



# East Devon District Council

## Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG) Diagnostic

A report by  
Strategic Leisure Limited  
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## 1. Introduction

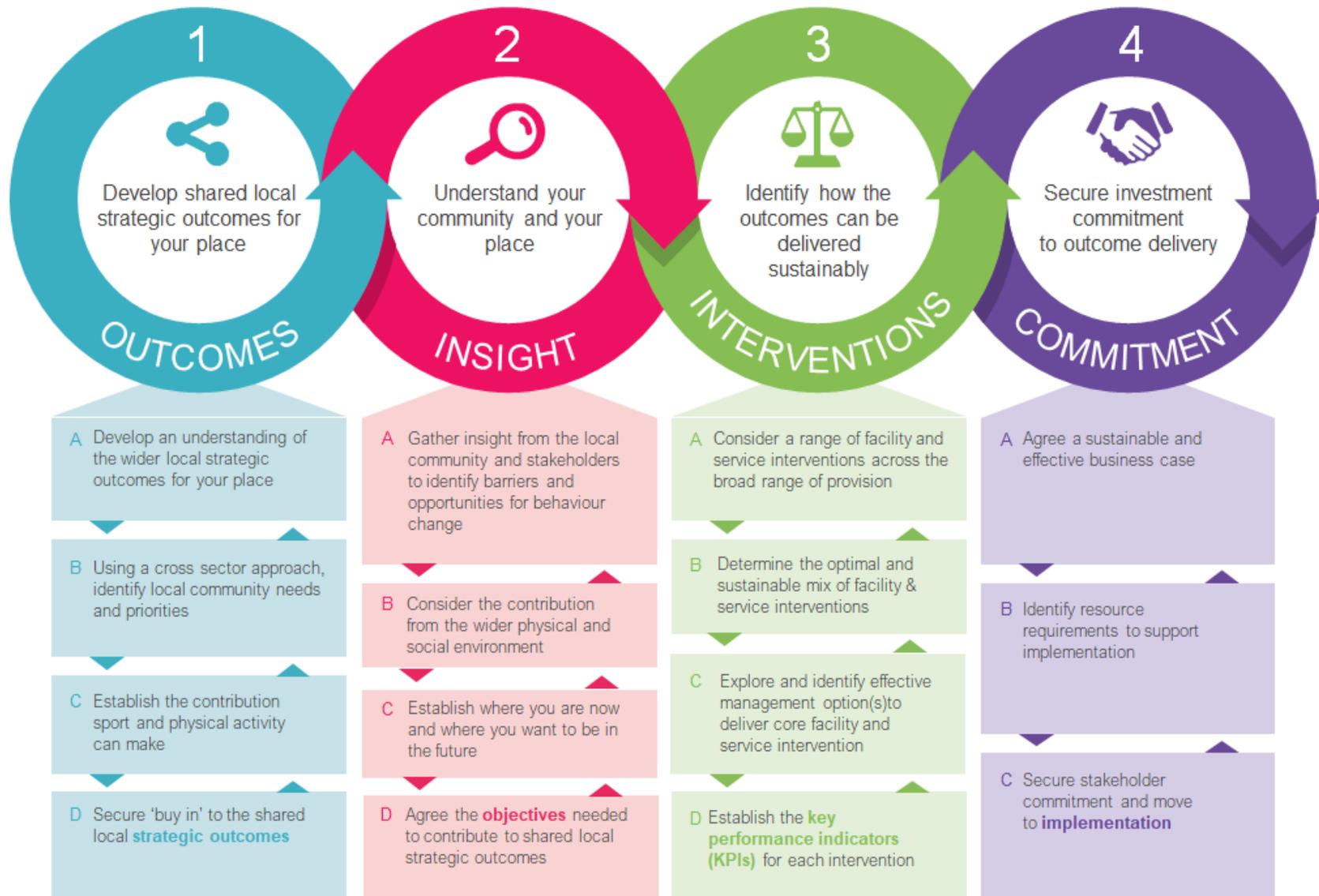
- 1.1 This Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance (SOPG) report has been commissioned by Sport England and East Devon District Council (EDDC). The purpose of the SOPG diagnostic is to provide a position statement for EDDC to illustrate where they are in the process of thinking about, and planning for physical activity and leisure provision over the next 5 – 10 years.
- 1.2 In the last 12 months, EDDC has experienced significant change politically, with The Democratic Alliance Group, the largest group on the Council, forming a coalition with the Independent Progressive Group to form a new administration. The new administration has expressed an ambition to adopt a new approach with its existing leisure operator, LED Community Leisure Ltd (LED), with greater scrutiny of the leisure services provided, set within the context of the Covid 19 pandemic and increased Council budgetary constraints. An LED Monitoring Forum has been established to undertake this function.
- 1.3 As part of this new approach, EDDC first appointed Strategic Leisure Ltd (SLL) in December 2020 to undertake a monthly review of LED open book accounts for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. In April 2021, EDDC asked SLL if this monitoring could be extended to cover the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 22. The initial monitoring of the open book accounts followed the Covid 19 closure agreement reached between EDDC and LED. During the course of this review, SLL made a number of other observations for EDDC to consider:
- **LED undertakes a significant amount of outreach work in the district, focussed on health and wellbeing. This work is not required by EDDC and is not currently part of the contractual arrangement with LED, however, we understand politically it is considered as essential, and is very valued.**
  - **The role and function of the LED Monitoring Forum will be particularly important going forward. Although there are no formal KPI's written into the contract with LED, there has been ongoing monitoring of key performance data supplied to the Council by LED on a quarterly basis. However, there is an opportunity for the Council to review and introduce more formal KPI's to ensure that LED is contributing to the Council corporate priorities, and addressing local issues, particularly in response to the Covid pandemic.**
  - **The costs of the dual-use facilities need to be addressed; existing agreements are historical and effectively mean that a non-statutory service is subsidising a statutory service. The facilities are needed but the costs to EDDC should be less.**
  - **There is no up to date Leisure Strategy for the District; development of a Strategy would provide a clear Vision and direction, driven by EDDC, to which LED could then align its services and be monitored through agreed KPI's.**
  - **There is no up to date PPS for the District.**

- 1.4 EDDC is currently reviewing its Local Plan which was adopted in January 2016. The current Local Plan allows for the development of 17,100 new homes between the period 2013 – 2031. The majority of the housing development will take place in East Devon’s West End area (10,563 homes) with the new town of Cranbrook accounting for 7,769 of this total. The new ‘Emerging Local Plan 2021 - 2040’ is currently being prepared to replace the existing Local Plan.
- 1.5 Following the advice of external consultants, EDDC transferred its leisure services to LED in 2005 and as a charitable trust, LED is able to take advantage of National Non-Domestic Rate Relief (NNDR) and partial VAT exemption on sporting and other charitable activities. EDDC has a 30 year leisure management contract with LED the operation of which commenced in January 2006 and operates on the basis of a Service Fee (subsidy) payment. The Service Fee is reviewed every 5 years between EDDC and LED and a new Service Fee is calculated by looking at the trading performance for the previous period and factoring in anticipated increases in income and expenditure to produce a net figure. The initial Service Fee for 2006 to March 2011 was £1,155,000 per annum which represented an annual saving to the Council in the first year of £360,901. These figures excluded capital, property services and other support costs retained by the Council. The same Service Fee was agreed for the period 2011 – March 2016 which represented an annual saving of £190,000 to the Council, with CPI inflation incorporated. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review of the Coalition Government in the latter part of 2010, LED approached the Council and voluntarily agreed to reduce the fee by 25%, at 5% per annum through to 2016. This reduced the fee in 2010 to £893,717. LED agreed to retain the Service Fee at this level through to March 2021 despite rising costs such as the introduction of the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage, increased utility costs etc.
- 1.6 EDDC set up the Trust to succeed and has benefitted financially from the arrangement since 2005 with LED generating net surpluses of £2.2m over the initial 10 year contract period, used to facilitate capital investment of over £5 million in EDDC leisure facilities. Local Authority support has also reduced from 26% to 11.5% of income for the contract.
- 1.7 However, there have been a number of changes in recent years which have impacted on the leisure contract in East Devon including changes within the leisure industry and types of contract, competition from other providers and new leisure activities, reductions in local authority funding, changes in legislation, changing public needs and expectations, and Covid. The Service Fee arrangement is unusual in that it goes into LED’s central costs and then is recharged to individual leisure facility Profit and Loss (P and L) accounts. Other operators tend to show the management fee as a separate line in each facility P and L. There is no surplus share arrangement in the current contract between EDDC and LED. A new 5 year agreement was due to be agreed with LED and introduced from 1 April 2021. However, as a result of the Covid pandemic, an interim 12 month agreement is being considered by EDDC to support and monitor the operator through the recovery phase prior to agreeing a new 5 year business plan. LED has estimated that it will need up to £550,000 supplier relief funding from the Council through to 31 March 2022, working on an open book basis.
- 1.8 The LED portfolio comprises of the following facilities:
- **6 dual use sites** – Axminster Leisure Centre (Axe Valley Community College), Broadclyst Leisure Centre, Colyton Leisure Centre, Honiton Leisure Centre, Ottery Leisure Centre and Sidmouth Leisure Centre

- **3 leisure centres** - Exmouth Leisure Centre, Exmouth Tennis Centre, Sidmouth Swimming Pool
- **3 outdoor facilities** – Sidmouth Coburg (tennis courts, putting green and 2 bowls rinks), Seafeld Gardens (tennis courts, adventure golf), Phear Park (tennis)
- **1 theatre** - Exmouth Pavilion

