

Improving Community Sports Facilities

**A toolkit for the strategic planning of
community sports facilities**

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Section 1

Introduction

What is the toolkit for?

The Toolkit is part of Sport England's '*Facilities Improvement Service*' (FIS) and replaces our 'Planning Across Boundaries' web-based planning guidance for local authorities.

The FIS aims to:

- Facilitate the application of Sport England's planning tools¹ to develop an *evidence-based needs assessment* to inform decision-making on what sports facilities are needed and where,
- To *build skills and capacity* through training and,

¹ Sport England strategic planning tools comprise Active Places Power, Facilities Planning Model (FPM), Active People Diagnostic, Market Segmentation, Sports Facility Calculator

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- To *disseminate examples of best practice* through use of case studies and the testimony of people who have done it.

Under the FIS, Sport England works with local authorities to deliver [tailor-made approaches to strategic planning](#) for sport based on the local authorities' agendas. By so doing, Sport England intends to 'raise the bar' in terms of the standard of strategic planning for community sports facilities, and to ensure sport features appropriately in LA strategies, priorities, actions and work commitments.

Why is it needed?

FIS was developed in response to a number of drivers:

- Recognition by the Audit Commission and within the sports sector of the need to improve the strategic planning for sport, particularly needs and evidence based decision-making. [[See Audit Commission \(2006\) Public Sports & Recreation Services](#), and [CLG \(2007\) Developing the Local Government Services Market: Working Paper on Leisure Services](#)]
- Some early Local Development Framework Core Strategies - and sports facility proposals within them - have failed to meet the Government's 'tests of soundness' and have had to be withdrawn [See [Planning Inspectorate \(2006\) Report on Lichfield District Council's Core Strategy Development Plan](#)]

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- The obesity pandemic, the wider physical activity agenda and the debate around what sport can contribute to this [See [HM Government \(2008\) *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross Government Strategy for England*](#)]
 - The ticking time bomb of the age of the Local Authority (LA) community sports facilities asset base and reduced capital investment opportunities from PFI credits to modernise existing provision
 - The need to ensure community sport is a core consideration in preparing local 'Strategies for Change' in response to the national roll out of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF), the Building Colleges for the Future (BCF) and the Primary Capital Strategy (PCS) capital investment programmes
 - Government proposals for new housing (including designated 'Growth Points') and the need to ensure community sports infrastructure needs in relation to this planned growth are known and evidenced in order to secure funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy and other forms of Developer Contributions
 - The London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and building capacity to meet expected increases in demand to participate in sport at a local level throughout the country
 - The Department of Health's national action plan for physical activity [Choosing activity: a physical activity action plan](#) and European Union recommendations for policy actions at national level in support of health-enhancing physical activity.

How does it relate to statutory planning guidance?

The guidance in the Toolkit both complements and augments current government guidance set out in [Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 \(PPG17\)](#) Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2001), and the companion guide [Assessing Needs and Opportunities](#)

This Toolkit focuses on built facilities for sport, while the PPG17 Guidance is much broader in its scope, relating to all types of open space as well as facilities for sport and recreation. The Toolkit sets out how planners and leisure professionals can make best use of sport-specific planning tools in following the PPG17 good practice principles and approach to determining local facility needs. Many of these tools have only become available since September 2001 when PPG17 was published.

Similarly, the Sport England Toolkit is intended to complement published guidance of related agencies, for example [CABE](#) jointly with the London Mayor's Office, has prepared [best practice guidance on preparing open space strategies](#). [Natural England](#) has developed [Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities](#), [Play England](#) has published its first [National Play Strategy](#) and the other cultural agencies have developed guidance via the [Living Places](#) initiative.

Who is it for?

This Toolkit is designed to support all those involved in the strategic planning of community sports facilities.

Given the lead role of LAs in community sports facilities planning and provision, the primary target users are those in local government engaged in strategic planning for sport, whether working in spatial land-use planning, sports & leisure, or in other services where sport and physical activity plays an important part. For example, corporate services and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), children and young people's services (including Building Schools for the Future), economic development and regeneration, and adult social care.

Others who may find resources in the Toolkit useful include those in National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) responsible for developing national or regional facility plans, those working in the further and higher education sector (for example on the Learning & Skills Council's Building Colleges for the Future capital programme), and those working in NHS Primary Care Trusts on planning health improvement services based around physical activity. Once a needs and evidence base for community sports facilities is in place, it can be 'passported' to education, health and other social policy areas as appropriate.

Lastly, the Toolkit - along with training and accreditation in the use of the Sport England planning tools - will be useful to planning and sports and leisure consultants working for LA clients, helping to improve the robustness of their work as well as LAs evaluating the work done by consultants .

Which sports does it cover?

The focus of the guidance in the Toolkit is on what PPG17 defines as *'Built Facilities and Sport & Recreation'* (i.e. indoor sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, indoor bowls, indoor tennis, ice rinks) **plus** those *'Outdoor Sports Facilities'* within the PPG17 definition that are also purpose-built for sports use (e.g. athletics tracks, golf courses, synthetic turf pitches) and for informal physical activity (e.g. multi use games areas and skate parks.) The Toolkit concentrates on these types of community sports facilities for several reasons:

- First, these facility types are the most popular and have the greatest capacity to accommodate community needs and demands.
- Second, it is the built facilities where the resource needs are greatest and the time bomb of the ageing stock and need for investment in modernisation is ticking the loudest.

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- Third, the Sport England planning tools are most relevant and applicable to these facility types when it comes to building the needs and evidence base to determine strategy.
 - And lastly, at present, many local authorities, while having a broad culture or leisure strategy and, perhaps, a PPG17 study concerning open space and playing pitches, do **not** have in place strategic plans for built sports facilities. Some that do include built facilities for sport and physical activity within their PPG17 study, are not making use of the Sport England planning tools or are not carrying out the local surveys and consultation needed to generate information on local demand to ensure the needs assessment is robust. Others stop at the stage of the spatial needs assessment and fail to take this evidence to the next stage and develop options for consultation and a coherent strategy.

While the above facility types are the primary focus, much of the guidance material in the Toolkit has relevance to planning for other types of community sports facilities namely...

Natural Resource-based Sports - e.g. open water for sailing, canoeing, rowing etc, or countryside for riding, walking, jogging, off road cycling. In local authorities where there is significant supply of natural resources for these sports - e.g. in coastal areas or in rural areas with large networks of accessible paths and bridleways - these sports should be included in the local area (PPG17) needs and opportunities assessment and within the Open Space or Green Space (OS/GS) Strategy developed from this assessment.

In terms of the Sport England planning tools, demand data for these sports and physical activities is available from the [Active People Survey](#) and [Market Segmentation](#). However, the supply data on Active Places currently does not cover facilities for these sports and activities.

Playing Pitches - e.g. facilities for football, rugby, hockey, cricket etc. Playing Pitches should also be included with a local area PPG17 Assessment. This should follow the methodology set out within Sport England's [Towards a Level Playing Field](#) toolkit, which produces Team Generation Rates and examines quantity, quality and accessibility.

Sport England's preference is that the strategy developed from the playing pitch needs assessment is the subject of a dedicated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS.)

Which parts of the facility planning process does it cover?

Planning provision for built sports facilities across an area can be usefully divided into three separate stages - from identifying broad facility needs against a needs and evidence base, to more detailed assessment of

strategic options and recommendations to address these needs, and finally, detailed site-specific feasibility studies to assess the deliverability and sustainability of the facilities recommended.

This is illustrated simply in the following diagram:



The guidance in this Toolkit focuses on the first two stages of this process.

A similar process applies to the strategic planning of playing pitches – i.e. i) prepare a pitch needs and evidence base (using Sport England [Towards a Level Playing Field](#) guidance and tools), ii) develop strategic options and recommendations and, iii) work up individual pitch project feasibility studies to assess their deliverability and sustainability.

