

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 15 November 2022

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Torbay Playing Pitch Strategy

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** November 2022

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## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Torbay Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) underpins Torbay on the Move and supports the Council's ambition for Thriving People. It also supports healthy and physically active lives for all, by improving existing provision and providing new sports facilities that enable increased sporting participation, encouraging people to become more active, and promoting health and wellbeing in Torbay.
- 1.2 The strategy is designed to ensure that there is a good supply of high-quality playing pitch facilities to meet the current and future needs of the area's residents and visitors. To improve Torbay's supply of these facilities the strategy is intended to inform and influence investment decisions of regional and national sporting partners including Sport England and intended to guide local investment decisions, primarily relating to S106 funding and inform the Planning provision.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 The PPS is a key component of *Torbay on the Move* and sits directly alongside *Re-Setting Sport & Physical Activity* to support both the **Place** and **People** themes within the Plan. (see Background documents for *Resetting Sport*.)

- 2.2 This Strategy comes at a challenging time for those responsible for protecting, delivering, managing, and maintaining sports facilities. With an obesity crisis well documented and the cost of living rising, there is an opportunity to put accessible physical activity at the heart of local communities in Torbay. Improving physical health is important not only in supporting health partners in easing pressure on the health system but also in helping address Torbay's economic underperformance. A healthier working age population is a more productive working age population, helping people stay active and stay in employment will also have positive impacts over time on Torbay's economic output.
- 2.3 Financial pressures on the Sport and Physical Activity Service (part of the Culture and Events Section of Place) have been building for many years, this has been exacerbated by the pandemic which has had a crippling impact on leisure providers. On top of this many facilities in the area have reached the end of their lifespan and the recent increases in energy prices has left many sports and leisure services and facilities at risk of closure.
- 2.4 Despite the financial pressures, the pandemic has explicitly highlighted the value that communities place on leisure, opens spaces and park services and being active. Being active has helped people to connect with communities in new and innovative and increasingly virtual ways. It shone a spotlight on the social value of sport, leisure and physical activity and its contribution to wider policy objectives such as levelling up health and wellbeing, tackling inequalities and placemaking.
- 2.5 The PPS will be used in collaboration with National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sport England, Planning, and other departments to deliver the ambition of improving sporting facilities within Torbay, in response to the current challenges to participation.
- 2.5 Implementation of the PPS would be tasked through to the Capital & Growth Board to ensure alignment with wider capital programme and to ensure that there is a coherent Council wide approach to delivery where appropriate reports will also be made to the Health & Wellbeing Board. Officers will also continue to engage with Sport Torbay and other partners to develop collective leadership externally as well as internally.
- 2.6 In addition to the traditional pitch-based sports that are deemed by Sport England to be essential to a PPS, the Council requested a wider more encompassing strategy that takes in the key outdoor playing facilities within the area. There was also a conscious decision to mitigate against the impact of the climate emergency in the provision of facilities due to the impact of rising sea-levels. As such, a comprehensive assessment has been produced which sits alongside an Executive Summary, and recommendations for prioritisation.
- 2.7 The proposals in this report help us to deliver against our corporate objectives of wanting our residents to thrive; turning the tide on poverty; reducing inequalities and making Torbay a premier resort in the UK. We will help to deliver this ambition by;
- enabling those who live, study, work and enjoy visiting and staying in Torbay to become more active and take part in sport, to whatever level they aspire, for the benefit of their physical and mental health.
  - protecting facilities for sports and physical activity and be planned for, provided, and managed in partnership in a co-ordinated way with a wide range of stakeholders.
  - be placed at the heart of a network of active environments and designed and delivered in ways that respond positively to and help address climate and environmental challenges, help address the issues for deprived communities, engender a sense of

personal and community pride, and contribute to the Bay's social and economic well-being.

- Improved sports facilities will contribute to Torbay being the premier resort in the UK. Implementation of the PPS will offer high quality sports facilities to residents and visitors supporting development of Torbay as a destination for sport where our built and natural environment is celebrated.