- 1.9 Pre-Covid, Exmouth Leisure Centre and Honiton Leisure Centre were operating at a surplus. All other facilities required a subsidy although some were close to breaking even.
- 1.10 The dual use arrangements have been in place since the 1980s where EDDC built leisure centres on Devon County Council land, with ongoing running costs shared between the two parties, formalised by dual use agreements; these agreements were subsequently novated to LED. Colyton Leisure centre has a slightly different tenure set up, having been built by the Grammar School in 2003 and leased to EDDC but follows similar usage arrangements to the other 5 sites.
- 1.11 LED also delivers a community outreach service across the District. Community outreach is not included in the LED leisure management contract. However, LED voluntarily took on responsibility for this service when the Council's Sport Development Team were made redundant. LED's Community Engagement Manager (job share) delivers community outreach across East Devon. Only recently has LED requested that the cost of funding this post (£50k including oncosts, travel etc) be separately highlighted within the accounts. LED has been successful in obtaining external grants averaging £100k per annum towards the cost of funding individual projects and activities.
- 1.12 This SOPG diagnostic seeks to identify future sport and physical activity needs for the District, any gaps in existing provision and options for best addressing these challenges that will underpin a future Leisure Strategy.
- 1.13 The 'Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance' (SOPG) provides a robust and consistent approach for establishing local need and achieving the best return on the use of resources.
- 1.14 The SOPG guidance is structured around 4 stages as illustrated in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Sport England SOPG Guidance



1.15 Having a clear, strategic and sustainable approach to sport and physical activity is essential prior to making effective investment into provision – both facilities and services. Creating a focus and vision on local outcomes, informed by customer insight and delivering interventions (capital and revenue) that effect behaviour change in the target audience will ultimately deliver local outcomes for a place.

### Scope of Work

1.16 The scope of works for this initial diagnostic is as follows:

- **Provide an overview of the District**
- **Headline demographic, health and socio economic review of the district**
- **Review of any existing needs assessment/supply/demand surveys**
- **Existing participation and activity levels and trends; what are the gaps? Who is inactive, where and why?**
- **Review of local and regional strategies and policies specifically relating to health and wellbeing, plus corporate plan and local plan (and any specific housing development proposals that may impact future demand)**
- **Identify local priorities and why these are important- what does EDDC want to achieve through the provision of physical activity and leisure and why?**
- **Identify the Shared Outcomes to be achieved in relation to health and well-being**
- **Identify gaps in existing evidence base**
- **Describe what EDDC currently provides, where and how**
- **Site visits of all EDDC facilities including dual use sites (Subject to Covid restrictions)**
- **Map all facilities by type and location**
- **Review the community outreach service**

- **The current arrangements with LED Community Leisure Ltd (LED)**
- **What that delivers in terms of throughput and social value**
- **The current cost of the service**
- **Review of each facility in relation to key strategic factors: meeting local need; community capacity; usage; whether adjacent/competition with other provision; financial (cost, investment, income generation); building condition; catchment areas; key users e.g. schools for curriculum delivery; dual use management arrangements/operating hours etc**
- **Run Sports Facility Calculator (SFC) to assess indicative future need**
- **Stakeholder consultation – engage with identified key strategic stakeholders to get their views on the challenge and opportunities for EDDC in terms of physical activity and leisure provision**

1.17 This report assesses where EDDC is now in terms of provision compared to need and opportunities and where it is compared to the SOPG process; this will identify key elements of work that are needed to underpin a future strategic approach to provision and delivery.

## 2. Context

### Location

- 2.1. The district of East Devon covers an area of 314 square miles and serves a resident population of 146,284<sup>1</sup>. East Devon can be described as average size for districts in the Southwest. However, it has one of the higher population levels. The eastern and northern boundaries of East Devon abut rural parts of Devon, Dorset and Somerset. The Southern boundary of the District is formed by the English Channel. The western boundary of East Devon abuts the commercially vibrant city of Exeter and environmentally sensitive Exe estuary.
- 2.2. East Devon is connected to Bristol and the north of the country by access to the M5 via Exeter and London and the Southeast by the A30/A303. London can be reached in about 3 hours by road. There are two main rail routes from the district to London. One is via the Honiton to Waterloo line which takes on average 3 hours. However there are efficiency issues with this route not being a dual track line. The main Great Western line to London Paddington via Exeter St David's station and can take 2 hours to reach the capital city. The rest of the rail network can be accessed via Honiton, Axminster, Exmouth and Exeter stations.
- 2.3. The District encompasses urban and urban fringe areas as well as market towns and villages, seaside towns and more remote rural and coastal areas. The outstanding environment makes East Devon popular with tourists, mainly due to the spectacular Jurassic Coastline, the two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Nature Reserves and the rich heritage of historical buildings that define East Devon's towns. There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) within East Devon, the Blackdown Hills AONB and East Devon AONB which together occupy some 66% of the district. The rural nature of the area is emphasised by the low population density of 175 per square km (the England average is 427).
- 2.4. There are eight towns in East Devon with population levels exceeding 3,000; Axminster, Budleigh Salterton, Exmouth, Cranbrook, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton and Sidmouth. Exmouth is the largest town with a population of 48,613<sup>2</sup>. The majority of the district is countryside, mostly in agricultural use, although woodland and forestry accounts for a sizeable minority of the district as does heathland and inter-tidal areas associated with the District's rivers and estuaries. Although agriculture and tourism form an important part of the District's economy, new technologies and business are also emerging and investing in East Devon. In recent years, East Devon's approach has been to concentrate larger scale employment development sites close to the city of Exeter. This has included promoting the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise zone which comprises of the Science Park, Skypark, Airport Business Park and Cranbrook Town Centre.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: ONS mid-year estimates 2019

<sup>2</sup> Source: Devon County Council Area Profile population data 2016

- 2.5. The new town of Cranbrook forms part of EDCC strategic policy to boost the economy of the Exeter sub-region by encouraging significant growth within the West End of the District through:
- **Continuing to encourage growth at Cranbrook, a prototype 'eco-town' new community, plus urban extensions East of Exeter;**
  - **Promoting the Exeter Science Park, Skypark, encouraging high technology industries and opening up our market and coastal communities to the latest technological innovations; and**
  - **Facilitating the change to a low carbon economy and supporting an advanced public transport system to connect the main employment sites with established and new communities.**
- 2.6. The District is relatively prosperous with low levels of unemployment. The proportion of those aged 16 – 64 who are economically active is 83.3% which is above the national average. The District enjoys a strong culture of self-employment and family businesses. However, there is a high proportion of lower paid, lower skilled and often seasonal jobs with a number of residents commuting out of the area, especially to Exeter, for higher paid jobs.
- 2.7. The Council's Local Plan (2013 – 2031) highlights the District's requirement to provide an additional 17,100 homes by 2031 in locations which reflect local needs with particular focus on Cranbrook, Axminster and Exmouth. In response to recent Government legislation and changes to the planning system, including the methodology for calculating housing need, EDDC is in the process of revising its Local Plan through to 2040. Under the revised calculation, East Devon would be required to build at least 928 homes per annum which is greater than current requirement of 918 homes per annum (using a base date of 31 March 2020).

### Demographic and Socio Economic Review

- 2.8. EDDC has a population of 146,284 and an older age profile with 30.4% of residents over the age of 65 years, which is higher than both Devon (25.5%) and for England (18.4%). Persons aged 0 – 15 years account for 16% of the District population and those aged 16 – 64 years account for 53.7%. It is estimated that the population of East Devon will increase to 182,780 by 2043<sup>3</sup> and those over the age of 65 will account for 37% of that total; 7.2% will be aged over 85 years compared to 4.1% for England. This increase reflects the 'baby boomer' generation getting older and people choosing to retire in the area. This aging population will have an impact on the provision of health care, housing requirements, the labour market and economic growth.
- 2.9. One of the effects of the ageing population is the impact it will have on the ratio of economically dependent people to those who are economically active, (those aged 16-64). In East Devon this is 0.78 which is very high by local and national standards and puts the district in the top 10 of all district's areas in the Country. By comparison, Exeter has a dependency ratio of 0.42 and the national figure is 0.55.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: ONS Subnational population projections 2018

- 2.10. The average household size in the district is 2.2 residents. Predominantly East Devon residents are from a white British background, with just 1.59% of the district's population coming from an ethnic background.
- 2.11. Levels of home ownership are high with a significant proportion of houses in the top three most expensive council tax bands. Affordability of homes is an issue in the district with East Devon being in the top 25% of all Local Authority areas for house prices but one of the lowest nationally in terms of wages.
- 2.12. The migration of population into East Devon from other parts of the UK show that in 2017 there were 2,620 more people moving into the area than out. The largest age group moving into the district were in the 25 – 44 age group.
- 2.13. The levels of car ownership reflect the rural nature of the district; at the last census it was recorded that 84.1% of households owned at least one vehicle; with the national figure being 74.4%<sup>4</sup>. The rural nature of some parts of the district is such that 13 wards in East Devon have less than one person per hectare living there. The accessibility to public transport is vital to those without a car living in such areas. The 2016 Cranbrook Community Questionnaire indicated average vehicle ownership of 1.55 vehicles per household in Cranbrook. The average car and van ownership figure per household is not dramatically different than the 2011 census data for Broadclyst Parish (within which Cranbrook lay at the 2011 census) of 1.62 vehicles per household and is higher than the East Devon and Exeter averages.
- 2.14. The 2011 Census shows there is a large flow of working out of the district with 41% (18,170) of the working population commuting out of East Devon to work, primarily by car (79%). Over 63% of those working outside of the district are travelling to Exeter with significant numbers also going to Mid Devon, South Somerset, Teignbridge, West Dorset and Taunton Deane.
- 2.15. There are 68,950 homes in East Devon the highest number of all the Devon districts<sup>5</sup>. The proportion of homes that are owner occupied is quite high with 74.9% being owned compared to the national average of 63.6%, of these 47.1% are owned outright, compared to 30.6% nationally. The Ottery St Mary ward has the highest percentage of homes that are owner occupied at 85.4% compared to the lowest Exmouth Town at 55.9%. Axminster Rural ward has the highest percentage of social rented housing at 22.8%.
- 2.16. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is based upon seven domains of deprivation: income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services, living environment and crime. These are weighted and combined to create the overall IMD. According to the Government's 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, East Devon is a comparatively affluent area and its ranking in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation is 238 out of 317. East Devon has no Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) in the most deprived 20% of all LSOA's nationally. Across the district, there are just two LSOA's in the most deprived 30% of all areas across England which are contained within the wards of Exmouth Littleham and Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh. There are areas of Honiton St Michael's and Exmouth Town which are in the top 40% most deprived nationally.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics: Census 2011

