



**Northern Midlands Council**



**Northern Midlands Community Sports Centre  
Master Plan  
Final Report May 2015**

Prepared by Jeff McClintock  
Ph: (03) 6391 8835

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*Disclaimer: This Master Plan has been prepared for Northern Midlands Council by Jeff McClintock. However, ultimate responsibility for all consequences related to its implementation rests with Northern Midlands Council.*

# 1 Introduction

The Northern Midlands Health, Fitness and Sports Centre ('the Centre') is an integral component of the sport and recreation infrastructure of the Northern Midlands. The Centre was built in 1983-1984 and comprises a multipurpose stadium, two squash courts, a fully equipped gym room (added in 1991), a kiosk/office and toilets/change rooms. The Centre grounds include a sealed car park and basic landscaping.

This Council-owned facility is currently managed by Health Revival Longford (HRL), which facilitates an extensive array of sport and recreation programs and activities, catering for most ages. HRL's programs and activities are highly popular with local community members, with gym membership currently in excess of 500 people.

## 1.1 Master Plan

Northern Midlands Council has commissioned a Master Plan for the Centre that provides the location, scale and type of maintenance and facility development that is required at the site to meet current and future community needs. The plan will also resource Council applications for external grants to assist with funding future developments at the facility.

The key objectives of the master plan include:

- Identifying the adequacy, constraints and improvements needed to the existing infrastructure;
- Identifying changes and improvements required to ensure the Centre meets the changing sport and recreation needs of community members: now and into the future;
- Preparation of concept plans for the centre and improvements;
- Development of lifecycle costings for the Centre and improvements.

## 1.2 Project Priorities

The following is a summary of the key requirements that Council specified to be incorporated into the Master Plan

- Provide an overview of the existing facility/infrastructure and existing use/user groups;
- Provide a plan (GIS/Map Info) of the existing infrastructure above and below ground (Council will provide GIS/Map Info plan for Council's stormwater assets);
- Identify adequacy, constraints and improvements needed to the Centre, its infrastructure and the site;
- Identify any conflicts between users and potential management solutions;
- Identify future needs and priorities for existing users;

- Identify potential new users and briefly detail any changes/improvements required to meet their usage needs;
- Provide concept plans and lifecycle costings for the site and improvements;
- Provide outcomes and recommendations formatted in a style suitable for public display.

### **1.3 Methodology**

In order to achieve the above, the following methodology has been utilised:

- Assessment of the existing facility, infrastructure and site (in conjunction with Council's appointed architect);
- Consultation with Health Revival Longford, relevant government representatives, Councillors and Council staff;
- Consultation with Centre user groups and members;
- Analysis of recreation and leisure demand trends at the national and/or state level as relevant;
- Input from the broader community including health service providers and Toosey Aged Care.

### **1.4 Key Stakeholders**

A number of key stakeholders were identified in relation to the use of the Centre, including:

Health Revival Longford

Longford Netball Club

Longford Badminton Club

Longford Squash Club

Toosey Aged and Community Care

Longford Primary School

Cressy High School

Missiondale

PCYC

Northern Midlands Council

Gym members

*Note from Mr McClintock: I wish to express my gratitude to all who contributed to the process of creating this Master Plan.*

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Description of Facility

The Centre is located at 8 Burghley St, Longford. It is situated on an irregularly-shaped block approximately 5,800m<sup>2</sup> in size which is fenced off from the remainder of the adjacent Council-owned Longford Recreation Ground. The Centre's grounds are bounded to the north by residences, it has one boundary fronting High St and it shares two boundaries with Longford Kindergarten.

The Centre was opened in 1984. Facilities include a wooden-floored stadium, a fully equipped gym, two squash courts, toilet and shower facilities, an office area, a massage room and a large storage area. Externally, the grounds include a sealed car park, some grassed areas and a number of mature trees and shrubs.

The following aerial photo shows the Centre including the carpark and surrounding grounds. The photo also shows its proximity to the kindergarten, recreation ground and several residences.



## 2.2 Longford Demographics

As the Centre is situated in Longford, it will be helpful to examine some relevant demographics of this Northern Midlands town.

In the 2011 Census, there were 3756 people living in Longford (State Suburbs). Due to changes in statistical boundaries, it is not possible to compare this figure with previous Census data, but anecdotal evidence and new housing development suggests that Longford is growing in population.

Of particular relevance to this study is the age group breakdown of the Longford population compared to the rest of Tasmania and Australia. Longford has an *older than average population*, with a higher than average proportion of people in all age brackets from 55 years up and a lower than average proportion of people in most age brackets (except 10-14 years and 15-19 years) up to 39 years of age. The median age is 44 years against a Tasmanian figure of 40 years and an Australian figure of 37 years.

The following table gives a detailed breakdown of Longford's population, with comparison to figures for the rest of Tasmania and Australia.