### 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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- 3.1 That the Playing Pitch Strategy be launched for consultation in order that it can inform the emerging Sports Strategy.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Playing Pitch Strategy Executive Summary

Appendix 2: Torbay Playing Pitch Strategy

Appendix 3: Torbay Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan

## Background Documents

1. Re-Setting Sport & Physical Activity – A Plan for Torbay

### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 A Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) plays several important roles in sport, leisure and planning terms, and has a direct link into the health and wellbeing agenda both in relation to formal club-based sport but also social, casual, and informal sport aimed at getting people more active (with positive outcomes for mental as well as physical health).
- 1.2 This PPS will play a vital role in encouraging increased sporting activity and promoting health and wellbeing in Torbay by helping to ensure that there is a good supply of high-quality playing pitch facilities to meet the current and future needs of the area's residents. Torbay Council as a major sports facility landowner, motivator and manager will play the key role in the delivery of the Strategy.
- 1.3 The PPS provides an audit of the quality, quantity, and accessibility of playing pitches, establishes the current levels of demand (and therefore whether pitches are being over or under used), and projects forward demand likely to arise by the end of the strategy period (2040) so that the appropriate pitch and facility provision can be planned for the future.
- 1.4 This PPS has been developed following Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' (October 2013). It focuses on the 'main' playing pitch sports of football, cricket, rugby union and hockey, and demand for outdoor tennis, bowls, and netball.
- 1.5 Torbay wishes to protect and provide sustainable high quality outdoor sports facilities with health and well-being central to the 'Torbay on the Move' initiative. In line with the Council's recent 'Vision' document and the focus on the development of Place Stories and Sport England's new Strategy 'Uniting the Movement' (2021), the following Vision Statement for the Torbay PPS has been agreed:

*In Torbay, playing fields and related outdoor sports facilities will:*

- *provide high-quality, accessible, and welcoming facilities and opportunities to enable those who live, study, work and enjoy visiting and staying in Torbay become more active and take part in sport, to whatever level they aspire, for the benefit of their physical and mental health;*
  - *be protected for physical activity and be planned for, provided, and managed in partnership in a co-ordinated way with a wide range of stakeholders; and,*
  - *be placed at the heart of a network of active environments and designed and delivered in ways that respond positively to and help address climate and environmental challenges, help address the issues for deprived communities, engender a sense of personal and community pride and contribute to the Bay's social and economic well-being.*
- 1.6 The strategy provides a "direction of travel" for the necessary improvements to better cater for the needs of pitch sports in Torbay in the period to 2040. In doing so, it proposes various actions and interventions to enable change to take place for the benefit of Torbay's residents and sport as a whole. However, the strategy cannot provide all the answers and it will take continuing work by Torbay Council with the partners who have overseen this

Strategy's development by continuing to collaborate with other key partners to develop, finalise and deliver proposed projects and options after the Strategy is adopted.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 The consultation process uncovered opportunities to make change with little additional investment e.g., using FA Pitch Power, collaborating with clubs to improve pitch maintenance, open access to changing facilities, and using the capacity that already exists in the system. To benefit from these opportunities, there needs to be a clear direction.
- 2.2 If we do nothing at all, facilities will deteriorate and therefore it is likely participation rates in Torbay will not improve and may even drop. Sport Clubs will continue to move out of Torbay to better facilities. Overall health and wellbeing will not be supported by improvements in our population's participation in sport and physical activity.
- 2.3 If we continue with the disconnected approach currently being taken it will have little impact on participation rates and improved health and wellbeing of our population. Improved partnership working between Torbay Council, Swisco, education and sports facility providers will give strategic direction for achieving the best possible impact in improving sports facilities in Torbay, and in turn increasing physical activity rates and improvements in overall health and wellbeing