What's in the Toolkit?

The Toolkit starts, in [Section 2](#), by setting out the **context to sports facilities planning** - why a strategic, needs and evidence-based approach to the planning of new and refurbished sports facilities is important.

[Section 3](#) explains, first, how to **diagnose the health** of strategic planning for sport in your organisation in answer to the question 'Is it fit for purpose?' and, second, how to **scope the gaps** – i.e. what needs to be done.

[Section 4](#), provides links to guidance materials on how to prepare different types of strategic planning documents – i.e. how to **fill the gaps** identified by the 'fit for purpose' health check.

[Section 5](#) comprises a checklist of the key elements of a robust **needs and evidence base** capable of standing up to scrutiny (for example in support of a public sector funding bid, or at a planning inquiry) in justifying a strategy for community sports facilities.

[Section 6](#) explains the importance of good **project management** to achieving a successful outcome – i.e. a sports facilities strategy that brings about real change and improvement to people’s lives.

The final section, [Section 7](#), is a ‘**How to Do It**’ **guide to the complete strategy process** for community sports facilities. This final section is divided into seven parts, A to G, corresponding to separate stages of the strategy process. Part C expands on Section 5 setting out the appropriate application of Sport England planning tools in interpreting locally generated information and surveys and developing a robust needs and evidence base to underpin and justify strategic facility options.

Throughout the Toolkit, direct download links are provided to recommended sources of more detailed information and guidance where this is available. Examples illustrating best practice are also provided.

Will it be Updated?

Yes. Sport England will review the Toolkit regularly as part of our continuous improvement in performance process.



The content will be updated to reflect new learning from the FIS programme gained through our work with a number of LAs, new guidance and planning tools as these come on stream, and any significant government policy changes.

Section 2

The Planning for Sport Context

Introduction

Planning for community sports facilities needs to be carried out within the context of ‘the bigger picture’ in terms of both the community’s needs and priorities and the available resources, including land use and spatial planning. It also needs to link to undertakings made between Central and Local Government in the form of Local Area Agreements (LAAs). (see [‘Linking Planning into the wider local authority agenda’](#))

Sustainable Communities

The core document articulating the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area, based on community needs and priorities at the LA level is the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This sets out the shared vision and outcomes for the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is led by the LA and made up of a range of local agencies and organisations from across the public, private and third sectors. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) for the area forms the delivery plan for the SCS. Achievement of these outcomes drives local decision-making and allocation of resources.

In future, the Government proposes to encourage LSPs to commission directly organisations (or consortia of organisations) to deliver against these broad strategic outcomes and [Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities](#), provides the latest statutory guidance on this. Guidance explaining this vision for a [strategic commissioning framework for sport and cultural services](#) is available.

In line with this new approach, the Government has also introduced a new performance assessment framework (The [Comprehensive Area Assessment](#) or CAA) replacing the local authority focused Comprehensive Performance Assessment or CPA.) The new CAA will focus more on outcomes, on citizens' experiences and perspectives, and on areas rather than individual institutions. Its scope will encompass all outcomes delivered by local authorities working alone or in partnership.

To raise the profile of sport and gain access to resources, it is paramount that the role of community facilities for sport and physical activity in a local area – for example in meeting the LSPs priority outcomes for adult health and wellbeing, children and young people, stronger communities, safer communities, tackling exclusion and promoting equality – is recognised fully by the LSP theme groups and reflected in the SCS.

In particular, the SCS should feature the Government's new Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets [21](#) and [22](#) concerning 'active communities' and 'the five hour offer' for children and young people. It is also

important the LSP members understand the challenges facing community sport, notably the conflicting pressures of increasing participation/demand and an ageing stock of poor quality facilities.

To achieve this recognition, community sport needs to have both:

- i) Strong connections to the LSP and its theme groups, ideally a voice to ‘champion’ the case for sport and physical activity in contributing to outcomes across a wide range of related local service areas and agenda, and
- ii) A clear picture of the local area needs and priorities for sport and physical activity at all times, underpinned by a robust needs and evidence base that can be transferred or ‘passported’ as required for use in making the case for investment in facilities for sport in related strategies e.g. for health improvement, regeneration, Building Schools for the Future Strategies for Change.

This requires plans and strategies for sport based on strong foundations of evidence as to the priority needs, whether these are for programmes and development activity, for clubs and capacity-building, for new or improved facilities, or, most typically, a combination of all three. This evidence base should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis informed by community consultations, local surveys and application of the Sport England planning tools and available data from other sports bodies.

Sport England has published five themed guides that advise LAs on how sport can help build stronger, healthier, sustainable and more prosperous communities. The [‘Shaping places through sport’](#) series is intended help local policymakers and practitioners put sport at the heart of their work.

Local Area Agreements

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) ‘sets out the deal’ between central government and local government and its partners and is the delivery mechanism for the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review the Government announced a new single set of 198 national indicators (the National Indicator Set) covering local authority activity it undertakes either on its own or in partnership with others. From these, the Local Strategic Partnership for each area select and set targets for no more than 35 indicators (designated targets) alongside 16 statutory education and early years targets to form its LAA, negotiated with the Government Office, and signed off by the Secretary of State . As indicated above, there is a single annual performance review to examine findings of a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and respond to changing priorities in the area.

CLG has produced guidance on negotiating [new Local Area Agreements](#) and subsequent review, the [National Indicator Set](#) (including definitions), and the CAA review process

It is important that sport is represented as part of the outcome targets for the LAA, both for the benefits that it can uniquely deliver, and through the contribution that it can make to broader community outcomes.

Examples of ‘national indicators’ (NIs) with direct relevance to sport that might be included in an LAA are:

- NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation (see [Guidance note on Target Setting – NI8](#))
- NI 57 Children and young people’s participation in high-quality PE and sport

Sport can also contribute to the achievement of many other indicators for example:

- NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering
- NI 110 Young people’s participation in positive activities

Within the [Shaping Places through Sport](#) papers there are many more examples of the indicators sport can contribute to.

In June 2008, when the LAAs for 2008-2011 were signed off by the Government, 80 local authorities that have had agreement on their LAA from the Secretary of State had included NI 8 – Adult Participation in Sport and Active Recreation. 15 had included it as a local target. Details on all current LAAs can be found using the [Tracker tool](#) on the IDEA website

To get sport-related indicators, activity and outcomes integrated into LAAs, and the delivery plans for those LAAs, sports professionals must engage with the relevant thematic groups of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the lead organisation for the delivery of the relevant target. This engagement is particularly important where NI8 is **not** one of the targets. In these LAAs the importance of sports programmes and activities for their contribution to other LAA targets needs to be conveyed to the decision makers.

Some areas will be negotiating voluntary [Multi-Area Agreements \(MAAs\)](#) to reflect local priorities that impact across local authority boundaries. These priorities will either be agreed alongside their LAA targets or captured in them, as they choose. It will be for the local partners involved to agree with the Government Office which measures they wish to use to track progress against their MAA priorities. These priorities will normally be broad based but there are opportunities for sport to be seen as a key tool in delivering, for example, economic regeneration and skills in a community.

The South East Cultural Observatory (SECO) has developed a useful resource, [The Culture and Sport Toolkit for Local Area Agreements](#), which supports LSPs to embed culture and sport within their Local Area Agreement, and to raise awareness of the important contribution that culture and sport can bring to community life.

