

Part 1: Establishing Need



The Benefits of Community Use

Secondary schools and community sports facilities require similar accommodation. Because their busiest times are usually different (schools during weekday mornings and afternoons and community facilities in the evenings and at weekends), there is often scope to make use of one facility to meet the needs of both.

Providing for community use will incur a greater capital cost and necessitates increased running and maintenance costs. This extra expense should, however, be considered to represent good value for money when the cost per hour of use of the facilities is considered: community use of the facility extends into the evening and weekends when school use is ceased and the facility may therefore otherwise be lying empty.

Furthermore, the operational costs of community use would be incurred whether community sports facilities are provided at a school site or at a separate sports centre, and must therefore be considered in this light. Finally, the community use of a school sports facility may lessen the need to provide a separate community facility. The capital cost of providing such a facility will in all likelihood far exceed the cost of adapting the design and specifications of new school facilities to meet this need.

There is therefore a clear economic case for providing community sports facilities in new secondary schools. Where community demand and school needs coincide, Best Value can only be obtained by providing for both in the same facility. The benefits of greater community use of school sports facilities are not limited, however, to making more efficient use of resources:

Pupils benefit because:

- They can participate in community sport in a familiar environment;
- There may be more opportunities for personal development, vocational training and health education;
- Sports development initiatives and sports club activity can be linked more closely to schools, giving easier access to coaching, talent identification and competition;
- The school's facilities are better suited to extra-curricular use.

The school benefits because:

- Potential pupils and their parents can be introduced to the school's facilities and programmes;
- There is an opportunity to forge links with local primary schools and community groups by inviting them to use the facilities;
- It can gain a reputation as a source of life-long learning, recreation and enjoyment;
- The pupils benefit.

The community benefits because:

- The school and the community it serves are brought closer together;
- New community sports facilities have been provided;
- Better value has been obtained from public spending;
- The school and its pupils benefit.

Assessing School Needs

A school's physical education curriculum should be based on national curricular guidance. This curriculum will consist of a range of activities and in order to provide the most appropriate teaching environment for each of them a number of specialised facilities are required.

Most schools will, depending on their size, require some or all of the following 'teaching spaces'. For very small schools in island and remote communities, however, a more flexible approach to delivering physical education may have to be adopted. See the relevant Design Notes for detailed design advice on each space.

Sports Hall

In this guidance, the term sports hall refers to a four-badminton-court hall unless stated otherwise. The sports hall provides the opportunity for the development of skills for indoor court games, individual activities and the practice of some skills and techniques for outdoor activity. The most likely games which will be taught are badminton, basketball, volleyball, netball, indoor hockey, handball and table tennis. In addition, skills practice such as athletics, football, golf and cricket may be taught. Gymnastics activities needing a large floor will also be taught.

A four-court sports hall is considered as one teaching space and should not be sub-divided for teaching separate classes. Doing so tends to result in a deterioration in the learning experience due to the distraction and disturbance caused by the other teacher and class. In addition, the full four-court hall is required to give sufficient room to teach a class of pupils the activities listed above. **The sports hall is the most flexible indoor teaching space and one should be provided in every school.**

Gymnasium

This space should have the flexibility to be used for school-based gymnastics and for skills practice for a range of other activities. School based gymnastics teaches pupils the principles of flight, rotation and balance and requires a range of specialist equipment. Much of the work in the gymnasium will require individual and small group work in an environment conducive to problem solving, concentration, creative thinking and skilled performance. In smaller schools, the gymnasium and dance studio functions may be provided in a single dual-use space designed to meet the functional requirements of both. **A gymnasium is likely to be needed in all but the smallest of secondary schools.**

Dance Studio

This space will be used primarily for movement and dance. The specialised facilities and equipment needed for these disciplines and the particular qualities required of the space means that a dance studio is a much more appropriate teaching environment for these activities than a gymnasium or sports hall. A dance studio can also be used for the teaching of other activities such as yoga, martial arts, aerobics, circuit training, keep-fit and other exercise disciplines. In smaller schools, the gymnasium and dance studio functions may be provided in a single dual-use space designed to meet the functional requirements of both. **A dance studio is likely to be needed in all but the smallest of secondary schools.**



Fitness Room

The existence of a well-equipped fitness room in a physical education department provides an environment in which pupils can focus on preparation for physical activity and on how their bodies react to this activity. The effects can be monitored in a controlled environment, lessons learned and theories tested. **A fitness room should be considered important to the delivery of the physical education curriculum.**

