Community Leisure Hub

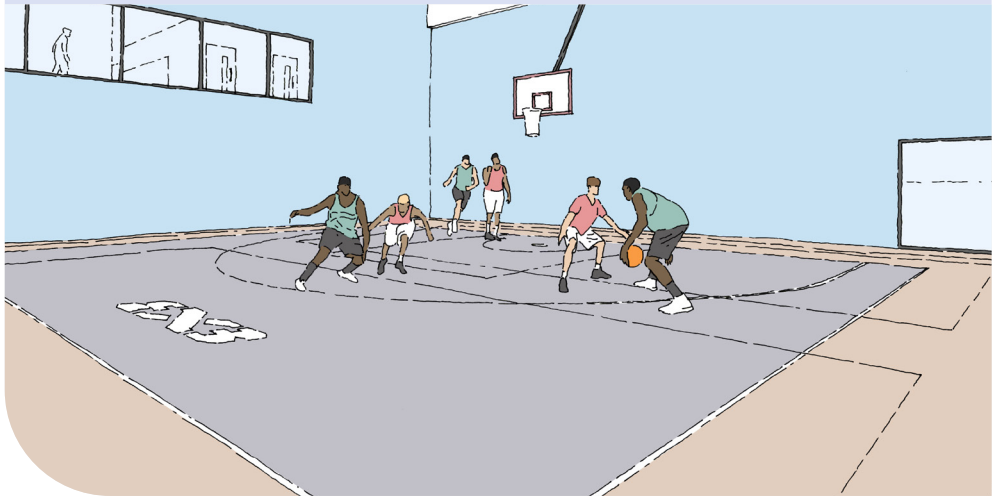
Accessible and inclusive facilities for the local community

Think of the environment. Please avoid printing this A4 document unnecessarily.

sportengland.org

Sport England's design guidance notes aim to:

- Increase awareness of good design;
- Help built environment professionals, clients, user representatives and stakeholders to follow best practice;
- Encourage well-designed facilities that meet the needs of sport and physical activity and are a pleasure to use.



Document accessibility

This document has been designed for comfortable reading at A4 and on a laptop screen, but can also be printed at A3 for large print versions. The pdf is accessible and has been tested to work with text readers.

User guide

Before using this design guidance note for any specific projects, all users should refer to the on-line User guide which explains when and how to use the guidance as well as understanding the limitations of use.

Click here for **User guide** and other **Design and cost guidance**

Forewords

Sport England overview

Access to good-quality affordable, sustainable facilities is key to getting more people physically active as demonstrated by participation patterns in numerous sports facilities across the country. The local demographic, health, participation and social profiles, will determine the most beneficial mix of facility provision. A Community Leisure Hub can provide access to leisure activities and other community services such as libraries, healthcare and childcare. Places and spaces are required for people of all ages and abilities to take regular exercise close to where they live.

Swim England and Sport England have been leading the sector in exploring new ideas. The Community Leisure Hub concept combines water activity space, health & fitness, and community services that are efficient and accessible. It allows flexibility to respond to the diverse needs and priorities of the community. For example, programmes to encourage healthier lifestyles, improving health outcomes, reducing social exclusion, increasing participation in target groups and supporting the sector in their Active Wellbeing Services and Uniting the Movement.

The ideas considered within Community Leisure Hub will further support both the mental and health wellbeing of the community, and bring additional social value. The facilities are flexible and agile, enabling a Hub that is accessible and inclusive for all.

Kevin Mills, Director Place Development Sport England

Swim England overview

Swimming continues to be one of the most popular activities in the UK, enjoyed by millions each year. With an ageing stock of swimming facilities, it is essential that sustainable, fit-for-purpose swimming pools are accessible to communities. Swim England is pleased to have worked with Sport England on the development of the Community Leisure Hub and Leisure Local concept.

Swimming pools are often natural hubs within local neighbourhoods and contribute significantly to feelings of place and a community, as well as improving physical and mental wellbeing.

The provision of water space within local authorities should be flexible in order to meet the needs of local communities. That can result in a variety of provision, including a more localised smaller-scale provision such as Leisure Local, which provides an excellent way to extend Swim England's approach to water wellbeing and deliver learn to swim lessons. Equally, Community Leisure Hub provides examples of a fully encompassing aquatic offer, which can meet the demands of all swimmers – including the ability to compete competitively. We have a core focus on environmental sustainability, ensuring the future provision of aquatic leisure considers our carbon footprint and delivers energy efficient swimming facilities.

Andy Salmon, CEO Swim England

Contents

See the animated walkthrough film to take you on a virtual journey, highlighting some basic design ideas that will help you to make the best of your facility.

Introduction

Understanding the needs of a community is key to developing the right active environment for that locality. This understanding comes from developing Insight about a community and its place, following the approach set out in the Sport England Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG):

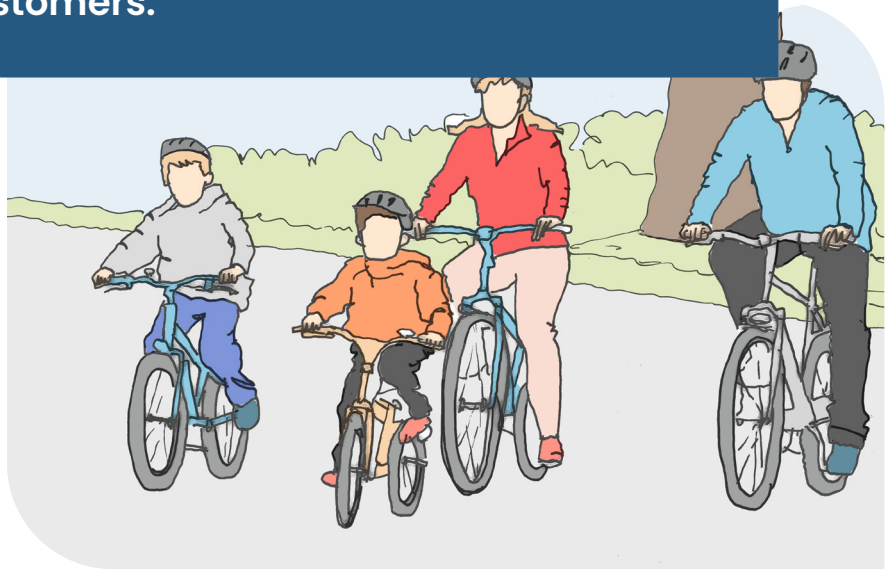
- Understanding local demographic, health, participation and social profiles;
- Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement;
- Understanding key partners and shared outcomes;
- Being clear about the specific barriers to increasing levels of physical activity.

Insight will inform the types of activity in which the community wants to participate; translating these into places and spaces creates the active environment to be provided. This is likely to be a combination of informal and formal indoor and outdoor provision, linked to opportunities for active travel.

Places and spaces for physical activity have a significant role to play in community health and wellbeing, as well as social interaction. They also provide opportunity for co-location of other services such as libraries, health services, education, together forming a Community Leisure Hub.

Every Community Leisure Hub will be different because it is a response to place-based thinking. There are, however, some core physical activity spaces to consider at the heart of such Hubs to enable in-creased active participation on a regular basis. Alongside the core spaces, there is a need to consider provision of multi-purpose spaces which can be used for a range of informal activities.

Engaging with the community whether in a small rural village or inner city neighbourhood, is essential to fully develop the brief and range of provision, based on an understanding of the specific needs and expectations of customers.



Background & Context

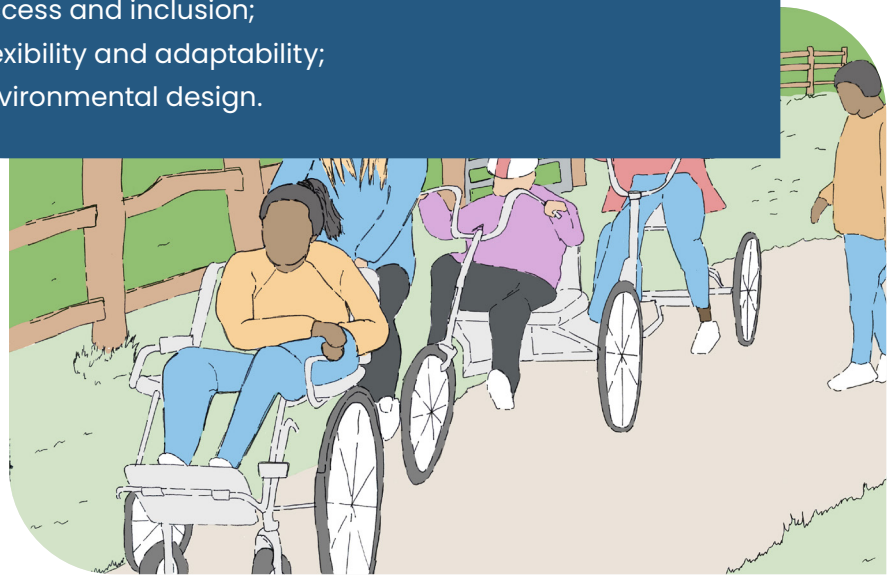
The health and wellbeing of local communities depends on getting more people more active more often. The creation of active environments, co-location of a range of facilities and services responding to identified local needs and priorities (Insight), presents a clear opportunity to achieve this.

