

Assessing Needs and Opportunities for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities in South Somerset

Executive Portfolio Holder: Sylvia Seal, Leisure and Culture
Director: Netta Meadows, Director – Strategy and Commissioning
Lead Specialist: Jan Gamon, Lead Specialist, Strategic Planning
Lead Officer: Lynda Pincombe, Specialist, Strategic Planning
Contact Details: Lynda.pincombe@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462614

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide members with an update on the Needs Assessment for Indoor/Outdoor Sports Facilities in South Somerset before the development and adoption of a new strategy for sports facilities.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 10 January 2019.

Public Interest

3. The Council aspires to help residents to live well by enabling quality leisure, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities within the district. The Council therefore recently commissioned a study to review built sports facilities in line with national planning policy guidance. Work to date has included consultation with key providers, national governing bodies for sport and sports clubs and parish councils. The initial examination of supply and demand for leisure facilities in South Somerset has identified a number of gaps and issues with leisure facility provision in South Somerset. This assessment of need will be used to help shape the production of a new built leisure facility strategy in 2019 which will identify actions the council can reasonably take to remedy gaps in provision. This report seeks to update member on the work to date and encourage them to provide relevant feedback on the emerging issues.

Recommendations

4. That the District Executive:
 - a. note and comment on the emerging issues from the draft Needs Assessment.
 - b. encourages Members to attend the upcoming workshop on 24th January 2019 at 5.00pm to share their reactions and to participate in a prioritisation exercise.

Background

5. Following a competitive process, Knight Kavanah & Page Limited (KKP) was appointed to undertake a needs assessment and produce a new National Planning Policy Compliant strategy for built leisure facilities in South Somerset. KKP commenced work on the needs assessment in July 2018. One of the the drivers for completing this work was to update the Council's evidence base to support the delivery of a new pool in Chard but the work will also help to set future funding priorities and to inform future planning policy.

Report Detail

6. KKP was instructed to include the following leisure facilities in the needs assessment:

Swimming Pools
Sports Halls
Community Halls
Health and Fitness facilities –20 stations and above
Indoor Courts (tennis, squash, netball, basketball, multiuse)
Outdoor sports facilities (athletics tracks, tennis courts, bowling greens, cycling)

7. A draft of the Needs Assessment documentation has now been completed. KKP will produce a strategy and action plan once members and other stakeholders are content that the needs assessment accurately captures the key issues and gaps in provision.
8. Needs assessment summaries by facility type are attached as Appendix 1. A copy of the full Needs assessment document can be found on the Council's website by following this link: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/sport-and-health/assessing-needs-and-opportunities-for-indooroutdoor-leisure-facilities-in-south-somerset/>

Overall Needs Assessment Summary and emerging strategic recommendations

9. A summary of the emerging strategy recommendations are detailed below. These recommendations are based on the initial views formed by the consultants but will inevitably be updated following further input from key stakeholders. This exercise will help to define the Council's future strategic priorities in this area and clarify what the Council can realistically do to address gaps in provision. The draft strategic recommendations are as follows:
 - Continue to support schools to manage their facilities with a view to ensuring continued community use following the end of contract with 1610 at the end of March 2019.
 - Commission a feasibility study to determine how the availability of water space can be increased in the area. This should assess and/or take account of:
 - The business case for a 5-lane x 25m pool in Chard.
 - Potential refurbishment/extension of Goldenstones Leisure Centre (i.e. whether it is more cost effective to build a new pool or to increase the size of the pool(s))
 - Potential investment in Crewkerne Aqua Centre to alter/improve the learning pool.
 - Consider whether and how increased use can be made of swimming pools at independent schools and at facilities located just outside of the district.
 - Develop a 'minor works' investment plan to address key issues appertaining to the condition and presentation of some of the more significant community/village hall facilities.
 - Concurrently support village hall and parish council committees to continue to offer, coordinate and publicise community spaces which contribute positively to the physical activity and health and wellbeing agenda.
 - With partners, commission a study to assess the feasibility of enclosing the tennis/netball courts at Westfield Academy to create an indoor netball centre. As part of this, assess the potential demand for indoor tennis within the same venue.
 - Work with the LTA and partners in a coordinated manner to address the relatively high latent demand and increase participation in tennis across SSDC by:
 - Developing a programme, based on the priorities identified in this report to improve the quality of community courts in the area.
 - Installing floodlights at key sites (based on priorities set out in this report) to increase the capacity of the District's publicly accessible court stock and address overplay.
 - Improving ancillary provision at Lightgate Recreation Ground (South Petherton TC) and Martock Recreation Ground (Martock TC).
 - Supporting provision of an additional outdoor court at Somerton TC