Classroom

Used on its own or together with one of the other teaching spaces, the classroom offers opportunities to use ICT, video and other aids to help pupils appreciate, analyse and improve performance. This 'Analysis and Investigation' will often mean the classroom is used either at the start or end of a lesson using one of the other teaching spaces. **A well-equipped classroom should be considered essential to the delivery of the physical education curriculum.**

Swimming Pool

Whether or not to provide a pool at a school is a complex decision because pool use is typically less than the other teaching spaces and because swimming pools are the most expensive spaces to construct, operate and maintain. The demand for pool space from all schools in the area should be taken into account as it may be sensible for a cluster of schools to share rather than each school having its own. It may also make more sense to use an existing community swimming pool if there is one nearby but for both these options the time and expense spent travelling to such a pool may be a serious constraint. Another consideration may be the opportunity for specialisation in the size and type of pools provided at different schools. **Further guidance is given in Appendix III: Swimming Pools.**



A swimming pool in a secondary school should be suitable for teaching children to swim for the first time and for further developing existing skills in swimming and diving. The larger the school, the more sense it may make to provide a pool on-site, but **all secondary schools should have a swimming pool or easy access to one within reasonable travelling time.**

Outdoor Teaching Spaces

The requirements of extra-curricular sports activities, and the fact that grass playing fields can accommodate only a limited amount of use per week without deterioration in their quality, makes the decision on which and how many outdoor teaching spaces to provide somewhat more complex than for indoor spaces.

Synthetic grass is suitable for match play and skills practice for football, hockey, tennis, netball, basketball and some rugby skills practice. Pitches can be either full-size or a smaller multi-court area. Natural grass playing fields can provide for match play and skills practice for hockey, football, rugby, rounders, shinty and cricket, for which a synthetic wicket may be provided. A running track and facilities for field events are also required. **See Appendix II: Playing Fields for further advice.**

Synthetic grass pitches have several advantages over traditional grass ones. They can cope with much more intensive use, require significantly less maintenance and are significantly less affected by severe weather. **It is recommended that all secondary schools have access to a synthetic turf area suitable for use as a teaching space. Larger schools may require a second, although this may not necessarily be full-size. In addition, all schools should have sufficient grass playing fields to accommodate both curricular use for physical education and extra-curricular use by school teams and clubs for match play and training.** The provision of mineral-based playing fields is not recommended.



Synthetic turf pitches can accommodate a variety of activities.

Changing Accommodation

Changing accommodation is required for the number of classes likely to be doing PE at any one time and for after-school use by school clubs and teams. **Sufficient changing accommodation must be provided to cater for maximum levels of use for physical education and extra-curricular activity.**



Calculating Teaching Space Requirements

Using parameters such as the school roll, class sizes, and length of period, it is possible to calculate the ideal number of each of the above teaching spaces and changing units required by any given school. These parameters can be altered to reflect the policies or chosen approach of the provider.

Scotland's Physical Activity Strategy, 'Let's make Scotland more active', recommends that school children should receive a minimum of two hours of physical education each week, as indeed does Sport 21 2003-2007, Scotland's national strategy for sport. Such an increase in core PE time will have implications for the numbers of sports facilities required in Scotland's schools. Table 1 is based on a set of parameters which represent typical approaches found in Scottish schools, and uses the recommended 2 hour minimum entitlement.

It should not be assumed that Table 1 automatically represents the correct mix of facilities for every school. Changes in the parameters used will affect the output of the calculations. For example, the tables were calculated using a period length of 55 minutes and changing this to 40 minutes would produce different results, as would increasing class sizes for some year groups from the maximum of 20 assumed in the calculations.

Local Authorities should consider what parameters are appropriate to their schools and do the calculations rather than rely on the table. Appendix I: Assessing School Needs gives guidance on choosing the most appropriate parameters and fully explains, with reference to a worked example, the calculations required.

Table 1: Guideline School Facility Requirements from Worked Example

School Roll	Sports Hall ¹	Gymnasium ²	Dance Studio	Fitness Room	Indoor Changing Units	Pool (Period Load) ³	Outdoor Teaching Spaces ⁴	Outdoor Changing Units
400	1	1	-	-	2	6	1	1
500	1	1	-	-	2	7	1	1
600	1	1	1	-	3	8	1	1
700	1	1	1	-	3	10	1	1
800	1	1	1	1	4	11	1	1
900	1	1	1	1	4	12	1	1
1000	1	1	1	1	4	13	1	1
1100	2	1	1	1	5	15	1	1
1200	2	1	1	1	5	16	1	1
1300	2	1	1	1	5	17	2	2
1400	2	1	1	1	5	18	2	2
1500	2	2	1	1	6	20	2	2
1600	2	2	1	1	6	21	2	2
1800	2	2	2	1	7	24	2	2
2000	3	2	2	1	8	26	2	2
2200	3	2	2	1	8	29	2	3
2400	3	3	2	1	9	31	2	3

