

Optimum Sports Halls

Introduction

Sport England is always looking for ways to make the process of building new sports facilities as streamlined and as cost efficient as possible. Taking this notion to its natural conclusion, we came up with the Optimum Sports Hall.

The Optimum Sports Hall is an off-the-peg design for a sports hall with four badminton courts and ancillary accommodation. Sport England has commissioned the development of the Optimum Sports Hall to meet market demand and to benchmark minimum performance standards for participation and management.

The Optimum Sports Hall has been extensively researched. The space surrounding the hall is designed to be flexible, to accommodate all types of use by schools and the wider community. Sport England's work on creating the Optimum model will save both time and professional fees for clients looking to develop a sports hall. We are confident that it will be attractive to all types of customers and that it will improve the operation and management of buildings.

Full design information will be made available after pilot projects have been completed and appraised. The objectives of the Optimum Sports Hall project and package are:

- to improve value for money by minimising capital and whole-life costs
- to improve fitness for purpose by meeting the performance requirements of user groups
- to reduce the costs of operation and promote ease of maintenance
- to improve customer appeal by creating a friendly, attractive environment for users.



Design and sustainability

For long-term sustainability, sports halls must be attractive to customers, and must minimise their running costs and maximise their income. The Optimum Sports Hall fulfils these three essential requirements in the following ways:

Be attractive to customers

Exterior - attractive by day and night, with a range of alternative cladding materials

Entrance - prominent, with generous lobby and automatic doors

Social hub - generous space and volume, with views directly on to the hall

Sports hall - a simple, vaulted space, with beams, acoustics, lighting, heating, ventilation, flooring, storage, escape doors and so on all designed to provide the best possible environment for multi-sport use

Changing - flexible layout, with high, sloping ceilings, large rooflights for daytime and uplighting at night; underfloor background heating, with warm air supply and extract operated by presence detectors; fully tiled walls and floors

Fitness and exercise - a high-volume space, with good acoustics, air conditioning and large external windows

Minimise the running costs

Plan form - compact, with minimal circulation

Roof - aluminium, requiring little maintenance

External frames - all doors and windows in powder-coated aluminium

Supervision - good visibility from reception counter and office

Store - located for easy changing of equipment

Energy - efficient heating, lighting and ventilation

Cleaning - quality finishes and careful detailing

Maintenance - quality materials throughout

Maximise the income generation

Fitness and exercise areas - comfortable space by day and night

Social area - attractive to retain customers before and after events

Vending - well sited, with stores adjacent

Hall - attractive and designed for maximum flexibility of programming

School and community use

The designs have been developed by a team of appointed consultants with a view to suiting the needs of both local authorities and schools wishing to provide for curricular and community use. The latter requires particularly careful planning, and the three generic models (small, medium, and large) have been developed with this in mind. The aim is to ensure that the chosen model promotes an identified programme of sports development and appropriate and structured operational management.

School use

A sports hall can bring a number of benefits to a school, both in terms of delivering the PE curriculum and developing extra curricular programmes, and increasing the opportunity for use of the school by the local community. The facility can also be used for assemblies, concerts, plays, and other events that enhance school life.

Community use

Sport England is committed to promoting schools as community resources, and to facilitate this, sports facilities should be designed for use by community groups outside school hours. Providing community access throughout the day to the health and fitness areas of the facility will allow a modest revenue stream which will assist in meeting operational costs while still providing the school with primary use of the main sports hall and changing rooms. The Optimum models have been designed to facilitate simultaneous use by the school and community, with each having dedicated access and changing rooms to service the health and fitness areas.

The demands for school usage should in no way compromise the use of the facility by the community, or management by commercial operators on behalf of a local authority. The three models are also tailored towards local authority leisure developments with full community use. Only the small model may require minor rearrangement as the extra set of changing rooms could be omitted to provide an enlarged fitness/exercise area of about 200 square metres or a space for alternative activities.

A key component of the consultation process on the development of the Optimum Sports Hall was the involvement of leisure management specialists. This contributed to the design, and a range of management and operational scenarios has been market tested. The management of the Sports Hall will be a key element in determining its success. Sport England has published a number of guidance

notes that address this important issue. It is strongly recommended that applicants consider the future management of the facility as an integral part of the development of the project.

Handing

All of the plans can be 'handed', that is, built in a mirror image to that shown - if that would be more suitable for your site.



What will it cost?

Total costs for individual projects will vary according to the size of the Optimum Sports Hall model selected, site-specific factors (such as planning restrictions, site conditions and foundations), the scope of external works, and regional cost variations.

Indicative costs are given in the Pre-Release package

Current position of the Optimum Sports Hall Project February 2003



Three pilot Optimum Sports Halls are at various stages of development, and consultants are monitoring progress.

The first pilot is at St Mary's College, Hull where a large Optimum is well under way, with completion anticipated in summer 2003.

At Robert Clack School, in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, construction of an Optimum started on site in November 2002.

The third Optimum pilot project is progressing through our Lottery award process.

The completed projects will be appraised from technical and management viewpoints and feedback gained will be incorporated into the designs before full technical and is released for other projects.

Pre-Release Information

Sport England has decided to release a package of detailed technical information on the Optimum Sports Hall, in advance of the completion of the pilot projects. This 'Pre-Release Information' will allow client bodies to make use of the considerable design development that been carried out to date in developing their own projects.

A hard copy Pre-Release brochure is available to local authorities and other community organisations. The brochure includes outline design information, schedules of accommodation, outline specifications and indicative costs, and is available to community organisations by completing Order Form 1 (See Facilities Guidance Documents on the Sport England website).

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