Summary
This report proposes new parking arrangements when special events are held at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre (predominantly at weekends). A report was presented to this Committee on 14 December 2005 which recommended that a key stakeholder working group be established to identify the most effective method of managing parking arrangements for special events at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre in the future. Sutton Arena Leisure Centre (SALC) is both a local leisure centre and a regional athletics facility. It opened to the public in March 2003 and has been extremely successful in attracting annual attendances of 150,000. Since opening the centre has become a very popular venue for special events. A Two Year Review of Sutton Arena Leisure Centre was undertaken in 2005 and was presented to the Council’s Strategy Committee and Environmental Service Performance Committee. The review found that it is a valuable community asset for local people and is making a significant contribution to the health, anti social behaviour, education, regeneration and leisure objectives of this Council.

Recommendations
I recommend the Committee to:

(a) Agree the approach presented (detailed in paragraph 2.3), to manage the parking arrangements at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre for large special events.
(b) Agree that a planning application be submitted for the works detailed in 2.4
(c) Subject to planning approval, request Strategy Committee to agree for the capital works (detailed paragraph 2.4) to proceed and to release financial provision in the sum of £15,000 for the works specified within the report.

1. Background
1.1 Sutton Arena Leisure Centre (SALC) is managed by Sutton Community Leisure Limited, a not for profit distribution organisation, on behalf of Sutton Council until March 2008. A Service Delivery Agreement sets out how the Council would like to see the Centre managed and operated.

1.2 A two-year review of the operation and management of Sutton Arena Leisure Centre was undertaken in 2005. It was presented to the Council’s Strategy Committee on 7 June 2005 and the Environmental Services Performance Committee on 28 June 2005.

1.3 SALC now attracts annual attendances in excess of 150,000, which whilst small compared to Westcroft Leisure Centre (586,830) and Cheam Leisure Centre (238,765), it is a significant figure. It is pleasing to note that this Centre is achieving a number of wider policy objectives such as improving health, reducing crime and anti social behaviour, enhancing educational outcomes, assisting economic development and creating a sense of self worth and encouraging greater social inclusion.

1.4 Sutton Community Leisure Limited is responsible for organising activities, programmes and events both within the Centre itself and on the adjacent athletics track and inner field. Over the last year (2005) the number of special events over and above the ongoing weekly programme totalled 30 (See Appendix ‘C’). It is also clear that the majority of events involve Sutton residents. The events outlined are those, which are established and likely to continue, although it could change.

1.5 It is well known that in general, users of sports facilities, do not on the whole, travel to these venues on foot or by public transport. Whilst they may be keen to undertake physical activity and watch sporting events, they will usually travel to leisure centres by car.

1.6 Before Sutton Arena Leisure Centre was built there was a hard surfaced car park able to accommodate 39 cars, with 20 more unmarked spaces along the access road. The planning requirement was for 40 more spaces, recognising that the overflow grass car park could be used. When Sutton Arena Leisure Centre was built, 119 car parking spaces were allocated. This was calculated by looking at the facilities at the Centre, programming opportunities and anticipated pattern of use.

1.7 The number of parking spaces outlined above is more than adequate to accommodate the day-to-day parking requirement of SALC. (For comparison Westcroft Leisure Centre has 200 spaces for 585,830 annual attendances). It is only when there are special events held at the Centre that there is a need for more parking spaces. Indeed many of the athletic events now taking place were also held before SALC was built.

1.8 When Sutton Arena Leisure Centre was in the planning stage it was decided that the open field (to the right of the entrance gate to the Centre – Area ‘A’ in Appendix ‘B’) could be used as an overflow car park. However, due to the great success of the Centre and the demand from both local and regional
groups/individuals to use SALC, the number of events held has grown beyond what was originally envisaged.

1.9 A report was presented to the Carshalton & Clockhouse Area Committee on 14 December 2005 following concerns raised by the Northern Wards Forum regarding parking at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre for special events. The report highlighted possible solutions and the Committee agreed to the creation of a short-life working group to resolve the issues highlighted.

2. **Issues**

2.1 The Working Group (composed of key stakeholders – see Appendix A) was held at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre on 1 February 2006 to discuss the current problems encountered and to identify a possible way forward. At the meeting, concerns were raised regarding the parking of vehicles on the open space next to the Sutton Arena Leisure Centre car park during special events.