- Installing/adopting the LTA Clubspark access system for community courts and an associated charging mechanism to enable accumulation of a sinking fund for ongoing court refurbishment.
- Support the development of additional recreational gymnastics provision in Area West.
- Increase health and fitness provision at Chard to meet the mild shortfall that will result from its increased popularity and the predicted population increase in the Authority.
- Maintain and further develop squash participation to ensure that the use of squash courts for their primary purpose is continuously justified – on an ongoing basis.
- Maintain and invest in the athletics track to ensure its ongoing regional profile and its use for training, competition and recreation.
- Build on the investment in infrastructure to encourage and enable the community to undertake active travel and increase cycling participation.
- Invest in the cycle network to join up cycle ways.
- Should the opportunity arise, develop a dedicated closed road circuit in the district possibly, in the fullness of time, on the MoD Yeovilton site.
- Retain a watching brief in respect of ensuring that sufficient daytime access is available to indoor sports and other facilities across the district.
- Use available investment funding to improve the quality of the Donyatt Indoor Bowls Club.

The Next Steps

10. The next steps are outlined below.

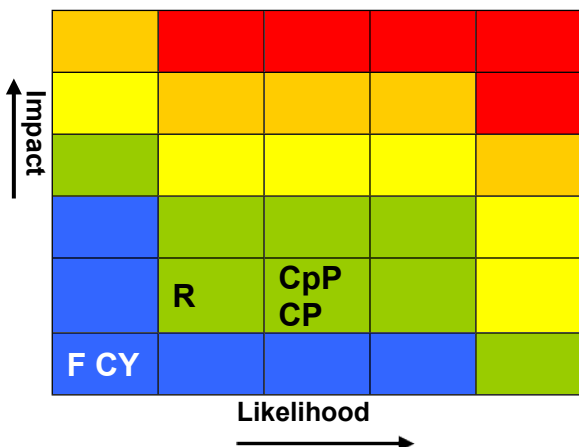
Consultation with NGB's, Sport England and other key stakeholders with regard to the emerging issues and strategic priorities	Now until January.
Portfolio Holder workshop to present finding, gauge priorities	24 th January 2019
Needs Assessment presentation to Chard Regeneration Board	8 Feb 2019
Strategy to District Executive for adoption	7 March 2019

Financial Implications

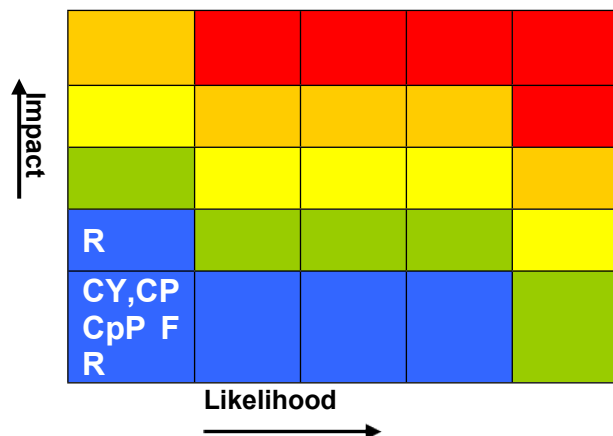
11. No new implications at present.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

12. The leisure facility needs assessment and strategy will contribute to Council Plan aim to “improve health and reduce health inequalities” and to help the Council “ to build healthy, self-reliant, active communities” by
 - a. Targeting support to areas of need
 - b. Helping people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

13. None

Equality and Diversity Implications

14. An EA has been completed for the development of a new strategy for built leisure facilities.

Privacy Impact Assessment

15. The way in which the KKP handle/hold personal data during the development of a new strategy has been discussed and agreed with the Case Team Leader for Support Services.