A Community Leisure Hub is not conceived as a traditional leisure centre; whilst it provides an inclusive and accessible space to do sport and informal activity, it also provides opportunity to access other community services. The nature of these other services will be driven by local factors and need; whilst it is challenging to think about a range of physical activity spaces and other services working together, there is no reason not to do it, if local Insight is telling us it is needed.

Developing a Community Leisure Hub is a real opportunity to put physical activity at the heart of communities by thinking differently, using place-based evidence and relevant partnerships to deliver shared health and wellbeing outcomes. This approach can change behaviours and in so doing, transform quality of life for communities.

Key Considerations

- Active environment;
- Walkable communities;
- Connected walking and cycling routes;
- Co-location of community facilities;
- Access and inclusion;
- Flexibility and adaptability;
- Environmental design.



Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG)

Sport England's SOPG Guidance sets out a way of identifying local physical activity needs and translating them into the places and spaces which make up an active environment.

The process involves:

- Identifying the shared outcomes for a place; this brings together strategic stakeholders who all have remit to deliver at locality level. The creation of a shared agenda means that communities benefit from a co-ordinated approach in which stakeholders all work towards the same priorities;
- Developing understanding which tells the story of a place and its people, why they face the inactivity barriers they do and what is needed to address these;
- Identifying the actions which are needed to address local barriers. These may be new places and spaces in which to be active (Community Leisure Hub, active travel routes), more and different activity offers, better partnerships, etc;
- Developing the partnership commitment necessary to deliver the actions. Partnership commitment embraces resources (people and funding), timescales and project development.

Defining the brief

A Community Leisure Hub comprises a number of different places and spaces; whatever these are, they should be identified as a result of understanding local community need. A facility mix and the activities that it accommodates should respond directly to identified needs. If a community identifies the need for a hall space that can be used for community events and recreational activities there is no need to build a formal facility to competitive standards.

Designing for the community

Active environments

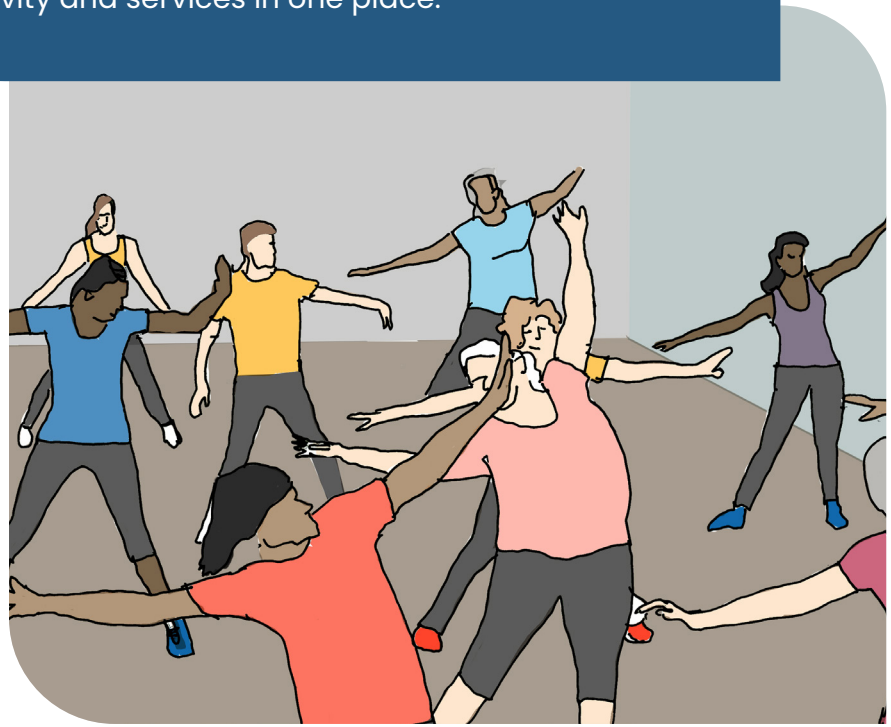
An active environment might be a building with places and spaces dedicated to sport and physical activity; it might be an outside space with a green gym or playing pitch or simply space in which to run around or exercise outdoors. Active environments may combine indoor and outdoor places; they should facilitate informal and formal inclusive opportunities, to be more engaged with physical activity. Ideally they will connect into cycle / walking routes so active travel becomes part of the active environment.

Developing the right active environment for each place means listening to, and understanding the needs of the whole local community, and what outcomes need to be achieved to facilitate increased levels of activity. It also means co-locating services and spaces to develop the most sustainable and viable offer for a locality, taking into account population size and profile, travel patterns, the local geography and environment and the existing leisure provision.

Flexibility and adaptability

The provision of flexible, multi-purpose space is an important element in a Community Leisure Hub. This allows for changes in participation trends, and enables other activities to take place e.g. birthday parties and therefore is an important contributor to long-term sustainability.

Multi-purpose space is also important to attract new people into a Community Leisure Hub because coming into the Hub for e.g. a meeting will raise awareness of a range of available activities and the social opportunities derived from putting people, activity and services in one place.



Accessibility and inclusion

A Community Leisure Hub should be designed to be both accessible and inclusive; it also needs to be welcoming and good quality to encourage the widest possible use in a locality, and particularly from the inactive.

The planning and design of a Community Leisure Hub is fundamental to achieving the inclusivity and accessibility which puts it at the heart of a community.

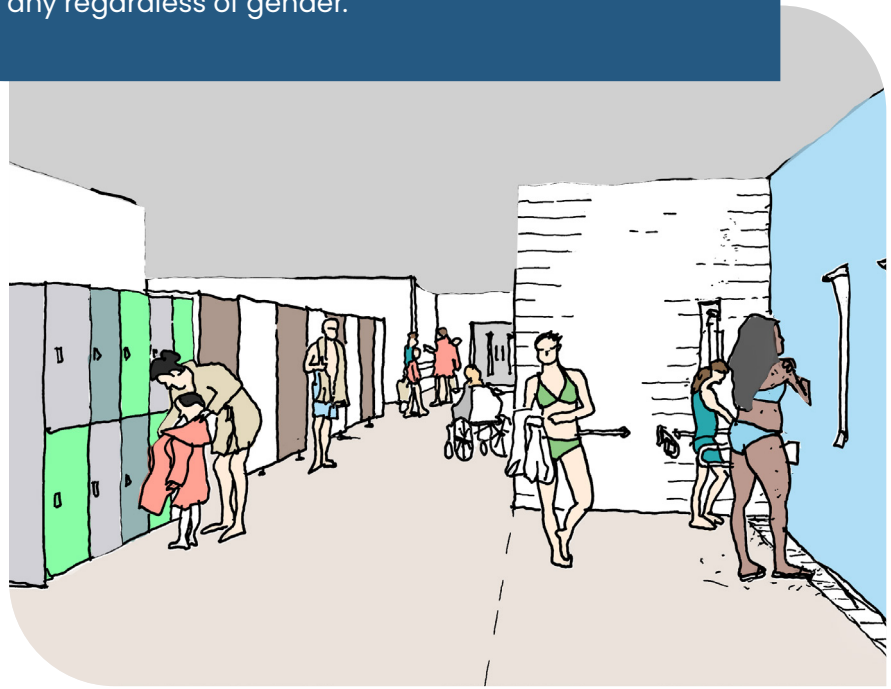
Click here for **User guide** and other **Design and cost guidance**

Changing facilities

The Community leisure hub concept aims to improve inclusivity by providing flexible changing and sanitary facilities that can be used by all.

