
- 5.66 As set out in Table 5.2, it is recommended that wider and targeted promotion and delivery of sports development activities across the borough takes place and that more use is made of community/village halls for physical activities and sports development programmes. It must be noted, however, that an additional range of activities aimed at reducing obesity and improving health are now available to Darlington residents at a range of community facilities.
- 5.67 During 2008/09, £43,000 was invested through the Extended Services model to provide a range of activities and sports in community settings. A further £60k has been allocated for 2009/2010. The types of activities provided varies according to the needs of locality workshops, which are made up of residents and representatives from various organisations, including the Council, Youth Service, Police and NHS Trust.
- 5.68 A diverse range of interventions have been developed alongside Children's Services within all of the locality areas including dance mat sessions, family activities, as well as breakfast and after school clubs, and the 'Junior One Life' clubs. Junior One Life is a 6 – 12 week physical activity and weight management programme for parents and children (8-11yrs). A 'rural issues' working group has been established to further develop provision in the villages in localities D and E. As well as holiday and after school clubs, there is free transport to enable young people in rural areas to access the activities in town. The group is planning to run a road show to visit rural areas to consult with children and families and to provide information on services.
- 5.69 This initiative should help to address some of the issues raised during consultation for this strategy in terms of providing activities, and making use of facilities, in the more rural areas of the borough.

SECTION 6
HEALTH & FITNESS FACILITIES

Health & fitness facilities

Current provision

6.1 There are currently fourteen health & fitness gyms in Darlington. Map 6.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 6.1 Health & fitness gyms in Darlington



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SECTION 6 – HEALTH & FITNESS FACILITIES

- 6.2 The facilities outlined in Map 6.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of health and fitness facilities within Darlington.
- 6.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online search of private facilities and consultation with key stakeholders.
- 6.4 Table 6.1 below provides more detail with regards to the health & fitness facilities identified in the audit.

Table 6.1 Health & fitness gyms facility details

Site Name	Locality	No of stations	Accessibility	Year built / refurbished	Dance studio
Bannatynes Health Club	B	113	Membership	2001/2004	Y
Dolphin Leisure Centre	B	100	Pay & play and membership	1982/2006	Y
Penthouse Fitness Suite	B	200	Membership	1997/2006	-
Darlington Arena - The Treatment Room	D	20	Membership	2007	-
Eastbourne Sports Complex	D	25	Pay & play, membership & club use	1999/2006	-
Hall Garth Golf And Country Club	D	14	Membership	1993/2007	-
New Darlington College Sports Centre	D	16	None	2006/2008	Y
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College	E	10	None	2004	-
First Step 2 Fitness (Ladies Only)	E	37	Membership	1997/2007	Y
Ineos Sports Facilities	E	20	Private	1990	-
Carmel Roman Catholic Technology College	E	17	None	2007	-
Darlington Rugby Football Club	E	7	Club use	2004	-
The Barcelo County Durham Redworth Hall Hotel Health And Leisure Club	E	30	Membership	1990/2001	-
The Blackwell Grange Hotel	E	12	Membership	1990/2004	-

- 6.5 There are two public health & fitness facilities in Darlington, at the Dolphin Centre and at Eastbourne Sports Complex. Together they provide a total of 125 stations, 20% of the overall provision in Darlington.
- 6.6 There are seven other facilities that are accessible by membership, the largest of these is Penthouse Fitness Suite (200 stations) and Bannatynes (100 stations). None of the facilities on school and college sites are available for community use.
- 6.7 Three of the facilities also have dance studios. In addition to this there are also dance studios at:
- Branksome School

- Darlington Education Village
- Hummersknott School & Language College
- Longfield Comprehensive School.

6.8 No planned facilities have been identified that will have an impact on the future provision of health & fitness provision in Darlington.

Adequacy of current provision

Active Places Power analysis

6.9 The Sport England FPM is currently only available for sports halls and swimming pools. Therefore we have used the strategic planning tools within Active Places Power to assess the current adequacy of health and fitness facilities in Darlington in terms of quantity. This should be considered in conjunction with the consultation findings.

Quantity

6.10 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 6.14 fitness stations per 1,000. Table 6.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 6.2 Comparison of health & fitness facilities per 1000 population

	Health & fitness stations per 1000
England	5.74
North East	6.30
Stockton on Tees	7.46
Chesterfield	7.58
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>6.14</i>
Dover	5.66
North Tyneside	4.63

6.11 The table shows that the amount of health & fitness provision in Darlington is below the regional average but above the national average. Compared to its nearest neighbours, it falls within the middle range ie it has more stations per 1000 than two of the authorities and but less per 1000 than the other two authorities.

6.12 This analysis suggests that the number of stations per 1000 people is about what would be expected for an authority of its type. However, it is important to combine these findings with the results of the consultation exercise.

Quality and accessibility

6.13 The number of commercial health and fitness facilities in Darlington is fairly high. Facilities such as these tend to update their equipment fairly regularly to keep in line with market expectations and this is seen to be the case in table 6.2 which shows the majority have been refurbished in recent years. Thus it is assumed that the majority of the private commercial facilities are of good quality, especially the larger facilities such as Penthouse and Bannatynes.

SECTION 6 – HEALTH & FITNESS FACILITIES

- 6.14 The site visit assessments to the public facilities identified a wide range of good quality equipment. The health & fitness equipment on school/college sites however, are of poorer quality, however these are only small facilities used solely by the students and staff.
- 6.15 In terms of access, 20% of the provision is Council owned and managed which means it is available for casual use and also via a membership package. The number of private facilities means that membership packages of all types and prices are available throughout the borough suggesting that facilities are fairly accessible.
- 6.16 The Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) is a programme supporting the fitness industry to become more inclusive, catering for the needs of disabled and non-disabled people, raising physical activity participation levels. The model is built around developments in four key areas; accessible facilities, inclusive fitness equipment, staff training and inclusive marketing strategies. There are currently no IFI facilities in Darlington which means access for people with disabilities may be an issue.

Consultation

- 6.17 A wide-ranging consultation process was undertaken, which included a household survey, sports club survey, workshop event and consultations with key stakeholders and council officers.

Household survey

- 6.18 The main findings from the household survey relating to health & fitness gyms were as follows:
- Quantity - almost two thirds (61%) of respondents stated that the amount of provision is about right or more than enough
 - Quality - 71% rated the quality of health & fitness facilities as excellent or good
 - Accessibility - 49% of respondents would expect to drive to a health & fitness gym, 33% expect to walk and 14% use public transport. The majority (81%) of those who would prefer to drive to a health & fitness gym would expect to travel 5 to 15 minutes.
- 6.19 In terms of differences between responses from locality areas, residents that responded from locality B are most satisfied with the quantity of health & fitness facilities, those in A are least satisfied. Those in D are most satisfied with quality of facilities whereas those in locality E are least satisfied. More people in locality C would expect to travel to a health & fitness gym by car or public transport whereas more people in D and E would want to go by bike and more people in A and E would prefer to walk. Those in locality B prefer to go by car.
- 6.20 Literal comments suggested that council facilities are often very busy at peak times. There were several comments relating to conflicts between adult and junior gym users, as young people sometimes use the facilities as a place to 'hang out' with friends.
- 6.21 Other respondents suggested limited provision for exercise activities in rural areas and that most of the gym facilities are in the town centre so there is a need to travel.

SECTION 6 – HEALTH & FITNESS FACILITIES

Workshop event & stakeholder feedback

6.22 The consultation process identified a gap in terms of:

- Junior gym facilities
- Outdoor gym facilities.

6.23 The opportunity to provide both junior gym and adult outdoor gym equipment was identified by a number of consultees in order to make such provision more accessible to a wider range of the population.

6.24 In 2008, Manchester City Council installed a £15,000 outdoor facility in one of its parks which features six pieces of fitness equipment (see images below). The facility has been designed specifically to provide gentle exercise for the over-60s.

Figure 6.1 Outdoor exercise facilities for the over 60s



Source: www.telegraph.co.uk

6.25 Provision of exercise facilities for the over 60s may be something that the Council wishes to explore further in the future.

Conclusions

6.26 Table 6.2 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for health & fitness facilities in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 6.2 Health & fitness facilities – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of stations per 1000 people is below the regional average but above the national average • The number of stations per 1000 people falls within the middle range compared to its ONS nearest neighbours • Almost two thirds (61%) of household survey respondents think the amount of health & fitness provision is about right or more than enough • There are no junior gym facilities or outdoor gym facilities in Darlington. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing level of provision across the borough • Explore the potential to provide a junior gym at one of the existing (or future eg Hummersknott) Council leisure facilities • Explore potential to provide 'green exercise' across the borough with partners such as the PCT & Groundwork, potentially through the Darlington one Life Programme, to cater for people who do not typically like to go to a gym
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% of household survey respondents rated the quality of health & fitness facilities as excellent or good • Private and public facilities are good quality • Health & fitness equipment on school/college sites is of poorer quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the quality of facilities across the borough, particularly ensuring that equipment is regularly refreshed to reflect advancements in the market.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) facilities in Darlington which means access for people with disabilities may be an issue • Conflict between adult & junior gym users at local authority facilities • Limited provision for exercise activities in rural areas • Almost half (49%) of those that responded to the household survey expect to drive to a health & fitness gym with a journey time of 5 to 15 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential for one of the Council health & fitness facilities to become IFI accredited to work towards meeting the needs of disabled people across the borough - www.inclusivefitness.org • As above, explore the potential to provide a junior gym at one of the existing (or future eg Hummersknott) Council leisure facilities to address conflicts between adult & junior gym users • Wider & targeted promotion and delivery of health & fitness activities across the borough eg increase usage of community/village halls for physical activities.