Derby Council identified a range of weaknesses with its Sports Service and, in the face of rising child obesity rates, determined to embed sport and physical activity into its Corporate Plan, the LSPs Sustainable Community Strategy, the PCT's Public Health Strategy and the Children and Young People's Plan. These agencies and services jointly developed a Local Area Agreement (LAA) stretched target based on 7 hours per week of physical activity for school age children delivered through:

Walking and cycling to school

In school - Physical Education/PESSCL

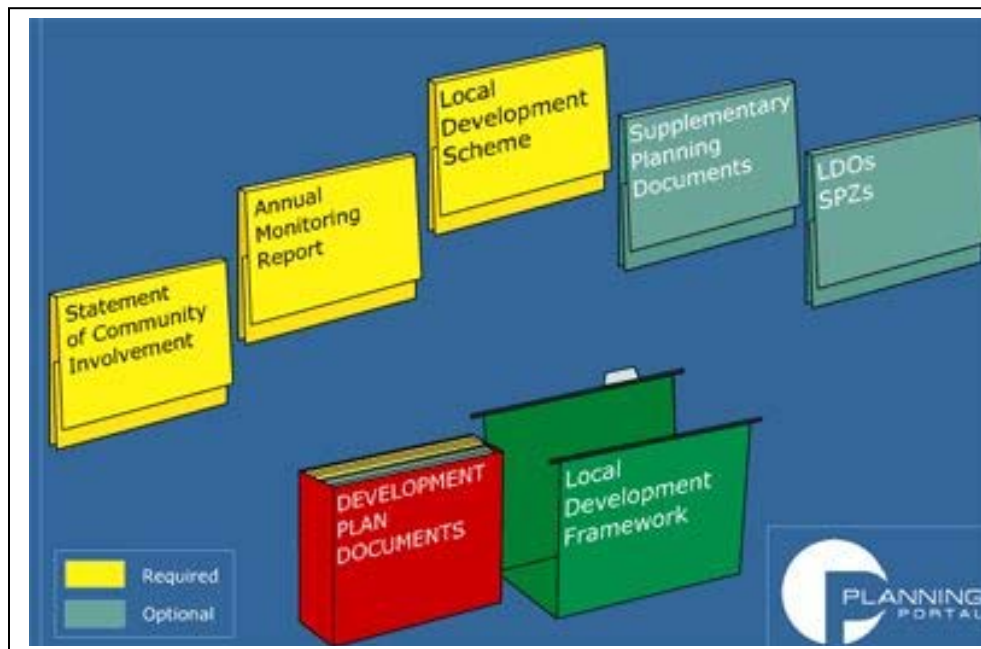
After school - OSHL/ Extended School programmes

Weekend physical activity and sport.

A Baseline was established in June 2006 for re-measure in 2009. By making the work of the Sports Service central to the aims of the LSP and the City Council, it has benefited through improved access to resources and having a greater influence on the BSF strategy and the Cityscape regeneration programme.

Local Development Frameworks

The Government's policy on local spatial planning is set out in [Planning Policy Statement 12 \(PPS12\)](#). PPS12 requires coherence between the priorities set out in the SCS and those in all other plans for the area, including the Local Development Framework (LDF) setting out land use policies. In turn, the LDF should reflect land use policy in the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The LDF comprises a 'folder' of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), some mandatory some optional. Detailed guidance on the Local Development Framework process can be found on the [Planning Portal](#)



The same evidence of facility needs underpinning the priorities for sport and physical activity in the SCS should be used to protect and further the interests of sport in land use planning.

The evidence base should be used to determine local priorities for investment based on robust supply and demand information and a formula for calculating developer contributions.

PPG 17 recommends that local authorities undertake a local needs assessment and further guidance on this is provided in the accompanying [good practice guide](#). Such assessments should make full use of available data gathered from local surveys and appropriate application of the Sport England planning tools.

Under the current statutory planning process, the resulting document - often called a PPG17 Assessment or PPG17 Study – setting out the open space, sports and recreation infrastructure needs and evidence base, should be adopted as a [Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPD) i.e. an optional Development Plan

Document (DPD) within the LDF folder. However this needs to be linked through to an [enabling policy in the Core Strategy](#).

In those local authorities that have already adopted the Government's preferred approach to planning obligations – i.e. the [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) - the PPG17 Study should form part of a single SPD setting out all community infrastructure needs i.e. along with housing, transport, schools, child care etc. The PPG 17 study will also contribute to the development of **integrated infrastructure delivery plans**, and guidance on these in relation to the LDF is available from the [IDEA and PAS](#).

Where the sports facility needs and evidence base is linked effectively to the Local Development Framework, community sport benefits in two ways:

- i) It embeds the spatial requirements for community sports infrastructure to meet existing and future population needs within the local land use planning process, and
- ii) It facilitates securing developer contributions towards capital investment in sport and recreation, whether through the current legislative framework for planning obligations or, increasing in future, through a Community Infrastructure Levy towards the costs of all community infrastructure needs.

As with the LSP, the greatest challenge in integrating planning for sport and physical activity within the spatial planning process is securing a place at the top table – i.e. gaining the commitment of senior management and local authority members.



A good evidence base as to the contribution of sport and physical activity, right across the priority local government agenda of affordable housing, education, community safety and health, is critical in securing this commitment.

Section 3

Diagnosing and Scoping

Introduction

Planning for sport and physical activity is a continuous process. Integral to the process should be the mechanisms by which progress against strategic recommendations and actions will be monitored and how regularly the needs and evidence base - the foundation on which the strategy is built - will be reviewed and updated.

Set up a Steering Group

Ideally, within every LA, the planning for sport process will be led by a Steering Group with appropriate representation from sports & leisure and planning professionals as well as from those service areas where sport and physical activity makes a significant contribution to local agendas.

This Steering Group will be responsible, at set intervals, for checking and challenging whether the current strategies and plans for sport and physical activity remain fit for purpose.

This diagnosis, or health check, and scoping what needs to be done to fill any gaps is fundamental to good community sport planning.

A 'joined up', managed approach to the strategic planning for sport is increasingly evident but not yet the norm. The *Facilities Improvement Service* and this Toolkit are part of Sport England's strategy to address this.

The key elements to the diagnosis and scoping stage of the community sports planning process to be undertaken by the Steering Group are summarised below. The process is also set out in detail in [FIS scoping methodology](#)

Clarify Sports Facility Priorities

For example, in a coastal or rural area, natural resource-based sports and playing pitches may be more of a priority than built facilities.

The converse may apply to a metropolitan setting with scarce green space. In such areas the provision of indoor sports centres, synthetic turf pitches and facilities for informal physical activity such as MUGAs and Skate Parks are more likely to be priorities.

In identifying facility priorities, it's important to think beyond those sports facility types where supply data is already available (e.g. on the Active Places website). It is important to consider local results from the Active People Surveys to find out what people are taking part in and the results of local surveys to find out what people want.

Identify Position in the Strategy Development Process

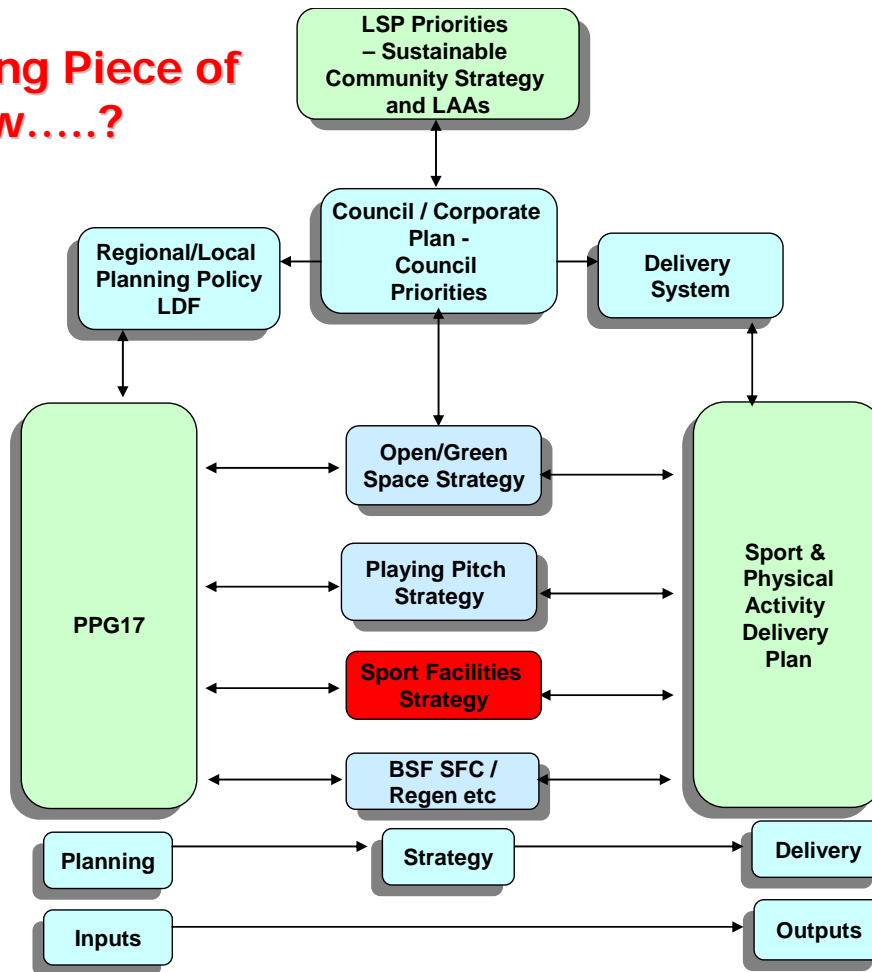
Check what community planning documents and statutory planning documents are in place, formally adopted and, most important of all, are used.