<sup>5</sup> Source: Valuation Office 2018

- 2.17. At just over 82.6 years old the life expectancy for residents in East Devon is very high with the area ranking in the top 10% of districts nationally and is top of all the Devon districts.
- 2.18. The proportion of the working age who are economically inactive due to suffering from long-term sickness is about the national average at 2.29% of the work age population. The national average is 2.29%, although the Devon average is 1.25% which is low by national standards.
- 2.19. Levels of fuel poverty in East Devon area are 9.6%, estimated at nearly 6,000 households in the district. The national average is 11.1% and the Southwest average is 10.2%. East Devon in line with the national trend has seen levels of fuel poverty decreasing.
- 2.20. In 2019, 12.7% of children in Year 6 (10 – 11 years old) were classified as obese<sup>6</sup>. This is lower than both the county of Devon (16.5%) and England overall (20.2%). However, 8.1% of Reception age children were classified as obese which is higher than Devon (7.4%) and England (9.7%). The recent Sport England Active Lives data detailed below (May 2019/20) suggests that levels of activity within the district are deteriorating amongst children and young people and therefore obesity levels will start to increase.
- 2.21. The Sport England Active Lives Data May 2019/20 reveals that a lower percentage of adults in East Devon (20.2%) participate in less than 30 minutes activity per week compared to Devon (20.4%) and England (25.5%); only 9.2% of adults are fairly active (30 – 149 minutes per week) which is comparable to Devon but less than England (11.7%); however, 70.6% of adults in East Devon are active which is better than both Devon (70.3%) and England overall (62.8%). The analysis therefore shows that participation levels in East Devon are relatively good with low levels of inactivity. This is also reflected in low levels of adult obesity within the district (55.8%) compared to Devon (61%) and England overall (62%).
- 2.22. Participation rates amongst children and young people varies with higher levels of inactivity in East Devon (26.8%) compared to Devon (23.7%) but lower when compared to England (29%); 18.9% of children and young people are fairly active in East Devon (30 – 59 minutes per day) which is lower than for both Devon and England. However, 54.6% are active (60 plus minutes per day) which is higher than for England (46.8%) but lower compared to Devon (54.6%). Overall, the District exhibits poorer participation rates amongst children and young people in comparison to the county of Devon.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: East Devon Public Health Profile 2019

### 3. Existing Leisure Facility Provision

- 3.1. EDDC's Countryside and Leisure Team is responsible for a range of services including the management of the LED leisure contract; cultural provision, including the management of the Manor Pavilion Theatre and Thelma Hulbert Gallery; countryside management including a ranger service and management of approximately 120 countryside volunteers; together with arboriculture services. Parks and Open Spaces across the district are managed by the Council's Streetscene Team.
- 3.2. The LED leisure contract comprises of 6 dual use sites, 3 leisure centres, 3 outdoor facilities and 1 theatre. Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary of the contract portfolio, including the facility mix, approximate age of the facilities and any refurbishments that have been undertaken. There is no leisure facility provision in Seaton or Cranbrook included within the contract. LED does operate its own 45 station gym at Seaton Fitness Centre.
- 3.3. Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of all built leisure provision in East Devon (public pay and play, registered membership, private, sports club/community association) as registered on the Sport England Active Lives database.
- 3.4. The Council outsourced its leisure provision to LED back in 2006 for understandable reasons, essentially allowing LED to take advantage of National Non- Domestic Rate Relief (NNDR) and partial VAT exemption on sporting and other charitable activities. However, as highlighted in the introduction to this report, EDDC has a very unusual contract arrangement, in which a fixed annual Service Fee is agreed with the operator for a 5 year period and then reviewed on a 5 yearly basis. There is no profit share arrangement with EDDC built into the contract, EDDC retains responsibility for most of the maintenance, there is no allowance for RPI, or utility price changes, competition clauses etc. EDDC was paying LED an annual Subsidy Fee of £893,717 per annum to operate the contract prior to Covid 19. This is a considerable level of funding for a district council but reflects, in part, the number and type of facilities included within the contract, the age of the buildings and the way in which they have to be managed eg staffing of dual-use sites. Income generation from dual use sites is restricted due to the limited number of hours available for public use. Five of the dual use facilities were built in the 1980s and are approximately 40 years old. The average lifespan of a leisure centre is normally 35 – 40 years.
- 3.5. Covid 19 has simply compounded the financial situation above, with EDDC agreeing to pay LED £1,237,802 in supplier relief funding for the period April 2020 to date. An interim 12 month agreement is now being considered by EDDC to support and monitor the operator through the recovery phase prior to agreeing a new 5 year business plan. LED has estimated that it will need up to £550,000 supplier relief funding from the Council for through to 31 March 2022, working on an open book basis.
- 3.6. In addition to the annual Subsidy Fee payment to LED, EDDC retains direct involvement and financial investment in the leisure buildings as Landlord, through its lease repairing obligations, which are generally set out as Landlord responsibility for internal and external building maintenance, with requirements on the Tenant (LED) for minor maintenance, statutory compliance, and running costs. LED also pays an annual contribution of approximately £44,645 towards maintenance costs incurred by Streetscene. A recent internal 'Review of LED portfolio - future building maintenance and investment requirements' (Dec 2020) highlights that EDDC is spending on average £409,585 per annum in revenue costs on the contract. This includes reactive/planned maintenance, insurance, and indirect management/overhead costs. The report projects a capital spend of £1,554,636 over the next 5

years and an overall expenditure on the leisure contract facilities over the next 30 years of £22.8 million (including dual use site contributions by schools); this is without providing any noticeable enhancements to the sites. The spend requirement over the next 10 years is significant and this is essentially due to lack of investment by the Council in the past 5 years.

- 3.7. There is no rental income to EDDC from any of the leisure centres.
- 3.8. In summary, assuming from April 2022 the leisure sector has recovered from the impact of Covid, and that an annual Subsidy Fee of approximately £893,717 is renegotiated with LED for the next 5 years, then the annual cost to the Council of providing the existing portfolio of leisure facilities will be approximately £1,614,000. Without a clear vision and key priorities for leisure provision in East Devon, supported by evidence of need, it is difficult to determine whether the existing portfolio of facilities, management arrangements and associated costs continue to represent good value for money for EDDC. At present, only 3 facilities in the contract portfolio provide full community access. East Devon also has a smaller population base compared to other local authorities which will impact on the footfall through the leisure facilities.
- 3.9. It should also be noted that there are now a number of national leisure operators who have set up non-profit making subsidiaries to obtain the benefits of NNDR relief and partial VAT exemption. These operators also have the added benefit over smaller trusts in relation to bulk purchasing power for servicing contracts, utilities etc across a large number of contracts and are therefore able to keep their costs down.

### Dual Use Sites

- 3.10. Six of the leisure centres are 'dual use' and located in the rural towns of Axminster, Broadclyst, Colyton, Honiton, Ottery St Mary and Sidmouth. All these towns serve relatively small populations and their rural hinterlands. Each dual use site is located approximately 6 miles (less than 20 minutes travel time) from another dual use facility. Broadclyst Leisure Centre is 6 miles from the city of Exeter and 3 miles from the new town of Cranbrook.
- 3.11. Dual use is where community usage of the facilities is shared with an adjacent secondary school. In East Devon, these arrangements were created in the 1980's where EDDC built leisure centres on Devon County Council land, with ongoing running costs shared between the two parties, formalised by 'dual use agreements'. EDDC's operational roles in these agreements were subsequently formally novated to LED. Colyton Leisure Centre has a slightly different tenure setup, being built more recently (2003), where the Grammar School constructed the building, and then leased to EDDC on a 99 year lease basis. The principles of the usage arrangements are similar though to the other five dual use centres.
- 3.12. The dual use agreements are very dated with maintenance costs split between the Council and the school based on the number of hours that the school uses the facilities rather than throughput. This works in favour of the school with the school paying 40% of the maintenance costs and the Council paying the remaining 60%. The split is 50/50 in the more recent Colyton Dual Use Agreement. Appendix 1 shows that all the dual use sites were built in the 1980s and although some facilities have been refurbished, the age of the buildings and associated plant is resulting in increased maintenance expenditure.