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1 – Summary of key facts and emerging issues by facility type

Facility type	Swimming pools	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 20 pools at 17 sites in South Somerset. There are nine main/general swimming pools in the area. A relatively modest increase in population is predicted for Yeovil.	Consideration should be given to the possibility of expanding water space provision at Goldenstones to accommodate potentially increased demand.
Quality	Most swimming pools in the area are assessed as above average quality or good. Three are rated below average. Two swimming pools (Bruton School for Girls and Crewkerne Aqua Centre) have not had any significant investment in over 20 years. Investment is planned for Crewkerne Aqua Centre. Goldenstones is a key facility but has ageing plant and equipment.	Investment is required in the plant at Goldenstones, in the near future.
Accessibility	30.3% of the population lives within one mile of a swimming pool with pay and play access. Almost the whole population lives within twenty minutes' drive of a swimming pool. Only 9.6% of the residents of SSDC's most deprived communities live within one mile of a community available swimming pool. Covering the pool at Huish Leisure Ltd has counter-balanced the loss of water at Cresta and improved access to pools in Area North	The residents of Chard and surrounding hinterland require access to a swimming pool.
Availability (Management and usage)	Four swimming pools offer pay and play availability in South Somerset. Remaining pools have restricted or no public availability. The shape of the learner pool at Crewkerne Aqua Centre restricts programming and use. Sexeys School wishes to develop a new swimming pool and offer community use of this.	A swimming replacement facility in Chard and the upkeep of Goldenstones swimming pool suggest that the needs of residents and clubs will be satisfied and enable swimming to grow.
Summary	Swimming pools are full and have little capacity to accommodate any increase in demand resulting from population growth or an increase in swimming participation. There is substantial latent demand for swimming. The water space gap/deficiency in Chard should be remedied via provision of a 5-lane x 25m pool (a modern, efficient replacement for Cresta Leisure Centre). A feasibility study should be commissioned to assess the business case for this including a re-run of the FPM based upon updated supply information. Consideration should be given to expanding the volume of water space at Goldenstones to accommodate increased demand for swimming in the locality.	

Facility type	Sports halls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 19 halls with 3+ courts across 18 sites.	
Quality	Four sports halls are rated good, eight above average, four below average, two poor and one was unassessed (private use).	
Accessibility	98% of SSDC's population lives within 20 minutes' drive of a sports hall. There are three additional sports halls with pay and play access within 20 minutes' drive of the SSDC boundary. Nearly half the population reside within walking distance of a sports hall.	Ilminster, with a population of nearly 6,000, has no access to a sports hall within the town.
Availability (Management and usage)	Most halls are located on education sites limiting daytime availability; just two are available during the day. One (4-court) sports halls is not available for community use at all. (Perrott Hill School). The three boarding schools offer very little community use. (Kings, Sexeys and Perrott Hill). Access to the Royal Naval Air Station requires security clearance so availability is also limited.	There is a need to retain full daytime access at Westlands Sports & Fitness and the existing level of daytime use at Wincanton Sports Centre. Netball is a key sport; SSDC should commission a study to assess the feasibility of enclosing the tennis/netball courts at Westfield Academy to create an indoor netball centre – which would also offer opportunity to further develop indoor tennis. In order to ensure certainty about access to (at least five of the six schools affected by the termination of the 1610 contract), a clear community access-based solution should be in place by December 2018. With specific reference to the sports hall (and second hall) at Wadham School the possibility of a management partnership with Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd. Should be considered in the first instance.
Strategic summary	Retain full daytime access at Westlands Sports & Fitness Retain existing level of daytime use at Wincanton Sports Centre. Commission a study to assess the feasibility of enclosing the tennis/netball courts at Westfield Academy to create an indoor netball centre. Establish clear community access-based solutions for all six schools whose sports facilities are presently managed by 1610 – by December 2018. Assess the potential for a partnership with Crewkerne Leisure Management Ltd to manage Wadham School sports hall facilities.	