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 Adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy provides the Council with a clear foundation to work with National Governing Bodies and local facilities to bring about investment.
- 3.2 Funding will be required; however, the full scale of funding is not yet known and will become apparent as priorities from the Playing Pitch Strategy are assessed and feasibility plans and master plans are developed.
- 3.3 Project proposals will be routed through the Capital and Growth board in the first instance before proceeding to Cabinet and Council for decisions as appropriate.
- 3.4 Match funding may be required for some areas of operation, and this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.5 External grants from the National Governing Bodies and Sport England are expected to be drawn down but local co investment through Section 106 funding and public health funding is assumed to be required.
- 3.6 There is a clear need for us to seek out alternative methods of financing sport and leisure services to create long term sustainability and to deliver on national and local policy objectives. Capital investment into community sport and leisure facilities should create the

conditions for their long-term viability, aiming to operate facilities without subsidy. Strong leadership and recognition of the social value of sport and leisure will be central to unlocking alternative sources of funding for its provision.

- 3.7 The Playing Pitch Strategy is the beginning of a plan that will inevitably require external spend as the associated action plan is put into effect. Specialist providers of facilities will be engaged to provide new facilities and improve what we already have for the benefit of the local community.

## 4. Legal Implications

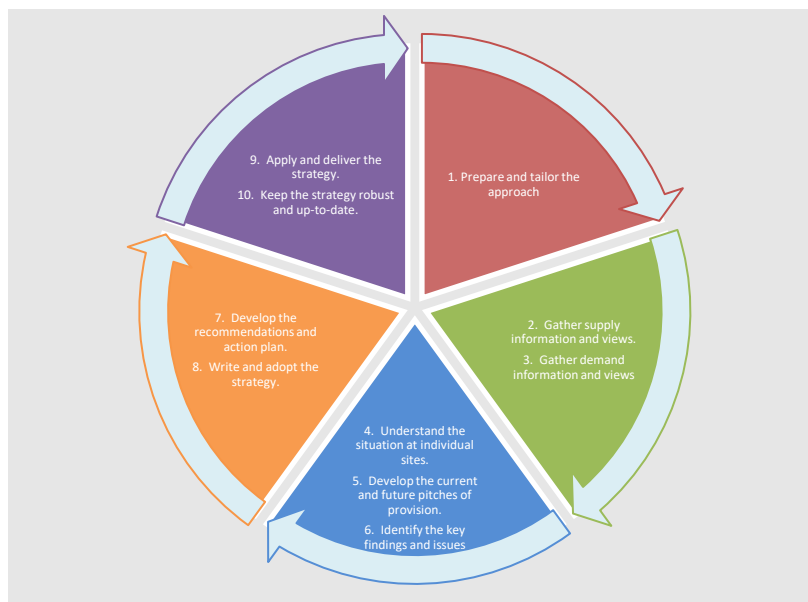
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- 4.1 None

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 The PPS followed Sport England's Playing 'Ten Step Approach' to developing a PPS:



- 5.2 At the start of the strategy development process there were already some obvious and notable challenges and opportunities at some sites. These included:
- sites which serve the whole Bay, such as Clennon Valley, which require significant investment to make them the strategic high quality hub sites and facilities that they should be for people in Torbay;
  - other key sites, such as Torre Valley North, Torre Valley South, and Torquay Recreation Ground (forming the "Valley of Sport"), which present challenges relating to their long-term and fit-for-purpose continued use for sport; and,
  - several other sites where access to, the addition of, or improvement of changing facilities and/or adjacent multi-use games areas (MUGAs) (which can be used for informal sport and for training) could transform the activity package on offer and secure them as quality sites for sport and the local community (for example, Armada Park or Barton Downs).
- 5.3 Through the process of this Strategy's preparation, consultation was undertaken directly with all secondary schools and Colleges in the Bay.

- 5.4 Through the process of this Strategy's preparation, consultation was undertaken directly with all relevant sports clubs in the Bay, including Sport Torbay (voluntary group which represents the voice of community sport).
- 5.5 Through the process of this Strategy's preparation, consultation was undertaken directly with all relevant National Governing Bodies.
- 5.6 Through consulting with the organisations mentioned in 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 we were able to gain a sufficient understanding of the pitch situation at each site, identify key findings, issues, and opportunities, gather supply and demand information and views, and develop an understanding of current and future provision at each site. All of this information has then informed the Strategy document and associated action plan.