If starting from scratch on a sport and recreation strategy, the first piece of the jigsaw should be local survey and demand work to develop a ‘people-based’ Sports & Physical Activity Delivery Plan. This should determine local *participation needs* and priorities related to the contribution of community sport and active recreation to local SCS outcomes and LAA targets.

Next should come the PPG17 strategic planning work on *facility supply and demand* to address participation needs. This work has to be done robustly, following the statutory guidance methodology and making use of available data and tools to justify any strategic recommendations and to gain acceptance for these in the statutory planning system.

The various community and statutory planning documents that together make up the ideal - ie. a complete jigsaw of planning documents for open space, sport and active recreation within a local authority - is shown diagrammatically overleaf:

The Missing Piece of the Jigsaw.....?



Check and Challenge existing Strategies

Questions to ask in scoping what strategic planning work is needed will include:

- Are there gaps in this jigsaw at your LA? And, within your existing documents, can a ‘golden thread’ be identified linking community planning (including sports planning) through to statutory land-use planning?
- Are strategies and policies aligned? Do they use the same needs and evidence base? Are the aims for sport and recreation clear and appropriate? Are they consistently applied throughout documents?
- Even more important than what is documented is what senior elected members and professional officers within your LA believe and do. Do decision-makers across the relevant service areas meet and share a common sense of vision for sport and physical activity and do they have a common understanding and application of the needs and evidence base?
- What is the role of sport and physical activity within your LSP, is sport and physical activity represented, by whom and what is its influence?

A key check for each strategy already in place is whether the evidence base of needs for community sport used to underpin the strategic recommendations is sufficiently up to date and robust.

For example, when was the last consultation or local survey carried out? Have the appropriate planning tools been used and applied correctly?

Another key check is whether major changes have taken place in either the internal or the external environments that warrant revisiting the strategic options and recommendations.

The detailed checks to be made will vary according to the scope and aims of the strategy i.e. whether a PPG17 Needs Assessment or Study, a Playing Pitch Strategy, A Sports & Physical Activity Delivery Plan or a Sports & Physical Activity Facilities Strategy.

Scoping Outputs

The outputs from a thorough diagnosis and scoping exercise should be:

A list of gaps i.e. the missing pieces in the community sport strategy jigsaw. For example...

- *Local authority A*, in a rural setting, has a comprehensive PPG17 needs assessment in place that makes good use of Sport England planning tools to support local surveys and guides spatial

planning policy for open space, countryside sports and playing pitches as well as for built facilities for sport. It has a delivery plan in place for Sport & Physical Activity. It has yet to develop a Sports Facilities Strategy from the needs assessment. It wishes to bring forward its BSF programme but needs a Sports Facilities Strategy to inform its BSF Strategy for Change.

- *Local authority B*, in a metropolitan setting, has a Sport & Physical Activity Strategy for service delivery and a Playing Pitch Strategy but its PPG17 Assessment has no needs and evidence base for built sports facilities. A pressing issue for this authority is the age of its sports centres and swimming pools. This is leading to declining customer satisfaction and unsustainable running costs, particularly the cost of utilities. The Council has an opportunity to negotiate a substantial sum in developer contributions towards the cost of modernising and rationalising its provision. However, members cannot agree which facilities should be retained (and modernised or replaced) and which should be closed. A sports facility strategy supported by needs and evidence is clearly needed.

A list of weaknesses in existing strategies identified through the ‘fit for purpose’ check and challenge. For example...

- Perhaps sport has no effective representation within the LSP.

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- Maybe the needs and evidence base is out of date and does not make sufficient use of Sport England planning tools.
 - There may be no evidence of consultation with stakeholders on the strategic options or inadequate mechanisms built into the strategy for evaluation and review.

Southampton City Council accepted an invitation to participate in the Sport England Facilities Improvement Service in spring 2008. The City Council's Sports & Strategy Manager in liaison with colleagues in other services identified a need for a robust needs and evidence base for community sports facilities and green spaces across the City to inform local planning policy and to maximise the opportunities for community benefit from new investment programmes, particularly Building Schools for the Future.

At an early stage, it was agreed to form a Project Steering Group comprising representatives from across the Council's sports, parks, education, regeneration and planning services as well as representatives of partner organisations within the 'Active Southampton' community sports and physical activity network.

Following a thorough scoping exercise, comprising a review of existing strategies and plans and interviews with heads of service and external partners, the Project Steering Group agreed an overall vision for the development of a Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy for Southampton.

(see [Southampton Scoping](#) and [Southampton Vision](#))

The visioning document summarised what current information relevant to sports facility planning was held by the various Council services and by Active Southampton partners. Examples of data in place included: a pitch strategy (prepared using the Sport England needs and evidence methodology), GIS mapping data on all types of sports facility and green spaces, Active Places Power benchmarking reports on facilities per 1,000 population and some Sports Facility Calculator reports relating to population growth areas. The visioning document then set down the aims of the FIS project in terms of both outputs and outcomes. The primary aims agreed by the Steering Group were: i) to address gaps in the information needed to complete a robust sports facility needs assessment and, ii) to identify future facility needs and priorities in the contexts of investment opportunities (e.g. BSF), the shared sporting aims of the Active Southampton partners and the wider aims of the City's Local Strategic Partnership.

Consultants were appointed by the City Council to plug gaps identified by the Steering Group in the needs and evidence base. Once this is in place, the Steering Group will decide on how it will be applied – for example to underpin a citywide Sports Facilities Strategy, and/or an updated Playing Pitch Strategy, to inform the City's BSF Strategy for Change, to inform a Community Infrastructure Levy Supplementary Planning Document.

Section 4

Filling the Gaps

Introduction

There is a wealth of detailed guidance material available to help fill the gaps in strategic planning for community sport. Sources for guidance materials and links to the relevant websites or documents are provided in this Section.

Sport & Physical Activity Strategy

As indicated in the [Strategy Jigsaw diagram](#), the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy (SPAS) is the key strategy determining the service delivery needs for sport and physical activity in a local authority area.

The focus of this document is on the sports and physical activity needs of target groups within the local community and the ‘people-based’ structures and resources available to address these needs. For example clubs, leagues, coaches, activity programmes and other initiatives. Guidance on the process of preparing a SPAS is set out in the [Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#) prepared for Sport England by Sheffield Hallam University in 2004.

A good local area SPAS will be developed and owned jointly by the members of a local Community Sports Network (CSN) i.e. not just by the local authority.

