

Community Committee	
Meeting Date	6 March 2024
Report Title	Built Facilities Strategy (BFS)
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Jay Jenkins, Leisure & Technical Services Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This report recommends that the Committee adopt the Built Facilities Strategy 2024 – 2038 as drafted in Appendix I. 2. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Environment & Leisure in consultation with the Chair of Community Committee to make minor amendments, should Sport England recommend any final changes.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has developed a Built Facilities Strategy for 2024 – 2038 (**Appendix I**) which analyses the Borough’s indoor sports facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. It considers facilities that are available for public use provided by the Council and other organisations. The Strategy sets out the Council’s intended approach and priorities for ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet current and future demand.
- 1.2 This report seeks Committee approval for the new Built Facilities Strategy (BFS) for a period in line with the Local Plan. This Strategy focuses on the built sports infrastructure and is complemented by a separate Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 1.3 The Strategy was undertaken by independent consultants (Strategic Leisure) and uses the research, consultation, site assessments, data analysis and mapping that underpins the study to set direction and determine priorities for future provision.

2 Background

- 2.1 The existing Swale BFS expired in 2023. The Council has developed a Built facilities Strategy for 2024 – 2038 (**Appendix I**) which analyses the Borough’s built facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. The Strategy sets out the Council’s intended approach and priorities for ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet current and future demand.

- 2.2 The Strategy provides guidance to assist with determining what provision of built facilities is required to respond to large scale infrastructure requirements for new community housing developments and also provides an evidence-based strategy that maximises the opportunity to take advantage of external funding opportunities.
- 2.3 The Strategy provides an evidence base that will allow Swale to plan, prioritise and schedule future-built facility improvement projects. The Strategy is primarily to aid the Local Plan process to enable SBC to advise and direct potential developers to ensure they deliver the right leisure facilities for the borough.
- 2.4 The Strategy follows Sport England guidance and is supported by National Governing Bodies of Sport. This helps to provide robust evidence for supporting the Swale Local Plan process. The strategy has been sent to Sport England but at the time of reporting no comments had been received. Members will be updated on the night if this comes before the meeting however the recommendation asks for delegation for minor changes to avoid coming back to committee.
- 2.5 It is important to stress that this BFS study focusses on facility provision in the context of health and wellbeing. Facility investment priorities will reflect locally identified needs to deliver opportunities for the local community to be more active.
- 2.6 Other future facility provision, linked particularly to long term population growth and housing development, is the development of new and improved walking, jogging and cycling routes, to encourage active travel, and provide an environment in which physical activity can be easily integrated into daily life.
- 2.7 It is clear from the strategy analysis that there is a need for some capital investment in Swale to address future needs. Whilst some of this investment relates to additional facility provision (more water space by 2038), there is also a need to start planning now for the refurbishment of Swallows Leisure Centre, Sheppey Pool (the sports hall and fitness provision at Sheppey Leisure Complex is being refurbished as part of a Levelling Up Funded project) and Faversham Pools. Investment is also required in some of the voluntary sector and education facilities.
- 2.8 The supply and demand analysis and priority for future provision within the borough clearly identifies 3 key needs:
- Redevelop and extend water provision at Sheppey Pool from 6 lanes to 8 lanes.
 - Retaining existing levels of community accessible (including pay and play) sports halls, swimming pools, and fitness stations as a minimum; and
 - Consider how best to facilitate enhanced and dedicated gymnastics facilities and explore feasibility of increasing indoor bowls provision.

2.9 Retaining and improving the quality of provision is important in Swale to ensure that participation levels are retained and wherever possible increased. Active Lives (Source: April 2023, data November 21/22) highlights that 28% of the Swale community is not active enough to have any health benefit.

3 Proposals - Findings

3.1 This report recommends that the Committee adopt the Built Facilities Strategy as attached in Appendix I.

3.2 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Environment & Leisure in consultation with the Chair of Community Committee to make minor amendments, should Sport England recommend any final changes.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 Failure to adopt a Built Facilities Strategy would severely limit the ability of the Council to gain developer contributions and national funding to support the development and delivery of new built facilities, and so is not recommended.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders, leisure operators, Sport England, town and parish councils and health organisations.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The new Corporate Plan 2024 – 2027 is has been developed. The Built Facilities Strategy sits within the ‘Community’ priority. Enabling our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience.
Financial, Resource and Property	It is clear from the draft strategy analysis that there is a need for some capital investment in Swale to address future needs. Whilst some of this investment relates to additional facility provision (more water space by 2038), there is also a need to start planning now for the refurbishment of Swallows Leisure Centre, Sheppey Pool (the sports hall and fitness provision at Sheppey Leisure Complex is being refurbished as part of a Levelling Up Funded project) and Faversham Pools. Each of these individual projects will need to be considered via the usual budget setting processes. This strategy will help to secure external investment to support these needs. Investment is also required in some of the voluntary sector and education facilities.

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified.
Crime and Disorder	None identified.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified.
Health and Wellbeing	By providing and supporting a broad range of quality facilities across Swale, there will be greater opportunities for people to participate in healthy activities. Where possible, partnerships will be sought with appropriate health partners to encourage participation and maximise funding opportunities.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified.
Equality and Diversity	None identified.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.

7 Appendices

7.1 Built Facilities Strategy 2024 - 2038

8 Background Papers

9.1 [31 October 2023 Community Committee Minutes](#)