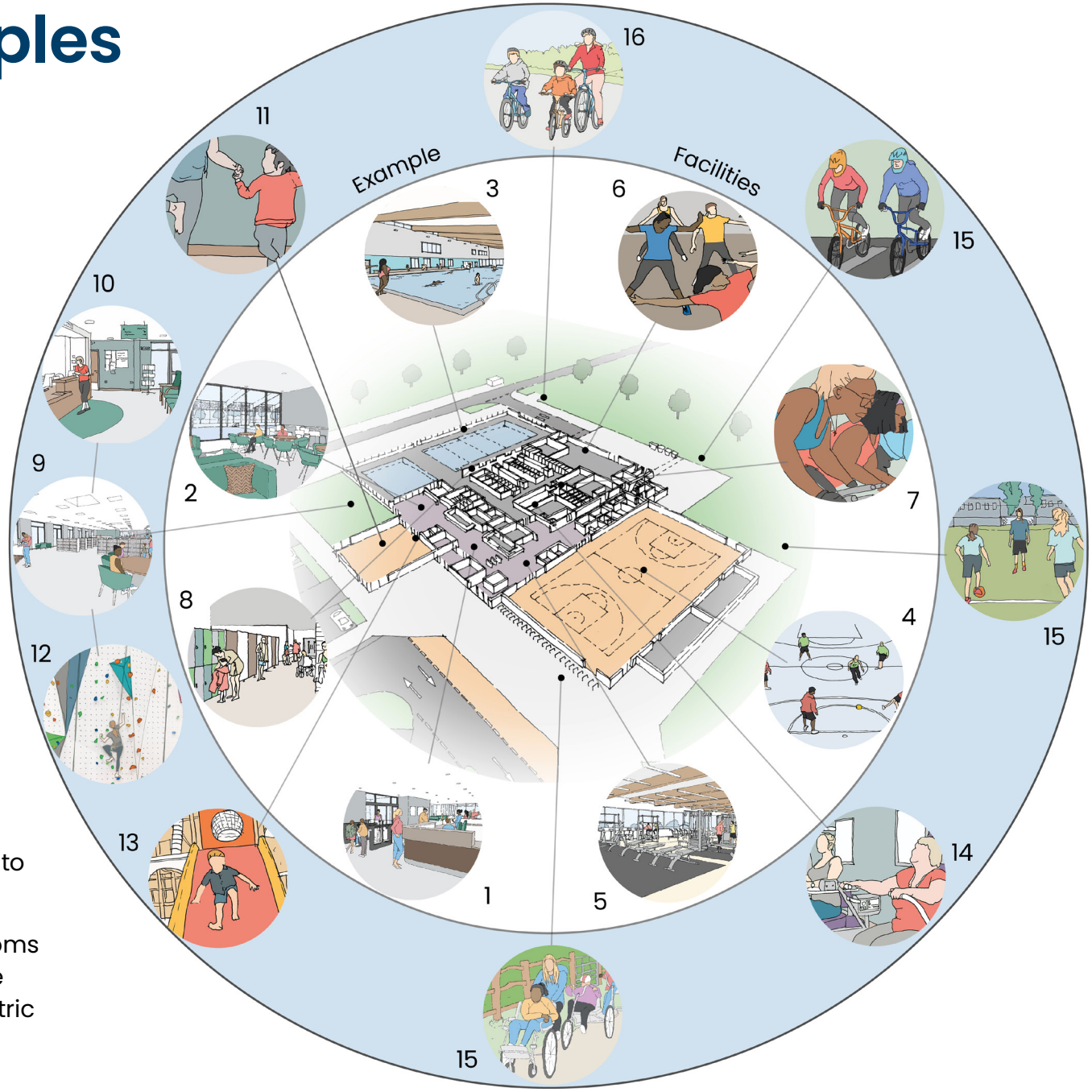
The design examples include a combination of:

- Separate male, female and all-gender toilets and dry changing areas;
- Accessible toilets and changing for disabled users;
- Changing Places toilet for assisted use (two in larger facilities);
- Family changing and baby change;
- All-gender wet changing and toilets which can be used by any regardless of gender.



Facility mix examples

1. Reception hub;
2. Social space;
3. Water space;
4.Multi-purpose hall / studio hall;
5. Fitness suite;
6. Studios;
7. Group cycle;
8.Changing facilities;
9. Public library / resource centre;
10. Public healthcare facility;
11. Flexible activity space;
12. Climbing facility;
13. Adventure play / childcare;
14. Toning suite;
15. External activity space;
16. Community links.



Support and ancillary space: In addition to the example facilities consideration should be given to babychange, faith and quiet rooms.

There will also be administrative and support rooms such as staff rooms, cleaning stores, plant space and circulation, extensive cycle parking and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

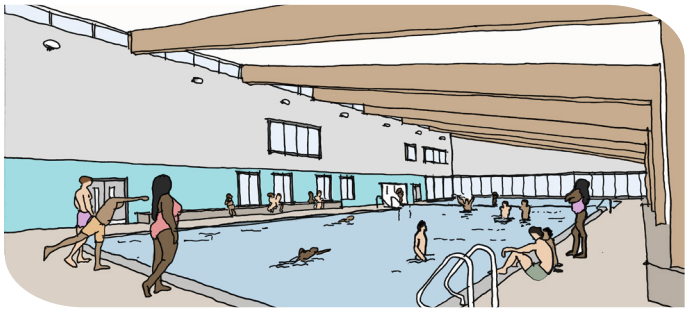
Facility mix examples

1. Reception Hub

The reception hub is the focal point on entry to the building, providing access to all services and activities, both inside and outside the building. The reception can provide information, contact with staff and a self service area.

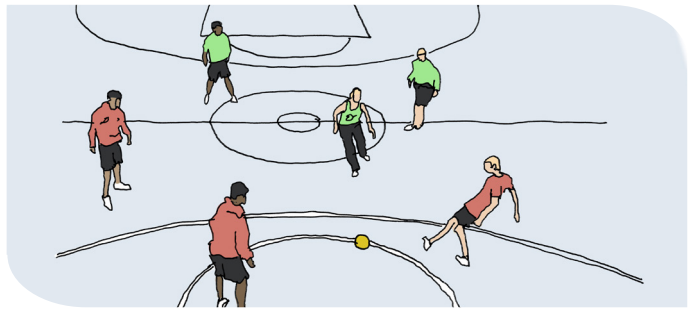
2. Social space

The café forms the heart of the social facilities recognising the importance of attracting people to the building and the significance of the social experience for mental well-being, as well as providing a shop front to the activities and additional revenue potential.



3. Water space

This could accommodate a traditional swimming pool, however the water space may be configured to suit local requirements, this could include a dedicated fitness pool, teaching pool, children's water play etc. Pool depths ranging from 0.9 to 2.0m can be provided however movable floor technology could be considered to maximise flexibility of use.



4. Multi-purpose hall/ studio hall

A large space, potentially double height can provide space for team and individual sports, alternatively it can be used for a wide variety of physical activities as well as non-sporting community uses. It can be subdivided to accommodate different activities at the same time. An activity space in smaller facilities that can be used for both traditional sports and studio type activities.

Facility mix examples

5. Fitness Suite

The fitness suite can house a variety of exercise equipment including cardio and resistance machines, free weights, functional equipment, inclusive equipment, etc. Zoning a fitness suite can make it more welcoming to more users from a larger section of the community.

6. Studios

A number of studios can be provided, potentially subdivided for increased flexibility and capacity. These can accommodate a number of different studio activities including yoga, dance, aerobics, etc.

7. Group cycle

A specialised room that accommodates a number of static cycles focussed on a trainer or audio visual display for group exercise. With interactive screens and mood lighting, an immersive experience can be achieved.

8. Changing facilities

Flexible, inclusive and accessible facilities should be provided to serve the water space and dry area activities. These should provide facilities for individual, family and groups including male, female, accessible, Changing Places toilet and all-gender provision to suit the needs of the widest range of users.

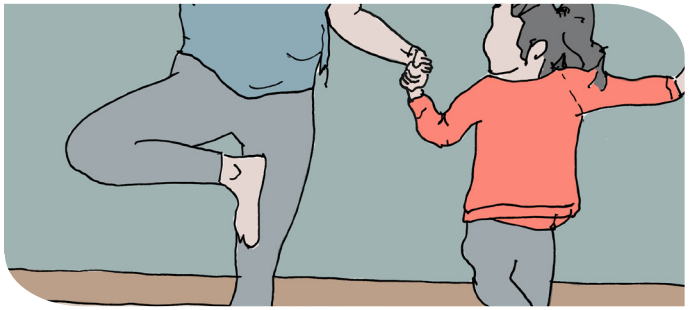
Facility mix examples

9. Public library / resource centre

Adjoining the reception hub and social space, a community facility such as a library could be included to enhance the opportunities on offer to the public; this will encourage use amongst those who might not ordinarily visit a centre where leisure activities take place due to the co-location of the library or resource centre.