- 3.13. Access arrangements are normally such that the school has use of the facilities during the weekday daytime and the community have access weekday evenings, weekends and holidays. However, the hours do vary per individual site and there is a mix of community pay and play provision, registered membership use (e.g. gym, tennis) and registered sports club/association use (e.g. regular block bookings).
- 3.14. Where dual use provision is included within a leisure contract portfolio, this normally reduces the value of that contract and its financial viability/attractiveness to leisure operators. This is normally due to the limited opening hours and restrictive access arrangements limiting opportunities to generate additional income. More and more schools are now retracting on their original dual use agreements, arguing pupil safety as a reason for restricting public access on site. Nationally, there are several schools now moving over to Academy status and this is also making it more challenging for Councils to negotiate community access. It should be noted that there are options for addressing safeguarding concerns whilst maintaining public access on site during the day, including pre-registered membership schemes with card swipe access entry systems.
- 3.15. EDDC needs to determine what value it places on community access pay and play provision across the district and the ability of dual use sites in meeting this provision. At present, it is not right that EDDC's non-statutory leisure service is propping up a statutory service (i.e. Education) financially by providing and maintaining leisure facilities on the 6 school sites. The Council should look at dual use provision in its entirety, including a review of all agreements, legal implications, finances, usage, investments to date etc. to determine what options are available which best meet EDDC's future leisure priorities and the needs of residents. If the Council determines that it wishes to hand back the dual use sites to the schools, it needs to know where there are alternative pay and play sports facilities in the district before doing this.
- 3.16. EDDC has already started a review of its dual use arrangements, having commenced discussions with Colyton Grammar School to address safeguarding concerns, but also to generally regularise the use and operating arrangements for the site.
- 3.17. LED has expressed a desire for the Council to retain the dual use arrangements with the 6 schools but to move its health and fitness offer out of the Axminster and Sidmouth school sites and into alternative facilities. LED's argument is that the existing health and fitness facilities are being delivered in old school buildings that are not commercially viable as they are small and operate with restricted opening hours. LED has proposed to the Council the development of replacement health and fitness facilities at Sidmouth Pool and Cloakham Lawn Sports Club; the latter would result in the displacement of Axminster Indoor Bowls Club. In the absence of an EDDC leisure strategy with a clear vision and key priorities, LED is suggesting changes which are financially, and not necessarily needs driven.
- 3.18. Pre-Covid, 4 of the dual use sites were operating at a small surplus, with the exception of Broadclyst Leisure Centre (operating deficit of £15,112 in 2019) and Colyton Leisure Centre (operating deficit of £4,064 in 2019) where there is no health and fitness provision. Honiton Leisure Centre was the best performing dual use site pre-Covid achieving a surplus of £124,343 in 2019.

### Synthetic Turf Pitch Provision

3.19. There are currently 2 full size 3G pitches in East Devon:

- **Axminster Leisure Centre (Axe Valley Community College)**
- **Exeter City Training Ground (only available for use by the professional football club)**

3.20. There are also two small sided 3G pitches at:

- **Cranbrook Educational Campus**
- **Exmouth Community College**

3.21. There are also several sand-dressed facilities which accommodate football training demand, including pitches at Sidmouth Leisure Centre and Colyton Leisure Centre. It should be noted that the pitch at Sidmouth Leisure Centre has no floodlighting which restricts its ability to generate income. The pitch at Colyton Leisure Centre is now in need of significant investment and the school is seeking an increased contribution from LED for hiring out the pitch outside of school hours. Clyst Vale Community College (Broadclyst Leisure Centre) is also campaigning for a 3G pitch on the school site.

3.22. The geographical spread of existing 3G pitch provision is uneven in East Devon. Key areas of population currently lack provision. These include Honiton, Exmouth and the coast between Sidmouth and Seaton. An up to date Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) needs to be produced by EDDC to provide the necessary evidence base for future investment. An updated PPS is currently being produced in house by EDDC. East Devon does have a Local Football Facility Plan (Football Foundation Sept 2019). This document also highlights the need for a PPS and in the absence of this, the document uses a less sophisticated method called the FA training ratio model 1:38. On the basis that there are 179 teams in East Devon, there is the requirement for 5 full sized 3G pitches in the District. There is currently the equivalent of 2, including the 3G pitch at Axminster Leisure Centre and the 2 small-sided pitches. There is therefore a shortfall of 3 full sized community accessible 3G pitches across the district which suggests that the pitch at Axminster Leisure Centre is strategically important. This shortfall may reduce to 2, pending the scale of development at Cranbrook. This data needs to be substantiated by a PPS.

### **Exmouth Leisure Centre, Exmouth Tennis Centre and Sidmouth Swimming Pool**

3.23. Exmouth Leisure Centre is the best performing facility within the leisure contract portfolio. This is partly due to the fact that this is a stand-alone leisure facility located in a prime location on the seafront at Exmouth, with accessible car parking and a good range of facilities. Annual throughput for the site pre-covid was 369,583. Although built in 1982, the leisure centre has been invested in over the years including refurbishment of both pools, pool changing, squash courts and gym. This investment of approximately £2.5 million was achieved by LED utilising Lottery funding and a Public Works Loan from EDDC.

3.24. Exmouth Tennis Centre is centrally located approximately half a mile from the leisure centre on land adjacent to Exmouth Community College. The facility includes 4 indoor carpet courts, 2 indoor acrylic courts, 3 outdoor tennis courts, a 28 station gym and café. This facility is the poorest financially performing

site in the leisure contract portfolio, operating at a pre-Covid deficit of £63,928 in 2019. As the venue is only half a mile from Exmouth Leisure Centre, it is questionable whether having gyms at both locations is viable, although LED argue that they cater for different clients.

- 3.25. Sidmouth Pool is a stand-alone facility located in Sidmouth town centre, adjacent to the main town centre car park. A Tourist Information Centre is located within the same building. The facility was built in 1991 and provides a 25m x 5 lane main pool but no learner pool. There are no other facilities provided on site. The building is now approximately 30 years old and is reaching the end of its useful life. No refurbishment has been carried out to the facility in the last 10 years. Despite its age and lack of commercial/learn to swim facilities on site, the facility performs relatively well, operating at a small annual surplus of £16,685 in 2019.

### Outdoor Facilities

- 3.26. The leisure management contract with LED includes the management of 3 outdoor facilities within East Devon.
- 3.27. Coburg Fields in Sidmouth provides 4 hard tennis courts, 4 grass tennis courts, an 18 hole putting green and 2 bowling rinks which can be booked online or by telephone. The tennis courts are not floodlit. LED is responsible for bookings and employs a seasonal leisure attendant on site (Easter to September). The Council undertakes all daily maintenance, grass cutting etc and LED pays EDDC a grounds maintenance fee. Streetscene (EDDC) are responsible for the upkeep of the courts.
- 3.28. Seafield Gardens is located at the top of Castle Hill in Seaton and provides a 9 hole themed adventure golf, 2 hard tennis courts (not floodlit) and a café. The tennis courts operate with a gate entry system from ClubSpark which allows users to book a court online up to 7 days in advance. Courts cost £6 per hour on a pay and play basis. LED is responsible for bookings and employs a seasonal leisure attendant on site (Easter to September). The Council undertakes all daily maintenance, and Streetscene are responsible for the upkeep of the Courts.
- 3.29. Phear Park in Exmouth provides 3 hard tennis courts (not floodlit) which also operates with a gate entry system from ClubSpark, allowing users to book a court up to 8 days in advance. Courts again cost £6 per hour on a pay and play basis and are open 7am – 8pm daily.

### Exmouth Pavilion

- 3.30. EDDC manages the Manor Park Theatre in Sidmouth in house but the decision was taken at the time of letting the contract to include the Exmouth Pavilion within the contract portfolio. The Exmouth Pavilion is located within landscaped, licenced gardens on Exmouth's seafront. The auditorium seats 550 (700 standing) and offers a cabaret or theatre layout and also has raised seating available. The facility also benefits from a café and main bar which are open throughout the day, and a lounge bar which opens an hour before shows start. The venue is used for wedding receptions, private functions, shows and exhibitions.

- 3.31. The site benefits from state-of-the-art sound and lighting equipment, a dedicated technical team and box office facilities.
- 3.32. The facility is profitable and achieved a small surplus of £9,457 in 2019.
- 3.33. EDDC is in the process of producing a new Cultural Plan 2022 – 2027 which will set out a direction of travel for cultural and related services across the district. EDDC is also in the process of relaunching its Art and Culture Forum. There is therefore an opportunity to review the performance and operation of the Exmouth Pavilion and how it can best meet the future cultural priorities of the Council. The review should incorporate consideration of alternative management models.

### Community Outreach Programme

- 3.34. EDDC previously employed a Sport and Health Development Officer. This role came to an end over a decade ago as part of a series of Council cost saving measures and in direct response to the 2008 financial crisis. Although not formally included within the original leisure management contract, LED voluntarily took on a community outreach role, to help support the Council and recognising the value and benefit of this work to the local community.
- 3.35. In the absence of a Council Leisure Strategy with a clear vision and key priorities, LED has had to determine the types of activities and programmes to develop and pursue. LED has tried to link to EDDC's Public Health Strategy (2019 – 2023) and its 10 key priorities (e.g. diet and nutrition, dementia, mental health) in determining its programme of activities. These programmes are detailed in Section 5 of this report.
- 3.36. Many of the LED outreach projects are either part funded or fully funded through grants (average £100k per annum) LED employs a full time Community Engagement Manager (currently full-time job share) who is responsible for instigating these projects, submitting bid proposals and managing and supporting the schemes. The funding received does not cover staffing costs. The cost of this post is £50k per annum, including oncosts, travel expenses etc. As a direct result of Covid 19, LED has highlighted that the cost of this employee can no longer be absorbed within the overall cost of the service and that the cost, role and priorities of the community outreach function should be reviewed jointly by EDDC and LED when determining the new Service Fee, and for this to be written into the contract.
- 3.37. Any review of the LED Community Outreach function should be looked at in conjunction with the current review of Active Partnerships which Sport England is undertaking. The review follows the launch of the new 'Uniting the Movement' Sport England strategy (January 2021) and is looking at future operational ways of working to achieve a shared vision and mission, including Sport England's investment into Active Partnerships and systems of measurement, evaluation and working. Future priorities for Active Partnerships will include investment in people as assets, building capacity in communities and across the system and developing skills and competencies to enable change needed in places. The focus will be on leadership, governance, learning and development together with greater insight of local communities and what is needed to meet local needs; connecting people within and across places and organisations will be a priority, engaging and convening a broad set of people as to what is required and then making it happen. Active Partnerships will help get resources (including investment) to where it is most needed locally. These changes may impact on LED's community outreach role going forward.