Similar to a PPS, the process of developing a Sport & Physical Activity Strategy will need four to six months to allow sufficient time for local consultations and a budget of between £15,000 and £20,000 if outsourced.

PPG17 Assessment / Study

The most important guidance document for local authorities in planning open space and facilities for sport and recreation is the Government's [Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation](#) and its Companion Guide entitled [Assessing Needs and Opportunities](#).

Following this methodology – involving local surveys and assessments of the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing facility provision - is critical to both protecting sports facilities from development and to securing developer contributions towards new or upgraded facilities. The Planning Advisory Service has also produced an '[Evidence Base Spreadsheet for Open Space](#)' as part of its Plan Making Manual. This is a helpful checklist and can be applied to sport and recreation

The PPG17 guidance materials pre-date the availability of a number of the Sport England planning tools. As part of the 'How To Do It' guide to preparing a Sports Facilities Strategy (see [Section 7](#) of this Toolkit), we suggest ways in which the tools available today should be employed alongside local needs surveys in preparing a PPG17 study that it is sufficiently robust to stand up to scrutiny.

Depending on the size of the area, the number of existing resources, and the extent of local consultation and survey work to be undertaken, a full PPG17 assessment covering open space, sport and recreation with full GIS mapping and detailed facility audits will generally require at least six months to prepare.

Some local authorities choose to outsource elements of this work where this offers value for money, although, some have found it more cost effective to supplement in-house resources with suitably qualified temporary researchers. The key when selecting consultants is to ensure there is a focus in the procurement criteria on quality of output, not simply cost per day. [A guide to producing a brief for a PPG 17 study](#) is available.

Open / Green Space Strategy

Starting with the PPG17 needs study and the local standards set out within it for open space, an Open Space Strategy, (often called a Green Space strategy) should be developed.

The best sources for guidance on the preparation of an Open Space Strategy are the [Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment \(CABE\)](#) and the [Planning Advisory Service \(PAS\)](#).

Provided the PPG17 needs and evidence base for open space is in place and up to date, it will take a further three to six months to work up strategic options for the future provision of open space in the area and to consult on these before finalising recommendations to Council Members for formal adoption. Where relevant, consideration of natural resource-based sports facilities should be considered within this strategy.

Playing Pitch Strategy

A good Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) will be determined from the foundation of a robust needs evidence base compiled using Sport England's recommended detailed methodology for conducting local surveys of sports clubs and leagues, for assessing the quality of pitches and changing rooms and for calculating team generation rates for adults and juniors.

Detailed guidance on preparing a PPS is set out in [Towards a Level Playing Field](#)

The PPS needs and evidence base should making use of local surveys (including a thorough quality audit), Sports Governing Body data sources (e.g. County FA district /borough level annual football status reports, commonly referred to as [Local Area Data](#)) and Sport England planning tools ([Active People Diagnostic](#) , [Market Segmentation](#), and [Active Places Power](#).)

As indicated above, the timescales and costs of outsourcing this work will vary considerably depending on local circumstances and the extent and adequacy of existing supply and demand data. As a broad guide, a PPS strategy with a comprehensive audit will take four to six months to complete and, if outsourced, cost between £15,000 and £20,000. The table below sets out the main characteristics of a robust Playing Pitch Strategy:

Question	Checklist – Answers indicating good practice
<p>‘How do we know if the existing needs and evidence for playing pitches is robust?’</p>	<p>1. There is a comprehensive audit of existing pitches including quality assessments and consultation with users</p>
	<p>2. There are clear demand parameters set out and which have been applied to determine how demand for each pitch sport have been developed</p>
	<p>3. The supply/demand assessment builds in any changes, e.g. population growth or increases in sports participation</p>
	<p>4. The supply assessment looked at all types of playing fields, full size as well as small sided games areas</p>
	<p>5. The needs and evidence has been applied by the Council in the following policy areas (e.g. planning, children’s services) and to achieve the following explicit purposes (e.g. to inform planning negotiations with developers, towards achieving the ‘5 hour offer’ target in the SCS for children and young people)</p>

Sports Facilities Strategy

The Sports Facilities Strategy is concerned with the built sports facility needs within a defined area (i.e. facilities other than playing pitches and natural resource-based sports facilities.)

It is likely to cover as a minimum sports halls, swimming pools, health and fitness centres and synthetic turf pitches, as these tend to be where the majority of formal sport is played and are often where a lot of local authority expenditure is incurred. However, depending on whether they are available in the local area, or there is an expressed demand for them from survey work, it may also include; indoor bowls, ice rinks, indoor tennis centres, athletics tracks and squash.

Typically, it will also include facilities for informal physical activity, for example skate parks and MUGAs and will align directly with the Sport & Physical Activity Strategy so that facility provision matches as closely as possible with community sports and physical activity delivery needs and priorities.

Many local authorities choose to combine these two elements – the people-based needs and the facility needs – within a single Sports & Physical Activity Strategy document. However it is documented, the strategic options for the facility types included at the scoping stage should be clearly linked to a robust assessment of needs and opportunities following PPG17 principles.

It is in this facility planning area, that the Sport England planning tools are most relevant and useful. Practical guidance on how to use the tools is provided in [Section 7](#) of this Toolkit (Part C.)

In terms of timescales, the complete sports facilities strategy process from initiation through to adoption (and including the PPG17 needs assessment) should be achievable within eight to ten months.

The following guidance is recommended for use in conjunction with Section 7 of this Toolkit: [‘Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework – Producing a Sports Facility Strategy’ \(Genesis Consulting Oct 2008\)](#)

The table overleaf summarises the detailed guidance available to help local authorities in preparing strategic planning documents for community sport:

Strategy	Guidance
Sports & Physical Activity Strategy	http://www.sportengland.org/15764_yorkshire_strategy.pdf
PPG17 Assessment	http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/assessingneeds
Open / Green Space Strategy	www.cabe.org.uk http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/open_space/oss-draft-sept08.pdf

Playing Pitch Strategy Towards a Level Playing Field	Sport England - Playing Fields
Sports Facilities Strategy	www.sportengland.org/fis/fit

Section 5

Producing a Needs & Evidence Base for Community Sports Facilities



Understanding the Tools

There is much confusion and mystique as to what constitutes a robust needs and evidence base when considering provision of community sports facilities. Some may argue that in developing increasingly powerful and sophisticated planning tools Sport England are partly to blame for this! We make no apology for striving to improve the quality of planning for sport. One of the drivers for developing the *Facilities Improvement Service* and this Toolkit is to help remove some of the confusion and to raise standards in planning for sport practice.

The planning tools available do require a level of knowledge and expertise to ensure they are used correctly and to complement – never to replace – local surveys and consultation. Training and advice is available from Sport England in your Region. (Please contact the Relationship Manager Facilities & Planning in your Sport England Region to find out about Sport England Planning Tool training courses in your area).

Also, it is important to remember that, while the detailed approach to gathering evidence may vary according to the type of sports facility (for example the Sport England Facilities Planning Model planning tool is only currently applicable to Sports Halls, Swimming Pools and Indoor Bowls only), the core components of a robust needs and evidence base for community sport remain the same across all facility types.