SECTION 7

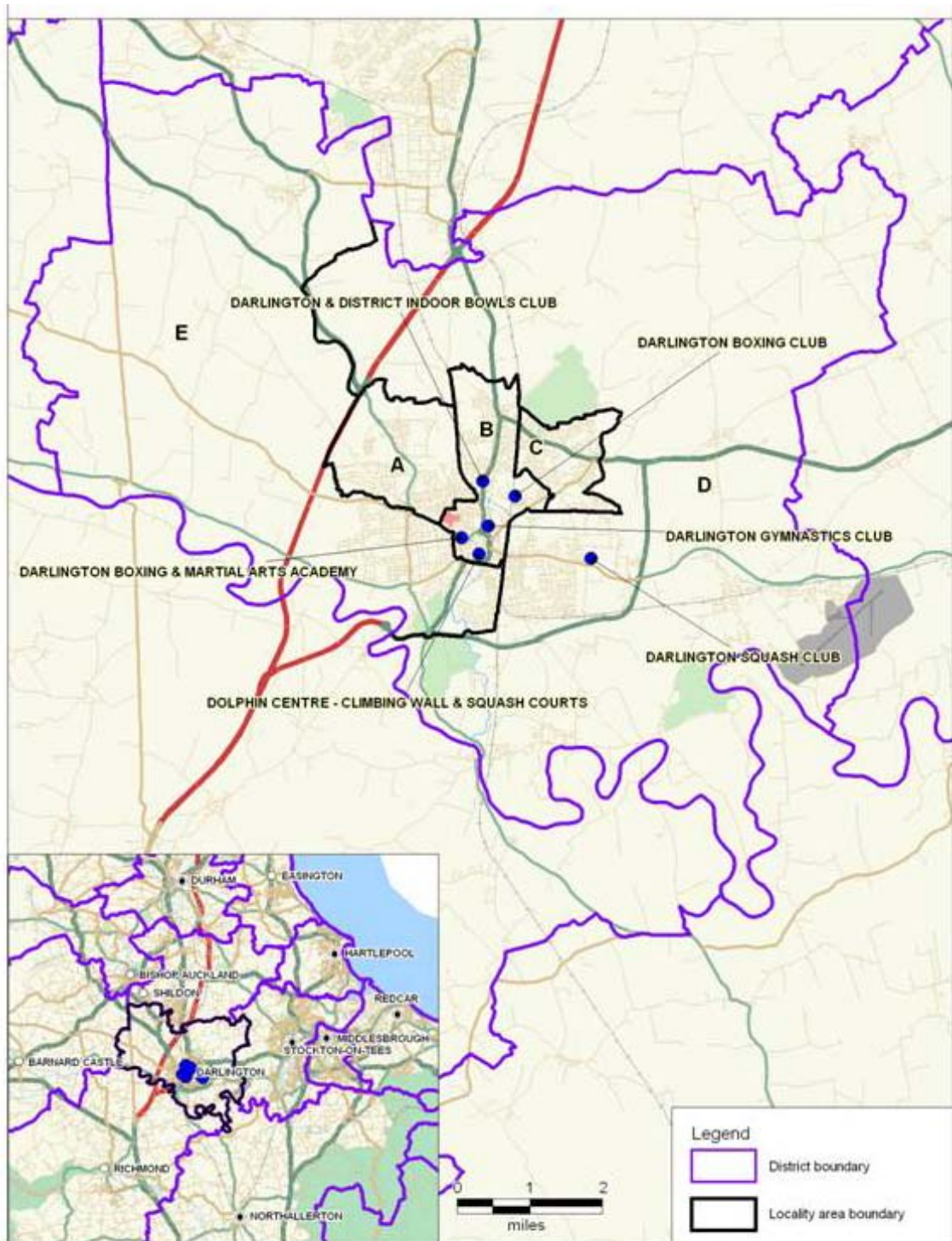
SPECIALIST INDOOR PROVISION

Specialist indoor provision

Current provision

7.1 There are a number of facilities in Darlington that cater for specific indoor sporting activities. These are identified on Map 7.1 below.

Map 7.1 Specialist indoor provision



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SECTION 7 – SPECIALIST INDOOR PROVISION

- 7.2 The facilities outlined in Map 7.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of specialist sports facilities within Darlington.
- 7.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online web and consultation with key stakeholders.
- 7.4 Table 7.1 below provides more detail with regards to the specialist indoor sports facilities identified in the audit.

Table 7.1 Specialist indoor sports facilities in Darlington

Site Name	Locality	Facility details
Dolphin Centre	B	In addition to the facilities identified earlier in the report, the Dolphin Centre also has a climbing wall and three squash courts.
Darlington Boxing & Martial Arts Academy	B	Provides facilities for boxing and a range of martial arts. It has c200 adult & 70 junior members.
Darlington & District Indoor Bowls Club	B	Provides an 8 rink indoor bowling green for use all year round.
Darlington Boxing Club	B	Previously lost its home when the facility it was in was closed down. The club is now in a temporary unit with no running water in Albert Hill.
Darlington Squash Club	D	Provides 4 squash courts, 2 of which are glass backed
Darlington Gymnastics Club	D	The Club has recently moved, to an old fitness gym in Weir Street, Darlington. It has a new refurbished gym with new equipment

Adequacy of current provision

- 7.5 Of the above, only indoor bowls facilities are captured on the Active Places website. We are therefore able to assess the current adequacy of indoor bowls facilities in Darlington in terms of quantity using the strategic planning tool in Active Places Power. The adequacy of all other provision has been assessed via consultation.

Indoor bowls

- 7.6 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 0.08 indoor bowls rinks per 1,000. Table 6.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 7.2 Comparison of indoor bowls rinks per 1000 population

	Indoor bowls rinks per 1000
England	0.04
North East	0.06
Stockton on Tees	0.04
Chesterfield	0.00

SECTION 7 – SPECIALIST INDOOR PROVISION

	Indoor bowls rinks per 1000
Darlington	0.08
Dover	0.04
North Tyneside	0.04

- 7.7 The table shows that the amount of indoor bowls provision in Darlington is above the regional average and national average. It also has a greater amount of provision when compared to all of its nearest neighbours. This suggests that the indoor bowls provision in Darlington is sufficient. However, it is important to combine these findings with the results of the consultation exercise.
- 7.8 The majority of respondents to the household survey (43%) had no opinion about the quantity of indoor bowls provision in Darlington and 29% stated that there is enough provision. Well over half (57%) rated the quality of provision as excellent or good, 45% rated it as average. The majority of respondents (59%) would expect to travel to an indoor bowls facility by car with a journey time of 5-15 minutes.
- 7.9 No other comments were made in relation to indoor bowls facilities, therefore it can be concluded that the provision that currently exists within the borough is sufficient to meet the needs of the population of Darlington.

Other specialist indoor provision

- 7.10 In the absence of a theoretical model, the adequacy of all other specialist indoor facilities has been assessed via consultation feedback.
- 7.11 Almost half (47%) of those that responded to the household survey stated that there is not enough specialist provision in Darlington, 30% were of no opinion. The types of indoor specialist facilities that were requested most were (in order):
- Indoor tennis
 - Indoor athletics (for training)
 - Ice rink
 - Boxing/martial arts
 - Ten pin bowling alley
 - Gymnastics
 - Climbing.
- 7.12 In relation to indoor tennis, the nearest facilities to Darlington are in Middlesbrough (Tennis World) and Stockton-on-Tees (David Lloyd). The sub-regional facilities strategy identifies that Tees Valley has a ratio of 0.016 indoor tennis courts per 1000 people which is lower than both the regional average (0.02) and national average (0.03). This means that within the region, there is 1 indoor court for every 19,930 people, however in Tees Valley, there is only 1 court for every 63,877 people.
- 7.13 The LTA has identified a number of gaps in the North East for indoor provision in terms of 'key sites', one of which is Darlington. Hummersknott School once expressed an interest in developing indoor tennis court provision and the LTA has indicated that there may be some partnership funding available for such a

SECTION 7 – SPECIALIST INDOOR PROVISION

development should the school still be interested. This would have to be developed in consultation with the local clubs. The gap in provision in Darlington is recognised in the Regional Facilities Strategy.

- 7.14 With regards to athletics, the regional athletics facilities strategy does identify the need for an indoor athletics facility in the Tees Valley. It does, however, state that the preferred location is Middlesbrough.
- 7.15 In relation to boxing and gymnastics, both clubs were identified as strengths during the workshop event. With regards to boxing and martial arts, the Academy identified its main issues as a lack of internal and external funding. In terms of plans for the future, the club hopes to refurbish its facilities.
- 7.16 The gymnastics club is a very strong club offering both recreational classes and elite squad training. It, however, only has a two year lease on its current facility and requires a more permanent facility. The Regional Facilities Strategy also identifies this as an issue. There may be an opportunity to provide a facility through BSF or perhaps retention (and conversion) of the Eastbourne School hall.
- 7.17 Whilst there is a climbing wall facility at the Dolphin Centre, several respondents to the household survey suggested the need for more of such facilities. Whilst there does not appear to be overwhelming demand at present, it may be something that is considered in the future, perhaps as part of a new/improved school via BSF.
- 7.18 No demand for additional squash facilities has been identified through the research and consultation process.

Provision for people with disabilities

- 7.19 Whilst there are a range of disabled friendly facilities in Darlington, both the household survey and the workshop event identified the need for more facilities that are accessible and usable for people with varying disabilities. Specifically, consultees at the workshop event identified the need for more markings for boccia courts and stated that this could be done relatively easily on any sports hall floor.
- 7.20 In the future, disability groups should be consulted when new facilities are being designed or existing facilities are being upgraded to ensure they meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Provision the over 60s

- 7.21 Several respondents to the household survey stated that there are not enough facilities/activities available for the over 60s. Consideration should be given by the Council to review its sports development programme to ensure that some activities are targeted at this age groups.

Summary and conclusion

7.22 This section has identified the range of specialist indoor facilities that exist in Darlington and the demand for additional facilities from residents. Based on the research and consultation we can conclude that:

- there is enough indoor bowls provision to meet the need of the population now and in the future
- the gymnastics club and boxing club is in need of a permanent facility
- there are no indoor tennis facilities, however this was the facility type that household survey respondents identified that they would most like to see
- there are no indoor athletics facilities but demand from the club for training
- there is demand for an ice rink, more boxing/martial arts facilities, a ten pin bowling alley, more gymnastics facilities and another climbing wall
- there is a demand for more facilities that are accessible and usable for people with disabilities
- there is demand for facilities/activities specifically for the over 60s.

Recommendations

- Liaise with the LTA and local clubs to explore the potential to provide indoor tennis provision in Darlington, perhaps at Hummersknott School or at one of the other secondary schools – Longfield Sports College would be a logical choice
- Continue to support the boxing club and gymnastics club & explore the opportunity to provide satellite facilities elsewhere in the borough. Where possible, assist the clubs to secure permanent facilities in the future – perhaps through BSF or the retention of Eastbourne School hall
- Consult with England Athletics to explore the options for providing indoor athletics training facilities in Darlington – or providing access to facilities elsewhere in the Tees Valley eg Middlesbrough
- Consider provision of a climbing wall as part of a new/improved school via BSF
- In the future, ensure disability groups are consulted when new facilities are being designed or existing facilities are being upgraded
- A review of the sports development programme should take place to ensure that a range of activities are targeted at the 60+ age group.