Facility type	Village halls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	The audit identified 104 village and community halls in South Somerset. Village halls serve many of the more rural parts of the District - in all four analysis areas with no obvious gaps in provision in areas of higher population density.	The areas with higher population density are serviced by village halls or community centres – so there is no need to develop additional venues.
Quality	Village hall quality is highly variable; based upon survey responses it would appear that the majority are in below average condition. Facilities generally deteriorate with age, unless sufficient maintenance, resources and investment are forthcoming.	Given the generally 'sub-par' condition of village/community halls in the district, SSDC and partners need to consider if and what support they can give to ensure that facility quality is improved and/or maintained.
Accessibility	Analysis indicates that 41% of the population lives within an 800-metre catchment of a site. Area South has the highest accessibility per capita (31%) whilst Area North has the lowest accessibility per capita (21%) when using the 800m catchment as a guide to accessibility. The proposed urban extension to Yeovil may place additional demand on current facilities, although as already identified Area South has the highest accessibility per capita currently. The rural nature of South Somerset (and variable levels of access to a car for leisure activity) means that the importance of local facilities should not be underestimated.	There is no need to develop additional venues at this time.
Availability (Management and usage)	Management varies between village hall committees, parish councils and individuals. All management relies on the goodwill of volunteers. Site visits and survey responses indicate that a wide variety of activity is on offer. The range of activities varies between each hall and is considered to broadly reflect interpreted local need.	Continue to support the work undertaken by Spark in respect of (e.g.) securing external funding, improving volunteer skills and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of facility management programming, management and finance.
Summary	Develop a 'minor works' investment plan to address key issues appertaining to the condition and presentation of some of the more significant community/village hall facilities. Concurrently support village hall and parish council committees to continue to offer, coordinate and publicise community spaces which contribute positively to the physical activity and health and wellbeing agenda.	

Facility type	Health & fitness	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 22 'main' health and fitness facilities with 863 stations in South Somerset. There is a current near supply demand balance and just a small predicted undersupply in 2036.	Additional health and fitness provision will be required to accommodate the slightly increased demand caused by predicted population growth especially if the popularity of fitness continues to increase.
Quality	Three gyms are rated good, 17 above average and four below average.	There is a need to maintain quality and where possible improve the condition of the average/below

		average rated gyms.
Accessibility	All the main population areas have health and fitness facilities. Almost half (48.6%) of the population live within one mile of a health and fitness facility and almost all residents in South Somerset live within 20 minutes' drive of a facility.	There is a need to do more to ensure that harder to reach groups and people with specific health needs can access facilities.
Availability (Management and usage)	There are 11 publicly accessible pay and play health and fitness facilities in South Somerset plus 13 which require a membership to access. The three private use only facilities are the Royal Naval Air Station – Yeovilton and the two boarding schools; Kings School and Bruton School for Girls. Three health and fitness facilities are located within 2 miles of the SSDC boundary.	The key need is to ensure health and fitness facilities cater fully for the full range of different market segments within the South Somerset community.
Strategic Summary	The market for health and fitness is still growing: different market segments utilise different types of facility. The importance of the financial contribution that health and fitness provision makes to the viability of (and to enable) other publicly accessible facilities as swimming pools needs to be taken into account; for example when assessing the feasibility of developing swimming facilities in Chard.	

Facility type	Tennis	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	South Somerset has 139 tennis courts on 47 sites 116 are available for community use across 42 sites. 52 community available courts are located at education sites or leisure centres. There are no purpose-built indoor tennis courts in South Somerset. The District has 13 tennis clubs with in a total of 1,195 members. Five clubs are not serviced by floodlit provision.	South Somerset has sufficient club court provision to meet current levels of demand.
Quality	37 community available courts are assessed as good quality, 44 as standard and 35 as poor quality. 13 sites have poor quality courts. Ageing macadam surfaces at many venues have started to break up.	Courts with poor surfaces need to be resurfaced.
Accessibility	Court hire costs and pricing structures may deter community users and limit use at some sites. Certain sites face specific issues related to overplay. The accessibility of certain club sites and most community courts is adversely affected by their quality (and limited ancillary facilities). There is substantial latent demand for tennis in the Authority Queen Camel TC and South Petherton TC (both of which already have floodlights) are operating close to capacity.	Installing floodlights on courts at North Cadbury Tennis Club and Tintinhull Recreation Ground & Swimming Pool (accompanied by improvements to court quality) will create additional capacity to alleviate overplay. Installing floodlights at other key sites will enable current provision to meet latent demand.
Availability (Management and usage)	There is a need to improve court quality and booking systems to utilise spare capacity on non-club community available courts. Pay and play options are made available by some clubs although information appertaining to this is not, in all	To ensure that pay and play access is available across the Authority, SSDC should consider installing the LTA Clubspark court hire solution. This would enable tracking of levels