Components of a Needs and Evidence Base for Built Sports Facilities

PPG17 sets out a 5-step approach to assessing local area needs for sports facilities. The five key components of a robust needs and evidence base that both meets PPG17 statutory planning guidance and incorporates use of the Sport England Planning Tools, are:

1. **Clear Vision & Rationale** - be clear about the outcomes sought from provision of community sport facilities (both sport-specific outcomes and broader community outcomes)
2. **Sport & Participation Led** - gather data on the population the facilities are intended to serve, the sports and physical activities they currently take part in and, for targeted communities and groups, those they are most likely to participate in if accessible facilities and programmes were to be provided. Take into consideration trends and data on forecast changes in the size and make up of the population (NB. If you already have a recent Sports & Physical Activity Strategy in place, this data can be taken from here)
3. **Auditing the Facility Supply** – assessment of the quality and accessibility of existing sports facilities as well as gathering available data on their use - e.g. management information and benchmarking data. Good sources for benchmarking data include Sport England’s [Quest & National Benchmarking Service](#) and the [Association of Public Service Excellence \(APSE\)](#)

4. **Use of Strategic Planning Tools and Data** – in looking at sports participation, the spatial planning of sports facilities (in all sectors), and testing possible future scenarios, make use of national and local data sources on supply and demand applicable to each facility type. Look at the facility sections in the strategies of neighbour local authorities, CSNs, CSPs and of NGBs at county or regional levels. Use the findings to complement local audits and surveys (above) and local consultation to establish aspirations and priorities (below)
5. **Effective Consultation** - consult with local community groups and clubs about their facility use, strengths and weaknesses, needs and aspirations. Find out about the sports and physical activity facility demands and needs of partner agencies, sports governing bodies and related services (e.g. health improvement, children and young people, adult social care). Consult with specific target groups.

Links to more detailed guidance on each of these core components of a needs and evidence base for community sports facilities are provided in [Section 7](#) of this Toolkit, 'The Strategy Process'.

Making the Case for a Sports Facilities Needs and Evidence Base

The reason most often quoted by sports & leisure professionals for not preparing a proper needs and evidence base for facilities for sport and physical activity is that of lack of resources in the face of more pressing priorities.

To counter this, sports & leisure professionals first need to ensure the Vision and Rationale is broad and embraces outcomes in other service areas. If they are to approve the resources needed to prepare the needs and evidence base, senior managers in these service areas need to understand and be convinced of the value of sport to their area of responsibility, be it...

- Land-use planning and the value of a robust sports facility needs and evidence base to the *Local Development Framework Core Strategy* and the *Community Infrastructure Levy*
- Children and young peoples services and planning for community access to sports facilities on education sites e.g. as part of a *BSF Strategy for Change*
- Public health and the value of facilities for physical activity to health improvement as part of an area *Health Improvement Strategy*

-
- *Regeneration* and the wider contribution facilities for sport and physical activity can make to the quality of life and prospects of people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

‘Passporting’ a Sports Facilities Needs and Evidence Base

In making this case, the relevance and transferability of the built sports facilities needs and evidence base to these other strategies needs to be made clear.

So too does the importance of the needs and evidence base to securing external funding whether this is from grants or from developer contributions through the statutory land-use planning process.

The diagram overleaf illustrates some of the applications of a needs and evidence base for community sports facilities.

This same principle of passporting a needs and evidence base for built sports facilities applies equally to the strategic planning of open spaces and playing pitches.

For example, a playing pitch needs and evidence base (developed using the *Towards a Level Playing Field* methodology) should be passported to a BSF Strategy for pitches for example and to a funding bid for new pitches or pavilions (e.g. to the [Football Foundation](#).)

Middlesbrough Council has developed two new strategies with support from the Facility Improvement Service (FIS), a Sports Facility and Physical Activity Strategy '*Active Middlesbrough 2008-20*' and a Playing Pitch Strategy '*Places to Play 2008-2020*'. The organisations involved in their development (Council, Local Strategic Partnership, Primary Care Trust, University and County Sports Partnership) recognised the importance of a clear, focused approach to future provision based on a detailed needs assessment. The town was in the lower quartile for participation and volunteering in sport and there was a need to respond to the Local Area Agreement target to improve health and life expectancy. Planning and provision for sport was spread between a range of Council departments and there was a lack of strategic vision about the needs of the area. The existing strategy had not considered the built environment for sport and physical activity. As a result of the needs and evidence base that has been developed, the Council is now in an excellent position to embed sport and physical activity into corporate and community strategies and plans of the Council and its LSP partners and to play its part in regenerating the area, reducing health inequalities and making more people more active. Clear priorities have been established to maximise the opportunities that might arise from Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and the new Primary Capital Programme (PCP) of investment in primary schools. The strategies have already improved the focus for grant funding discussions involving the PCT, the FA and other Governing Bodies of Sport and the Council's Regeneration team. The playing pitches needs and evidence base is being used to safeguard existing provision of pitches and to provide for site-specific allocations via Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents.

Section 6

Project Management

Importance of Project Management

Strong management of the strategy development process is critical to the achievement of an effective strategy for community sport. As with any complex process that involves inputs from people working in different service areas and organisations and comprises several stages and a range of tasks, a project management system is required to keep the process on track, to time and budget.

As we have already touched on under Scoping and the importance of the Steering Group (see [Section 3](#)), project management is an area of weakness when it comes to the community sports planning process, particularly in those local authorities where there is no shared vision of the case for sport at senior management and member levels.

FIS Project Management Principles

For this reason, integral to the *Facility Improvement Service (FIS)*, we have designed a system of project management specifically for the community sports planning process. The system follows the five well-established project management principles set out in PRINCE2, the internationally recognised project management product used extensively in local authorities and advocated by the [Office of Government Commerce \(OGC\)](#), namely:

1. *A finite and defined life cycle*
2. *Defined and measurable business products/outputs*

-
3. *A corresponding set of activities to achieve the business products/outputs*
 4. *A defined amount of resources*
 5. *An organisational structure, with defined responsibilities, to manage the project.*

The FIS project management system is tailored from OGC in the form of a [Gateway Review](#). It comprises [5 gateways](#) (corresponding to stages of activity) that a project will need to ‘pass through’ in delivering the outcome – i.e. the sports strategy.

Overleaf, we set out a summary of each Gateway and some ‘top tips’ for management of your community sports facilities strategic planning project:

Gateway 0 - Project Initiation

Project Initiation is about ensuring there is support for the strategy development project from the local authority at senior level and there is a named individual at a senior management position formally responsible for taking ownership of the project.

A top tip therefore, before moving to project start up, is to make sure your sports strategy project has a Senior Responsible Officer or 'Project Champion' with sufficient influence within the organisation.

Gateway 1 - Project Start Up

Gateway 1 is all about making sure the five PRINCE2 project management principles (above) are in place. A Steering Group is set up with an agreed structure and responsibilities (terms of reference), and an experienced Project Manager is appointed.

There is an agreed (and documented) vision as to the output sought from the process (e.g. a Sports Facilities Strategy, A Playing Pitch Strategy, a PPG17 Assessment), how performance will be monitored and how the resulting strategy will be used.

Timescales are set with a project plan covering all the key tasks and activities and a risk register prepared. Resources have been defined and in place.

Top tips for Gateway 1 include:

- Identify the key stakeholders for the project
- Ensure all members of the Steering Group have sufficient time released from their 'day job' to be active members of the group, and
- Sort out from the start who on the Group will be responsible for carrying out the progress reviews at each Gateway (NB. this should **not** be the project champion or project manager)

Gateway 2 - Project Direction (Options & Needs Analysis)

Once underway, the first main review is the robustness of the needs assessment and whether the options developed from the assessment are supportable. If the project is a Sports Facilities Strategy, issues to consider here in reviewing the needs assessment will include:

- Has it covered all the relevant sectors (including sports facilities in the private and third sectors) and the impact of provision in surrounding authorities?
- Has it looked at sports beyond the most common facility types (i.e. not just sports halls and swimming pools)?

-
- Does it seek to cover all sections of the community (age, sex, socio-economic and ethnic groups) and provide a realistic view of future changes in the local area (e.g. population growth)?

In reviewing the options put forward, issues to consider include:

- Are the options put forward justifiable and robust enough to stand up to scrutiny (e.g. at an inquiry)?
- Do they challenge the status quo and link back to the agreed vision (see Gateway 0)?
- Have they considered ‘deliverability’ issues (e.g. procurement, planning, financing and management)?
- Is it clear who needs to be consulted on the options and that they are capable of securing both stakeholder and political support?