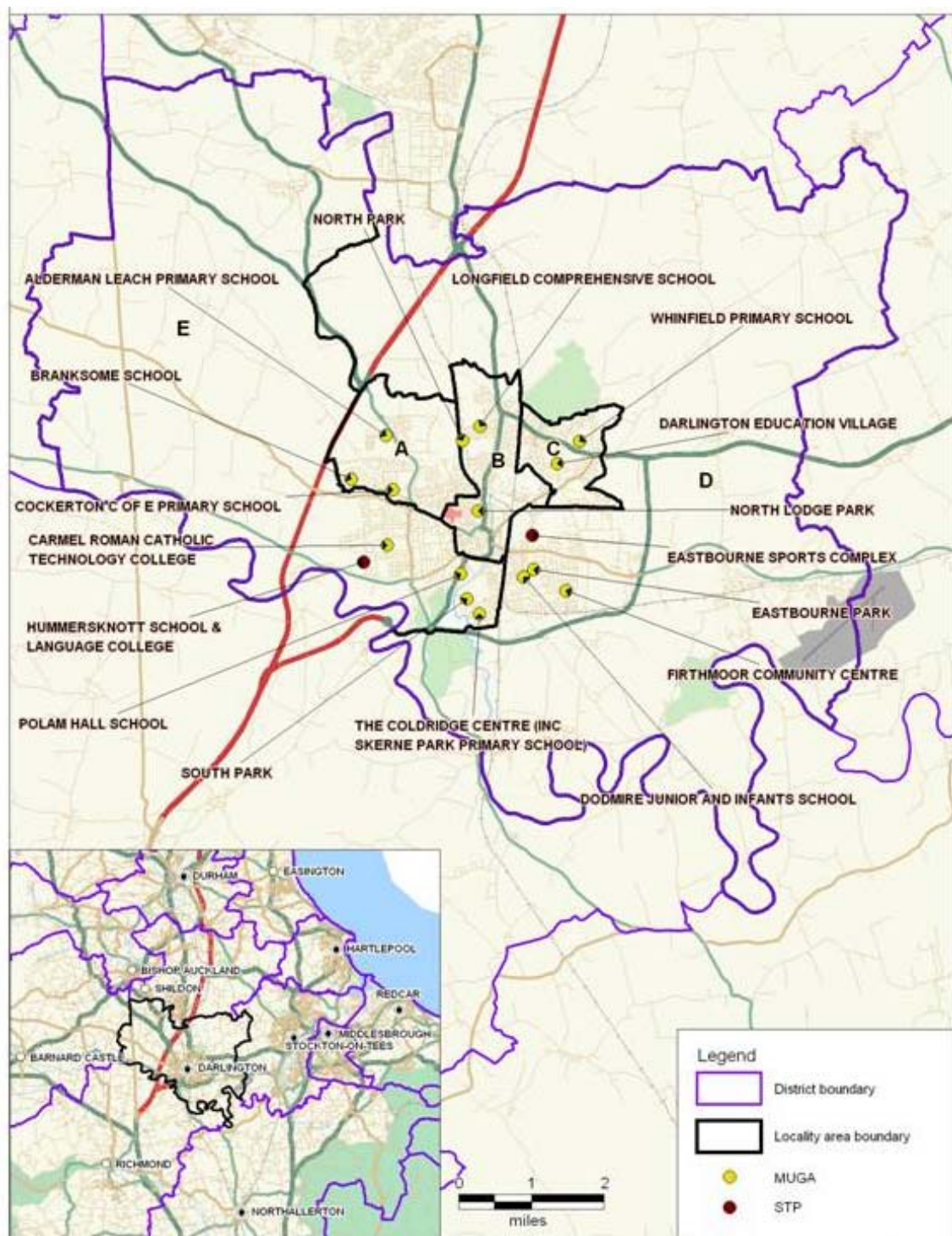
SECTION 8
STPs & MUGAs

STPs & MUGAs

Current provision

- 8.1 Two full size synthetic turf pitches (STPs) and 15 multi-use games areas (MUGAs) have been identified across Darlington. Map 8.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 8.1 STPs and MUGAs in Darlington



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SECTION 8 – STPs & MUGAs

- 8.2 The facilities outlined in Map 8.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of STPs and MUGAs within Darlington.
- 8.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online web search, via council records and through consultation with key stakeholders.
- 8.4 Table 8.1 below provides more detail with regards to the STPs and MUGAs identified in the audit.

Table 8.1 STP and MUGA details

Site Name	Locality	Type of facility
Eastbourne Sports Complex	D	Sand based STP
Hummersknott School & Language College	E	Third generation STP
Branksome School*	A	MUGA
Alderman Leach Primary School*	A	MUGA
Cockerton C Of E Primary School	A	MUGA
North Lodge Park	B	MUGA
Longfield Comprehensive School	B	MUGA
North Park	B	MUGA
Whinfield Primary School*	C	MUGA
Darlington Education Village	C	MUGA
Dodmire Junior And Infants School*	D	MUGA
Firthmoor Community Centre*	D	MUGA
Eastbourne Park	D	MUGA
The Coldridge Centre (Inc Skerne Park Primary School)	E	MUGA
South Park	E	MUGA
Polam Hall School	E	MUGA
Carmel Roman Catholic Technology College*	E	MUGA

* Are thought to be NOF funded facilities

- 8.5 There are two full size synthetic turf pitches (STPs) within Darlington. The STP at Eastbourne Sports Complex is sand based and is therefore suitable for hockey and football. While sand-based synthetic facilities are considered suitable for football training, they are rarely used in competitive match play due to local and national football league regulations. Sand based facilities are however used for competitive match play for hockey. The STP at Eastbourne is used by Darlington Hockey Club for both training and matches.
- 8.6 The other STP is a third generation (3G) pitch at Hummersknott School. This facility is suitable for football and rugby training but is not suitable for hockey. This facility is relatively new (built in 2008) and at the time of writing, has relatively limited community use as the programme has not yet been fully developed and building works on the school grounds are still ongoing. However, from September 2009 the pitch will be fully accessible to the public outside of school hours with long term agreements for community use of this facility in place. This is necessary as the pitch was part funded through the Football Foundation. The FA has recently approved the use of 3G synthetic facilities for competitive football matches.

- 8.7 Durham County FA stated that they would support another 3G pitch in the borough and have already been in discussions with Kajima in relation to development of a pitch at the Education Village. There may also be an opportunity for development of an STP as part of College/University proposals.
- 8.8 In addition to the STPs, 15 MUGAs have been identified. The map shows that these are relatively evenly spread across the borough. Of these, ten are located on school sites, four are in parks and one is part of a community centre. In addition to these, one planned facilities has been identified, on the Redhall Estate in locality C.

Adequacy of current provision

Quantity

- 8.9 The Active Places database includes STPs but does not include MUGAs. We have therefore used the strategic planning tools in Active Places Power to assess the current adequacy of STP facilities in Darlington in terms of quantity. The adequacy of all other provision has been assessed via consultation.
- 8.10 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 0.02 STPs per 1,000. Table 8.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 8.2 Comparison of STPs per 1000 population

	Health & fitness stations per 1000
England	0.03
North East	0.03
Stockton on Tees	0.03
Chesterfield	0.03
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>0.02</i>
Dover	0.03
North Tyneside	0.04

- 8.11 The table shows that the amount of STP provision in Darlington is below the regional and national average. It also has the least amount of provision when compared to its nearest neighbours.
- 8.12 This analysis suggests that the number of stations per 1000 people is below what would be expected for an authority of its type. However, it is important to combine these findings with the results of the consultation exercise.
- 8.13 In relation to quantity of provision the household survey responses were as follows:
- Around half (52%) of respondents stated that there is not enough STPs in Darlington and only 9% said there is enough, 40% had no opinion
 - More than half (58%) of respondents stated that there is not enough MUGAs in Darlington, 14% said there is enough whilst 27% had no opinion.

- 8.14 The household survey suggests that residents feel there is not enough STPs or MUGAs in Darlington. However, the literal comments suggest that the issue with MUGAs is actually access to rather than quantity.
- 8.15 As detailed in section 5 and in the playing pitch strategy, consultees identified a general lack of training areas in Darlington and specifically a lack of dedicated football training facilities similar to Powerleague or Soccer Sensations in Stockton. Indeed there are no dedicated outdoor or indoor football training areas in Darlington and this therefore creates big demand for the STPs that do exist. Alternatively teams have to either train outside of the borough or on grass pitches which subsequently leads to overuse of the pitches (for more details see Darlington's playing pitch strategy).

Quality

- 8.16 The Hummersknott facility is of excellent quality as it was built in 2008. The Eastbourne facility is also of adequate quality having been refurbished in 2006. Due to the heavy use of the facility however, it is important that it is properly maintained and refurbished on a regular basis.
- 8.17 Around a third (35%) of respondents to the household survey rated the quality of STPs as good or excellent, 46% rated the quality as average. In relation to MUGAs, around a quarter (26%) rated the quality as good or excellent with 47% rating the quality as average.
- 8.18 The majority of MUGAs on school sites are in fairly good condition as they were developed through NOF funding. Some of the MUGAs in parks however, are not in as good a condition as the ones on school sites as they are older and they are vulnerable to misuse and vandalism. The MUGAs in North Lodge Park and Eastbourne were not rated as highly as others. The former because it is not floodlit and quite old, the latter because it has been damaged by graffiti and is not fenced.
- 8.19 Few of the MUGAs whether on school sites or within parks are well signposted or have ancillary provision.
- 8.20 All of the MUGAs in Darlington have a tarmac surface and so are not really suitable for football training. Nevertheless, as these MUGAs are floodlit, they could offset some demand from football particularly in those areas where access to local training facilities is most problematic. The issue however is being able to access them

Accessibility

- 8.21 The STP facility at Eastbourne is fully accessible during the daytime, evenings and weekends. As mentioned earlier, the STP at Hummersknott will be available fully available for hire at evenings and weekends from September 2009.
- 8.22 As mentioned above, the main issue reported in relation to MUGAs is the lack of access to those on school sites. The majority are fenced off and locked up at the end of the school day with no available community access. Whilst the NOF funded MUGAs do have a requirement for community use, it appears that this is not necessarily the case at present.
- 8.23 The Councils Children's Services directorate, together with Cultural Services has already recognised this as a significant issue and is currently undertaking a piece of work to look in to how this can be addressed in the future. As mentioned in section 5, access to school sites out of school hours is not only important for community sport

but is also vital in terms of meeting the Extended Services agenda and helping to achieve the '5 hour offer'.

- 8.24 Around a half (51%) of survey respondents expect to drive to an STP, 36% expect to walk. The expected journey time is 5-15 minutes. In relation to MUGAs, the majority (53%) expect to walk there with a journey time of 5-10 minutes. This suggests the importance of MUGAs as local community facilities. Consultation however suggested a lack of awareness of where these facilities are located.

Conclusions

8.25 Table 8.2 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for STP and MUGAs in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out some a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 8.2 STPs and MUGAs – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 2 STPs (one sand based, one 3G) and 15 MUGAs in Darlington • The amount of STP provision per 1000 is below the regional and national average and below that of all its nearest neighbours • Around half of respondents stated that there is not enough STPs • More than half of respondents stated that there is not enough MUGAs, however literal comments suggest that this is awareness and access rather than quantity • All forms of consultation identified a general lack of training areas and specifically a lack of dedicated football training facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of one more STP in conjunction with the Football Foundation • Explore the opportunity to provide a dedicated football facility, in conjunction with the private sector • No obvious evidence for additional MUGA facilities, the main issue is access to existing provision
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STP at Hummersknott is excellent quality • The STP at Eastbourne is good quality but receives heavy use • All of the MUGAs in Darlington have a tarmac surface and so are not really suitable for football training • MUGAs on school sites tend to be better quality than those in parks • MUGAs in North Lodge Park and Eastbourne were not rated as highly as others – due to lack of floodlighting and age North Lodge Park) and damaged by graffiti and lack of fencing (Eastbourne Park) • The majority of MUGAs are not signposted and have no ancillary facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a sinking fund is put in place for regular maintenance and upgrade of existing STPs • Should any new MUGAs be provided in the future, explore the opportunity for a synthetic surface rather than tarmac to cater for demand for football training • Maintain and improve the quality of existing MUGAs in parks - priority is North Park and Eastbourne Park • Improve signage and promotion of MUGA facilities (and sports development activities that take place on MUGAs) across the borough.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access to Eastbourne STP, community access at evenings & weekends will be fully available from September 2009-04-03 • The main issue with MUGAs is access to those on school sites • Lack of awareness of where MUGAs are located. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to MUGAs on school sites to provide informal facilities for young people in local communities, in conjunction with Childrens Services. • As above, improve signage and promotion of MUGA facilities.