Age	Longford (Tas.)	%	Tasmania	%	Australia	%
<i>People</i>						
0-4 years	210	5.6	31,182	6.3	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	211	5.6	30,231	6.1	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	249	6.6	32,455	6.6	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	259	6.9	32,687	6.6	1,405,798	6.5
20-24 years	180	4.8	29,577	6.0	1,460,673	6.8
25-29 years	149	4.0	28,074	5.7	1,513,236	7.0
30-34 years	159	4.2	27,209	5.5	1,453,775	6.8
35-39 years	228	6.1	30,908	6.2	1,520,138	7.1
40-44 years	273	7.3	33,944	6.9	1,542,879	7.2
45-49 years	257	6.8	35,030	7.1	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	276	7.4	36,528	7.4	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	262	7.0	34,090	6.9	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	288	7.7	32,733	6.6	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	226	6.0	25,312	5.1	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	193	5.1	19,449	3.9	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	148	3.9	14,522	2.9	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	89	2.4	11,175	2.3	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	98	2.6	10,247	2.1	402,681	1.9
Median age	44	--	40	--	37	--

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 2.3 Overview of Exercise, Recreation and Sport in Tasmania

The 2010 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) provides a snapshot of overall participation trends in Tasmania. Some of the findings that are relevant to the Northern Midlands were as follows:

- In regional areas of Tasmania, 77.6% of Tasmanians participate in some form of physical activity, with participation rates almost equal between males and females. However, this is considerably lower than the rate of 84.1% for Hobart. Although the report doesn't explain why this is so, one reason may be reduced access to fitness facilities.
- The rate of 'regular participation' in physical activity in Tasmania (three or four times per week or more) declined from 48.3% in 2009 to 45.1% in 2010. Again, it is not clear why this decline has occurred, but it is evident that work needs to be done to reverse this downward trend.
- Participation is reasonably evenly spread across age brackets, with between 39-49% of people in all age brackets between 15-24 and 65 and over participating regularly in physical activity of some kind.

The following table shows the top-ten most popular sports in Tasmania by total participation, with a breakdown of male and female participation:

Rank	Activity	Male Participation (%)	Female Participation (%)	Total Participation (%)
1	Walking	27.3	49.1	38.4
2	Aerobics/fitness	12.1	23.0	17.7
3	Swimming	9.7	13.4	11.5
4	Cycling	15.8	6.5	11.1
5	Bushwalking	10.1	8.1	9.0
6	Running	9.6	6.4	8.0
7	Golf	10.4	1.8	6.0
8	Cricket (outdoor)	8.7	0.7	4.6
9	Australian rules football	8.6	0.5	4.4
10	Fishing/Tennis (equal)	7.0/3.6	1.3/4.5	4.1

Source: 2010 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey

Although not specific to the Northern Midlands, these statistics are nevertheless highly relevant to the development of the Centre. This is particularly the case with respect to aerobics/fitness, where the high participation rate – particularly by females – aligns with the way the Centre is being successfully utilised by HRL for gym and fitness classes purposes. Furthermore, the popularity of aerobics/fitness activities also provides a degree of certainty regarding the ongoing development of the Centre for these purposes because it shows that these reflect a statewide trend.

### 3 Overview of Existing Management and Facility

The purpose of this section of the Master Plan is to describe the Centre’s existing management and facilities. Information is based on site inspections, combined with feedback provided by key stakeholders, including Council, the CEO of Health Revival Longford and various community members who use the facility.

#### 3.1 Health Revival Longford

The Centre is operated by Health Revival Longford (HRL) under a profit-sharing arrangement with Council. There is *currently no formal lease*, with both parties desiring a degree of flexibility during the establishment phase of the business.

HRL operates a fully equipped gym and an extensive program of fitness classes for people of all ages as well as remedial massage. HRL also provides first aid classes and oversees the use of the facility by a number of sporting clubs and groups that conduct rostered sports (including providing blanket insurance coverage for those groups).

Sporting clubs that make use of the facility include netball, squash and badminton. In addition to these, groups also use the facility for social sports including netball (ladies) and basketball (seniors).

There is also an after school exercise program for primary school aged children (currently Tuesdays and Thursdays) and a youth program on Friday evenings which is run on behalf of Council.

The timetable for the use of the Centre (as at March 2015) is as follows:

Telephone: (03) 6391 1055 Email: info@healthrevival.com.au		<b>Health Revival LONGFORD</b> <small>March 2015 Timetable</small>		8 Burghley Street LONGFORD Tas 7301	
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Conditioning 9:00am - 10:00am	WILDCARD 6:00am - 7:00am	Conditioning 9:00am - 10:00am	WILDCARD 6:00am - 7:00am	Conditioning 9:00am - 10:00am	
Heartmoues 10:00am - 11:00am	PILATES (45min) 9:30am - 10:15am		PILATES (45min) 9:30am - 10:15am	Heartmoues 10:00am - 11:00am	
Living Longer 11:00am - 12:00pm	KIDS FUN TIME 3:00pm - 5:00pm	Living Longer 11:00am - 12:00pm		Living Longer 11:00am - 12:00pm	
Living Longer 1:00pm - 2:00pm	X-AEROBICS 5:30pm - 6:30pm	Living Longer 1:00pm - 2:00pm	KIDS FUN TIME 3:00pm - 5:00pm	JUNIOR NETBALL 3:00pm - 4:30pm	
ATB/Group Fitness 5:00pm - 6:00pm	BOXING FIT 6:00pm - 7:00pm		X-AEROBICS 5:30pm - 6:30pm		
FITBALL 6:00pm - 7:00pm	**YOGA \$15 / \$12 6:00pm - 7:15pm	PILATES (45min) 5:30pm - 6:15pm			
X-AEROBICS HADSPEN 6:30pm - 7:30pm	X-AEROBICS CRESSY 7:00pm - 8:00pm	PILATES (45min) 6:30pm - 7:15pm	BOOTCAMP CRESSY 7:00pm - 8:00pm		
**Ladies Social Netball 6:30pm - 9:30pm	**Badminton 7:00pm - 9:00pm	**Longford Netball 4:30pm - 8:30pm	**Squash 5:00pm - 9:00pm	**YOUTH PROGRAM 6:00pm - 8:00pm	

**Note:** The activities with grey shading are conducted by groups who hire sections of the Centre from HRL. All other activities are operated by HRL.