Gateway 3 - Project Direction (Statement of Community Consultation)

The third review is the robustness of the consultation on the options developed from the needs analysis.

For the sports strategy to stand up to challenge, it is critical that the Steering Group agrees and documents how and when local communities and other stakeholders will be consulted.

The review should check that both the statement and the practice follow the consultation principles enshrined in the statutory Local Development Framework planning process i.e.

- Consultation begins at the earliest stages of development of the strategy so that communities are given the fullest opportunity to participate in plan making and to make a difference
- Consultation provides open access to information, actively encourages the contribution of ideas and representations from the community and provides regular and timely feedback on progress.

Gateway 4 - Project Direction (Strategy or Position Statement)

Having completed the consultation on the options and developed and documented the recommendations for action, the final project management review must establish whether evidence is in place to show:

- The local authority remains committed (e.g. the Steering Group has signed off the strategy or position statement, the Chief Executive is supportive of the documents and prepared to take them to committee)
- There is a robust way forward that clearly links back to the original vision

- Managers responsible for effecting the changes proposed in the strategy are clear about how to take these forward in their service areas (e.g. planning, neighbourhood regeneration, health improvement, young peoples services, BSF strategy planning)
- There is in place a post-project process to review progress at agreed intervals and to check and challenge the strategy remains ‘fit for purpose’ in light of changing circumstances. These could be changes that impact on the needs and evidence base (e.g. major new housing development). Or, they could be changes that impact on the strategic options (e.g. an enforced closure of a key sports facility or an opportunity for a new centre as part of a major redevelopment of the town centre).

Newark and Sherwood District is a designated Growth Point in the East Midlands and as such the Council recognises the importance of ensuring its sports facility strategy meets the needs of a growing population. In addition, it also understands that BSF developments, the specifics of which are as yet unknown, may have significant impact on the range of options open to the Council in respect to addressing issues relating to its aging flagship leisure centre.

The challenges facing the District Council, compounded by the complex nature of related decision-making processes, required the Council to adopt a structured approach to developing its sports facility strategy. This was needed to ensure that not only was the widest range of stakeholder perspectives taken into account in its needs assessment but that the most probable Growth Point and BSF development scenarios were identified and considered in the strategic options development process.

The Council set up a Project Team, comprising officers from a range of services: leisure; environment; planning; and policy. This team forms part of a Steering Group which includes representatives from the County, CSP, CSN and BSF. Whilst the overall project is managed by the Head of Service, a senior leisure service manager has been designated to lead the work of the team. At the outset a detailed plan was produced which stated the rationale, scope, objectives, outputs, required interfaces and timelines for the project. Thereafter, research tasks were allocated and evidence base formulated. Work is now commencing on drafting the strategy.

The management framework established by Newark and Sherwood was informed by a four-stage gateway management approach devised by Sport England which sets out criteria for project management and assessing outputs. The project team uses the criteria to guide it through the strategy formulation and adoption process as a means to following good practice. It has been particularly useful as a means to identifying any gaps in the evidence base. The Steering Group uses the criteria to evaluate the outputs of the work produced by the project team.

The gateway project management approach has delivered several benefits to Newark and Sherwood:

Enhanced ownership of the strategy across council services

A broader understanding of the strategic planning process

Raised awareness of the inter-relationships / inter-dependencies between the work of individual council services

A robust evidence base

*Key stakeholder support for strategic options
Increased capability in sport facility planning
Project delivered within timeframe.*

Section 7

The Strategy Process



Introduction

This final section of the Toolkit is a ‘How to Do It Guide’ for the complete strategic planning cycle for ‘built’ facilities for sport and physical activity - i.e. from visioning and compiling the needs and evidence base (expanding on the guidance on this aspect set out in [Section 5](#)), through to implementation of strategic recommendations and progress review.

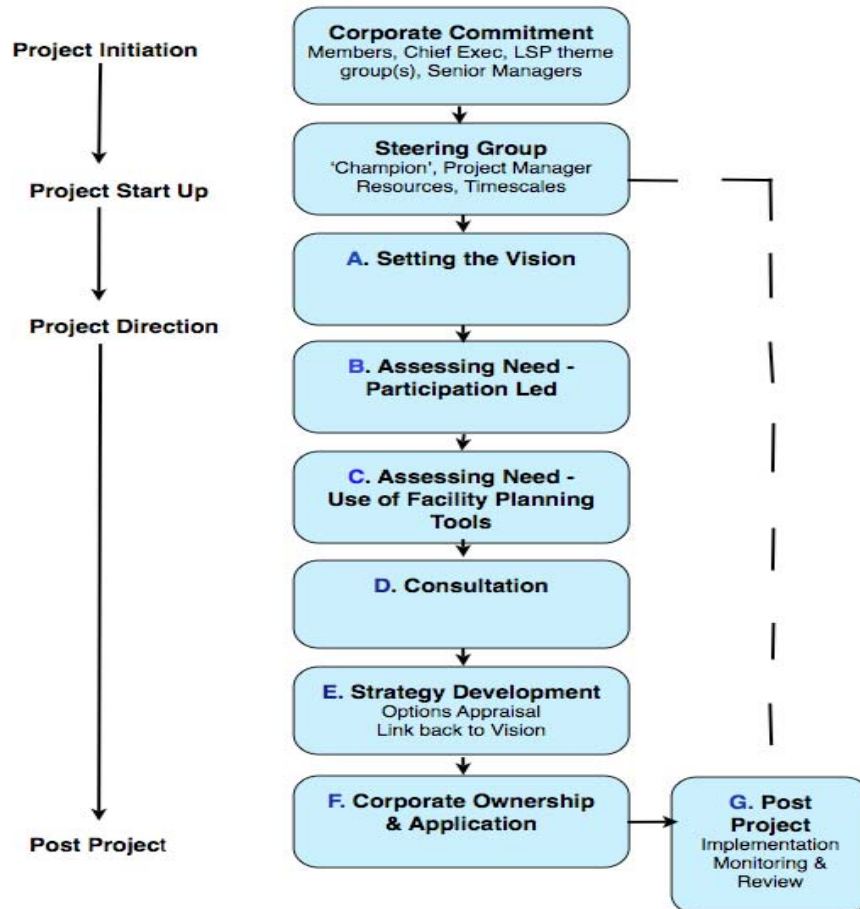
The guide is intended as an introduction to the process, along with how the Sport England planning tools can be used to both facilitate the process and enhance the robustness of the outcomes. Links are provided to detailed guidance where available.

Most of the guidance is also applicable to preparing a [playing pitch strategy](#) or a strategy for natural resource-based sports facilities although the detailed methodologies for compiling the needs and evidence base will be different for these facility types.

The complete process or cycle is shown in the diagram overleaf.

The point at which you enter the process will depend on the outcome of the scoping and diagnosis of your existing plans for community sport (see [Section 3](#)).

The strategy process...



If, for example, you are confident that the needs and evidence base you have in place (perhaps as part of a comprehensive PPG17 study) covers people-based needs and demands for sport and physical activity, covers all relevant sports facility types, makes use of the available data and tools and is sufficiently robust to be capable of standing up to scrutiny, then your starting point will be to develop strategic options and consult on these (i.e. from D).

If, however, the needs and evidence base fails the 'fit for purpose' test, or is in need of updating, then you will start at the beginning (i.e. from A).

A Setting the Vision and Rationale

The purpose of the sports facility strategy needs to be clear. The project Steering Group first needs to decide aims for the strategy (i.e. its intended impact), the sports and recreation facility types it will cover, its lifespan (in years), the frequency it will review progress and impacts of local change (e.g. population growth), and its relationship with other strategic planning work (See [Section 3](#)).