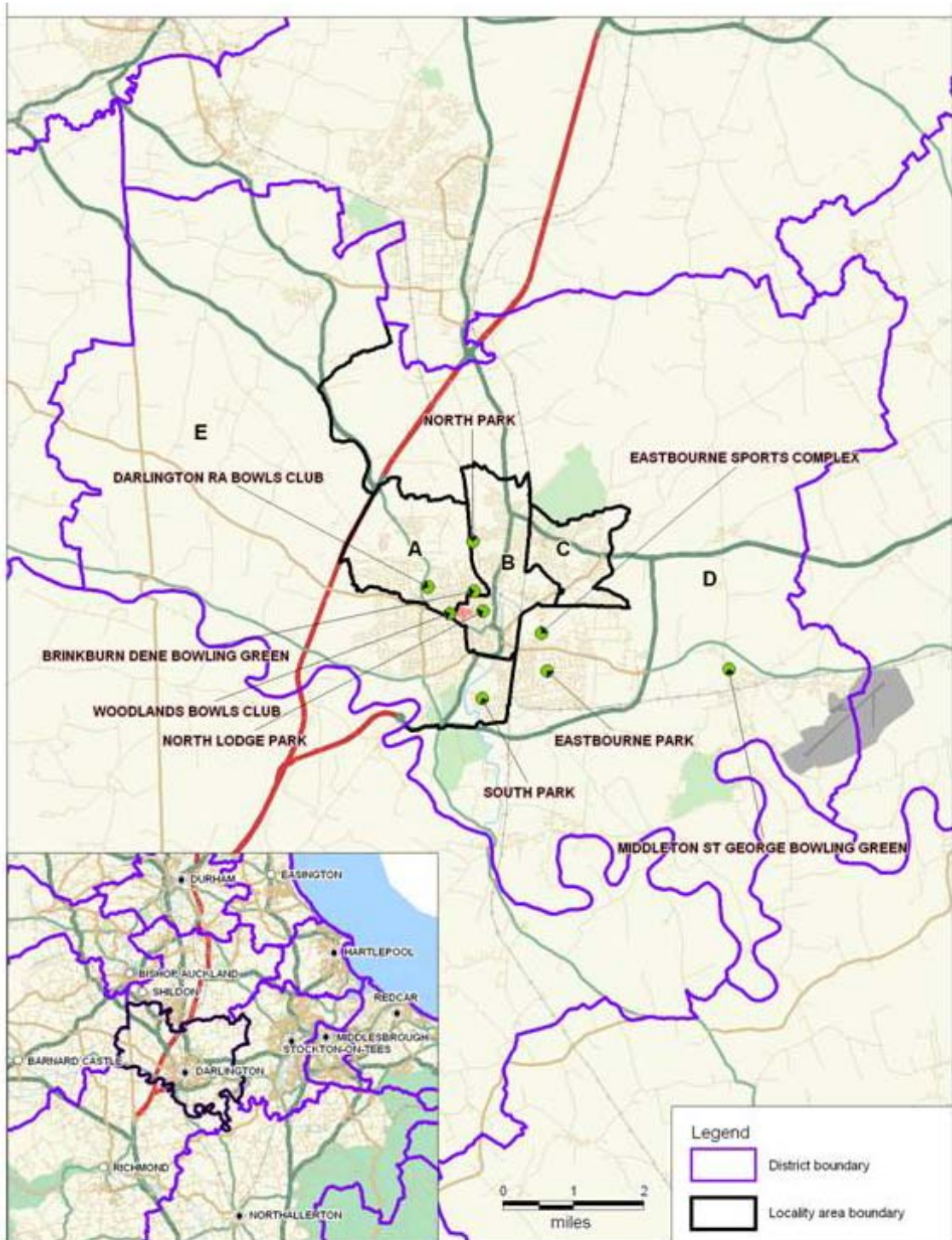
SECTION 9
BOWLING GREENS

Bowling greens

Current provision

9.1 There are nine bowling greens in Darlington across eight sites. Map 9.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 9.1 Bowling greens in Darlington



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SECTION 9 – BOWLING GREENS

- 9.2 The facilities outlined in Map 9.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of bowling greens within Darlington. The audit was using existing council records, via an online web search and through consultation with key stakeholders.
- 9.3 Table 9.1 below provides more detail with regards to the bowling greens identified in the audit.

Table 9.1 Bowling green details

Site Name	Locality	Facility details
Darlington Railway Athletic Bowls Club	A	Provides 4-6 rinks.
Brinkburn Dene Bowling Green	A	Council facility
Woodlands Bowls Club	A	Private club facility
North Lodge Park	B	Council facility providing 8 rinks
North Park	B	Council facility providing 3 rinks
Middleton St George Bowling Green	D	Private club facility, next to Middleton St George Cricket Club
Eastbourne Sports Complex	D	Council facility providing an Olympic standard green
Eastbourne Park	D	Council facility providing 8 rinks
South Park	E	Council facility providing two bowling greens. One rink is not well used but both are still mowed & maintained.

- 9.4 The map and table show that the bowling greens are fairly evenly spread across the borough. There is only one analysis area, locality C, without a bowling green.

Adequacy of current provision

- 9.5 The Active Places database does not include bowling greens and therefore there are no strategic planning tools available in Active Places Power in which to assess the current adequacy of bowling greens. Adequacy of provision therefore has been assessed through consultation feedback.

Quantity

- 9.6 In relation to quantity, the responses from the household survey were mixed. Around a third (32%) of respondents stated that there are enough bowling greens in Darlington and the same proportion 32% said there is not enough, 36% had no opinion. Responses to the club survey from bowls teams suggested that quality of bowling green facilities is the issue rather than quantity.
- 9.7 Consultation with Council officers suggests that all the greens are well used with the exception of one of the greens at South Park. This does not appear to have been used for years although it is still mowed and maintained as a bowling green. It is of lower quality than the other bowling green on the site because it is known that it is not used.

SECTION 9 – BOWLING GREENS

9.8 Feedback from the workshop event suggests that the amount of greens is correct and that the issues are mainly around quality of provision and profile of the sport. The fact that one of the greens at South Park is currently unused suggests that there are enough bowling greens in Darlington to meet the demand.

Quality

9.9 In relation to quality, almost half (48%) of respondents to the household survey rated the quality of bowling greens as good or excellent, 41% rated the quality as average and 11% as poor.

9.10 The workshop event identified security of provision as both a strength and a weakness. At the private clubs, security was seen to be good, however consultees suggested a need to improve the security on park facilities as they are sometimes subject to vandalism and damage. The security at South Park and Brinkburn Dene in particular was seen as poor and in need of improvement.

9.11 The sports club survey also identified security of facilities as an issue. Indeed several responses suggested that greens need to be fenced off and protected from vandalism. Ease and security of parking was another aspect that club members would like to see improved.

9.12 The facilities at Brinkburn Dene bowling green in particular have been subject to vandalism. The bowls hut has been vandalised on a number of occasions and although the damage has been repaired, comments suggested that only a stronger built hut would help to stop the vandalism.

9.13 The quality of the actual greens themselves was generally rated as good. However, clubs suggested that having a green keeper that could look after all greens in the area would further help to improve the quality of the surface of the greens.

9.14 The bowling greens are cut three times a week during the season and feedback suggests that maintenance has improved this year (2008-2009). The Council holds a bowling green forum with one representative from each green during the season and either side of it. This has led to an improved working relationship between the Council and clubs.

9.15 The main feedback from both the workshop event and club survey was a lack of changing facilities and ancillary facilities. Site specific comments were made as follows:

- Brinkburn Dene - is the only bowling green in Darlington that does not have enclosed facilities. The bowling green is situated down a steep incline, away from the bowls hut. The wooden bowls hut has been subject to vandalism
- Eastbourne Sports Centre (Hundens) - The bowling green is generally in good condition, however the changing facilities are poor and there is a lack of clothes storage for after an event. There is a new pavilion onsite but this does not have a changing room or lockers
- North Park - Updated premises would be appreciated by clubs although no significant issues were raised in relation to quality of provision.

SECTION 9 – BOWLING GREENS

9.16 Hundens is the only Council facility with a purpose built 'hut', other clubs have to manage with poor quality wooden huts. The facilities at the private Woodlands Bowls Club were specifically identified as being of very good quality. Eastbourne Sports Centre is considered to be the highest quality Council site, followed by North Park. Eastbourne SC has held county standard matches.

9.17 On the survey, clubs were asked to identify what three features they would prioritise if new/improved sports facilities were to be provided. The features identified most were:

- Cleanliness and maintenance
- Ease/security of parking
- Changing facilities.

Accessibility

9.18 In relation to accessibility, around a half (49%) of household survey respondents expect to drive to a bowling green, 41% expect to walk and 7% expect to travel by public transport. The expected journey time is 5-10 minutes. Consultees stated that the bus routes enable easy access to the bowling green sites.

9.19 Feedback from the workshop event suggested that the greens could be made more accessible, particular given that the majority are Council facilities and therefore should allow general public use. Consultees also suggested that access would be made easier if there was a facility to book the greens and collect/take money. Clubs also commented that there is no access at to the Eastbourne Sports Centre facilities at the weekend after 4.30pm.

9.20 One of the biggest issues identified at both the workshop event and in the club survey was the profile of the sport and the development of the sport to allow clubs to continue. Retention and recruitment of members was raised as key issues for clubs.

9.21 Bowling as a sport mainly attracts an older profile of participants. Currently there is no coaching structure in place or junior leagues and therefore clubs are finding that there are no younger players 'coming through'. Thus, the number of club members is decreasing.

9.22 In terms of pricing, facilities were seen as being value for money.

Conclusions

9.23 Table 9.2 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for bowling greens in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out some a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 9.2 Bowling greens – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation suggests there are enough bowling greens to meet the demand, with one green currently unused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing level of bowling green provision in Darlington, retaining the unused bowling green at South Park to cater for any future increases in demand/participation
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of greens generally rated as good • Maintenance has improved recently • Lack of changing provision and ancillary facilities is an issue • Security is an issue at some sites – especially South Park & Brinkburn Dene (facilities are not enclosed at this site) • The three features prioritised by clubs for new/improved sports facilities are cleanliness and maintenance, ease/security of parking and changing facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the bowls facilities, particularly at Brinkburn Dene and South Park to deter vandalism • Explore the potential to provide improved ancillary facilities at Brinkburn Dene • Continue to ensure that bowling greens are maintained in line with clubs needs and consider where possible to provide safe storage facilities on site • Continually monitor the opportunity to use section 106 monies to improve sports facilities in areas of new housing development.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback suggests that accessibility to public bowling greens could be improved • No access to the bowling green at Eastbourne Sports Centre after 4.30pm at the weekend • Retention and recruitment of members is a key issue, coupled with profile/perception of the sport and lack of coaching structure • Facilities are seen as being value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the booking procedures for Council owned bowling greens, in conjunction with the bowls club forum, to explore possible ways to improve accessibility to greens • The sports development team should liaise with the NGB to explore ways of raising the profile of bowls amongst the younger population, perhaps through schools via SSCOs and PDMs • Ensure facilities remain value for money by continuing to work closely with the bowls forum.