	cases, kept fully updated.	of use made of its community courts.
Strategic Summary	<p>The LTA's view is that community courts need protection and are a priority in order to increase levels of tennis participation in South Somerset, Sites the LTA would consider most appropriate for such investment include Ilminster Recreation Ground and Yeovil Recreation Centre.</p> <p>Installation of floodlights at key clubs will increase the capacity to accommodate additional play and address overplay.</p> <p>SSDC should consider installation/adoption of the LTA Clubspark access system for community courts. Charges for this access should be at a level which will generate revenue sufficient to generate a sinking fund for future refurbishment.</p> <p>Although consultation did not produce significant evidence related to demand for an indoor tennis centre, include a tennis-related specification and consideration of tennis requirements in any feasibility study commissioned to evaluate the likely viability of a netball centre at Westfields Academy</p> <p>Priority should be given to installation of floodlights (plus court quality improvement) at North Cadbury Tennis Club and Tintinhull Recreation Ground and Swimming Pool to create significant additional publicly accessible capacity.</p> <p>Other schemes for which SSDC endorsement should be considered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provision of additional outdoor court at Somerton TC. ▪ Modernisation of the clubhouse and additional outdoor courts at South Petherton TC (Lightgate Recreation Ground). ▪ Provision of additional outdoor courts at Queen Carmel TC ▪ Provision of access to suitable toilet facilities at Martock TC (Martock Recreation Ground). 	

Facility type	Squash	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 18 squash courts in South Somerset. There are no courts in Area East.	
Quality	Most are of good or above average quality; two are below average. Huish Episcopi courts are reportedly deteriorating in quality.	There is a need to maintain quality and where possible improve the average/below average rated courts.
Accessibility	93% of South Somerset's population live within 20 minutes' drive of a squash court facility.	
Availability (Management and usage)	<p>Six pay & play courts are available at four sites.</p> <p>Availability will reduce by one in 2019 due to loss of the court at Stanchester Sports Centre.</p> <p>Courts at Royal Naval Air Station -Yeovilton offer only limited access.</p> <p>All clubs/courts have capacity to accommodate increased demand.</p> <p>The club structure in the District is willing and has capacity to take on new members.</p> <p>A key threat is that, declining demand will lead some courts to be used as multi-purpose facilities. This can adversely affect court quality which may then exacerbate quality issues causing further reductions in use.</p>	<p>Retain pay and play access to squash courts across the four sites.</p> <p>There is a need to drive up participation/increase demand to ensure that courts are used for their primary purpose and not 'hived off' for other uses.</p>
Strategic Summary	<p>There is no requirement to build additional courts</p> <p>There is a need to maintain the quality and preserve the function of existing courts.</p>	

Facility type	Gymnastics	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are five gymnastics clubs in South Somerset There are two dedicated gymnastics venues. Westlands Sports and Fitness is the only leisure centre offering recreational gymnastics. The majority of provision is located in Yeovil (Area South).	Consider making additional provision available in leisure centres in administration areas other than Area South.
Quality	Dedicated facilities are of high quality and in good condition meeting club needs.	Continued maintenance and investment are required to maintain quality.
Accessibility	Gymnastics is accessible to people resident in Area South but is limited for people living in Area West.	Additional recreational gymnastics provision in Area West is needed to meet current demand.
Availability (Management & usage)	Dedicated centres are operational during the day and in the evening. Current facilities are full to capacity; clubs have substantial waiting lists. At present, opportunity to grow participation in gymnastics is limited by the limitations in spatial capacity and the need for a larger workforce to grow the sport.	Increase coaching workforce to support any increases in provision.
Strategic Summary	There is a need to maintain the quality of dedicated provision in South Somerset There is a need to increase the available qualified coach workforce to underpin existing provision and enable future expansion. SSDC should consider whether and how to encourage development of additional recreational gymnastics provision in Area West.	