### Cranbrook New Town

- 3.38. Cranbrook is a new town located within 5 miles of Exeter. Development commenced in 2012 and to date approximately 2,300 homes have been built for 3,500 residents. The town has planning permission for 8,500 homes and the population is set to grow to approximately 20,000 by 2028. There will be 30% affordable housing provided. The town has been an NHS Healthy New Town, one of 10 selected demonstrator sites across England. The Healthy New Town programme has been testing interventions and new approaches to meeting health needs across a wide range of types of development. Cranbrook and Exeter are also one of 12 Sport England Local Delivery pilots with the objective of people being more active and tackling health inequalities.
- 3.39. This scheme will introduce significant funding potential to complement the work of the Healthy New Town Programme and is being administered by Exeter City Council. EDDC is no longer involved in the governance of the pilot. In Cranbrook, the pilot is focussing on families on low incomes facing significant challenge.
- 3.40. Cranbrook has a unique young family demographic (2 times the national average) with over 4 times the national average of 0 – 4 year olds.
- 3.41. The town has its own railway station and schools catering for up to the age of 16 years. There are grass football pitches provided and overlaid for cricket and there are plans for a pavilion to be built adjacent to the pitches. There are also plans for a Multi- Use Games Area to be provided adjacent to the Skate Park. The development of a large leisure centre is being considered for the south of the town. However, there are also plans to build a health and wellbeing hub in the town centre. EDDC is now in the process of negotiating with the developer the option of acquiring additional land in the town centre to allow the development of a co-located health and wellbeing hub incorporating the leisure centre and GP/health services. EDDC is seeking a capital contribution of £4 million from the developer towards the leisure centre build. No facility mix has been agreed. A leisure strategy and PPS would help inform this process.
- 3.42. All assets in Cranbrook are owned by the town council and not EDDC.
- 3.43. Cranbrook Education Campus hires out its sports facilities to the local community outside of school hours. Facilities for hire include a sports hall, 2 studios, floodlit 3G pitch and 4 tennis/netball courts. This is administered by Exeter City Community Trust.
- 3.44. The Sport England Delivery Pilot is delivering a number of projects. This includes active travel and encouraging key target groups to walk and cycle more in everyday life. A new cycle route has been introduced between Exeter and Cranbrook to ease congestion and encourage Cranbrook residents to stop using the car for short journeys to work in Exeter. Wide cycleways, directional routes and improved off-road leisure routes are also being introduced. As it would be difficult to build housing to the south of Cranbrook due to its proximity to Exeter airport (noise pollution), consideration is being given to the development of a cycle park in the area and initial discussions have taken place with British Cycling.
- 3.45. Other projects include a local programme of social prescribing and a Community Connector has been appointed to lead motivational conversations towards active lifestyles with patients referred by the local GP practice. A local Move More Cranbrook Community grants programme has been prepared for launch to support local resident groups that are establishing grass roots activity programmes.

### Covid19

- 3.46. EDDC's facilities and LED's activity programmes have been reopening under the Government Covid Roadmap, following the Government's announcement that 'Step 2' could commence as planned on 12 April 2021.
- 3.47. From 29 March 2021, outdoor group exercise classes were made available across the district. Outdoor tennis re-opened at Phear Park, Exmouth and Seafeld Gardens. The majority of staff remained on furlough with only a small cohort returned to prepare for re-opening.
- 3.48. From 12 April 2021, health and fitness re-started at Exmouth, Sidmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary and Axminster leisure centres, and Exmouth Tennis Centre. Swimming also re-started at Exmouth Leisure Centre and Honiton Swimming Pool. There was a delay in the re-opening of Sidmouth Pool due to an unexpected management system failure requiring a replacement repair.
- 3.49. Colyton Leisure Centre re-opened on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2021 and Broadclyst Leisure Centre in June 2021.
- 3.50. The dual use sites have re-opened with restricted opening hours due to reduced demand and in order to mitigate costs.
- 3.51. Exmouth Pavilion has been offering a takeaway food and beverage offer and re-opened with a wider offer in May 2021, under Step 3 Government guidelines but with significant restrictions.
- 3.52. The next sections of the report reflect the structure of the SOPG guidance in order to understand the Council's position within the strategic outcomes planning process.

## 4. Shared Outcomes

- 4.1. The provision of high-quality physical activity facilities is vital to the achievement of the priority health outcomes identified as being needed in East Devon. EDDC has a number of strategic documents in which sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing outcomes are referred to either directly or indirectly. A full list of these documents is set out in Appendix 3.

### Strategic Vision - Existing Strategies

- 4.2. **East Devon Statement of Intent 2020** - The new administration has produced an interim working document whilst a new full Council Plan 2021 – 23 is being developed. The vision set out in this document is as follows:

**Vision: To achieve a positive difference to residents' lives and our environment**

- 4.3. Working towards this vision, the following research and insight has already been undertaken to present an analysis of:



- 4.4. At present, the Statement of Intent sets out a number of key priorities for physical activity, health and wellbeing including:

- **Reviewing the Playing Pitch Strategy and ensuring the protection of playing fields;**
- **Implementation of the actions in the Public Health Strategy designed to improve public health, wellbeing and the quality of life of residents;**

- **Promote community well-being programmes through a culture and activities offer, led by the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, Seaton Wetlands, Wild East Devon, and expand our community development activities;**
  - **Reviewing our relationship with LED and the provision of leisure facilities and activities to meet the needs of residents across all communities;**
  - **Promoting health and wellbeing, including healthy lifestyles, physical activity, and good mental health**
  - **Completing the already-agreed regeneration projects within our district [Exmouth and Axminster] and delivering a vibrant, sustainable and future-proof Cranbrook town centre; one which meets the needs of today's residents and those settling here in the next 10-20 years;**
  - **Ensuring that ALL our assets (including car parks) are used in the most effective way and that their development potential is evaluated in order to support employment, create opportunity and economic growth and prosperity for all.**
- 4.5. **East Devon Local Plan 2013 – 2031** – includes policies relating to provision of infrastructure of both physical and service elements that is adequate for the population of each locality meeting people's needs such as health care, recreation space and village halls. There is emphasis on maximising opportunities for the creation of green infrastructure and promoting active travel (walking and cycling) and reduction of carbon emissions.
- 4.6. **The Emerging Local Plan 2021 – 2041** – places greater emphasis to the value of physical activity and sets out a clear objective to encourage healthy lifestyles and living environments for all East Devon residents. It refers directly to East Devon's Public Health Strategy, the district's aging population and many dispersed rural communities leading to associated issues of depression, social isolation and loneliness as well as physical activity issues developing with age. The document recognises the role that Planning has in facilitating the prevention of ill-health, which is a key focus for the NHS and Public Health going forward. It refers to the need to provide well designed places that will encourage people to increase their physical activity. This includes safe and pleasant cycling and walking routes between services and facilities, and good access to sports, recreational and play facilities and improved public transport.
- 4.7. **East Devon Public Health Strategy 2019 – 2023** – The Strategy's aim is to help more people to be healthy and stay healthy, enhance self-care and support community resilience and integrate and improve support for people in homes. The strategy is evidenced based and focuses on 3 geographical areas of Exmouth (Littleham, Town Centre and Withycombe), Honiton Dowell Street/Northcott Lane area, and Cranbrook. These areas have been identified through the Devon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment as the areas that are in most need of support. The Strategy also focuses on 12 key priority activities: - physical activity, diet and nutrition, smoking, alcohol use, mental health, loneliness/social isolation, dementia, long-term conditions, frailty and falls, housing and homelessness, and indoor environmental factors. In the absence of a leisure strategy for East Devon, LED have focussed their community outreach work on the above priority activities.