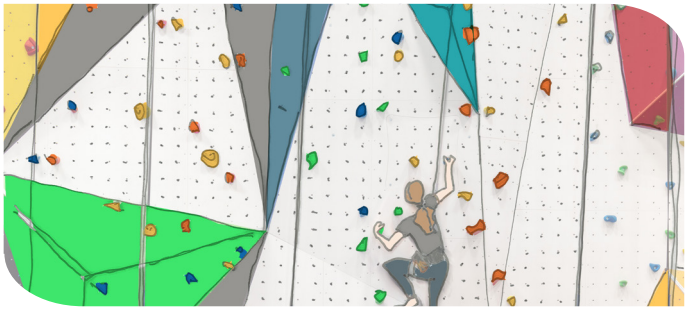
10. Public healthcare facility

A joint partnership with a public healthcare facility such as a pharmacy or surgery could also be offered. The overlapping space between these and leisure offering will strengthen the sense of a community hub and broaden its appeal to the local population.



11. Flexible activity space

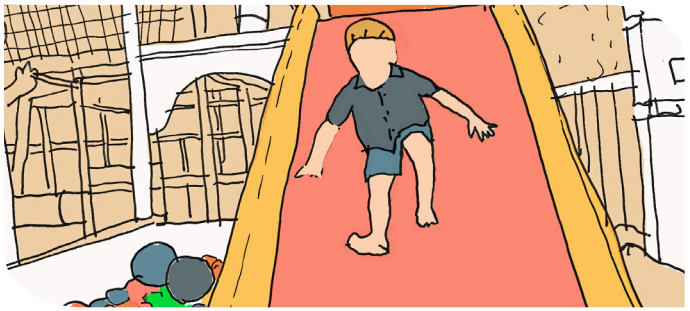
A multifunctional space that can accommodate numerous activities adjacent to the social hub would form part of the typical accommodation. It can be used for community activities. A location before any entry barriers / gates may be convenient for non-sport community uses such as functions and meetings.



12. Climbing facility

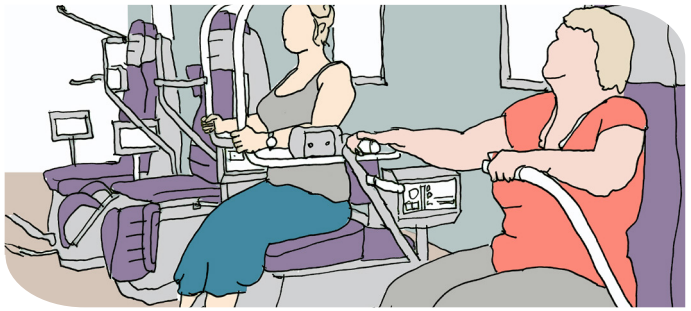
Modern climbing facilities provide a safe and fun environment for all ages and abilities, not just climbing enthusiasts. With some minor adjustments or assistive devices they can also be made accessible to people with a range of physical impairments.

Facility mix examples



13. Adventure play / childcare

A dedicated children's adventure play can provide activity space for both younger children and teenagers. Providing short term childcare facilities can help parents participate in the full range of activities provided within the centre.



14. Toning suite

The toning suite is an additional service providing the opportunity of increased health and fitness for individuals with reduced mobility. This area has para-assisted equipment and greater supervision when exercising.

15. External activity space

External spaces such as MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) pitches, courts, can be provided, centred around, and controlled by the Community Leisure Hub. This could link to activities such as cycling, running and skateboarding etc. If outdoor activities are provided, additional separate changing rooms should be considered.

16. Community links

Footpaths, cycle paths and support accommodation such as secure and covered cycle parking will encourage sustainable travel to the facilities and support users to become more active; improving their wellbeing and physical health.

Facility mix examples

There are many potential combinations of facilities depending upon the outcomes and needs of the community. A typical facility mix for three examples is given below.

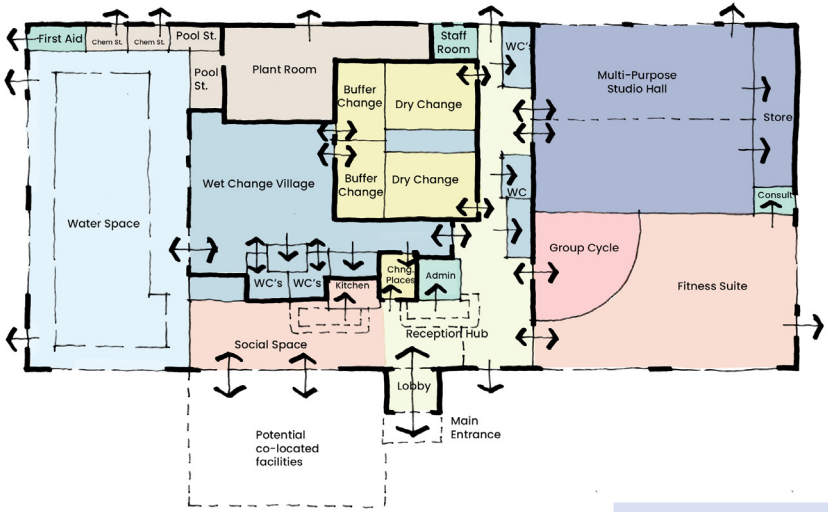
Table 1 Accommodation mix	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Activity Examples
Reception Hub	●	●	●	• Customer service / membership / orientation
Social space	●	●	●	• Café / meetings / retail / inductions
Flexible activity space		●	●	• Children's parties / private hire / community use • Group Activity
Water space	Small ●	Medium ●	Large ●	• Club Training / limited competition / casual / fitness swimming • lessons / school use / aqua aerobics / swim parties
		●	●	• teaching pool functions (learn to swim / aquarobics) etc.
Multi-purpose hall/ studio hall	Small ●	Medium ●	Large ●	• Badminton / volleyball / table tennis • club / casual use / community events
	●	●	●	• yoga / pilates / group exercise / circuits / martial arts / gymnastics
		●	●	• basketball / netball / futsal
Studios		●	●	• Group activity / yoga / pilates / group exercise / circuits / • martial arts
Fitness Suite (stations)	50+	90+	120+	• Individual/ personal training/ instruction
Group cycle (stations)	22+	25+	27+	• Individual/ personal training/ instruction
Approximate Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA)	2,215m²	4,700m²	5,410m²	

To support these traditional activity spaces a number of administrative and plant rooms will be required including staff welfare, stores, cleaning cupboards and a full range of accessible and inclusive changing facilities to cater to individuals and groups.

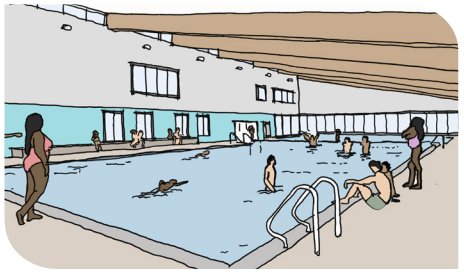
A key component in the creation of the Community Leisure Hub will be the inclusion of the type of facilities indicated on pages 10-14, particularly in regard to access to the Hub and its links to community activities.

Facility layouts

Example 1



Ground floor layout



Examples can include:

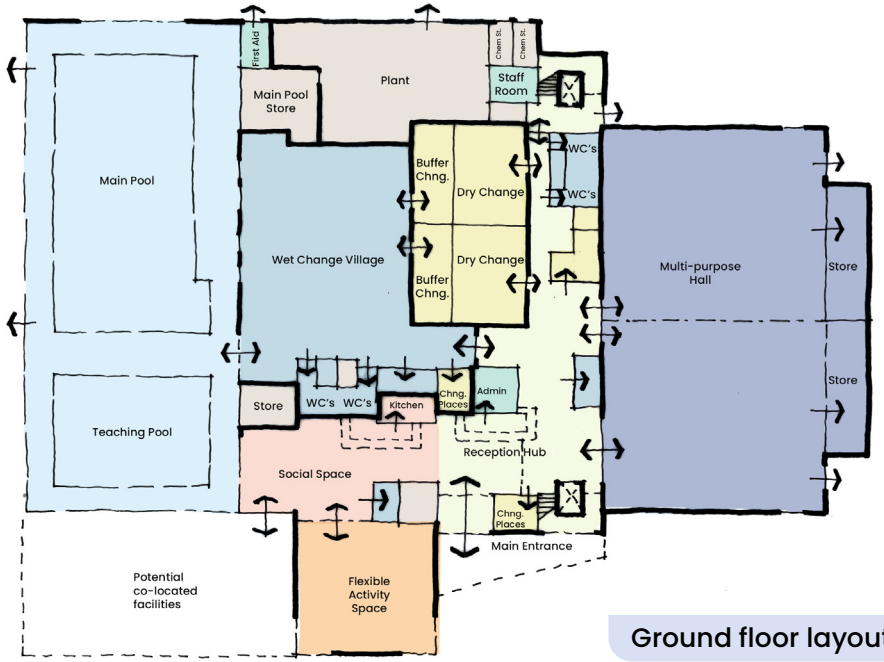
- Easy to navigate layout and compact form;
- Accessible single storey layout;
- Reception hub;
- Social space (Café with 40+ covers);
- 4 lane, 25m Community pool, water depth 0.9-1.8m;
- Flexible changing and WCs, including accessible, male, female and all-gender;
- Multi-purpose studio hall, potentially divisible into separate activity spaces, approximately 17m x 18m (306m2);
- Group cycle studio (22+ cycles);
- Fitness suite (50+ stations).