9.24 The Council should continue to liaise with bowls clubs via the bowls club/facility forum to maintain a good working relationship and ensure that any areas for improvement are identified and the most effective use is made of the bowling greens and facilities that are provided.

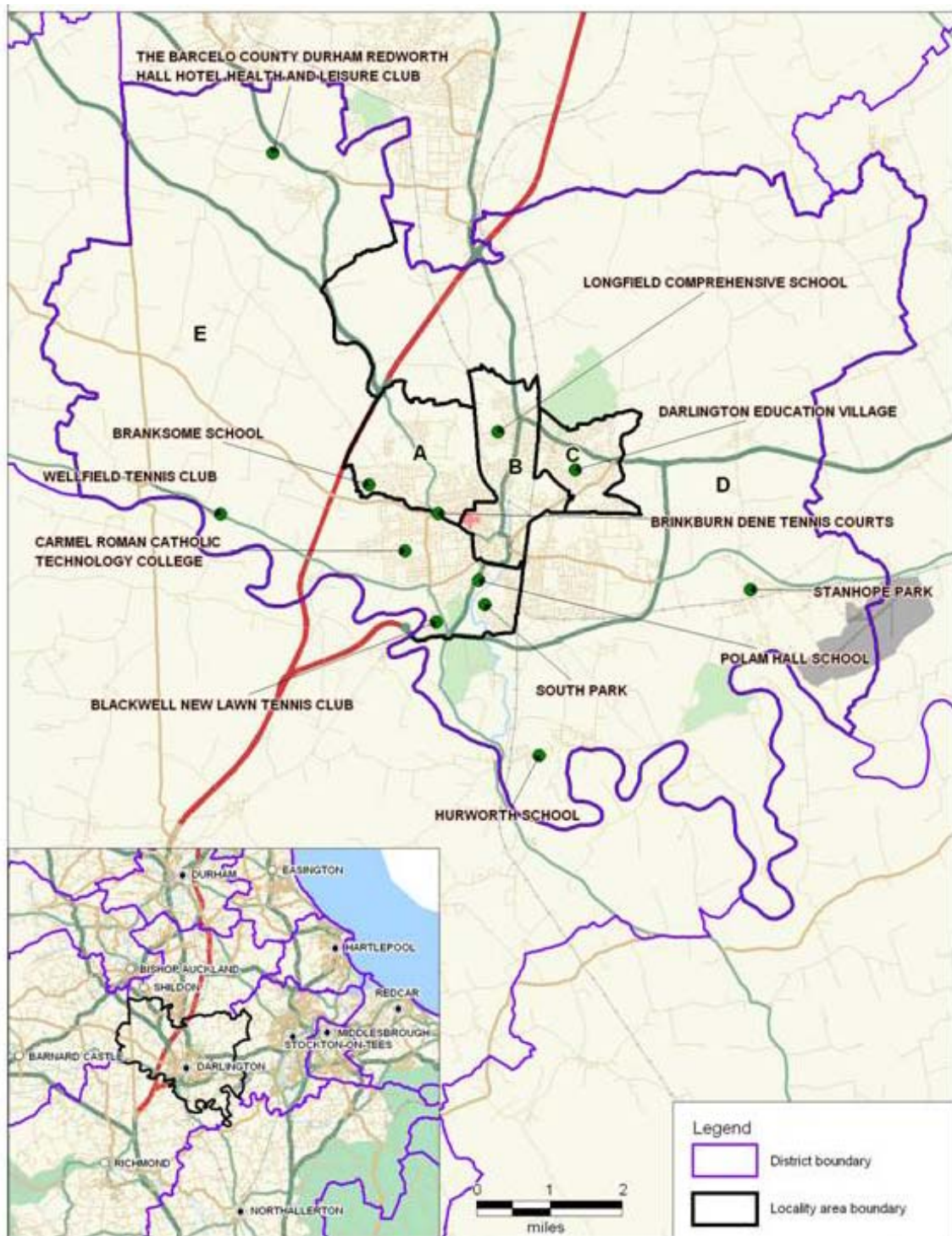
SECTION 10
TENNIS COURTS

Tennis courts

Current provision

10.1 There are 35 tennis courts in Darlington across twelve sites. Map 10.1 below identifies the location of these facilities.

Map 10.1 Tennis courts in Darlington



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SECTION 10 – TENNIS COURTS

- 10.2 The facilities outlined in Map 10.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of tennis courts within Darlington. The audit was undertaken using existing council records, via an online web search and through consultation with key stakeholders.
- 10.3 Table 10.1 below provides more detail with regards to the tennis courts identified in the audit.

Table 10.1 Tennis courts details

Site Name	Locality	No of courts	Facility details
Brinkburn Dene Tennis Courts	A	2	Currently unusable due to Waterways works, but expected to be reinstated on completion of works. Open access hard courts with mesh fences
Branksome School	A	3	Part of MUGA
Longfield Comprehensive School	B	4	Part of MUGA
Darlington Education Village	C	3	Part of one of the MUGAs
Hurworth School	D	2	Part of MUGA
Stanhope Park	D	2	Open access, hard courts with mesh fences
The Barcelo County Durham Redworth Hall Hotel Health & Leisure Club	E	2	Hotel facility
South Park	E	2	Green Flag park, also used as MUGA. Open access
Polam Hall School	E	5	Part of MUGA
Carmel Roman Catholic Technology College	E	1	Part of MUGA
Wellfield Tennis Club	E	3	Club facility
Blackwell New Lawn Tennis Club	E	6	Floodlit, club facility

Adequacy of current provision

- 10.4 The Active Places database does not include outdoor tennis courts and therefore there are no strategic planning tools available in Active Places Power in which to assess the current adequacy provision. This has therefore been assessed through consultation feedback.

Quantity

- 10.5 The map and table show that the tennis courts are not particularly well dispersed across the borough. Whilst all localities have tennis court facilities, both clubs are based in locality E and localities B and C do not have any open access courts ie tennis courts in parks. All public tennis courts are hard courts.

SECTION 10 – TENNIS COURTS

- 10.6 In relation to quantity, almost two thirds (63%) of household survey respondents stated that there are not enough tennis courts in Darlington. Only 12% think there is enough and 25% have no opinion.
- 10.7 Consultation with Council officers suggests that usage of tennis courts in parks is reasonable however it is not monitored as all sites are accessible free of charge.
- 10.8 There have been no recent changes to the overall provision of tennis in terms of quality or quantity, however there were once tennis courts on the site of the Eastbourne Sports Complex but these have now been demolished.
- 10.9 Literal comments from the household survey suggest that Darlington used to have a good network of well maintained tennis courts in its parks but these have disappeared. Many respondents stated that they are not aware of where tennis court facilities are. Others said there are no tennis courts near to where they live. Of those that are aware of tennis courts, they stated that they are often very busy during the summer time.

Quality

- 10.10 Consultation with Council officers identified that the tennis courts in parks are laid out from the 1st May to 30th September and are free access. All courts are hard surface with nets and fencing and quality is said to be adequate for their purpose. Council officers suggested that they have few issues with the tennis courts apart from the occasional misuse.
- 10.11 Findings from the household survey however, suggested that quality of tennis court provision is poor. Indeed half of respondents rated the quality of tennis courts as poor. Around a third (35%) rated them as average whilst only 16% rated the quality as good or excellent.
- 10.12 Literal comments suggested that many of the parks courts have a poor surface and that often the nets are down. Comments also suggested that the facilities suffer from vandalism. Of those that stated they use the courts, they suggested that it would be good to have some form of seating near the tennis courts to use to spectate and to use whilst they are waiting for the courts to become free.
- 10.13 The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) stated that the facilities at New Blackwell Tennis Club are good and those at Wellfield are adequate. Whilst the LTA recognises that park courts are available they stated that they are of poor quality. Similarly, school tennis courts were said to be of poor quality.
- 10.14 Blackwell Tennis Club in particular is said to be a well organised club with an established maintenance programme for its tennis courts. Provision for the replacement of courts is also made. The layout of the club is good with a modest clubhouse and easy viewing onto the courts.

Accessibility

- 10.15 In relation to accessibility, around a half of household survey respondents expect to walk to a tennis court, 39% expect to drive, 6% expect to travel by public transport and 5% by bicycle. The expected journey time is 5-10 minutes emphasising the need for localised provision.

SECTION 10 – TENNIS COURTS

- 10.16 As mentioned, tennis courts are not particularly well dispersed across the borough and localities B and C do not have any open access courts ie tennis courts in parks. Feedback from the household survey suggested that many residents are not aware of any tennis court facilities within walking distance from their home
- 10.17 Site visits identified that many of the tennis courts are not accessible to the local community. Many of the courts are part of MUGAs and as section 8 identifies, many of these are on school sites and are not accessible to the community.
- 10.18 Similarly, the tennis courts at the two clubs and at the hotel are primarily available for use by club members/hotel guests. Currently the quality sports provision is through the tennis clubs.
- 10.19 The actual number of accessible courts in Darlington therefore is only six across three sites, Stanhope Park, South Park and Brinkburn Dene (and these are currently out of use).
- 10.20 The two tennis clubs, which provide a total of nine courts are both located in locality E in the west of the town, therefore residents have to travel if they want to be part of a tennis club. The LTA suggested that a second venue somewhere else in the borough would be useful.

SECTION 10 – TENNIS COURTS

Conclusions

10.21 Table 10.2 provides a summary of the current position and future requirements for tennis courts in Darlington based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It also sets out some a proposed strategy framework for the future.

Table 10.2 Tennis courts – Summary of current situation and recommendations for the future

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
Quantity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two thirds of household survey respondents stated that there are not enough tennis courts in Darlington • Number of courts in parks has decreased in recent years • No public, open access courts in locality B or C • Courts at Brinkburn Dene are currently out of action • Lack of awareness of where tennis court facilities are • Public courts are very busy during the summer time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the opportunity to increase the number of community accessible tennis courts in Darlington, on managed sites eg new Eastbourne Academy • Explore the potential to provide new open access courts in locality B and C – possible via Section 106 negotiations • Ensure the courts at Brinkburn Dene are replaced to the same or higher standard when works are complete • Ensure residents are made aware of existing tennis facilities via promotion in schools, local community facilities and other public buildings • Continue to provide facilities that can provide for a range of recreational and competitive opportunities, in conjunction with the two clubs • Explore the long term need for indoor tennis provision in Darlington, with the LTA
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of household survey respondents rated the quality of tennis courts as poor • Poor surface and vandalism was identified as a problem with public courts • There is a lack of seating near the existing public tennis courts • The best quality facilities are at the two clubs - New Blackwell Tennis Club and Wellfield Tennis Club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to provide a network of high quality facilities with priority on indoor facilities and floodlit courts • Ensure existing public courts are well maintained and that park wardens are used to monitor the facilities to prevent vandalism and misuse • Consider upgrading the existing parks courts via monies from external 'parks' funding and section 106 negotiations. Priority is Stanhope Park
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of household survey respondents expect to walk to a tennis court with an expected journey time of 5-10 minutes • Locality B and C do not have any open access courts • Many residents are not aware of any tennis court facilities within walking distance from their home • Site visits identified that many of the tennis courts that exist, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider development of a satellite club in the east of the borough, potentially using a school site, in conjunction with Blackwell Tennis Club • Improve access to tennis courts & MUGAs on school sites (priority locality B & C) to provide facilities for informal play for young people and families in local communities, in conjunction with

SECTION 10 – TENNIS COURTS

	Summary of current situation & key issues	Recommendations for the future
	<p>especially those on school sites,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are not accessible to the local community • Club/hotel facilities are primarily available only to club members/hotel residents • The actual number of accessible courts in Darlington therefore is only six (across three sites) • Both tennis clubs are located in locality E in the west of the town. 	<p>Childrens Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve signage and promotion of tennis courts (and sports development activities that take place on tennis courts) across the borough • Promote school club links to raise the profile of the tennis clubs in the community and provide an exit route for young people.