2.2 The following proposed solutions were considered at the meeting taking into consideration the need to be ‘venue friendly’ for event hirers; the views of local residents and elected members; the associated increase in cost to stage an event; possible local traffic disruption; damage to property and likely success of introducing new parking arrangements:

**Options**

*a. Introduce a ‘park and ride’ system for the larger events.*

This option was ruled out as the Working Group believed that it was not a practical solution for users. There are difficulties in identifying suitable "parking" sites within a reasonable bus travelling time of the Arena, and the costs of operating this service per transported person would be large. Experience of park and ride schemes elsewhere generally indicates that unless very large passenger volumes (far in excess than may be expected at Sutton Arena) are catered for, or the costs can be fully recharged to the ticket price for entry to the event, the scheme is found not to be economically viable. Although the multi-story car parks in Sutton could be utilised and then the public be transported via a park and ride system it was unlikely that this service would be used due to the distance from the venue. The number of buses required to transfer users would create excessive additional costs and effect the viability of the service.

*b. Move the location of the ‘Little League pitches’ (Area “A”) to create more parking spaces on the adjacent open spaces.*

This option was ruled out as the Working Group believed that as the Little League had been utilising Area A for over 30 years, it would be unfair to displace local children and their usage of the pitches should be protected. There are no suitable football pitches located in the immediate vicinity that the teams could relocate to without causing major disruption.

*c. Create more internal car parking spaces within the SALC (fenced site).*
This option was ruled out as there is very little space available within the Sutton Arena Leisure Centre fenced area for more car parking. Should an additional 20-25 car parking spaces be able to be located adjacent to the centre it would be at a very high construction costs, per new bay.

d. Site the cars on the adjacent open spaces (Area B).

This option was agreed by the Working Group as the most suitable way forward as the area would be able to accommodate the required number of vehicles for events and would not impact on the Little League pitches.

2.3 It was agreed by those in attendance at the meeting that the best location for the overflow parking during special events would be the land to the north of Middleton Road, across the road from the Sutton Arena Leisure Centre main entrance (Area B). It was agreed that in future the open space next to Sutton Arena Leisure Centre car park (Area A) would not be used as an overflow car park for events. In order to prevent vehicular access to the open space fencing has been purchased and will be erected at key points on event days.

2.4 A follow up meeting with key stakeholders was held on 20 Feb 2006 at which discussion took place regarding the most suitable site for the entrance and exit of the proposed overflow car park. Officers from the Council’s Planning and Transportation Service have produced plans and approximate costings which are detailed below. A plan of the proposed site is detailed in Appendix B. This option will require the following capital works;

- The installation of two heavy duty dropped kerbs and crossovers (one for the entrance and one for the exit of the overflow car park) – approximate cost £4,000 each. This would enable cars to drive off the road and across the footway.
- The breaching of a bund in two places to allow vehicles to pass – approximate cost £1,000 each.
- The installation of robust security measures to prevent illegal access that can be easily and quickly removed to give access for car parking (eg farmer’s 5 bar gate, fabricated with steel) – approximate cost £2,500 each, when fitted. The keys of the new gates will be held by Sutton Community Leisure Limited.

2.5 The total cost of the works is approximately £15,000. There is currently £450,000 in the Capital Programme allocated for security and parking improvement works at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre following a fire in 2005. From the quotes being returned for the project It is anticipated that there will be a slight underspend on these works. The balance of which can be used to meet the costs associated with the overflow parking works detailed above. The capital works will be undertaken through the Council’s Property and Construction Service. The
required works will enable up to 200/250 vehicles to be accommodated in the
overflow car park and will be subject to a planning application. As most of the
special events take place during the summer the impact on the green space will
be minimal. The existing youth shelter and goal posts that are erected during the
football season will also not be effected. In addition to the works detailed below,
for 2006 onwards event organisers will be required by conditions of hire to advise
those attending from within the London Borough of Sutton boundaries that
parking at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre is limited. Customers will be asked to
attend the event on foot or by a local bus/train. Transport timetables will be made
available. This option is difficult to enforce but may help to alleviate some of the
parking difficulties.

2.6 Should this Area Committee agree in principle to proceeding with this option,
detailed drawings will be produced for submission to Development Control, as
part of a planning application.

Planning Comments

2.7 Provided the use of the site for car parking is limited to not more than 28
days per calendar year the use would benefit from permitted development rights
subject to Part 4 Class B of the General Permitted Development Order 1995 and
planning permission would only be required for the access points and farmer’s 5
bar gate. The gates to be installed would need to ensure the maintenance of the
open character of the MOL (Metropolitan Open Land) and Local Open Space. It
should be noted that it is unlikely that the use of the site for car parking would be
supported for a period greater than that listed above, as it would be likely to have
a detrimental impact on the nature conservation value of the site and be contrary
to the functioning of the MOL.