Roof: Centrally located Air Handling Units and plant within louvred enclosure.

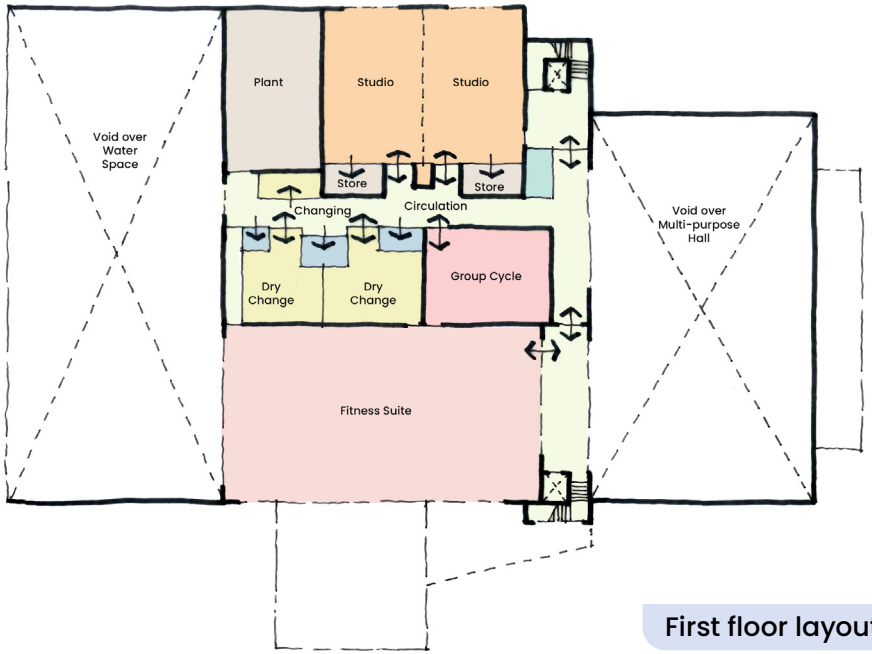
Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) - 2,215m²

Facility layouts

Example 2



Ground floor layout



First floor layout

Examples can include:

- Easy to navigate layout and compact form;
- Accessible layout, two separate vertical circulation cores with evacuation lifts and refuge areas;
- Reception hub;
- Social space (café with 60+ covers);
- Flexible activity space;
- 6 lane, 25m Community pool, water depth 1.0-1.8m;
- Teaching pool 13x10m, water depth 0.6-0.9m;
- Flexible changing and WCs, including accessible, male, female and all-gender;
- Multi-purpose hall, approximately 20x34.5m (690m^2).

Examples can include:

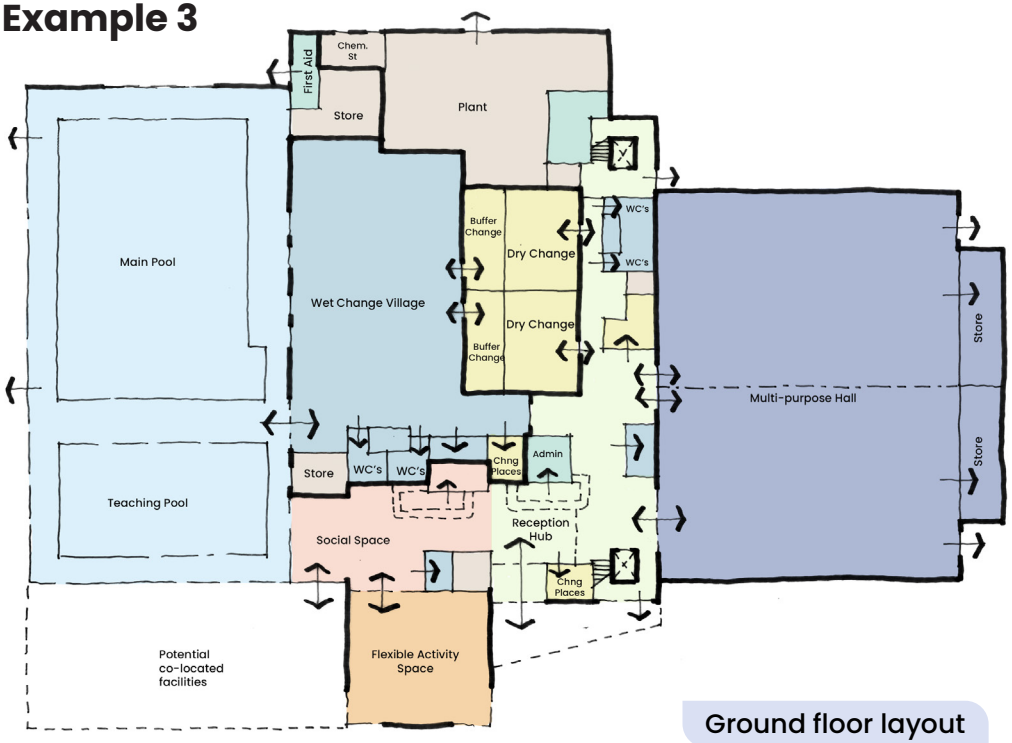
- Group cycle studio (25+ cycles);
- Fitness suite (90+ stations);
- 2 Studios (25+ person each);
- Flexible changing and WCs, including accessible, male, female and all-gender;
- Extensive refuge areas for assisted evacuation from vertical circulation cores;
- Visual links to multi-purpose hall and water space.

Roof: Centrally located Air Handling Units and plant within louvred enclosure.

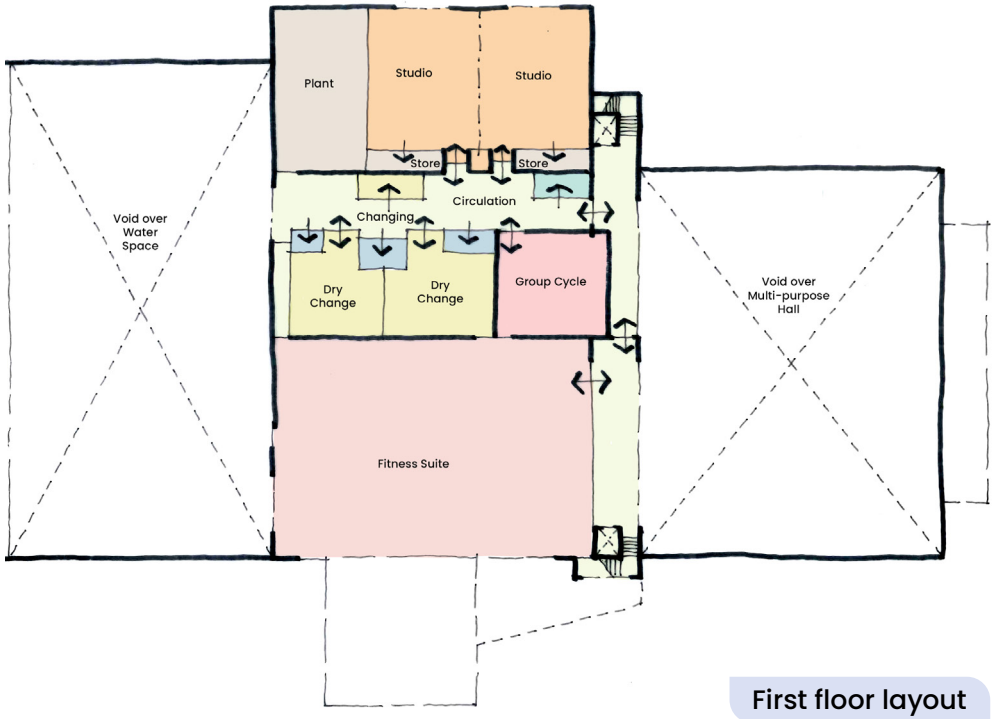
Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) - 4,700m^2

Facility layouts

Example 3



Ground floor layout



First floor layout

Examples can include:

- Easy to navigate layout and compact form;
- Accessible layout, two separate vertical circulation cores with evacuation lifts and refuge areas;
- Reception hub;
- Social space (café with 60+ covers);
- Flexible activity space;
- 8 lane, 25m Community pool, water depth 1.0-1.8m;
- Teaching pool 17x10m, water depth 0.6-0.9m;
- Flexible changing and WCs, including accessible, male, female and all-gender;
- Multi-purpose hall, approximately 27x34.5m (931.5m^2).