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

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- 6.1 Not applicable

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 **Sustainable locations:** The strategy will be delivered to ensure that pitch improvements and their use are planned, managed and promoted to ensure that they lie at the heart of their local communities and are easily accessible to all, thus reducing the need to travel, and / or work is progressed to help ensure that transport connectivity (while prioritizing low carbon and active modes of travel first) are delivered in Torbay to ensure good and safe access to strategic and multi-pitch, multi-sport sites from across the Bay.
- 7.2 **Good design** incorporating low carbon and carbon-reducing measures and innovations such as sustainable drainage systems, rainwater recycling, electric car and bike charging points, biomass boilers, the greater use of natural light / passivhaus design and underfloor heating in sports pavilions, solar power for electricity generation will be considered wherever feasible.

Design will also reflect opportunities for multi-use facilities. Compromise and adaptable buildings must be considered to help keep costs down and future proof use, particularly on multi-sport sites. Multi-use must extend to opportunities for wider community uses where feasible, needed, and appropriate. Community Consultation will be at the heart of the project and direct the design.

- 7.3 **Innovations:** Alternatives to grass and other technical developments could be considered in the future: hybrid pitches (a combination of grass and artificial grass) are being trialled in a few locations in the UK and may come forward as a sustainable alternative to full artificial grass provision, which face major challenges now in terms of manufacture, disposal of carpets, reduction of loss of rubber crumb to watercourses (from 3G pitches) and their lifetime cost. Other innovations, such as the use of a different ball for hockey to use on non-sand-based surfaces are also being trialled. The new Gen2 surface offers opportunities for hockey pitches to be viable in the long-term without relying on football demand to supplement income, by enabling netball and tennis to be played on the surface too. Other artificial surfaces and fills could become available during the lifetime of this Strategy and should be considered as options in the future where viable.
- 7.4 **Role of strategic sites in supporting the environment:** Opportunities can be taken on multi-pitch / multi-use strategic sites to invest in whole life and whole site plans which benefit on-site and adjacent ecology and habitats (for example, testing whether net gains in biodiversity can be achieved).

- 7.5 Pursue **whole life plans** for artificial pitches, in particular, to demonstrate how loss of rubber crumb into off-site environments can be minimised (e.g. removable filter in ducting on a dedicated fenced hardstanding path from 3G to changing and / or parking area to prevent loss of crumb to grassed areas), how surface can be sourced to minimise carbon footprint, how investment in a good maintenance and management programme can extend the surface life and how surface will be dealt with at end of its life.
- 7.6 **The role of modular/portacabin prefabricated/container facilities:** Modular, portacabin, prefabricated and shipping container adaptations as buildings can work well in some locations. Subject to them being able to meet standards set by sport's governing bodies and Sport England and demonstrate that they can be a low-carbon option, they could be much more widely used as a cost-effective and viable solution on some sites.

## 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 If this strategy is not implemented, an efficient, cohesive approach would be missed, and we would forego the opportunity to work with Sport England and National Governing Bodies of Sport to achieve positive improvements to Torbay's sports facilities and the greatest impact to overall health and wellbeing through increased physical activity.

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

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	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	YES		
People with caring Responsibilities	YES		
People with a disability	YES		
Women or men	YES		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	YES		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	YES		
People who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual	YES		



People who are transgendered	YES		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	YES		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	YES		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	YES		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	YES		

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 10.1 Torbay's Playing Pitch Strategy will see a positive impact across several areas including but not limited to; reducing the Council's carbon footprint through encouraging walking and cycling; improved benefits to overall health and wellbeing; benefits to mental health, benefits to our Tourism offer and reducing demands on other health services.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 11.1 Torbay's Playing Pitch Strategy will see a positive impact across several areas including but not limited to; reducing the Council's carbon footprint through encouraging walking and cycling; improved benefits to overall health and wellbeing; benefits to mental health, benefits to our Tourism offer and reducing demands on other health services.