10.22 As mentioned in section 7, the LTA has identified a gap in the Tees Valley for indoor tennis provision and has identified Darlington as a 'key site' for development. The Council should continue to review opportunities for the development of indoor tennis courts in Darlington in conjunction with the LTA. The Council should also work with the LTA to support proven and sustainable programmes to allow greater activity and help with retention/ attraction/development of players.

SECTION 11

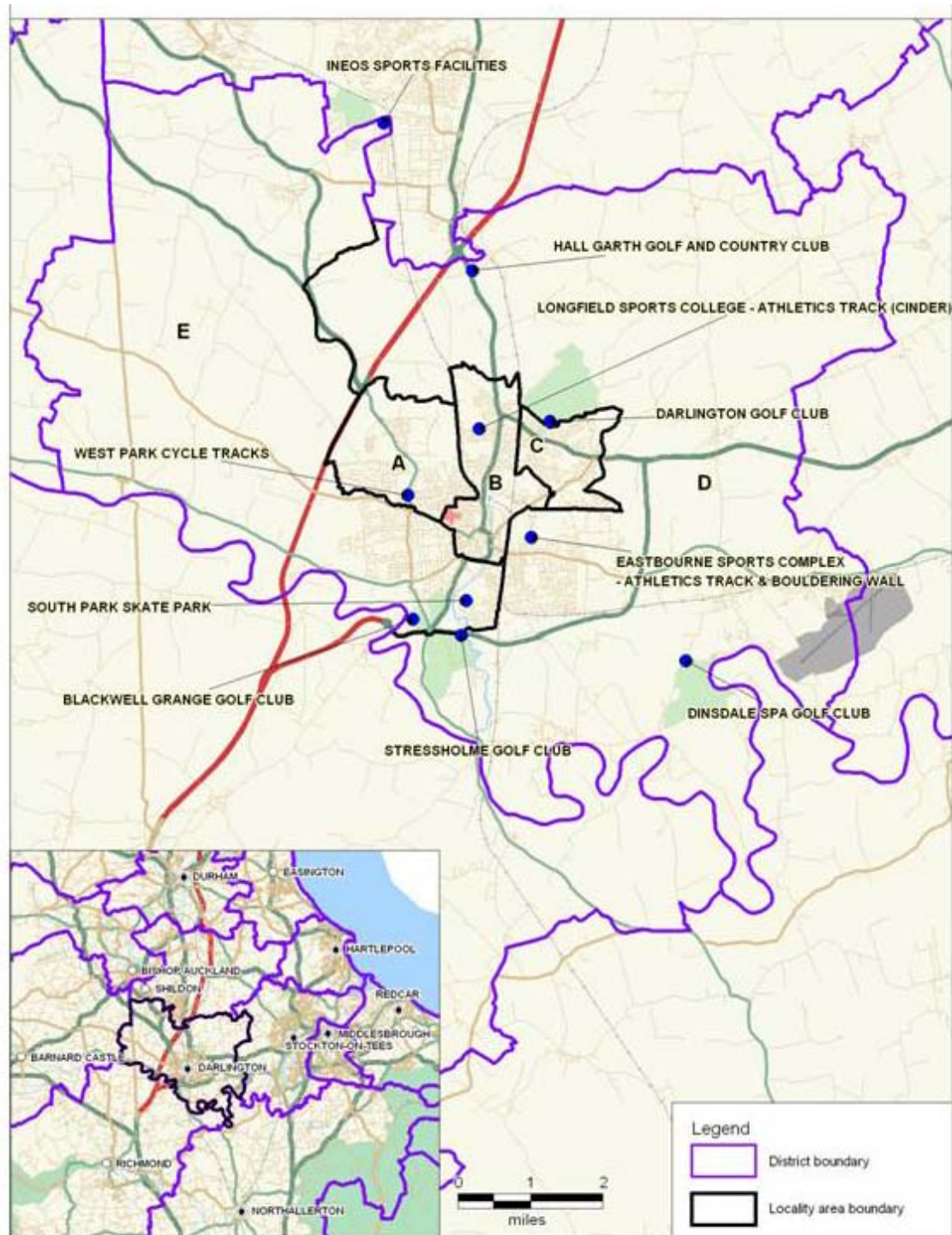
SPECIALIST OUTDOOR PROVISION

Specialist outdoor provision

Current provision

11.1 There are a number of facilities in Darlington that cater for specific outdoor sporting activities. These are identified on Map 11.1 below.

Map 11.1 Specialist outdoor provision



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SECTION 11 – SPECIALIST OUTDOOR PROVISION

- 11.2 The facilities outlined in Map 11.1 were identified via a comprehensive audit that was undertaken to identify the current supply of specialist sports facilities within Darlington.
- 11.3 The audit was conducted, in the first instance, using the Sport England ‘Active Places’ tool. Additional facilities were also identified via an online web and consultation with key stakeholders.
- 11.4 Table 11.1 below provides more detail with regards to the specialist outdoor sports facilities identified in the audit.

Table 11.1 Specialist outdoor sports facilities in Darlington

Site Name	Locality	Facility details
West Park Cycle Tracks	A	Cycle track
Longfield Sports College - Athletics track	B	6 lane cinder athletics track
Eastbourne Sports Complex - Athletics Track & Bouldering Wall	D	8 lane synthetic athletics track Bouldering facility - funded by Spaces for Sport & Arts
South Park Skate Park	E	Skate park
Darlington Golf Club	D	18 hole course
Dinsdale Spa Golf Club	D	18 hole course
Hall Garth Golf & Country Club	D	18 hole course
Ineos Sports Facilities	E	9 hole course
Blackwell Grange Golf Club	E	9 hole course
Stressholme Golf Club	D	18 hole course & driving range – Council facility

Adequacy of current provision

- 11.5 Of the above, only athletics tracks and golf courses are captured on the Active Places website. We are therefore able to assess the current adequacy of these types of facilities in Darlington in terms of quantity using the strategic planning tool in Active Places Power. The adequacy of all other provision has been assessed via consultation.

Athletics tracks

- 11.6 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 0.14 athletics track lanes per 1,000. Table 11.2 overleaf compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington’s ONS ‘nearest neighbours’.

Table 7.2 Comparison of athletics track lanes per 1000 population

	Athletics track lanes per 1000
England	0.05
North East	0.09
Stockton on Tees	0.10
Chesterfield	0.14
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>0.14</i>
Dover	0.08
North Tyneside	0.06

- 11.7 The table shows that the amount of athletics track provision in Darlington is above the regional average and national average. It also has a greater amount of provision when compared to its nearest neighbours (with the exception of Chesterfield which has the same amount). This suggests that the athletics track provision in Darlington is sufficient. However, it is important to combine these findings with the results of the consultation exercise.
- 11.8 It is also important to remember that one of the athletics tracks (Longfield) is cinder and therefore is not recognised by England Athletics as suitable for training and competition. It may however, provide an important facility for the school and the local community.
- 11.9 Responses from the household survey suggest that residents would like to have running track facilities that are available to the public anytime free of charge. This is to provide for the increasing number of people running on the streets. The absence of athletic track facilities in the west end of the borough was also highlighted. Comments suggested that the athletics facilities on school sites eg Longfield, are not often available for community use.
- 11.10 Some specific comments were made in relation to the track at Eastbourne in relation to:
- Poor maintenance
 - Lack of covered stands for spectators – the spectator provision is not in line with the quality of the track
 - Location of the changing rooms being too far away from the track
 - Limited catering facilities.
- 11.11 At the workshop event, the fact that Darlington has an eight lane synthetic athletics track was seen as a positive. Attendees however, identified a number of improvements to be made to the facility, as follows:
- There is nowhere secure for kit storage when using the track
 - The track is in need of a covered stand for spectators – the athletics club is unable to enter some competition due to the lack of stadia at Eastbourne. Members cannot afford to travel to other venues, thus restricting athlete development. The lack of covered spectator facilities has led to ‘town’ competitions being held outside of the borough

SECTION 11 – SPECIALIST OUTDOOR PROVISION

- The track is need of appropriate cleaning and maintenance and general improvements to the up keep of facilities eg sometimes there is glass on the track and water collects due to lack of maintenance
 - Some of the floodlights are often not working.
- 11.12 In addition to the comments made regarding outdoor athletics facilities, as identified in section 7, there are no indoor facilities for athletics. Darlington Harriers who are reaching national standard are in need of an indoor facility for training. They are also in need of Olympic weightlifting equipment for training purposes.
- 11.13 The sub-regional strategy for Tees Valley identifies that some investment is required (c£250,000) to relay the track at Eastbourne. It also recognises the lack of wet weather spectator provision at this facility which limits its attractiveness for competitions and events.
- 11.14 England Athletics has provided some feedback in relation to athletics in Darlington. It stated that the quality of athletics provision in Darlington is good and there are a good group of coaches who operate out of Darlington Harriers which are based at Eastbourne Complex.
- 11.15 The key strengths of athletics provision in Darlington the area are seen to be the quality of the club coaches along with a quality outdoor facility, both of which provide a good platform for the development of athletics in the area.
- 11.16 The weaknesses of athletics in Darlington is the lack of school-club links created between the club and the local SSCO's along with a lack of indoor facilities to conduct quality training in during the winter months at a price the club and its members can afford. The poor school-club links means that there is no exit route for young people who are identified as having talent to be signposted towards.
- 11.17 The key priorities for improving athletics in the area are:
- increased provision for training facilities in the winter months - either a new facility or reduced costs associated with accessing existing indoor facilities elsewhere
 - to improve the links between the club and schools in the area to give more young people exposure to the sport, and parents the chance to develop as coaches and officials
 - to improve both the numbers of coaches in the area and the quality of support they receive from local authorities through educational course costs and support after their qualifications have been completed.
- 11.18 The club also commented on the adequacy of provision for athletics in Darlington. It stated that it has little or no input from schools (with the exception of Carmel) and one of the major improvements for athletics development in the town would be to get more schools involved.

Golf courses

11.19 Active Places Power calculates that Darlington has a supply of 0.83 holes per 1,000 people. Table 11.2 below compares this to the regional average, national average and those of Darlington's ONS 'nearest neighbours'.

Table 11.2 Comparison of golf courses per 1000 population

	Number of holes per 1000
England	0.68
North East	0.68
Stockton on Tees	0.50
Chesterfield	0.46
<i>Darlington</i>	<i>0.83</i>
Dover	0.77
North Tyneside	0.33

11.20 The table shows that the amount of golf course provision in Darlington is above the regional average and national average. It also has a greater number of holes per 1000 people when compared to all of its nearest neighbours. In addition to the above, there is also another golf course coming near to the Middlesbrough FC training ground, but this is likely to be a top end facility. This analysis suggests that the amount of golf course provision in Darlington is sufficient. However, it is important to combine these findings with the results of the consultation exercise.