Examples can include:

- Group cycle studio (27+ cycles);
- Fitness suite (120+ stations);
- 2 Studios (25+ person each);
- Flexible changing and WCs, including accessible, male, female and all-gender;
- Extensive refuge areas for assisted evacuation from vertical circulation cores;
- Visual links to multi-purpose hall and water space.

Roof: Centrally located Air Handling Units and plant within louvred enclosure.

Approximate gross internal floor area (GIFA) - 5,410m²

Environmental design

Planning / Building Regulations

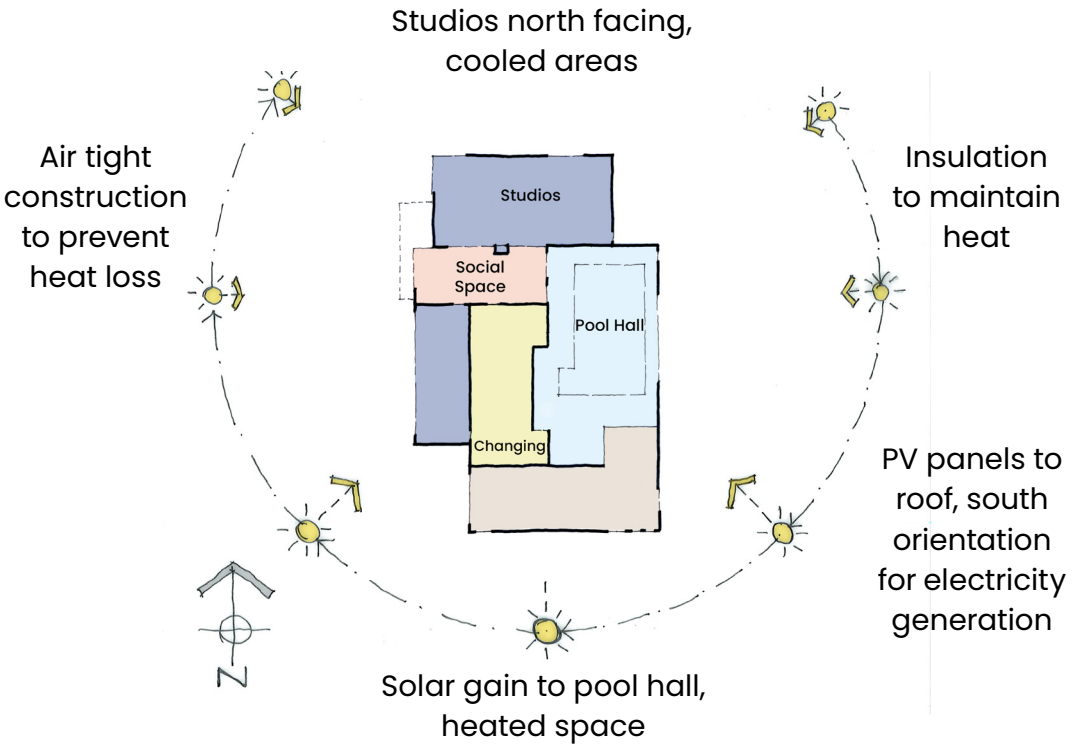
Local planning policies should be reviewed as some local authorities have sustainability targets over and above the requirements of Building Regulations.

Compliance with Building Regulations involves meeting ever increasing environmental standards. Normal assumptions currently include minimising energy use through use of efficient building services, high standards of insulation and air tightness and incorporation of renewable technologies such as heat pumps and solar panels.

Climate Emergency

Reducing the carbon impact of leisure facilities poses additional challenges and considerations beyond Building Regulation compliance, including:

- Whether to retain and adapt existing buildings which generate CO^2 in their construction or build more suitable new facilities;
- Accessibility of the site to the local community, minimising reliance on transport;
- Investing in higher standards of insulation and airtightness;
- Should the building aim for net zero carbon, by eliminating natural gas from the design;
- Considering all energy use, such as that used by pool water treatment plant - currently outside the scope of Building Regulations;
- What construction materials are used, where they come from and their environmental impact.



Methods towards more sustainable facilities

Various methods and accreditations may be used to demonstrate the sustainability of the facilities including: Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), BREEAM and Passivhaus. Other accreditation such as WELL and Fitwel can also be used to demonstrate good sustainability design standards.

Although useful tools, accreditation does not guarantee carbon neutrality without a well-considered brief. Therefore, sustainability and low carbon objectives and outcomes need to be considered from the start and integrated into the project brief. Carbon calculators can be used as an additional tool to assess the carbon impact of the scheme. See Sport England's Environmental Sustainability Check List for further guidance.

Planning / Building Regulations

Methods to reduce the requirement for energy use should be the starting point, correct orientation and enhanced fabric performance, specifically targeting the pool hall which has the highest energy demand. Well insulated walls, triple glazing and pool covers will be effective in the pool hall. Understanding which technologies are the most applicable, is key to an efficient design. Some technologies to consider are:

- **Air Source Heat Pumps:** use electricity to generate hot water by extracting heat from the air. Excellent with underfloor heating.
- **Ground Source Heat Pumps:** similar, but more efficient than air source heat pumps, but much more expensive.
- **Air Source CO_2 Heat Pumps:** a form of air source heat pumps, which are used exclusively for generating domestic hot water.

Where heat pumps are used instead of natural gas running and capital costs will increase, but the carbon emissions will reduce.

- **Photovoltaic Panels:** capture the energy from the sun and convert to electricity. Will assist in reducing running costs, especially useful with all electric buildings, using heat pumps.
- **Pool Covers:** used to cover the pool overnight. When in use a pool cover reduces water and heat loss due to evaporation and allows the pool hall to be kept at a lower temperature and the ventilation plant to be run at reduced speeds.

Other technologies which can be considered are:-

- **Water Cooled Heat Pumps:** can be used effectively in fitness suites. Heat rejected from the space is transferred to heat the pool. Can be expensive to install, but achieve good carbon reductions.
- **Micro Filtration:** an innovative way to filter the pool water, it reduces the amount of water discharged during the filter cleaning cycle and reduces pumping costs.

Technology	Application	Capital Cost	Running Cost	Carbon Emissions
Air Source Heat Pumps	Space Heating	X	X	✓
	Pool Water	X	X	✓ ✓ ✓
	Domestic Hot Water	X	X X	✓ ✓
Ground Source Heat Pumps	Space Heating	X X X	X	✓
	Pool Water	X X X	X	✓ ✓ ✓
	Domestic Hot Water	X X X	X	✓ ✓ ✓
CO_2 Heat Pumps	Space Heating	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Pool Water	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Domestic Hot Water	X X	X	✓ ✓ ✓
Photo-voltaic Panels	Electricity Generation	X	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Energy Efficient Fans	Ventilation Plant	X	✓	✓
Enhance Fabric Performance	Reduce Heating Demand	X	✓	✓

Comparison of technologies to a base building, which uses natural gas.

Key to Table:

X = Small Increase

X X = Medium Increase

X X X = Large Increase

✓ = Small Reduction

✓ ✓ = Medium Reduction

✓ ✓ ✓ = Large Reduction

Examples:

Air Source Heat Pumps providing space heating: small increase in capital and running cost and small carbon reduction.

Photovoltaic Panels generating electricity: small increase in capital cost, significant reduction in running costs and carbon emissions.

Operation

Programming

Operation of a Community Leisure Hub will depend on its scale, location, and the outcomes it is delivering. The more specialist nature of any co-located facilities, the more likely it is that more than one operator will be involved.