## 3.2 Stadium

The single most substantial part of the Centre is a large steel framed, timber floored stadium. This has different coloured line markings for basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball. The stadium has a high ceiling and both the ceiling and walls are lined with foil-backed insulation. Natural light enters the building through large areas of transparent cladding in the walls and artificial light is provided in the form of halogen spotlights. An electric scoreboard is installed for use for basketball games only. The exterior is clad with beige coloured vertical colorbond sheets.



### 3.2.1 Condition and Comfort

Overall the stadium is in reasonably good condition. It is apparent that significant sections of the timber floor (at the northern end of the building) have been replaced, which according to Council occurred following work to correct previous drainage issues. There is some damage to the plasterboard lining above one of the doorways which appears to be the result of impact by basketballs. It is unclear whether the electric basketball scoreboard is in full working order. The stadium does not have – and nor would it be practical to provide – heating of any kind.

The main issue with the stadium – as it is currently being utilised – is that it is *too large a space for activities such as fitness classes*, which are ideally operated in a more intimate sized room with less echoing of sound, a better floor surface (eg carpet) and the availability of base level heating in winter.

Using the stadium for exercise classes also makes it difficult to provide a dedicated area for small children to play while their parents participate in exercise classes.

### 3.2.2 Usage

The stadium is used regularly during week days for a wide range of fitness activities and sports. According to the HRL timetable for March 2015, the stadium is being used for a variety of fitness classes, as well as netball (social, junior and roster), badminton and basketball.

A representative of the badminton club indicated that the club is happy with the current arrangements relating to the club's use of the stadium. Equipment is kept in the storeroom and used for the two hour period that the club meets each week.

Similarly, a representative of the netball club expressed that the club is pleased with the current arrangement, although there are some minor issues related to accessing the club's equipment (which is kept in a shed inside the storage area).

One issue is that all sporting clubs have raised is that there is *no clubroom space in the Centre for sporting clubs* to meet socially before and after games, to hold meetings and to display sporting memorabilia etc. The suggestion has been made that the various sporting clubs could share such a room if one could be incorporated into the future redevelopment of the Centre.

In addition to organised sports and fitness activities, the stadium is also used on a more casual basis for volleyball and a Friday night youth program. Missiondale is a regular user, bringing groups of residents across from Evandale each week. The stadium is also periodically used by Longford Primary School, as well as for special sporting events such as indoor bowls championships (in which case event organisers temporarily install carpet).

The current utilisation pattern of the stadium clearly shows that despite the previously mentioned comfort issues, there is *no shortage of demand* for the stadium. There is also no reason to think that this will not continue into the future provided the centre continues to be well managed. It would therefore *not be difficult to justify investing significant funding into repairs and improvements*.

### 3.2.3 Management and Finances

The stadium is managed by HRL as part of its lease of the total facility. As well as running its own activities, HRL hires the stadium out to various groups (currently at a charge of \$20 per hour). Under this arrangement, HRL has taken out blanket Public Liability insurance which covers all current user groups (excluding special tournaments etc). This is a change to the previous situation when the facility was managed by NMC and there was some uncertainty related to PL insurance coverage.

The current management arrangement seems to work reasonably well, although a recent HRL e-newsletter highlights issues related to the children of gym users interfering with the use of the stadium by fee-paying club members. There also seems to be a small amount of residual ill-feeling amongst schools about the need to pay to use the facility when in the past they were given free access. However, this is a relatively minor issue as the fees for using the facility are minimal and reciprocal (ie HRL is required to pay to use the hall at Cressy District High School for the fitness classes it runs there).

### 3.3 Gym

Extending from the southern end of the main stadium is a gym facility which was added to the stadium in 1991. This contains a wide range of exercise equipment. Members access the gym via a FOB security door leading off the stadium. The internal walls of the gym are fully lined and the low ceiling has the same foil-backed insulation as the stadium.



#### 3.3.1 Condition and Comfort

Apart from a few rubber floor tiles having become detached, the gym is generally in good condition. The gym equipment is also of very good quality. However, there are a few issues that relate to the comfort that the gym affords to users.

The first issue is that the gym does not have any natural light. This means that – combined with the low ceilings and dark colour scheme – it feels ‘cave’ like. One gym member described the space as ‘dark’ and ‘oppressive.’

A second issue with the gym is its size. In relation to the amount of equipment that it contains, the room is relatively small and there is a sense that the equipment is quite densely packed in. This is an issue aesthetically, but more importantly, it could be a threat to user comfort and safety. The same gym member quoted above stated that the gym feels ‘squishy’ and that users are ‘crammed in like sardines.’