- 4.8. **East Devon Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2015)** – This Strategy is now out of date and very few of the recommendations from the strategy have been implemented. The Strategy identified a lack of good quality football pitch provision and AGPs in all of the main towns.
- 4.9. **The Sports, Leisure and Recreation at Cranbrook Report (March 2015)** – this report was produced by East Devon Planning Department to provide a more in depth evidence base for sports, leisure and recreation needs in Cranbrook. The assessment looks at a number of different housing growth scenarios for the town and relies on use of the Sport England Sports Facility Calculator in the absence of an up-to-date Sport England Facility Planning Model. Recommendations include the provision of 2x community sports hubs to cater for outdoor football, rugby and cricket requirements. The report also recommends that a leisure centre with a 4 court sports hall, 25m x 6 lane swimming pool, 50 station gym, 2 squash courts and a floodlit 3G pitch be built adjacent to the town centre.
- 4.10. **A Cultural Plan for East Devon District Council 2017 – 2022** – The aim of this Strategy is to provide cultural activities that can help improve health and wellbeing outcomes; to use the District’s cultural heritage to bring social benefits through boosting the local economy; and help provide opportunities for people of all backgrounds to get the most from and enjoy the various cultural sectors that the Council supports. The document also focuses on the natural environment including the district’s nationally important landscapes, marine habitat, accessible beaches and wildlife and therefore takes a broad view of culture, ensuring that people can enjoy culture in the outdoors, alongside the benefits of health and wellbeing. It refers to collaborative working and cross promotional activities of the Countryside, AONB, Streetscene, Housing and Arts based teams; engaging with and delivering actions to improve the health and wellbeing of older people as targeted within the East Devon Public Health Strategy.
- 4.11. **East Devon Green Spaces Plan 2017 – 2027** – The Vision for this Strategy is **“To provide, protect and enhance a publicly accessible network of diverse and quality green spaces that meet the needs of all our communities in East Devon”**. The Plan refers in detail to the contribution that green spaces play in improving the health and wellbeing of local residents. A number of key policies have been produced in collaboration with other teams, ensuring that good quality facilities be provided, utilising S106/CIL monies for capital and ongoing maintenance contributions. The Plan seeks to support clubs and individuals by providing the right facilities and encouraging participation in outdoor sport. There is also reference to the value of informal sport and the need to enhance the wider park environment to encourage this. Policy GSP AR 6 refers to providing active recreation opportunities but support, where possible and suitable, the development of hub sites in association with Devon County Council and the NGB’s. The Plan cross references with East Devon’s Public Health Strategy and the contribution that green spaces can make to addressing a number of public health key priorities.
- 4.12. The Council is very proud of the leisure services that it provides for its residents of East Devon and there are good examples of joint initiatives and collaborative working. However, at present these services are provided without a clear vision and priorities for physical activity, health and wellbeing, supported by up to date research and insight into the needs of its residents.

### Summary

- 4.13. *It is clear from the above and Appendix 3 that there is a wealth of EDDC policy and strategy documentation supporting healthier lifestyles, physical and mental health and wellbeing and increased levels of physical activity. There are also good examples of collaborative working between Council teams and external partners to deliver healthier lifestyles e.g. Community Orchards initiative, Healthy Walks etc. However, there is no district wide Leisure Strategy which brings together in one document a clear vision and key priorities for built infrastructure, community outreach, the Active Environment, Active Travel etc based on evidenced needs. As a result, the majority of references in these documents to physical activity, health and wellbeing are generic or refer back to East Devon's Public Health Strategy, which is the only document with clearly targeted programmes of activity and geographical areas.*
- 4.14. *The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) is also out of date. Both an up to date and evidence-based Leisure Strategy and PPS are required to inform the emerging Local Plan 2021 – 2041.*

Final Draft

## 5. Insight

### Borough Demographics

5.1 There are a number of key health and demographic-related issues impacting East Devon residents:

- **Geography**

- East Devon is a predominantly rural district with a low population density of 175 per square km (England average is 427).
- There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) within East Devon, the Blackdown Hills AONB and East Devon AONB which together occupy some 66% of the district.

- **Obesity**

- The Public Health Profile for East Devon reveals that the prevalence of obesity in Reception children in 2019/20 was 8.1% which is higher than Devon (7.4%) but lower than England (9.7%).
- Interestingly obesity levels in Year 6 children in East Devon are lower than the region and England which suggests that obesity levels are on the increase in the younger age groups.

- **Inactivity**

- Participation rates amongst children and young people varies with higher levels of inactivity in East Devon (26.8%) compared to Devon (23.7%) but lower when compared to England (29%);
- 18.9% of children and young people are fairly active in East Devon (30 – 59 minutes per day) which is lower than for both Devon and England. However, 54.6% are active (60 plus minutes per day) which is higher than for England (46.8%) but lower compared to Devon (54.6%).
- Overall, the District exhibits poorer participation rates amongst children and young people in comparison to the county of Devon.

- **Aging Population**

- 30.4% of residents are over the age of 65, which is higher than both Devon (25.5%) and England (18.4%).
- The percentage of residents aged 85 plus is 4.8% and in Sidmouth it is 7.6%.
- It is estimated that the population of East Devon will increase to 182,780 by 2043 and that those over the age of 65 will account for 37% of that total; 7.2% will be aged over 85 year compared to 4.1% for England.
- In East Devon, this will lead to increases in those suffering from mild, moderate or severe frailty, and long term limiting conditions. This will in turn lead to pressure on health service use/cost, long term admission to care homes, mental illness (Dementia is common in frail older people) and increased falls. Across Devon, frailty is estimated to rise from 2.7% to 3.9% by 2038.
- The number of people with a long term illness or disability is 21% in East Devon compared to 19% in Devon and 17.6% across England (Census 2011).

- With an increasing aging population, the number of paid and unpaid carers is expected to increase. Caring can have a negative impact on the carer's physical and mental health.
- A large area of the district is rural and poor public transport makes it more difficult for people without a car to access provision in East Devon. It is likely that loneliness and isolation is a significant issue for a proportion of these residents.
- **Financial inequalities, Deprivation and Migration**
  - Levels of home ownership are high with a significant proportion of houses in the top 3 most expensive council tax bands.
  - Affordability of homes is an issue with East Devon being in the top 25% of all local authority areas for leisure prices but one of the lowest nationally in terms of wages.
  - The 2011 Census shows there is a large flow of working out of the district with 41% (18,170) of the working population commuting out of East Devon to work, primarily by car (79%). Over 63% of those working outside of the district are travelling to Exeter with significant numbers also going to Mid Devon, South Somerset, Teignbridge, West Dorset and Taunton Deane.
  - There are pockets of social and economic deprivation, particularly in areas of Exmouth and Honiton. Shorter life expectancy is seen in areas of deprivation and areas with a high concentration of care homes.
  - There are variations in life expectancy across the district and within towns e.g. Exmouth life expectancy ranges from 77.3 years in Exmouth Town up to 92.8 years in Exmouth Brixington; a difference of 15.5 years.

### LED Community Outreach Programme

5.2 As highlighted in Section 3 of this report, LED delivers a series of outreach programmes linked to Sport England and East Devon Public Health priorities. These programmes include:

- **Walk this Way** – a scheme to encourage people of all ages including those with health and mobility problems, and those recovering from illness, to walk for their health. These walks are led by qualified volunteer walk leaders, who have undergone the National Walking for Health training, as well as training in First Aid and Resuscitation. There are a number of different walks to choose from, graded according to level of difficulty. The walks programme also includes Dementia groups, mum and baby groups etc. Pre-Covid, approximately 9,000 people attended these walks. The walks are free of charge.
- **Active Mums** – these sessions are designed to ease mums into getting active, building confidence and strength. LED run an Active Mums bootcamp at Exmouth Tennis and Fitness Centre. LED has also provided activities for Mums in the new town of Cranbrook where there is a high proportion of families with young children.
- **Walking Football and Netball** – Led has linked up with Exeter City in the Community to deliver Walking Football in East Devon. Aimed at male and female players aged over 50, sessions are available at Axminster, Sidmouth and Honiton Leisure Centres and Exmouth Tennis and Fitness Centre. Walking netball is offered at Bicton College near Budleigh Salterton.

- **GP Referral** – LED offers a range of referral programmes. This includes **FORCE Cancer Referrals** for people going through cancer treatment and dealing with the effects of this, including reduced energy levels, low mood and anxiety. The programme now allows a patient to be assessed by an experienced Oncology Physiotherapist. This programme is available at Axminster, Exmouth, Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Seaton Fitness Centre and Sidmouth Leisure Centre. **Pulse GP Referral Scheme** has been established for over 20 years. The programme runs for 12 weeks with 2 sessions per week and a small charge is made for the initial assessment and first session. Referrals are made by local GPs, physio departments or similar. The scheme is offered at Sidmouth, Axminster, Honiton, and Ottery Leisure Centres and Seaton Fitness Centre. A **Cardiac Rehab Phase 3 and 4 programme** is available for people who have had heart conditions. Depending on the phase you are attending, the programme runs for 6 – 12 weeks. Patients are referred by their GP or health professional. This programme is available at Axminster, Ottery and Honiton Leisure Centres and Seaton Fitness Centre. **Escape Pain** – This is a rehabilitation programme designed to reduce pain and disability for people who are over 45 years of age and have knee and/or hip pain for at least 3 months. A group exercise programme is offered, tailored to individual needs and is available at Exmouth and Honiton Leisure Centres and Seaton Fitness Centre.
- **Weight Management** – a 12 week programme is available to help people maintain a healthy weight, increasing confidence, health and mental wellbeing. The programme allows access to facilities at any time including exercise classes and swimming. You receive one to one contact with your instructor as well as nutritional advice. This programme is available at Sidmouth, Axminster, Exmouth, and Ottery Leisure Centres and Seaton Fitness Centre.
- **Strength and Balance** – this is an exercise class for older people who have had a fall or who feel unsteady on their feet. The aim of the classes is to improve strength, balance and confidence. This class is available at Honiton Leisure Centre.
- **Ways to Wellbeing** - this is a social prescribing scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to enhance a patient's health and wellbeing, with the help of a coach, to access non-medical community services. Patients suffering from loneliness, social isolation, mental health issues, physical health and fitness problems can all benefit from the scheme. As part of the original pilot scheme launched in 2018, LED, alongside the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS, jointly funded the first full time Health and Wellbeing Coach to cover the Honiton and Seaton areas. As a result of the successful pilot, the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS has since funded a further 5 Health and Wellbeing Coaches to bring the Ways to Wellbeing scheme to the whole of East Devon. This scheme went live in February 2019. There are now coaches covering Honiton, Ottery St Mary, Sidmouth, Axminster, Seaton, Woodbury, Exmouth and Budleigh, collectively. A number of partners were involved in the development of the scheme including East Devon Healthcare and Action East Devon. The scheme has seen 183 referrals, with 92 patients enrolled fully onto the scheme.
- **Connecting Actively with Nature (CAN)** – this is a programme that supports and inspires inactive people aged over 55 in Devon, Torbay and Plymouth, to connect actively to nature. CAN is a Devon Local Nature Partnership Programme, supported by Sport England and managed by Active Devon, working with a range of partners including LED. Activities include walking, gardening, visiting local parks, wild swimming, education in nature, Tai Chi and forest walks. CAN projects are also supporting social prescribing as detailed above.