11.21 The main comments made in relation to golf courses in Darlington, in all forms of consultation, were positive. Stressholme Golf Centre, the Council owned facility, is seen to be a key strength for the borough. Stressholme provides an 18 hole course and 15 bay driving range and is available for pay and play. The golf course and its facilities are well established in the golfing world and are regularly used by the PGA for competitions.

11.22 The only suggestions raised in the household survey were for provision of a child's golf course or mini golf course to enhance the range of facilities available for young people in Darlington.

Other specialist outdoor provision

11.23 In the absence of a theoretical model, the adequacy of all other specialist outdoor facilities has been assessed via consultation feedback.

11.24 Almost half (47%) of those that responded to the household survey stated that there is not enough specialist provision in Darlington, 30% were of no opinion. The types of outdoor specialist facilities that were requested most were (in order):

- Facilities for cycling - tracks, paths, off road circuits
- Skate parks
- Facilities for off road motorbikes/quad bikes.

Cycling

- 11.25 Facilities for cycling were by far the type of facilities most requested in the household survey. Comments suggested that:
- more cycle paths needed to link up the playing fields and sports centres
 - the track at Faverdale is an excellent facility and another one on the east side of the town would be good
 - there is a need for more cycle tracks away from roads where possible
 - there are lots of cycle tracks on roads, however, there are limited facilities for off road cycling
 - lack of mountain-biking trails.
- 11.26 British Cycling (BC) identified that there is currently no cycle sport specific provision in Darlington apart from the down hill/four cross course in West Park. BC however, stated that this facility was built without reference to British Cycling and as such is unsuitable for use within the recognised cycling competition framework. There is currently no provision for road, track cycling or BMX in the borough.
- 11.27 The key priority for improving cycling provision within Darlington from an NGB perspective is to develop the site at Longfield School (formerly known as Rolling Mills) where there is a redundant cycle track around the athletics track. There is no evidence however, of a written strategy that identifies this as a priority over any other project.
- 11.28 BC stated that there is a shortage of cycling specific facilities within the North East region and in particular there is no velodrome facility. It highlighted that although the profile of the track at Longfield is somewhat old fashioned, it can be resurfaced at minimal cost and will provide, at the least, a unique training facility within the region.

Active play

- 11.29 Whilst provision for young people was identified as important, the consultation process did not identify overwhelming demand for additional facilities. It is recognised that there are lots of facilities on school sites, that should they be opened up for community use, would provide important provision for active play within local communities. At present however, the facilities such as MUGAs on school sites are locked up at the end of the school day with limited, if any access for local people.
- 11.30 In relation to skate parks, there is currently only one permanent facility, at South Park. This was developed following consultation with the local community. This facility is thought to be well used and well received by the local young people. Comments from the household survey, however, suggest that there are some problems with anti social behaviour from a small minority of users and that it would be of benefit to young people if it was policed better. Comments suggest that the facility is often dominated by older children which acts as a deterrent for use by others.
- 11.31 In 2003, Darlington received £70,000 of NOF funding which was used to set up a mobile skate park. This was circulated around the Borough visiting local communities and was available for use by local people. The aim was to ensure that all young people have access to facilities. Young people were asked to help shape the design

SECTION 11 – SPECIALIST OUTDOOR PROVISION

and style of the mobile skate park to make sure the facilities were what young people really wanted and would make best use of.

- 11.32 Consideration is being given to providing smaller skate park facilities in North Park so there are two facilities (one in the north and one in the south), of the borough. Having only one such facility leads to territorial issues as identified above.
- 11.33 In relation to recreational cycle facilities, as mentioned above, the consultation exercise identified this as the type of facility that people in Darlington would most like to see. Consultation with Groundwork suggested that the BMX tracks at West Park have proven to be very popular and that it has generated demand for similar facilities elsewhere. Consideration is being given to putting in similar facilities at other sites across the borough.

Informal recreational activities

- 11.34 Increasing levels of physical activity in residents of all ages, and reducing obesity, are considered to be big issues in Darlington and are being prioritised for action through the Healthy Darlington theme group. There has been a greater focus on targeting increased levels of gentle activity eg healthy walks rather than trying to drive people towards leisure centres or formal sports provision.
- 11.35 Partnership working between various departments within the Council eg planning, Leisure, Parks, Childrens Services etc, and with external partners such as the PCT and Groundwork, will help to ensure that local activities are being provided and that local facilities are available for both formal and informal use. Facilities for off-road motorbiking and quad biking, use of the landscape for outdoor pursuits such as climbing, abseiling and canoeing and provision of areas fishing, were all highlighted as opportunities for increasing the range of activities 'non-traditional' activities available for the residents of, and visitors to Darlington.
- 11.36 Young people in particular identified that they would like to see more diverse activities on offer eg trampolining, dance, rather than the typical sports that are often provided as part of the curriculum, such as football and badminton.

Summary and conclusion

- 11.37 This section has identified the range of specialist outdoor facilities that exist in Darlington and the demand for additional facilities from residents. Based on the research and consultation we can conclude that:
- the number of athletics tracks in Darlington is sufficient but there is a demand for more informal provision for running and better access to existing facilities on school sites eg Longfield
 - there is a need to improve the athletics track and facilities at Eastbourne Sports Complex to make it more suitable for competitions and events
 - there is demand for more formal and informal cycling provision ie tracks, paths and mountain bike facilities
 - there are enough golf courses in Darlington
 - school-club links for athletics and golf are poor

SECTION 11 – SPECIALIST OUTDOOR PROVISION

- there is some demand for additional active play facilities eg skate parks, BMX facilities and MUGAs, but the main issue is gaining access to those that currently exist, especially MUGAs on school sites
- there is a need to provide and promote non-facility related activities to increase levels of physical activity eg walking, use of parks and open spaces
- there is a demand from young people to provide more diverse 'non-traditional' type activities to stimulate interest eg trampolining, dance.

Recommendations

- Explore the opportunity to improve the quality of the athletics track at Longfield, perhaps through BSF and in conjunction with the NGB, and increase community access
- Work with British Cycling to explore development of, and improvements to the cycle track at Longfield High School, and increase community access
- Improve maintenance and general upkeep of the track at Eastbourne, ensure a strategy is in place for future maintenance/replacement of the facility
- Explore potential external funding opportunities to improve the facilities at Eastbourne athletics track - to provide a covered stand for spectators and to provide a secure storage area for when track is in use
- Work with the NGBs for athletics and golf, and with the PDM, to improve the school-club links
- Continue to work with Childrens Services to obtain greater access to active play facilities on school sites
- Continue development of a second skate park in the borough
- Consider development of a bmx facility
- Continue to work with partners such as the PCT and Groundwork to provide and promote non-facility related activities to increase levels of physical activity in Darlington
- Continue to provide a wide range of activities through the sports development team and outdoor sports manager, and in conjunction with locality coordinators.

SECTION 12

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Summary and implications of key findings

- 12.1 This study has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) and its Companion Guide. It provides an overview of indoor and outdoor sports facilities across Darlington.
- 12.2 This section summarises the recommendations and the future key priorities for each facility type. It also considers the implications of the key findings of this strategy for Planning.
- 12.3 The key issues emerging for each type of sports facility are summarised in Table 12.1 along with the key implications for policies within planning.

Hub & spoke model

- 12.4 To develop a more co-ordinated approach to sport and physical activity facility provision within Darlington, it is recommended that the Council and its partners explore a 'hub and spoke model' of provision. This is whereby there is one (or a small number of central 'hub' sites' and a series of 'spokes' radiating outwards.
- 12.5 For Darlington, we would suggest that the Dolphin Centre is the Central 'hub' for indoor facilities and the school/college facilities act as the spokes. Similar would apply to Eastbourne Sports Complex acting as the 'hub' site for outdoor facilities with provision on education sites acting as the spokes.
- 12.6 In order to do this it is important that there is consistency in the approach in terms of access to facilities on education sites and some level of co-ordination between programming and pricing between all facilities.
- 12.7 Specific recommendations relating to individual facility types are outlined in Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 - Implications of key issues by sports facility type for planning

Swimming pools		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of pools meets current demand • Attractiveness/quality of pools in Darlington is an issue, mainly the ageing school pools • Disability access issues at some of the older pool facilities • Conflicts between lane swimming & ‘fun’ swimming at the Dolphin Centre • Darlington Swim Club would like to access more pool time to reduce waiting lists • Lack of access to school pools pre and post school hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the amount of water space in Darlington • Maintain the quality of provision at the Dolphin Centre including cleanliness & maintenance of the changing facilities • Upgrade the school pool facilities at Longfield and Branksome (in priority order) to ensure they are disabled friendly & are suitable for community use • Review the swimming pool programme at the Dolphin Centre to try to incorporate more fitness/adult only sessions, fun only sessions, more pool time for Darlington ASC (not necessarily at the DC) • Improve community access to school pool facilities (priority Hummersknott then Longfield) to ease pressure at the Dolphin Centre • Revisiting the potential for alternative management of Hummersknott School sports facilities as a satellite community based leisure centre at evenings and weekends (& longer term Longfield) • Work with the ASA to explore a facility h • Consider development of a hub and spoke model where the Dolphin Centre is the hub, and the school pool facilities are the spokes • ire discount scheme to Swim21 accredited clubs. 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out, where appropriate, for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. The priorities for swimming are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protection of current quantity of provision - improvement of access to school facilities - improvement of quality of school facilities. <p>No additional swimming provision is required. Policies should provide the means, through planning obligations, for qualitative improvements to school pools and to help provide increased community access.</p> <p>In the event of population and/or participation growth and following the above identified improvements to school facilities, and based on monitoring of the Strategy, if provision becomes insufficient, the Sport England Facility calculator indicates that by 2014 the new population would generate demand equivalent to 10.10sqm per 1000 population. Under these circumstances this figure should be used as the new local standard.</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Sports halls		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longfield Sports Colleges is only one of two Sports Colleges in the country without (at least) a four court sports hall Quantity of sports halls is slightly below current demand Lack of dedicated indoor space for football and lack of provision for indoor cricket nets Good network of village/community halls but few offer sporting activities Attractiveness/quality of sports halls in Darlington is an issue, mainly the school facilities Inconsistent access and pricing policies across school sites No pay & play access to school sports hall facilities & no formal community use agreements in place (except at the Education Village) No community access to the sports hall at Queen Elizabeth VI Form College Cost of hire reported as a barrier by some clubs New sports hall soon to be developed at the new Eastbourne Academy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the new sports hall at Eastbourne Academy is fully accessible for the community once open Work with the VI Form College to negotiate access to its sports hall for community use Whilst the FPM calculations alone do not suggest the need for any more sports hall space in Darlington (in addition to the new Eastbourne Academy), we would recommend that support is given to the development of a sports hall (minimum 4 courts) at Longfield Sports College for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Longfield area is identified as a strategic development area & there is a significant amount of new housing planned for the future there are no other sports halls in this part of the borough the Sports College is severely limited in terms of the activities it provides (in curricular, extra curricular and out of school hours) due to the lack of a quality sports hall it will help the school and the authority to meet the Extended Services agenda and help to achieve the '5 hour offer' it will help develop pathways from schools to clubs and therefore help achieve targets relating to the development of school-club links there is an NGB need for indoor cricket provision in Darlington the LSP and borough council is proactively aiming to increase participation levels across Darlington which is likely to increase the demand for sports facility provision in the future. Explore the potential to develop a dedicated 5-a-side facility in Darlington in conjunction with the private sector (but likely to be an outdoor facility) 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. The priorities for sports halls are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvement of access to school facilities improvement of quality of school facilities additional provision of one sports hall of at least four courts in size. <p>DPD's/SPD's should provide the means, through provision on strategic sites, through site allocations or through planning obligations, for additional sports hall provision. All new provision should ensure that adequate community use is available. Where planning obligations are sought these can be used to help provide new sports halls, to contribute to the enhancement of existing facilities and to help provide increased community access.</p> <p>In the event of population and/or participation growth and following the above identified improvements to school facilities, and based on monitoring of the Strategy, if provision becomes insufficient, the Sport England Facility calculator indicates that by 2014 the new population would generate demand equivalent to 0.28 courts per 1000 population. Under these circumstances this figure should be used as the new local standard.</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Sports halls		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase usage of community/village halls for physical activities • Improve the quality of sports hall provision at secondary school sites, potentially via BSF– priority is Longfield • Explore the potential to improve quality sports facilities on school sites through the planning system • Maintain the quality of sports hall facilities at the Dolphin Centre • Improve access to school sports hall facilities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - revisiting the potential for alternative management of Hummersknott School sports facilities as a satellite community based leisure centre at evenings and weekends (& longer term Longfield) - a consistent approach to lettings/bookings at all secondary school sites with a tiered pricing approach dependant on quality of facility in the short term - promoting joint and partnership working across secondary schools (and council leisure centres) through the development of a joint working group. • Liaise with Queen Elizabeth VI Form College to open up its sports hall for community use • Consider development of ‘specialisms’ where one sports hall caters primarily for cricket for example, another for badminton etc, and the facilities are programmed accordingly • Work with NGBs to explore a facility hire discount scheme to Clubmark accredited clubs. 	
Community/village/activity halls		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good spread of community hall facilities but limited usage for recreational activities and/or people are not aware of the types of activities that are provided in them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide a range of activities and sports in community settings, increasing usage of community/village halls & increasing awareness of activities amongst residents. Use the facility database to identify which halls are most suitable for physical activities 	Community halls should be included within overall planning policies and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relating to the protection and enhancement of indoor sports facilities in the borough.