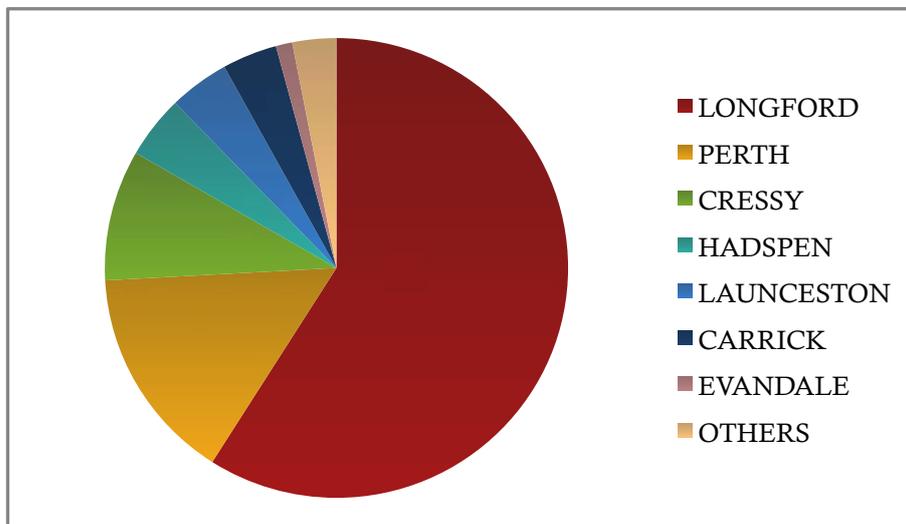
A third issue with the gym is that ventilation is limited to ceiling fans (which in summer are used in combination with opening the side doors). Although the room has ceiling insulation (and presumably wall insulation), cooling is limited to a few fans and heating to a couple of panel heaters, meaning that it would be difficult to regulate the room temperature to within a comfortable range.

### 3.3.2 Usage

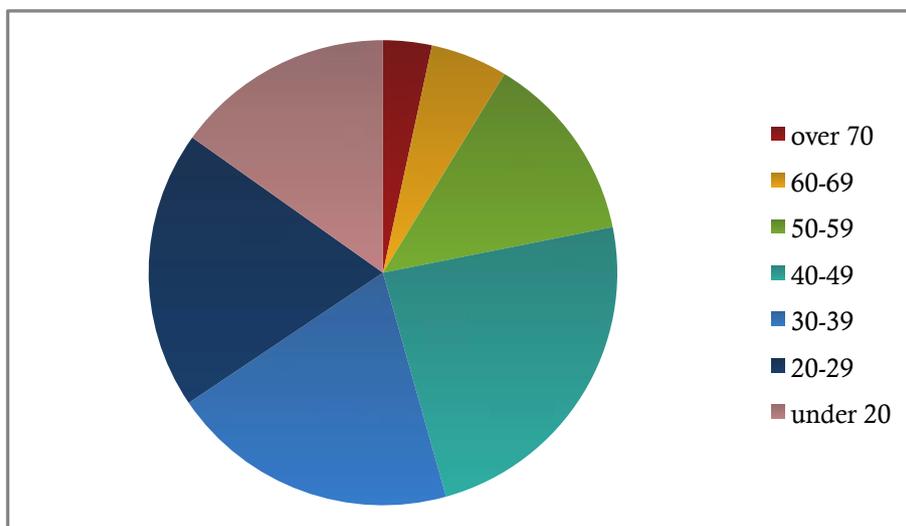
Analysis of membership data provided by HRL shows that as at February 2014, there were just over 500 gym members. Membership categories include three-month, six-month and 12-month durations and both single and family memberships.

Members live in a variety of locations. As would be expected, the majority (approximately 60%) are Longford residents. However there are also significant proportions from Perth (15%), Cressy (9.5%), Hadspen (4%), Carrick (4%) and Launceston (4%). A notable anomaly is the very low proportion of Evandale residents (1%) which may relate to the way the facility is promoted.

The proportion of members from various localities is shown in the following chart:



Gym membership data shows a wide range of ages, from teenagers up to members almost 80 years of age. Apart from the over 60 age brackets, all ages are well represented. The 40-49 age group is the largest bracket, closely followed by the 30-39 bracket and the 20-29 bracket. The proportions of each age bracket are shown in the following chart.



In terms of gender, the breakdown of HRL gym membership is remarkably consistent with the ERASS data for Tasmania (contained in section 2.3), with approximately two-thirds of members being female and one-third male.



### 3.3.3 Management and Finances

The gym is managed by HRL, with equipment either owned outright or being off in installments. Typical of most businesses, the establishment phase has seen HRL reinvesting much of its profits back into the business. However there is expectation that as the gym equipment is paid down, profits will increase. With a strong membership base and ongoing good management, there is no foreseeable reason why this need not be the case.

## 3.4 Squash Courts

Two squash courts are located at the northern end of complex. These are in fairly good condition and are used regularly for squash fixtures (currently Thursday evenings) as well as for occasional casual use. As well as being used for squash, one of the courts is also used for various exercise classes (such as Fitball) because the smaller space is more practical than the stadium. However, according to HRL, the squash courts are about *50% too small* to be ideal for this kind of use and there is also an issue with the potential marking of the squash courts if they are being used for non-squash activities.

The squash club have expressed general satisfaction with the squash courts in their current condition. Membership in the club is solid and fairly consistent (about 25 members for each of the three rosters annually).

The squash club also mentioned the desirability of an overlooking area to enable spectators to watch squash games. However, there was an acknowledgement that this would require extensive structural modifications to the existing building and may be beyond the scope of redevelopment plans.