2.8 The area described as “Area B” is currently designated as Metropolitan
Open Land, Public Open Space, and a Site of Importance for Nature
Conservation “SINC” No.37 (Revesby Road Wood). The site is therefore subject
to protection under the Council’s UDP in particular policies OE14 (Development
in Metropolitan Open Land), OE18 (Loss of Local Open Space), OE22 (Sites of
Importance for Nature Conservation) and OE23 (Development Affecting Sites of
Importance for Nature Conservation). The London Plan is also relevant in
particular Policy 3D.9 (Metropolitan Open Land).

2.9 Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) designation is unique to London and
protects strategically important open spaces within the built environment.
Therefore, development proposals are limited to those that have minimal adverse
impact on the open character of such sites and will be limited to small scale
structures to support outdoor open space uses. Furthermore, as the site is a
SINC (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation), generally development
would be refused unless it can be shown that there will be no significant
damaging impact on the nature conservation value of the site concerned.
Biodiversity Comments

2.10  Provided the use of the site is limited, and not intensively used, it is unlikely to be detrimental to the nature conservation status of the site. The ecological value of the site is limited as it is primarily managed as close-mown amenity grassland. However, should the use of the site be sought as permanent, or more frequently used, then national, regional and local policy would seek to enhance and restore the diversity of wildlife by sustaining, and where possible improving, the quality and extent of natural habitat. This would include, but not exclusively, new or enhanced habitat, or design and landscaping that promotes biodiversity, and provision for its management.

Timetable

2.11  Should this Committee approve the recommendation to proceed with the works the following indicative timetable will be applied:

- Planning application submitted 7th July 2006
- Planning approval obtained 8th September 2006
- Tenders invited 15th September 2006
- Contractor appointed 29th September 2006
- Works commence 13th October 2006
- Works completed 17th November 2006.

3. Financial Implications

Group Finance Comments

3.1  The 2006/7 Capital Programme contains an estimate of £450,000 (scheme E020) for security and parking improvements.

3.2  The estimated cost of the Parking works detailed in this report is £15,000 and will be funded from this capital scheme (E020).

3.3  The balance of the budget will be used for fences, CCTV and other security enhancing measures at Sutton Arena Leisure Centre.

Strategic/Corporate Finance Comments

3.4  The total 2006/07 estimate for this scheme is £493,000. Included in this sum is £43,000 for insurance funded fire remedial works. Financial provision has already been released for this.

3.5  £15,000 is now required to meet the costs of the overflow parking works and this is expected to be met from an underspend on the main scheme works.

3.6  Subject to planning approval, it is recommended that Strategy Committee release financial provision for £15,000.
3.7 The remaining £435,000 is subject to a full financial appraisal.

4. Influence of the Council’s Core Values

4.1 Working in partnership - The Sutton Arena L C project involved liaising and working with a wide range of partners, existing and new. This is key to continuing success of the scheme.

4.2 Involving residents and staff in decision-making - This has been achieved through the consultation process with responses helping to determine the facility mix and programme of use. The Consultative Committee assists in the monitoring of the Centre and helps SCL to reflect local needs in provision of services.

4.3 Making our services open and accessible - The facility is accessible to all sections of the community.

4.4 Providing high quality cost effective services. – Sutton Arena L C is built to a high quality, to meet Sport England National Lottery Fund criteria.

4.5 Investing wisely for the future - Sutton Arena offers the opportunity to the community to actively participate in sport and recreation. Active participation has been proven to reduce the risk of certain health related illnesses, which are above the national average in the local catchment.

5. Contribution to the Achievement of the Council’s Corporate Goals

5.1 Sutton Arena meets all the Council’s policy aims by revitalising the social fabric and infrastructure of the area.

Background Papers
Carshalton and Clockhouse Area Committee Report 14 December 2005 – Sutton Arena Leisure Centre – Parking arrangements for special events
### Appendix ‘A’

**Working Group Key Stakeholders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Names</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LBS Leisure Management (Chair)</td>
<td>Mark Fisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ward Councillors</td>
<td>Councillors Andrew Theobald and Paddy Kane</td>
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<td>Carshaton Little League</td>
<td>Ken Weller</td>
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<td>Local resident representative</td>
<td>Fred Winning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair Northern Wards Forum</td>
<td>Jean Crossby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sutton Community Leisure Ltd</td>
<td>Mark Leahy and John Pook</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBS Traffic &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Alan Carrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS Parks</td>
<td>Mark Dalzell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS Education School Sport</td>
<td>Richard Oxlade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBS Parking</td>
<td>Frank Tinsley</td>
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