### Community and Key Stakeholder Insight

- 5.3 In recent years, no detailed community user/non-user leisure surveys have been undertaken by EDDC or LED and therefore there is limited information on residents' current behaviours and attitudes towards physical activity and opinions on local leisure facilities and outreach services. The last detailed residents survey was undertaken by LED in 2010 to which 799 replies were received. Headline information obtained from the survey is summarised below:
- **42% of respondents had not used a leisure facility in the last 3 months.**
  - **98% of respondents saw physical activity as important to health.**
  - **65% would like to do more exercise.**
  - **41% of respondents considered lack of time to be a key barrier to physical activity followed by the direct cost of the activity (21%).**
  - **41% of respondents were unlikely to increase their physical activity levels in the near future.**
  - **78% would consider using LED leisure facilities, ranging from 70% in Seaton up to 83% in Exmouth.**
  - **39% said that reducing fees and charges would encourage greater use of LED facilities followed by 18% who thought that improving facilities would encourage greater use.**
- 5.4 As a direct result of this survey, LED invested in a health and fitness facility in the town of Seaton.
- 5.5 LED does maintain demographic information relating to its facility members (e.g. age, sex etc) and also uses the nationally used Net Promoter Score (NPS) customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement to find out from customers how likely they are to recommend their product or service to others on a scale of 0-10. LED also uses E Focus online software for obtaining customer feedback on different aspects of service provision and Proinsight for mystery customer visits.
- 5.6 Consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken as part of this report and is attached as Appendix 4.

5.7 The summary below details some of the key issues that were raised:

- **Facilities and maintenance**

- The existing leisure contract is costing EDDC a significant amount of money over and above the annual Service Fee payment made to LED. EDDC retains responsibility for facility maintenance, and this accounts for a large proportion of the Council's expenditure. EDDC's annual revenue budget is £410k and capital expenditure over the next 5 years will be approximately £300k per annum. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Council has an aging stock of facilities in need of refurbishment/replacement.
- EDDC's spend on the leisure portfolio will be significant over the next 10 years due to the lack of investment in recent years.
- There is a need to prioritise which leisure facilities should be invested in, based on evidenced need. A BFS/leisure strategy would deliver this.
- Dual use agreements are dated and are advantageous to the schools and not EDDC (60:40 split on maintenance costs). The Council is not always aware of changes that the schools make to the buildings.
- It is questionable why Manor Pavilion Theatre is managed inhouse by EDDC but Exmouth Pavilion Theatre is outsourced to LED. Exmouth Pavilion made a pre-covid surplus to LED of £49,725 yet EDDC retains responsibility for all maintenance.
- Cranbrook's infrastructure plan includes provision of a leisure centre which would ideally be located in the town centre as part of a health and wellbeing hub. However, the facility mix has yet to be determined and an up to date BFS would inform this process.
- Seaton lacks free/affordable indoor and outdoor facilities for younger people and teenagers to encourage physical activity. The town also lack more commercial type leisure 'family fun' provision e.g. soft play, bowling alley, trampoline space, climbing wall space etc.

- **Leisure Contract and Community Outreach**

- The leisure contract makes no reference to community outreach work and as such, the Council argues that it has to negotiate for anything seen as additional. Where LED has undertaken community outreach, as a Trust they have been successful in accessing external funding for initiatives e.g. health coaches, Walking to Health scheme etc. LED has created good links with key partners in the area e.g. Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, Force cancer charity etc
- LED has a monopoly on leisure provision in the district but are very town focussed with little offered in rural areas, beaches, nature reserves, open spaces, cycle paths etc.
- EDDC has no clear objective policies on future leisure provision, target groups, community pay and play, leisure pricing and community outreach. At present, LED is influencing EDDC decisions on investment, type, location and cost of leisure facilities/services based on commercial/financial criteria e.g. moving gyms/studios out of dual use sites (Sidmouth and Axminster).
- Social Value targets should be incorporated into the leisure contract.
- There is a need to utilise other community venues in rural areas.
- Should the Council be re-focussing some of its current expenditure away from LED and to other third sector organisations who are delivering an equally important service to the community? The Council is currently unable to support other providers financially.
- Cranbrook is an area of focus for LED's Community Outreach Officer. There is currently no infrastructure in place to support families who have moved there.

- There is an opportunity for LED to do more joint working with the Council's Countryside, Arts and Leisure Services Team and particularly the LED Community Outreach Officer.
- There is a need to re-set the relationship with LED. EDDC does not know what value it is getting back from the leisure contract, only the expense.
- **Health and Wellbeing**
  - EDDC's Public Health Strategy is evidenced based and has a clear geographical and programme focus. It looks at reducing the causes of ill health and protecting and improving people's health e.g. quit smoking, Sugar Smart initiative, or improving living conditions. In the absence of a leisure strategy, this document has provided the main evidence base for physical activity initiatives.
  - EDDC Public Health officer's main focus is health inequalities. She used to work closely with LED (e.g. Walking with Dementia scheme) but the links have fallen away more recently.
- **Housing Development**
  - Most of the new housing development in East Devon is close to Exeter including Cranbrook, Axminster and Exmouth.
  - The Local Plan makes reference to the Active Environment and walking and cycling infrastructure to support development.
  - There is the ability to pool S106 funding and CIL funding. However, the monies available outside of the Cranbrook development are not significant. The CIL pot is over-subscribed.
  - There is the need for an updated PPS and BFS. EDDC needs to look at leisure provision in neighbouring authorities and how this impacts on current and future provision.
- **Active Devon**
  - Sport England is currently reviewing the role of Active Partnerships following the launch of its new Uniting the Movement Strategy 2021. Active Partnerships will take on a more collaborative, connecting and influencing role at a local level and this will impact on LED who are fulfilling this role currently.
  - SLL contacted Active Devon but was unable to convene a meeting to discuss this study. They will be consulted with as part of any future work.

## Summary

- 5.8 ***At present, EDDC has limited insight and evidence of the current needs, behaviours, interests and influences affecting the residents of East Devon in relation to sport and physical activity. It would be helpful for EDDC to undertake a Community Survey to gather this insight. This could be undertaken as part of developing a Leisure Strategy.***
- 5.9 ***Although survey information will be useful, it will only provide an overview of the current situation in East Devon and not address future facility requirements based on estimated population growth. EDDC is in the process of reviewing their Local Plan to address population growth and increased housing targets set by the Government. It is too early to be definite about the housing growth numbers that will feature in the new local plan (the new plan that is likely to cover the period to 2040 – but even this end date is not yet determined).***

- 5.10 *The most recent Government methodology for housing requirements sets out an average annual minimum requirement of 928 new homes per year for East Devon. However, this number may change. The Council is also some way off determining where in the district future growth will be located. EDDC is therefore trying to determine future leisure needs for a community that is not there yet, and for locations that have yet to be confirmed.*
- 5.11 *What is clear from the above insight is that the population of East Devon is getting older, and as the district is largely rural with poor public transport, easily accessible and suitable leisure facilities and services will be important going forward. There is an opportunity for future programmes to focus on helping residents live well for longer. Obesity and inactivity levels amongst young children are also on the rise. The balance between built leisure infrastructure and community outreach needs reviewing in East Devon as do roles and responsibilities, taking into account the proposed changes to Active Partnerships and opportunities to enable communities to deliver activities and services on the ground, helping build capacity into local organisations.*
- 5.12 *There are pockets of deprivation and inactivity across East Devon but at present, it is unclear whether those residents are using East Devon Leisure facilities or services. The perception from stakeholder consultation is that the facilities are expensive to use, and that the membership pricing does not always represent good value for money because the offer, particularly at dual use sites is limited.*
- 5.13 *Further input and feedback from key stakeholders would also be useful, particularly from the Council's Planning Team in respect of future housing proposals. It would also be useful to have feedback from the organisations/support networks working with the vulnerable/hard to reach groups.*
- 5.14 *EDDC has an aging portfolio of facilities which is costing the Council a significant amount of money to operate per annum. A large proportion of these are located on school sites with dual use agreements in which the terms are beneficial to the school but not necessarily the Council or public. It is not right that a non-statutory service (i.e. Leisure) should be subsidizing a statutory service (i.e. Education). EDDC should review all dual use agreements in their entirety (e.g. Legal obligations, public access hours, Finance etc) and determine what options are available that are in the best interests of the Council.*