### 3.5 Reception, Treatment Room and Toilets/Change rooms

Sandwiched between the squash courts and the stadium is a single storey area consisting of a glassed in foyer, reception area, treatment room (for massage therapy) and toilets/change rooms. Although not particularly well designed, these facilities are in reasonable condition and are adequate for the way in which they are currently being utilised. However, as part of any redevelopment of the facility, it is important to consider how this area could be remodeled or extended such that that overall amenity is improved. There is also one place where a drainage problem is clearly apparent and will require remedial action.



The existing reception area, looking towards stadium from main door



Existing change rooms



Existing water damage to ceiling

Another item requiring attention is the disabled toilet facility, which does *not meet current regulations*. This will need to be remodeled as part of any redevelopment as part of ensuring that the entire Centre, including external spaces, is fully compliant with disability standards throughout.

A final issue that was raised in discussion with the sporting clubs that use the Centre was the lack of a clubroom in which members can gather before and after games or for social occasions and where trophies can be stored etc. The suggestion was made that if such a room could be included in the redevelopment of the centre, this could be shared by each of the clubs that use the Centre.

### **3.6 Vehicular Access and Parking Areas**

The Centre is accessed from Burghley Street, with vehicles required to immediately make a left turn (via a one-way system) to access parking spaces which run along the boundary with the kindergarten and along the edge of a landscaped island area (containing a silver birch tree and three eucalypts).



In addition to the main row of parking spaces, there are additional spaces immediately in front of the building, including one only disabled parking space, four motorbike spaces and a timber bike rack (in poor condition). There is also a large unsealed area to the north of the complex which is used informally for overflow parking but which is likely to be very muddy in winter.

It is important to note that the parking spaces at the Centre are also used by parents dropping off and picking up children from the kindergarten (via a gate in the boundary fence), creating heavy demand for spaces during peak pick up and drop off times. This must be taken into account in terms of the number of parking spaces required and in terms of safety issues related to children using the carpark.



Two other issues are the way the cars currently cut through the central island (which does not have any kerbing) and that the overflow car parking area is not well utilised because it is undeveloped and there is no access between it and the main entrance of the building.

### **3.7 Infrastructure**

According to information provided by Council from its GIS, there are two main underground assets running through the precinct. The first of these is a sewer which runs along the western and southern sides of the existing gym (with the sewer running along the southern side providing a connection point for the kindergarten).

The presence of this sewer in close proximity to the existing gym places constraints on extending the existing structure in a southerly direction. However, there are nothing apparent that would restrict development into the vacant space to the west of the Centre's existing footprint.

The second major asset is a water main which runs along the SW boundary (beneath the landscaped area between the carpark and kindergarten).

A plan showing the location of underground infrastructure is included in Appendix A.

### 3.8 Fencing, Landscaping, Signage and External Lighting

The Centre is fenced along all of its boundaries, except for its Burghley Street frontage, which has been left open to create a welcoming feel for visitors to the site. The following table provides a summary of the existing fencing and access points to the site.

Boundary	Fence Materials	Fence Condition	Access Points
SE (Burghley St)	N/A	N/A	Pedestrian and vehicular between landscaped beds. Boom gate to block vehicle access as necessary.
NE (residences)	Corrugated iron, chainwire, timber paling	Fair	None
NW (football club)	Barbed wire topped chainwire	Fair	Double gate at northern end (padlocked) – used by primary school to access recreation ground.
S (High St)	Barbed wire	Poor	None
SE (kindergarten)	Timber paling	Good	None
SW (kindergarten)	Timber paling	Good	Gate to kindergarten



Fencing along NW boundary of the site

A number of trees are present on the site, including three medium sized eucalypts in the island in the car park area. These appear to be in good condition and give a nice feel to the island as well as providing shade to the car park. There is also a very well established silver birch tree, which provides summer shade to a picnic table and bench seats. Many other trees are in poor condition.

Grass coverage in the island is poor, which appears to be due to vehicles driving across the island, causing heavy compaction of the soil. Also, although there is evidence of an irrigation system, this does not appear to be working, meaning that there is little chance of grass surviving, particularly during the summer months.



Compacted soil in main carpark island



Trees in poor condition

The main sign relating to the Centre is positioned in a garden bed adjacent to the Burghley St entrance. It contains the Council logo and the wording, 'Northern Midlands Community Sports Centre' as well as listing the sports and other activities that the centre offers. There is no signage on the Centre itself and only limited directional signage to the Centre from Wellington and Marlborough Sts.



### **3.9 Offsite Facilities and Stakeholders**

In assessing the development potential of the Centre, it is essential that it be considered within the wider context of the Northern Midlands. This helps avoid unhelpful doubling up of facilities and ensures the greatest likelihood that improvements will dovetail with existing services and therefore meet with community approval. The following facilities and community groups have been identified as being worthy of particular consideration in relation to any redevelopment of the Centre:

- Toosey Aged and Community Care
- Eskleigh
- Longford Primary School
- PCYC
- Cressy High School
- Cressy Pool

#### **3.9.1 Toosey Aged and Community Care**

As a major provider of residential aged care and one which is located in close proximity to the Centre, Toosey is an important off site stakeholder. A discussion with Toosey management revealed that there is potential to increase links between the Toosey and the Centre, especially for tailored fitness classes and gym usage.