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Health & fitness facilities		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of health & fitness facilities meets current demand No junior gym facilities or outdoor gym facilities in the borough Both private and public facilities are good quality No Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) facilities in Darlington limiting accessibility for disabled users Conflict between adult & junior gym users at local authority facilities Limited provision for exercise activities in rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the quality of facilities ensuring that equipment is regularly refreshed to reflect advancements in the market. Explore the potential for one of the Council health & fitness facilities to become IFI accredited Explore the potential to provide a junior gym at one of the existing (or future eg Hummersknott) Council leisure facilities to address conflicts between adult & junior gym users Increase usage of community/village halls for physical activities. 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough.</p> <p>The priorities for health & fitness are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> protection of current quantity of provision potential development of a junior gym. <p>Developments meeting these objectives should be supported.</p> <p>In the event of population and/or participation growth and following the above identified improvements to school facilities, and based on monitoring of the Strategy, if provision becomes insufficient, the Sport England Facility calculator indicates that by 2014 the new population would generate demand equivalent 6.14 stations per 1000 population. Under these circumstances this figure should be used as the new local standard.</p>

Specialist indoor provision facilities		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of indoor bowls facilities meets current demand Gymnastics club is in need of a permanent facility Demand for indoor tennis facilities (none) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with the LTA and local clubs to explore the potential to provide indoor tennis provision in Darlington Continue to support the boxing club and gymnastics club & explore the opportunity to provide satellite facilities elsewhere in the borough 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Specialist indoor provision facilities		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<p>at present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand for indoor training facilities for athletics (none at present) • Some demand for an ice rink, more boxing/martial arts facilities, a ten pin bowling alley, more gymnastics facilities and another climbing wall • Demand for more facilities for people with disabilities • Demand for facilities/activities for the over 60s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible, assist the gymnastics club and boxing club to secure a permanent facility in the future • Consult with England Athletics to explore the options for providing indoor athletics training facilities in Darlington or providing access to facilities elsewhere in the Tees Valley • Consider provision of a climbing wall as part of a new/improved school via BSF • Ensure disability groups are consulted when new facilities are being designed or existing facilities are being upgraded • Ensure that a range of activities are targeted at the 60+ age group. 	<p>the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough.</p> <p>Specialist facility related priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - potential development of indoor tennis provision - permanent specialist gymnastics facility. <p>Developments meeting these objectives should be supported.</p>
STPs & MUGAs		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of STPs is below current demand • Existing STPs are good quality but Eastbourne receives heavy use • Issues relating to awareness of, and access to MUGAs on school sites • Lack of training areas and dedicated football training facilities - all MUGAs have a tarmac surface and are not suitable for football training • MUGAs on school sites are better quality than those in parks but have limited community access • Majority of MUGAs are not signposted and have no ancillary facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of one more STP in conjunction with the Football Foundation • Ensure a sinking fund is put in place for regular maintenance and upgrade of existing STPs • Explore the opportunity to provide a dedicated football facility, in conjunction with the private sector • Improve access to MUGAs on school sites to provide informal facilities for young people in local communities, in conjunction with Childrens Services • Improve signage and promotion of MUGA facilities (and sports development activities that take place on MUGAs) across the borough • No immediate demand for additional MUGAs but should additional facilities be provided in the future, explore the opportunity for a synthetic surface rather than tarmac • Maintain and improve the quality of existing MUGAs in parks - priority is North Park (install floodlighting) and Eastbourne Park (fencing, equipment, line markings) 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. The priorities for STP/MUGA facilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - additional provision of at least one STP - improvement of access to MUGAs on school sites - improvement to the quality of MUGAs in parks. <p>DPD's/SPD's should provide the means, through provision on strategic sites, through site allocations or through planning obligations, for additional STP provision. All new provision</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

STPs & MUGAs		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for Planning Policy
		<p>should ensure that adequate community use is available. Where planning obligations are sought these can be used to help provide to contribute to the enhancement of existing STPs/MUGAs and to help provide increased community access.</p> <p>There is an identified need for a commercial 5 a side facility in the Borough. The LDF should incorporate this requirement.</p> <p>In the event of population and/or participation growth and following the above identified improvements to school facilities, and based on monitoring of the Strategy, if provision becomes insufficient, the Sport England Facility calculator indicates that by 2014 the new population would generate demand 0.03 STPs per 1000 population. Under these circumstances this figure should be used as the new local standard.</p>

Bowling greens		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for LDF Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of bowling greens meets current demand • Lack of changing provision and ancillary facilities is an issue • Security is an issue at some sites • Accessibility to public bowling greens could be improved • Retention and recruitment of members is a caused by the profile/perception of the sport and lack of coaching structure • Facilities are value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the existing level of bowling green provision • Ensure bowls facilities are monitored to deter vandalism • Explore the potential to provide improved ancillary facilities at Brinkburn Dene • Continue to maintained greens in line with clubs needs and consider, where possible to provide safe storage facilities on site • Explore possible ways to improve accessibility to public greens in conjunction with the bowls club forum • Explore ways of raising the profile of bowls amongst the younger population, with the NGB 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. Facility related priorities focus around ancillary accommodation and improvements to security. Developments meeting these objectives should be supported.</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Bowling greens		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for LDF Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure facilities remain value for money by working closely with the forum. 	

Tennis courts		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for LDF Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of tennis courts is below current demand – mainly due to access No public, open access courts in locality B or C Poor surface and vandalism was identified as a problem with public courts The best quality facilities are at the two clubs - New Blackwell Tennis Club and Wellfield Tennis Club. Both clubs are located in locality E in the west of the town. Many of the tennis courts that exist are on school sites and are not accessible to the local community The actual number of accessible courts in Darlington is only six (across three sites). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the opportunity to increase the number of community accessible tennis courts in Darlington, on managed sites, perhaps via BSF Explore the potential to provide new open access courts in locality B and C Ensure the courts at Brinkburn Dene are replaced to the same or higher standard when works are complete Upgrade and improve the existing parks courts, priority is Stanhope Park Ensure existing public courts are well maintained and that park wardens are used to monitor the facilities to prevent vandalism and misuse Consider development of a satellite club in the east of the borough, in conjunction with Blackwell Tennis Club Improve access to tennis courts & MUGAs on school sites (priority locality B & C) in conjunction with Childrens Services Improve signage and promotion of tennis courts (and sports development activities that take place on tennis courts) across the borough Promote school club links to raise the profile of the tennis clubs in the community and provide an exit route for young people. Ensure residents are made aware of existing tennis facilities via promotion in schools, local community facilities and other public buildings 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. Tennis court related priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional provision of courts in locality areas B and C improvement of access to tennis courts on school sites improvement to the quality of tennis courts in parks. <p>DPD's/SPD's should provide the means, through provision on strategic sites, through site allocations or through planning obligations, for additional tennis provision. All new provision should ensure that adequate community use is available. Where planning obligations are sought these can be used to help provide to contribute to the enhancement of existing tennis courts and to help provide increased community access.</p>

SECTION 12 – SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

Specialist outdoor provision		
Summary of key issues	Recommendations	Implications for LDF Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of athletics tracks meets current demand Limited access to existing athletics track at Longfield Sports College The athletics track and facilities at Eastbourne Sports Complex are not suitable for major competitions and events Demand for more formal and informal cycling provision Quantity of golf courses meets current demand School-club links for athletics and golf are poor some demand for additional active play facilities eg skate parks, BMX facilities and MUGAs, but main issue is gaining access to those that currently exist, especially MUGAs on school sites Need to provide and promote non-facility related activities to increase levels of physical activity eg walking, use of parks and open spaces Demand from young people to provide more diverse 'non-traditional' type activities to stimulate interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the opportunity to improve the quality of the athletics track at Longfield, and increase community access Work with British Cycling to explore development of, and improvement to the cycle track at Longfield High School, and increase community access Improve maintenance and general upkeep of the track at Eastbourne, ensure a strategy is in place for future maintenance/replacement of the facility Improve Eastbourne athletics track to provide a covered stand for spectators and provide a secure storage area for when track is in use Improve school-club links for athletics and golf by working with the NGBs and PDM Work with Childrens Services to obtain greater access to active play facilities on school sites Consider development of a second skate park Consider development of a bmx facility Continue to work with partners, eg PCT and Groundwork, to provide and promote non-facility related activities to increase levels participation Continue to provide a wide range of activities through the sports development team and outdoor sports manager, and in conjunction with locality coordinators. 	<p>Sport and recreation facilities should be included within the Core Strategy and future Development Plan Documents, with details set out where appropriate for specific sports facilities in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document relating to the protection, enhancement and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities in the Borough. Specialist outdoor facility related priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative improvements to athletics facilities - Facilities to accommodate cycling - Additional active play facilities such a skate parks and bmx tracks. <p>Developments meeting these objectives should be supported.</p>