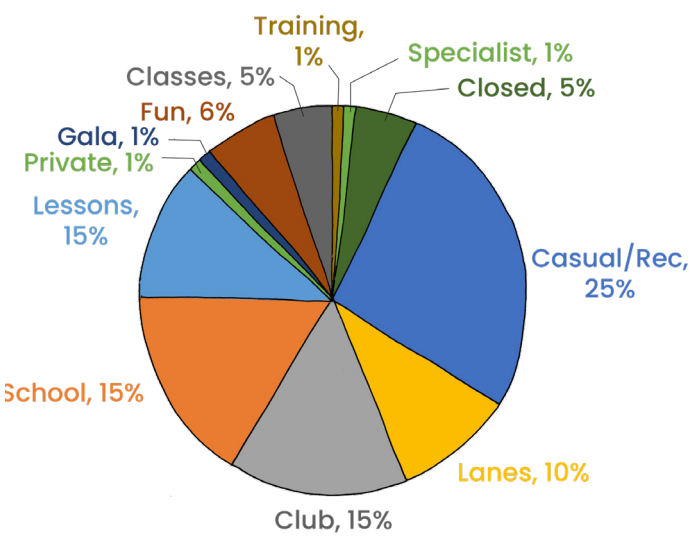
Community Leisure Hubs could be managed externally, in-house, through a community trust, or through a combination of those options and the local community itself, through volunteers. People, and particularly those who are inactive or with low physical activity, should be at the heart of the operational approach to facilitate increased engagement and involvement with physical activity for the health benefits it delivers.

Depending on the facility mix, the operator of the Community Leisure Hub is likely to be managing both indoor and outdoor spaces, and potentially shared spaces e.g. a café shared with co-located providers. The operator will also be managing the interface with active travel, as part of the overall approach to development and delivery of an active environment.

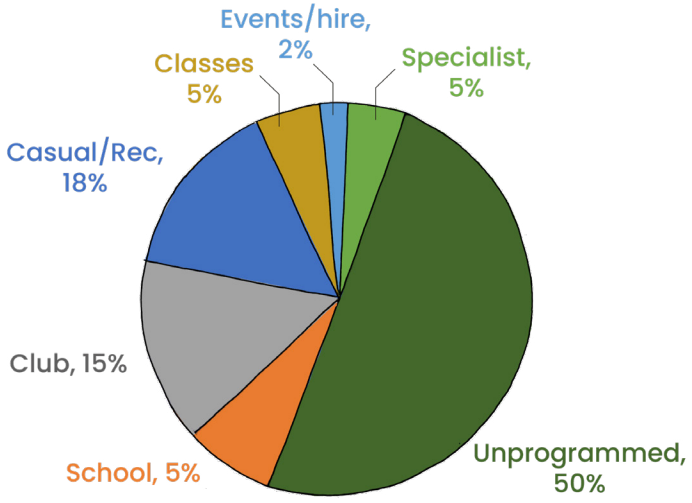
Opening hours and the pricing and programming strategies should reflect the understanding about the community to ensure local barriers to being more active and inequalities are addressed.

Typical usage breakdown

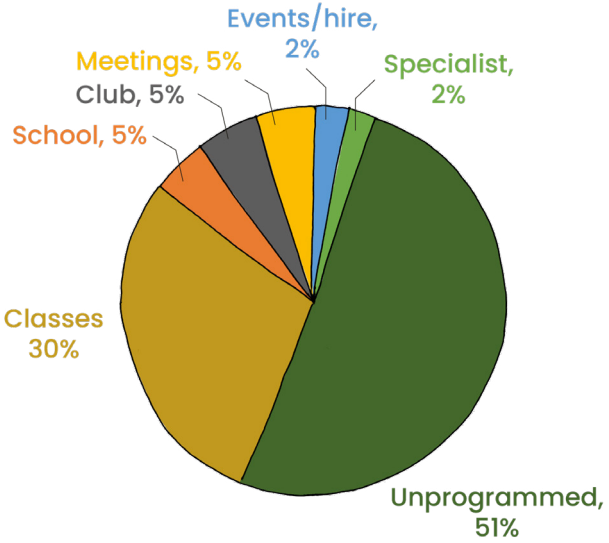
The pie charts show a potential typical usage breakdown of the flexible activity spaces and water space based on Example 2.



Water space



Multi-purpose hall



Studios

The charts illustrate how usage of the key spaces (pool, multi-purpose hall, studio) in the Community Leisure Hub could be programmed to achieve the indicative income projections. Programming and activities should respond to identified community needs as part of addressing barriers to participation, whilst ensuring provision is sustainable in the long term.

Programming for the fitness suite and group cycling facilities are not illustrated above as they are single-use spaces, with the main variant being whether users are members or non-members. The café social space could be used for a range of activities e.g. one-to-one meetings, membership advice, displays of health information, some health advice, etc; none of these are likely to be charged sessions but are more about interaction with hub users. The multi-purpose space is exactly that so its use will vary according to location, community need etc.

Financial viability

A range of facility examples have been considered that can accommodate a wide choice of activities, generate sufficient revenue and avoid potential barriers to participation.

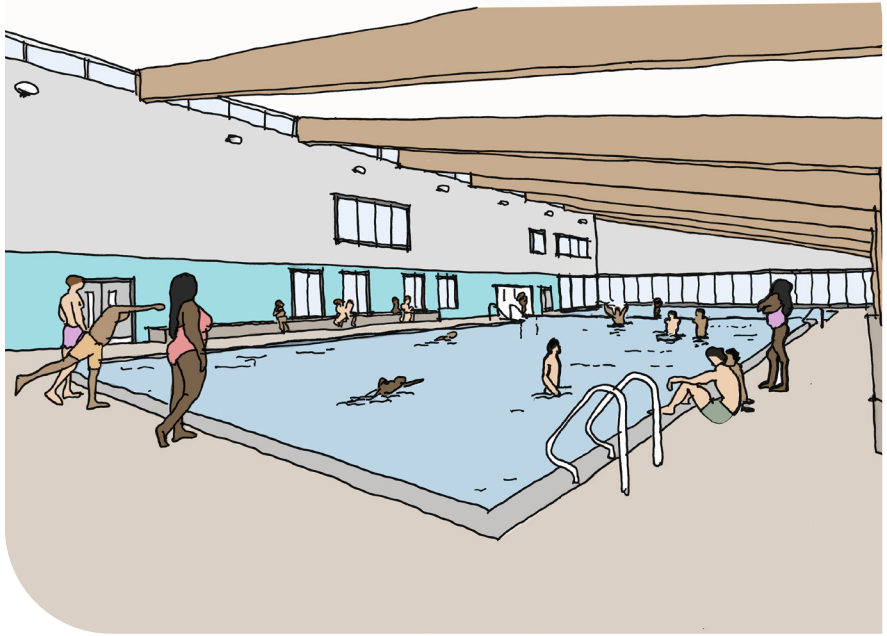
Swimming lessons and casual swimming are important income streams. However, there are many other aspects of the swimming market that can increase participation opportunities such as fun and splash sessions for young people and activities that encourage and attract people who are less active. Both are key customer targets.

The extent of facility programming, user throughput and potential revenue generation is directly linked to the scale of a facility and accordingly, its operational sustainability. This also links to secondary spend levels.

The balance of initial build costs, programming and revenue generation has been carefully considered and the examples included optimise these factors. However, they are not intended as fixed, off-the-shelf solutions but rather starting points to help establish provision to match the specific needs of a local community. For example, the function space or fitness gym could be enlarged or café, adventure play and childcare areas could be added.

The Community Leisure Hub concept can offer new opportunities to create facilities that are both economically and environmentally sustainable in the long term.

The concept's indicative design examples are not intended as fixed, off-the-shelf solutions but rather starting points for discussion to help establish provision to match the specific needs of a local community.



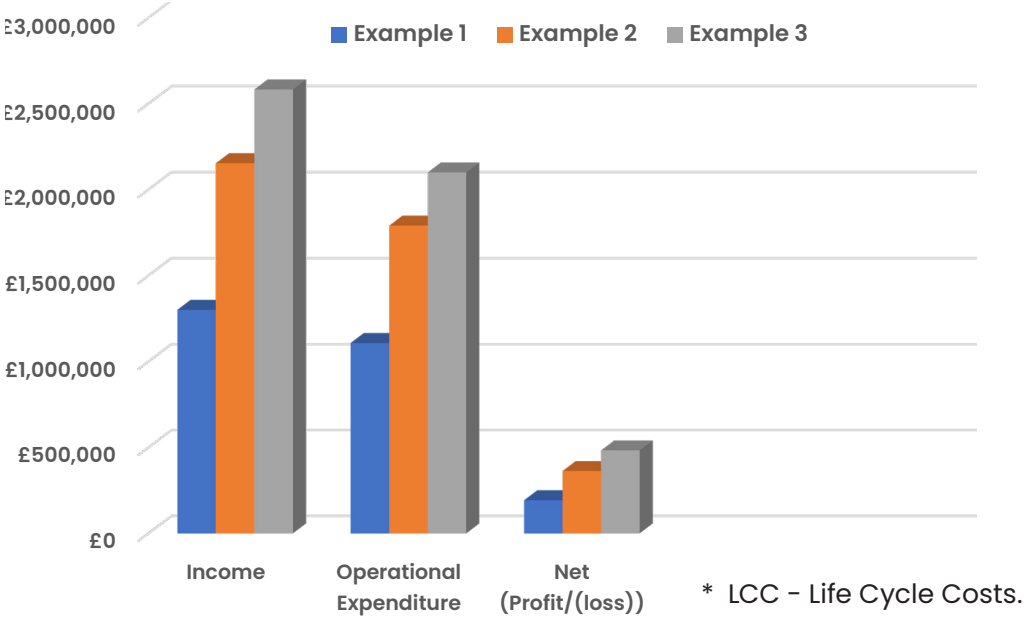
Income / Revenue

The facility mix in each example is informed by the SOPG (Strategic Outline Planning Guidance) approach which involves the local community identifying their physical activity needs. These are then translated into places and spaces following a place-shaping approach.