It was also felt important to consider options relating to the *provision of a therapeutic swimming pool* for use by Toosey residents and the wider Northern Midlands community. Toosey does not have any current plans to build such a facility, but expressed keen interest in making use of a heated indoor therapy pool if one was available in Longford.

#### **3.9.2 Eskleigh**

The Eskleigh Foundation runs a facility in Perth that – among other things – provides supported accommodation for people with disabilities. A conversation with Eskleigh management confirmed that current activities include the use of therapy pool and gym facilities located in Launceston. However, the therapy pool that Eskleigh currently uses is often booked out, so having the proposition of having another facility, and one that was located more locally, is of great appeal to Eskleigh.

In addition, Eskleigh suggested that provided qualified staff were available to design fitness programs for people with a range of disabilities, they would also be interested in utilising a gym that was located closer to their headquarters in Perth.

#### **3.9.3 Longford Primary School**

Although located just a few hundred metres away, Longford Primary School currently makes limited use of the Centre. This is largely because the school has its own facilities for netball. However the school has used the Centre to host

Country Gold netball, a key desirable factor being the availability of an indoor court in case of inclement weather.

School staff expressed a desire to establish a closer relationship with the Centre, possibly including making use of its squash and basketball facilities (which the school does not have). The school would also like to see its students using the Centre outside school hours and see the development and promotion of a more substantial youth program as being a key factor in this.

#### **3.9.4 PCYC**

PCYC operates its own facility in Longford (located at 74 Marlborough St), with the main hall hired out for dance classes and Taekwondo and the storage sheds being leased (on a long term basis) for use as a Men's Shed.

In addition PCYC is also currently contracted by Council to operate the Friday evening (6-8pm) youth sports program at the Centre, which, according to the PCYC manager, runs well, with around 15-20 youths participating each week.

With the prospect of considerable maintenance requirements at its own facility, one idea that PCYC has put forth in the past is the possibility of relocating to the Centre, with the proceeds of the sale of its existing facility being used to establish a permanent 'youth space' (with 8-ball tables, air hockey etc) at the Centre.

Whilst this idea has some merit, it is not without drawbacks. The most significant issue is the potential for a 'youth space' to detract from the sports and fitness focus of the Centre. Whilst encouraging young people to use the Centre should be a high priority, there is significant potential for a conflict of interest between teenagers using the centre to 'hang out' and users participating in health, fitness and sports related activities. A 'youth space' should therefore not be included in the redevelopment of the Centre.

#### **3.9.5 Cressy District High School**

There are existing two-way links between HRL and Cressy District High School, with HRL hiring the use of the school's hall for some of its exercise classes and a number of the school's students participating in the Centre's after school programs. Like Longford Primary School, there is potential for Cressy to increase its use of the Centre if future redevelopments offer opportunities that the school cannot provide through the use of its own facilities.

#### **3.9.6 Cressy Pool**

As well as utilising the Centre, HRL also makes use of the Council owned pool in Cressy. This is a vital facility that is used by residents of Longford and Cressy and it is essential that any redevelopment of the Centre does not in any way undermine the viability of the Cressy Pool. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that a therapy pool – if included in the redevelopment of the Centre – is used only for therapy purposes and *does not become a substitute for Cressy Pool* for aqua aerobics etc.

## **4 Development Recommendations**

Having assessed the existing facilities, considered relevant demographic and sports and recreation data and consulted all relevant stakeholders, this section of the Master Plan provides recommendations for Council regarding the work to be undertaken to redevelop the Centre.

These recommendations relate to the Concept Drawings prepared by David Denman and Associates and should be considered in conjunction with those drawings. Estimated costings are also included, along with suggested prioritising of works in case the redevelopment needs to be staged.

### **4.1 Stadium**

#### **4.1.1 Recommendations**

Repair and update the electric basketball scoreboard.

Replace plasterboard wall lining in the vicinity of the basketball court with plywood and repaint.

Carry out other repairs as required.

#### **4.1.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for the above recommendations is \$20,000.

It is recommended that this work is included in Council's 2015/16 building maintenance schedule and budget.

### **4.2 Gym**

#### **4.2.1 Recommendation**

A new gym area is to be constructed, extending out from the north-western side of the existing building containing the squash courts and amenities connecting with the existing storage area. The gym will be approximately 200m<sup>2</sup> in area (approximately 1.5 times the size of the existing gym). The proposed construction method is steel frame on a concrete slab floor with a skillion roof over. Careful attention should be given to the admittance of natural light and ventilation and maximising solar gain and insulation for user comfort and to lower long term running costs, particularly those associated with heating and cooling.

#### **4.2.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for construction of the new gym area is \$296,582.

It is recommended that the new gym area be developed in Stage 2.

## **4.3 Aerobics and Fitness Room and Storage Area**

### **4.3.1 Recommendation**

The existing gym is to be converted into an aerobics and fitness room approximately 97m<sup>2</sup> in size (approximately 1.5 times the size of a squash court) and a storage area of approximately 41m<sup>2</sup> in size. The conversion of this facility would involve the construction of a new internal wall. It would make use of the existing access points into the room, with the addition of an extra access point created by relocating the roller door from the existing storage area.

### **4.3.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for converting the existing gym into an aerobics and fitness room and storage area is \$60,720.

It is recommended that development of the aerobics and fitness room (and storage area) occur in Stage 2.