Facility type	Bowls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are 12 bowling greens in South Somerset across 12 sites These are used by 11 community clubs Membership of the 11 clubs playing in South Somerset totals 685 people.	There is no requirement for additional bowling greens.
Quality	Nine greens are good quality; two are standard quality and one is of poor quality.	Improve the poor quality green at Westlands Sports Bowls Club. Maintain green quality at all other sites. Maintain the present quality of ancillary provision
Accessibility	All greens are available for community use. No clubs express concern re security of tenure and related arrangements	
Availability (Management and usage)	Four greens are operating at above the recommended capacity. The one (privately owned) disused green has been out of action for at least three years.	Monitor levels of demand for/usage of the greens at Ilminster Bowling & Tennis club Yeovil Bowls & Squash Club,
Strategic Summary	Supply of greens is sufficient to accommodate current and future demand. Area South greens are currently overplayed; the impact on their condition should be monitored.	

Facility type	Indoor bowls	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are three indoor bowls facilities in South Somerset; a total of 12 rinks.	
Quality	One is of below average quality, the other two are above average in quality.	Donyatt requires investment to resolve ongoing structural issues and improve quality.
Accessibility	93% of the population lives within 30 minutes' drive of an indoor bowls facility.	
Availability (Management and usage)	All facilities are available during the day and in the evening. It is necessary to be a member to access all three facilities.	.
Strategic Summary	Indoor bowls clubs are experiencing declining numbers in South Somerset Consultation did not highlight any additional demand for indoor bowls and, based upon current membership figures, EIBA's view is that the three existing clubs will be able to accommodate current and future demand.	

Facility type	Athletics	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	An 8-lane synthetic track and 'in-track' field event venue – in Yeovil.	
Quality	It is in generally good condition. Current investment in the clubhouse should result improved its condition and access (including disability).	Continued maintenance and investment are required to maintain quality and ensure ongoing use for competition/recreation.
Accessibility	The majority (87%) of SSDC population resides within 30 minutes of the athletics track. Facilities at Millfield School are not readily available to the general public. The facility at Taunton is over 30 minutes' drive time away for the majority of SSDC residents.	The track is accessible to the majority of the SSDC residents. It is a regional asset and of strategic importance to SSDC residents and regionally.
Availability (Management & usage)	The track is floodlit and is available during summer and winter (weather dependent). Triathlon clubs, schools, club and disability groups all use the facility. People travel a long way to use the track	Daytime and evening access is important to maximise use and ensure that user groups other than YOAC are able to gain access to the track
Strategic Summary	It is a key facility for SSDC and neighbouring authorities. Current investment will improve DDA access and enhance participation. There is a need to protect this facility for local and wider sub-regional use.	

Facility type	Cycling	
Elements	Assessment findings	Specific facility needs
Quantity	There are no specific built cycling facilities in South Somerset. There is an 80 mile circular route within the authority, which offers long or short distance cycling use.	Consider dedicated facilities should the opportunity arise for a built facility (e.g. MoD site becomes available).
Quality	Some Authority cycle ways are not joined up and the cycle network suffers from a lack of connectivity.	Invest in the cycle network to join up the cycle ways.
Accessibility	Bikeability is delivered in schools and Breeze cycle leader training has taken place. These are key to ensuring more people can safely take part in the sport. The nearest velodromes are at Newport and Bournemouth (both over one hour's drive away).	
Availability (Management and usage)	N/A	
Strategic Summary	Local clubs would be keen to see a velodrome developed and are also interested in a closed circuit/off-road facility in the area. They are aware of the financial investment required to achieve this and do not have funds available to contribute. Use should be made of MoD land and facilities if the opportunity arises.	