- For larger schools where the tables suggest more than one sports hall, it may be more sensible to provide one larger hall which can be subdivided. **See Design Note 2.**
- For smaller schools without a separate gymnasium and dance studio, the design of the gymnasium should be altered to act as a dual use space meeting the requirements of both.
- Due to the complex issues involved in deciding whether to provide a pool at a school, the demand is expressed simply in periods per week. **See Appendix III.**
- This is not equivalent to the number of pitches which a school requires but rather the number of outdoor teaching spaces (ideally synthetic turf) which must be available for curricular use throughout the week. The limited hours which grass surfaces can be used and requirements of extra-curricular use mean that more pitches should be provided than simply the number of required outdoor teaching spaces. **Further guidance is given in Appendix II.**



It should be noted that the above table includes activity spaces only: in addition, a PE classroom should be provided at all schools of reasonable size.

In calculating the numbers of teaching spaces required, it has been assumed that each is available throughout the school day, and indeed throughout the year. In many existing schools, however, sports halls are required to accommodate assembly, exams and even dining.

Occasional use of the sports hall for assembly, drama and evening events will be acceptable if this does not impact upon the delivery of the PE curriculum, particularly in smaller schools where flexibility in the use of facilities is essential.

Exams pose particular issues as they tend to require exclusive use of a hall for weeks at a time and at certain times in the school year. This can be a problem if the school sports hall (and perhaps gymnasium also) is required: PE for the whole school will still have to be delivered, yet fewer spaces are available.

The use of the games hall for dining also causes significant disruption due to the time taken to set up the hall for dining and to clear and clean it afterwards.

It is recommended, therefore, that the PE facilities are not used for dining and exams, which should be accommodated in a separate hall or halls.



Assessing Community Needs

Having determined what physical education facilities are required, the next stage is to determine how these can best contribute to community sports provision.

Every Local Authority should ideally have a Sport and Leisure Strategy (or similar) which should provide the context for assessing this potential contribution. Whether or not such a strategy exists, the local supply of and demand for sports facilities should be examined. This investigation should include not only local authority facilities but all publicly accessible facilities whether provided by schools, colleges, universities, clubs or the private sector. Comparison of the existing supply and the current and likely future demand for facilities will help to identify the community's requirements for new or replacement sports facilities over the coming years. The first task is to examine supply:

- What facilities exist locally?
- What is their size and capacity?
- What catchment area does each facility serve?
- What sports do they cater for?
- What condition are they in?
- How affordable/suitable are they for all sectors of the population?
- Do they need replacement or substantial investment?

Having assessed the existing supply of facilities, local demand should be considered:

- What are the levels of demand for each sport?
- How is this demand distributed?
- What sports clubs exist and what are their facility needs?

- Is this demand likely to change (for example due to sports development initiatives, new housing development or population change)?

The analysis can be done by undertaking an audit of facilities, local market research such as customer and household surveys and through community planning. Another useful tool is **sportscotland's** Facilities Planning Model (FPM) which provides an objective assessment of the relationship between the likely demand for sports facilities in an area and the actual supply. Contact **sportscotland** for further details of the FPM.

Comparison of supply and demand will show where demand is not being met. This may be because existing facilities are full to capacity or because there are no facilities within a reasonable distance of where people live. New school facilities can address these gaps in provision. It is also important to establish if there are any current plans (by the local authority, clubs, colleges, universities and the commercial sector) for new sports facilities in the area. If so, this may influence what facilities are to be provided at the school.

Also, existing community sports facilities may be sub-standard, require heavy investment or be expensive to operate and maintain. In such cases it may make sense to replace these by providing school facilities which are available for community use.

At the end of this process, the community's requirements for new and replacement sports facilities should have been established. If some of these requirements can be satisfied by the new school facilities, it makes sense to combine both school and community provision.

Consideration should be given to providing facilities over and above those strictly needed by the school. For example, the assessment of community needs may identify substantial unmet demand for indoor sports facilities. While it may have been the intention to provide a standard four-court hall at the school, community demand may be high enough to justify the provision of a larger or second hall.

The same principles should apply to any sports facilities for which a community need has been established. Even if the facility cannot be justified on school use alone, its inclusion may nevertheless be sensible. It will generally be cost effective to provide such a facility as part of the school development; a community need will have been met; it can be managed as part of the whole facility and of course it can also be used by the school.



Some facilities, such as squash courts, may be provided primarily for community use but can also be used by the school.





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