## **4.4 Redevelopment of Office and Amenities Area**

### **4.4.1 Recommendation**

The existing amenities area (between the stadium and squash courts) is to be remodeled and extended to achieve the following:

- An improved entry foyer and office space, with stronger connection between these and the stadium and new aerobics and fitness room
- A new, fully compliant disabled toilet and shower facility
- A new massage room
- An additional training and sporting club room with kitchenette (to be shared by the various sporting clubs)
- Enlarged and improved change rooms accessible directly from entry foyer/corridor (to allow flow through from change rooms to new gym)

### **4.4.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for redeveloping the office and amenities Area is \$326,997.

It is recommended that this work occurs in Stage 1.

## **4.5 Therapy Pool**

### **4.5.1 Recommendation**

Further investigations should be conducted into the feasibility of including a therapy pool as part of the redevelopment of the Centre. As well as additional community and stakeholder consultation, this should involve the development of a business plan for how the running of such a facility could either be included under the umbrella of activities conducted by HRL.

If found to be viable, a Therapy Pool should be included into the redevelopment of the Centre as per the Denman Concept Plan.

#### **4.5.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for constructing a therapy pool is \$332,950.

It is recommended that Council consider this as a future project.

### **4.6 External Works**

#### **4.6.1 Recommendation**

The area surrounding the Centre is to be developed according to the Site Plan, with works to include the following:

- Remove or prune existing trees and shrubs as required and grind existing stumps
- Fences are to be repaired or replaced as necessary
- Island in centre of main carpark to have kerb installed, be decompacted and have manual irrigation system installed and grass planted
- Sealed carpark surface to be repaired, with parking space lines remarked as necessary and provision of disabled parking
- Overflow parking area to have compacted road base and asphalt seal as per Site Plan, with provision for coach parking
- New and existing planting areas to be landscaped with topsoil, edging and mulch and planted with approximately 12 deciduous trees (eg Gleditzias) and approximately 30 columnar-shaped conifers as shown on Site Plan
- Compacted gravel path to be constructed along eastern side of stadium and between overflow car park and entry area
- Paving to front of main entrance
- Additional signage to be installed, including offsite directional signs
- Additional lighting to be installed
- New bike rack to be installed

#### **4.6.2 Costing and Staging**

The estimated cost for external works is \$199,650.

It is recommended that this work occurs in Stage 3 (following completion of major construction works).

## 4.7 Summary of Redevelopment Staging and Costs

<b>Stage 1</b>		
<b>Element</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicative Cost</b>
Office and Amenities Area	Redevelopment and expansion	\$326,997
	<b>Subtotal Stage 1</b>	<b>\$326,997</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>		
<b>Element</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicative Cost</b>
Gym	Construct new gym area	\$296,582
Aerobics and Fitness Room	Redevelop existing gym, including storage	\$60,720
	<b>Subtotal Stage 2</b>	<b>\$357,302</b>
<b>Stage 3</b>		
<b>Element</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Indicative Cost</b>
External works	Carpark, landscaping, signage and lighting	\$199,650
	<b>Subtotal Stage 3</b>	<b>\$199,650</b>
<b>Total Stages 1, 2 and 3</b>		<b>\$883,949</b>

## **5 Management and Marketing**

### **5.1 Ongoing Management**

Health Revival Longford has demonstrated that with good management, it is possible to run the Centre profitably for the benefit of the Northern Midlands community. This current profit-sharing arrangement has also benefitted NMC because, notwithstanding one-off facilities upgrades, it provides Council with income from Centre, which previously ran at a substantial loss.

Moving forward, there are two issues that Council should consider in any future negotiations with HRL. The first is whether both parties would be well served by the creation of medium term (5-10 year) agreement related to the ongoing leasing and management of the Centre. Such an agreement would give greater certainty to both parties, especially as Council considers further capital investment.

The second issue is that now that the profitability of the Centre has been established, Council may wish to renegotiate the terms of the management agreement. This is particularly relevant given that carrying out the recommended improvements is likely to require significant capital expenditure by Council as well as additional ongoing maintenance costs.

#### **5.1.1 Recommendation**

Council should discuss the ongoing management arrangements with Health Revival Longford. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a 5-10 year lease and management agreement between NMC and HRL, the terms of which should be considered as part of the proposed redevelopment and upgrading of the Centre.

### **5.2 Facility Name and Promotion**

A final issue to be resolved in the name of the Centre. Currently it is variously referred to as:

- Northern Midlands Health, Fitness and Sports Centre (its formal title according to NMC)
- Northern Midlands Community Sports Centre (the wording on the large sign at the entrance to the property)
- Northern Midlands Sports Centre
- Longford Community Sports Centre (the name on the plaque attached to the building)
- Longford Sports Centre (the term generally used by the community)

On one hand the name of the Centre is not particularly important and there is a likelihood that people will refer to it by whatever name they are accustomed to using. On the other hand there are good reasons to have a consistent name, especially if this helps clearly convey a facility's purpose and target users. Also, in an increasingly marketing oriented society, a catchy name can help with marketing a service or product.