The intended outcomes are improved physical and mental health and wellbeing as a result of increased levels of physical activity.

Potential revenue summary

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
Income	£1.30m	£2.15m	£2.58m
Operational Expenditure	£1.11m	£1.79m	£2.10m
Net (Profit/(loss))	£0.19m	£0.36m	£0.48m



* LCC - Life Cycle Costs.

Assumptions

The assumptions behind the usage are:

- Community access at all times; it is more likely that use by schools will be during the daytime;
- Pay and play use, particularly to engage and involve people who have low levels of activity, will be the priority followed by community bookings e.g. parties, and clubs / schools;
- Health-related activities targeting a range of conditions will be a programme priority e.g. disability, social prescribing, GP referral, dementia friendly, mental ill-health;
- Gender specific sessions as relevant to local community;
- Operational management will be by a leisure operator / trust;
- Membership will predominantly cover fitness – classes, use of the fitness suite, and pool access at some times;
- Minimum opening times envisaged as 6am - 10pm Mon-Fri; 8am – 4pm weekends, depends on local needs;
- The multi-purpose space is designed to accommodate a range of active uses as well as activities to engage and involve people in physical activity;
- Minimum outdoor formal spaces are predominantly programmed during spring and summer;
- There will be at least some element of holiday programming in school holidays, but less in Example 1 given the scale of the pool;
- No specific outdoor facilities are included but, wherever possible, the opportunity to develop outdoor facilities should be considered e.g. MUGAs, Padel Tennis, outdoor gyms, play areas, low level climbing / bouldering features, cycling facilities (Learn to Ride, Mountain Bike trails, pump tracks, BMX etc). The aim should be to provide for a minimum of a 20 minute neighbourhood;
- It is assumed walking and cycling routes connect to the Community Leisure Hub, creating an active environment.

Capital costs

Table 1 Example	Facility description	Indicative cost* Base scheme**	 Enhanced scheme***
1	Single storey building 25m, 4 lane pool Fitness suite Multi-purpose activity space Social space Group cycle	£12.8m	£13.5m
2	Two storey building 25m, 6 lane main pool 10 x 13m teaching pool Flexible activity space Multi-purpose activity space Social Space Fitness suite and two studios Group cycle	£23.7m	£24.4m
3	Two storey building 25m, 8 lane main pool 10 x 17m teaching pool Flexible activity space Multi-purpose activity space Social Space Fitness suite and two studios Group cycle	£26.1m	£27.1m

* Costs are indicative and do not reflect abnormal impacts on market conditions.

Cost summary

An overview of the capital costs for the three core examples is given in the table alongside, based on benchmark data and respective gross internal floor areas.

* Costs are indicative and do not reflect abnormal impacts on market conditions.

** Base Scheme - Assumes gas fired boiler plant for pool water, air source heat pumps for domestic hot water and space heating.

*** Enhanced Scheme - All electric building. Photovoltaic (PV) panels added to roof.

Assumptions

- Building costs at 4Q2025;
- A flat level greenfield site with no abnormal ground conditions;
- The works are competitively tendered via an industry standard procurement route;
- External works are included as a notional allowance;
- Incoming services are assessed as a notional value, assuming availability from existing infrastructure with sufficient capacity;
- Preliminaries are based on an unrestricted site with a construction period of 54 to 70 weeks;
- Client contingency included at 5%;
- Sports Hall equipment allowance included.

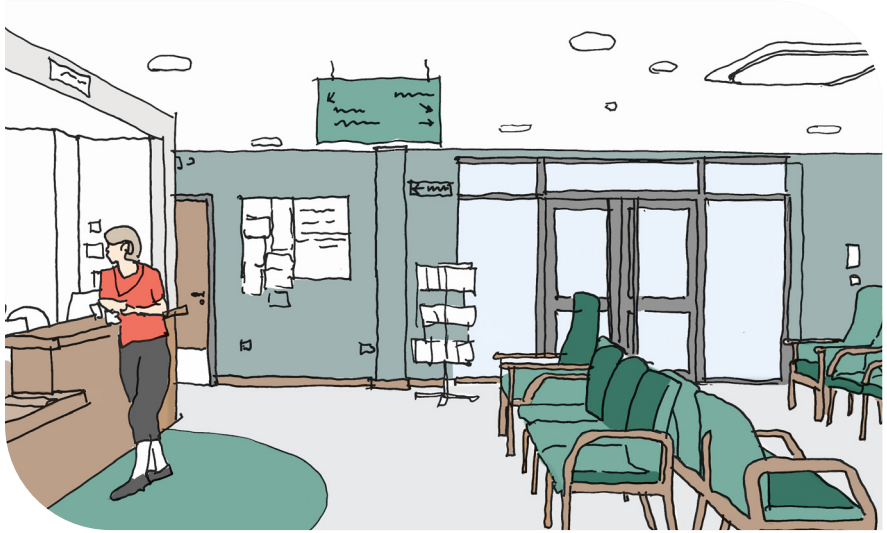
Exclusions

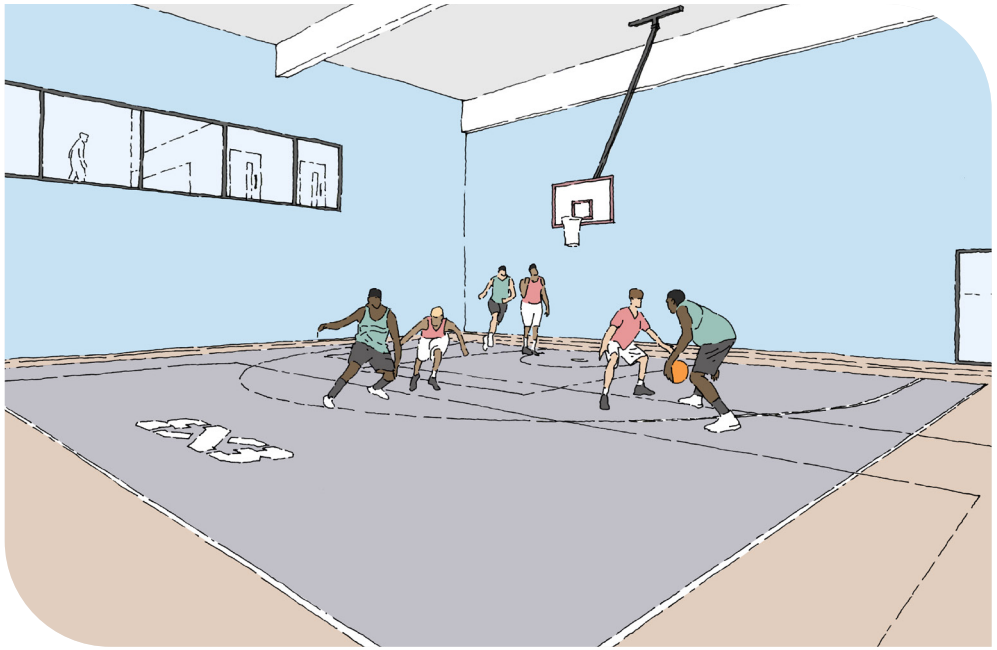
- VAT / Statutory & Professional fees / Land acquisition costs / Loose furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) / Movable pool floor.

Life Cycle costs

The published guidance is intended to assist applicants, design teams and operators with assessing indicative costs associated with long-term maintenance and replacement of major components over the life of a facility.

Please refer to the relevant documentation on the Sport England website.





Sport England: Community Leisure Hub

Document accessibility

This document has been designed for comfortable reading at A4 and on a laptop screen, but can also be printed at A3 for large print versions. The pdf is accessible and has been tested to work with text readers.

Contributors

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User guide

Before using this design guidance note for any specific projects all users should refer to the User Guide to understand when and how to use the guidance as well as understanding the limitations of use.

Click here for **User guide** and other **Design and cost guidance**

Issue tracker

002 – Publication: November 2025

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