## 6. Interventions

- 6.1 This report has highlighted some of the current key challenges facing EDDC in terms of sport and physical activity provision locally:
- 6.2 There are a number of geographical, demographical and facility-based challenges affecting existing leisure provision in East Devon. However, the immediate overriding challenge is the absence of a vision and key priorities from EDDC regarding future leisure provision across the district. East Devon's Public Health Strategy articulates in detail the health inequalities in East Devon and is clear about what needs to be addressed; the provision of physical activity opportunities has a key role in contributing to wards the reduction in East Devon's health inequalities moving forward. To do this effectively, and sustainably, there is a need to understand community needs and priorities and translate these into appropriate interventions – built and outreach services.
- 6.3 EDDC has a large number of dispersed rural communities. The size of some of the existing rural communities and their locations presents challenges to the provision of leisure facilities because it costs more to provide a service to fewer people, because less income can be generated. This does not mean that a service should not be provided, simply that it may need to be delivered in a different way. Stakeholder consultation has highlighted the value that EDDC places on community outreach in delivering physical activity provision to the wider rural communities, and there is a desire for the leisure operator to work more closely with EDDC teams on projects e.g. Countryside Team. There is also recognition that there are other third sector organisations who are delivering physical activity in the rural communities. However, at present, EDDC has no strategy for community outreach across the district and how this should complement facility provision in the towns.
- 6.4 There has been no detailed assessment of need undertaken by EDDC or LED, other than the 2010 Residents' Survey commissioned by LED, and facilities identified for Cranbrook in the 'Sport, Leisure and Recreation at Cranbrook' internal report produced in March 2015. These studies are now dated and do not reflect recent population changes, changing behaviours resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, competition etc. In the absence of any assessment, all existing facilities within the leisure portfolio have been maintained.
- 6.5 There are no Key Performance Indicators included within the existing leisure contract relating to health priorities, target groups etc. Until recently, monitoring of the contract by the Council has been at 'arms-length' with LED often making decisions independently of EDDC.
- 6.6 The leisure contract is costing EDDC a significant amount financially per annum. This may be in part, due to the age and nature of facilities included within the leisure portfolio (e.g. 6 dual use sites). The dual use agreements should be reviewed in their entirety and in conjunction with this, EDDC should determine what value it places on daytime public pay and play provision on dual use sites going forward.
- 6.7 The facilities are also managed under a long contract arrangement which may have been beneficial to the Council back in 2006 due to the NNDR and partial VAT savings, but there has been no testing the marketplace since to determine whether the contract still represents good value for money.

- 6.8 The leisure contract's 5 year fixed Service Fee arrangement should be reviewed as this requires the leisure operator to predict any increases in the Retail Price Index, utility costs etc, and as a result, the leisure operator will be pricing for risk within its Service Fee. Consideration should be given to introducing a business plan and baseline annual management fee agreed between EDDC and LED which is increased by RPI annually over the remaining period of the contract. The format in which LED's accounts are presented to EDDC should be reviewed for ease of monitoring.
- 6.9 A Local Plan Review will result in new housing development and population growth, but as yet the locations for this growth have not been determined.
- 6.10 The aging demographic of East Devon means that access to opportunities to be physically active, which has a positive impact on health and wellbeing, will become even more important for both individuals and communities.
- 6.11 Growing levels of obesity and inactivity amongst young children which suggests that the existing facility portfolio and outreach provision is not meeting current needs.
- 6.12 The district suffers from social isolation, particularly in rural areas. Approximately 29% of residents over the age of 65<sup>7</sup> live alone. This, couple with poor and unaffordable public transport provision exacerbates the issue, making it difficult for the elderly to access vital services, including sport and leisure provision. However, social isolation not only affects the elderly in East Devon. The rurality of the district also impacts on the mental health of young people, and there is a dependency on car travel across the district.
- 6.13 There are pockets of social and economic deprivation in East Devon, mainly in the towns of Exmouth and Honiton.

### East Devon's Leisure Provision in the context of the SOPG

- 6.14 This SOPG Diagnostic highlights areas where there is an opportunity to strengthen the existing evidence base for future provision of physical activity in the district and the proposed options feasibility work will hopefully ensure that the future direction reflects the shared outcomes and Vision for health and wellbeing in the Borough. Table 6.1 reflects the above and summarises where East Devon is now in terms of the SOPG approach.
- 6.15 Overall there is a lack of one document pulling together all the existing physical activity evidence, Vision, Insight and proposals for the way forward i.e. an SOPG report.

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<sup>7</sup> East Devon Public Health Profile (LTLA 2021)

Table 6.1: Summary of identified gaps against the SOPG

SOPG	Shared Outcomes	Insight	Interventions	Commitment
	<p>There is no shared vision and outcomes supporting healthier lifestyles, physical and mental health and wellbeing and increased levels of physical activity i.e. a Leisure Strategy.</p>	<p>Up to date insight regarding residents' physical activity needs and behaviours together with data evidencing the impact and social value of physical activity will help support key policy and strategy development going forward and inform physical activity interventions.</p>	<p>EDDC has made significant interventions to retain its leisure facilities operated by LED. Interventions include both significant capital and revenue investment.</p>	<p>EDDC has continued to provide financial support to LED throughout the Covid pandemic.</p>
	<p>There is no up to date evidence based assessments of individual indoor sports facility needs to inform the Local Plan Review i.e. A Built Facility Strategy/Leisure Strategy.</p>	<p>Existing insight could be better used to evidence the needs and priorities for provision on a place based approach.</p>	<p>Future interventions of any description need to be evidence-based, so that investment is aligned to an agreed Vision, priorities and outcomes for physical activity, that contribute to a healthier East Devon.</p> <p>In other words, future investment needs to be on the basis of an agreed Leisure Strategy framework.</p>	<p>There is corporate commitment to physical activity provision evidenced in various Council documents. However, its vision and key priorities are not clearly and consistently articulated in the absence of a Leisure Strategy.</p>
	<p>There is no up to date evidence based assessment of individual outdoor sports facility needs to inform the Local Plan Review i.e. A Playing Pitch Strategy.</p>		<p>EDDC has started reviewing its current dual use arrangements, but this should not be done in isolation but as an integral part of an agreed Leisure Strategy framework.</p>	
	<p>There is no linking together of strategic need with operational viability</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of all dual use arrangements is required to fully understand the legal, financial, and operational implications to the Council and options available. This should be done in conjunction with evidence obtained of current and future needs.</p>	<p>EDDC is in the process of updating its PPS.</p>	

SOPG	Shared Outcomes	Insight	Interventions	Commitment
	<p>There are limited shared outcomes with other partners in relation to physical activity</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement in the Leisure Strategy is also critical. It is suggested that the following are consulted with as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCG's</li> <li>- Public Health</li> <li>- Local Sports Clubs</li> <li>- Parish and town Councils</li> <li>- The Education Sector</li> <li>- The Tourism Sector</li> <li>- Marginalised groups</li> <li>- Organisations representing older people, younger people, those in social care, those on low incomes, those with a disability etc</li> <li>- All providers of physical activity facilities</li> <li>- Transport</li> <li>- Arts/Cultural Sector</li> </ul>	<p>EDDC has introduced an LED Monitoring Forum to scrutinise the work of the leisure operator which has included reviewing of accounts on an open book basis during the Covid pandemic and determining future financial arrangements during recovery and beyond.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to replacing the 5 year fixed service fee with an annual baseline management fee which is index linked for the remaining period of the contract.</p>	
	<p>There is no linking together of strategic need with operational viability</p>	<p>To determine whether EDDC is receiving value for money from the current leisure management arrangement, a market testing exercise (SMT) should be undertaken to inform future decision making.</p>		
	<p>There is no up to date evidence based assessments of individual indoor sports facility needs to inform the Local Plan Review i.e. A Built Facility Strategy/Leisure Strategy.</p>	<p>Need for up to date bespoke Facility Planning Modelling reports (FPM) to inform the supply and demand analysis</p>		
	<p>There are limited shared outcomes with other partners in relation to physical activity.</p>			

## 7. Recommendations

7.1 The SOPG diagnostic highlights the number of big decisions that EDDC needs to make in respect of physical activity provision across the district. EDDC recognises the need to introduce a strategic and sustainable approach to planning for future physical activity provision, based on local insight and locality evidence. The SOPG assessment identifies a number of 'gaps' in the strategic approach to provision which all need to be addressed. These are based around a suite of reports which are usually developed to provide the evidence base for physical activity provision. These reports are:

- **Leisure Strategy and Built Facility Evidence Base**
- **Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)**
- **Soft Market Testing Exercise for the leisure contract**
- **SOPG report, reflecting all existing and above information**

7.2 To help inform the above reports, and ensure that all information is fully aligned, there is a need to:

- **Undertake a residents' survey to provide evidence and insight of current needs, behaviours, interests and influences in relation to physical activity in East Devon.**
- **Consult with Active Devon to understand the changing role of Active Partnerships and how this may impact on the work that LED currently undertakes.**
- **Undertake additional focussed community engagement with stakeholders who can represent hard to reach groups, and/or hard to reach groups direct.**
- **Commission bespoke Facility Planning Modelling for Swimming and Sports Halls once the Local Plan Review is completed and outcomes for housing are known.**
- **Review all dual use arrangements to ensure that they are fulfilling the needs of residents and are financially sustainable for EDDC.**
- **Review the financial arrangements between EDDC and LED with consideration given to introducing a business plan through to the end of the contract period, replacing the Service Fee with a baseline Management Fee increased by RPI annually, a revised P and L reporting format to be agreed with EDDC, clearly showing the management fee payment allocated to each site P and L account.**
- **Confirm all financial, timescale and policy elements of EDDC's commitment to inform and guide implementation of the Interventions.**

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Final Draft