A second issue is the way the Centre is promoted within the Northern Midlands. Given the Centre's backstreet location, anecdotal evidence suggests that many Northern Midlands residents – even those living in Longford – are not aware of the Centre's existence, let alone the range of activities on offer. Further away from Longford, awareness of the Centre diminishes further despite Council's desire for it to be a municipality-wide facility.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations

Council should settle on a consistent name for the Centre that reflects both its main purpose and intended users. Given that the facility is used predominantly for fitness related activities (more so than organised sports) and with users coming from all parts of the municipality, one possibility would be: **Northern Midlands Fitness Complex**. However, if it is felt necessary to retain 'sports centre' in the name, then Northern Midlands Sports Centre/Complex (without 'community') would also work well.

Another option would be to use a short, catchy name, with the addition of a separate byline. An example of this would be **NorthFit - Northern Midlands Sports and Fitness Complex**.

Concurrent with the completion of the Centre's redevelopment and in conjunction with HRL, Council should launch a coordinated media (including social media) and publicity campaign throughout the Northern Midlands to raise awareness about the Centre. This could also include 'open day' events or free trials of exercise classes where people and community groups can see and experience what the Centre has to offer.

In order to increase the usage of the Centre, particularly by young people, Council and HRL should also seek to develop stronger relationships with schools, both in the Northern Midlands and further afield. As well as increased usage of the centre by school groups, this will familiarise students with the centre such that they and their families will be more likely to utilise it at other times.

Finally, Council should consider installing additional signage in Longford to increase awareness about the Centre and make it easier to find. Ideally, this signage should include photographs of the facility. Signs should be positioned at key locations, especially around the intersection of Marlborough and Wellington Streets.

# Appendix A – Existing Underground Infrastructure



Sewerage 

Water 

HIGH STREET



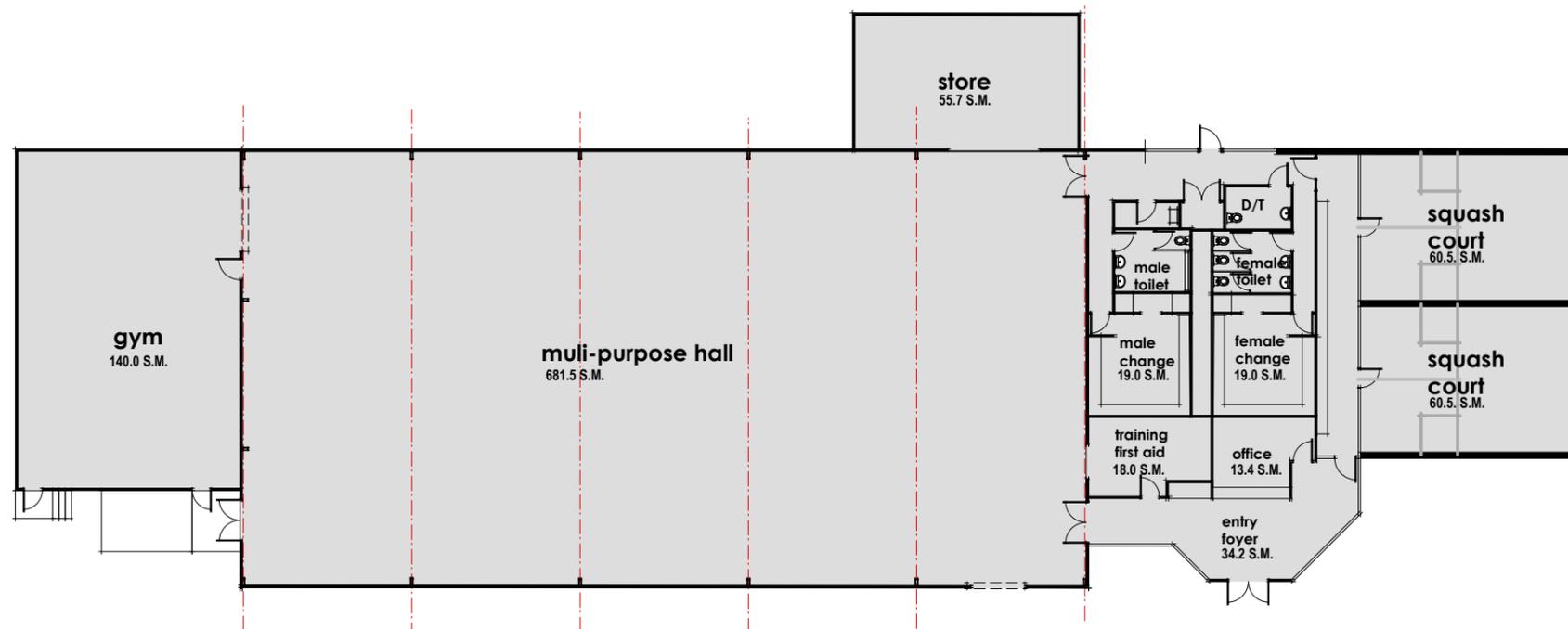
**SITE PLAN**  
Scale: 1:250

BURGHLEY STREET

# NORTHERN MIDLANDS SPORTS CENTRE - LONGFORD



PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN  
Scale: 1:200



EXISTING FLOOR PLAN  
Scale: 1:200

# NORTHERN MIDLANDS SPORTS CENTRE - LONGFORD



EAST ( STREET) ELEVATION



VIEW OF NEW ENTRY FROM CAR PARK



VIEW OF COMPLEX FROM VEHICULAR ENTRANCE



VIEW OF NEW ENTRY FROM NORTH EAST

# NORTHERN MIDLANDS SPORTS CENTRE - LONGFORD