The sports facilities strategy might be the missing element of an area cultural strategy, or the logical next step in sports facilities planning following completion of a sport and physical activity delivery plan and a PPG17 assessment of need. Or, perhaps, the sports facility strategy is the remaining document needed to calculate a formula for a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that planners will apply in relation to new commercial and housing development. Alternatively, the sports facilities strategy might be needed to inform Children and Young Peoples planning on its 'Strategy for Change' under the Building Schools for the Future or other educational capital investment programme.

Right from the start, it is **also important to determine how the impact of the strategy will be measured against the outcomes selected**. The starting point here should be the LSP's LAA targets and the national indicator set.

For example, National Indicator No. 8 (NI8) concerning regular participation in sport and active recreation by adults can, for example, be used as a measure of Healthier Communities and Safer Stronger communities SCS outcomes.

Information on [LAAs](#), the [National Indicator Set](#) and the new [Audit Commission Comprehensive Area Assessment \(CAA\)](#) can be downloaded from the appropriate websites

Alongside local surveys and facility audits, the Sport England planning tools [Active People Diagnostic](#) and [Active Places Power](#) play a central role in establishing the baseline - the **'where we are now'** – for a number of these indicators, the benchmarks from which targets can be set – the **'where we want to be'**.

Strategy Development Stage	Use of Sport England planning tools
A - Vision & Rationale	<p>Active People Diagnostic - adult participation, volunteering</p> <p>Active Places Power - lists of facilities, relative share, population characteristics within facility catchment, travel time to facilities, facilities per 1,000 head of population</p> <p>Use these tools alongside local surveys and audits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish baseline and benchmarks – i.e. <i>where we are now</i> • Set realistic but challenging targets – i.e. <i>where we want to be</i>

The ‘Sports Facilities Strategy: Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework’ document sets out the criteria for each stage of the strategy development process that determine to extent to which it is ‘fit for purpose’. The Framework provides guidance against each criterion to help gauge whether what you have in place is ‘excellent’, ‘fair’, or ‘requiring attention’.

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin an excellent vision and rationale for a LA sports facilities strategy, see Section A of the [Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#)

Darlington Council has a wide variety of sport and recreation facilities and school-based sports halls and playing pitches playing an increasing role in meeting local community needs. Despite this, the Council acknowledges that parts of the Borough, particularly some inner urban areas, have poor access to the green infrastructure network and to sport and recreation facilities.

Providing quality sport and physical activity facilities is considered key to delivery of the health outcomes set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy for the area, *“One Darlington: Perfectly Placed”*. The Facilities Improvement Service (FIS) Scoping exercise led to an early agreement between the local authority, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) that there was a need for a robust needs and evidence base to inform the priorities for future provision. A Sport and Physical Activities Strategy and a Playing Pitch Strategy, developed from this evidence base, were also considered important to delivery of the health improvement vision, particularly in relation to obesity.

Timing of the sports facility strategy and PPS preparation was planned to coincide with the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy to be submitted in late 2009, which has as an objective *‘to safeguard, enhance and provide a wide range of sporting and recreational facilities to contribute to the happiness, fulfilment and well-being of people who live and work in the Borough, including children and young people’*. Other relevant planning documents to which the sports facilities strategy will contribute include a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and an Allocations Development Plan Document.

B Sports and Participation Led (Demand)

The vision for a sports facilities strategy should be about improving the quality of people's lives whether this is through prioritising adult health, children's education, community safety, promoting equality, the economy or the environment. Within this broader context, the vision should also be about *growing* the number of people taking part in sport in the local area, *sustaining* participation by improving quality and reducing the number of young people who stop taking part, and helping talented sports people in the local area to *excel*.

With the needs of people as the rationale, the assessment of facility needs should first be clear about the people for whom the facilities will be provided, their aspirations and the sports and activities in which they are most likely to participate - i.e. the demand.

Too many local authority sports facilities strategies start by looking to address facility (supply) issues before properly considering the local area 'people issues' that determine demand for facilities - e.g. the areas in which people live, their economic circumstances, their age and interests, and trends in both the population itself and in sports participation.

Some do set out the demographic and socio-economic context to the strategy in some detail but without, later, relating this to the facility issues to be addressed.

The local demand needs to be assessed (and documented) as part of needs and evidence base before considering the supply issues, however pressing these issues may be (e.g. what to do about a failing stock of leisure centre buildings with high energy costs or how to capitalise on current opportunities to develop new sports facilities as the result of a BSF programme or a town centre re-development.)

One of the most problematic issues in assessing local demand is achieving objectivity in the face of conflicting imperatives of the expectations of existing sports users versus budgetary pressures. It is too easy to overlook the potential to fulfil demand which is currently not expressed – i.e. people who might take up sport or increase their participation if modest changes in supply were made.

Essential, people-based evidence to underpin an assessment of need for community sports facilities falls into two categories:

- Population data and forecasts
- Sports and recreation participation data and trends

Population data and forecasts i.e. the size, distribution and socio-economic and health profiles of the area population and likely changes forecast over the next five to ten years.

Local population data and ward profiles can usually be found on LA website planning pages while health data can usually be found on the websites of either the LA or the Primary Care Trust.

The main source for census data at LA and ward levels is the [Office of National Statistics \(ONS\) Neighbourhood Statistics](#)

For population trends at LA level to 2012, Sport England has an easy-to-use [look-up tool for ONS data on all local authority areas](#).

It is also worth checking the website of your Sport England Region for **Borough Profiler Data**. For example, Sport England South East provides a link on its [web page](#) to profiles of all local authorities in the region. These Borough Profiles provide a useful summary both of population data and forecasts and sports participation data. Sources include ONS, the Active People Survey, the Annual School Sports Survey and Sporting Market Segments. (The applications of these tools and how to access them are explored in [Section C](#).)

Participation in sports and physical activity and trends i.e. overall levels of participation nationally, regionally, by LA area and by neighbourhood; and the sports and activities that the local population currently take part in or have a propensity to take part in by virtue of their age, family and socio-economic circumstances.

Local sources of participation data to be analysed include:

- Local surveys (e.g. activity levels as part of a PCT health and lifestyles survey)
- Usage records kept by facility operators, by local sports clubs and leagues, by local School Sports Partnerships and by other recreation programme providers. Also useful here in respect of participation at existing sports facilities will be benchmarking data, for example from APSE

Since December 2006, the **Active People Survey** results have been available to augment locally sourced participation data, to facilitate reporting against LAA National Indicator No. 8 (adult regular participation in sport and active recreation), and to allow performance benchmarking against similar local authorities. In time, Active People will also facilitate monitoring area sports participation trends year on year. Results of the first two Active People surveys - carried out by telephone interview with at least 1,000 people in each local authority area in 2005/06 and again in 2007/08 - are now available. A third survey is underway and the results will be available in December 2009. The [‘Headline Results’](#) for both years are available on the Sport England website

Sport England has developed a powerful planning tool from the Active People survey database called **Active People Diagnostic**. Active People Diagnostic allows users to review and analyse sports participation data gathered from the survey by sport / activity as well as by age, gender, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic group.

Participation data are provided at national and regional levels, county and local authority levels as well as at local neighbourhood level ('Middle Layer Super Output Areas') in recognition of the different make-up of areas within each local authority. (It should be noted that, at neighbourhood (MLSOA) level, the data comprise estimates only, due to small sample sizes.)

The data are organised and presented in five 'tiers'. Tiers one and two allow users to find data relating to all the Active People performance indicators (e.g. regular participation, volunteering, club membership, satisfaction with sports provision) and for all sports and activities including in the survey. Tier three allows you to conduct your own interactive analysis. This takes the form of profile analysis, where you can interrogate your data and look at survey results by sub-groups as defined by you, the user. You are able to build two profiles at once or create your own cross-tabulations.

Tier four allows you to compare your sports participation results with others for benchmarking purposes, while tier five compares the level of 'expected' sports participation in your area given the local population profile against actual participation. These tools can be particularly useful, alongside local surveys, in target setting.

Active People Diagnostic is a password-protected website with access for registered users only. Anyone can register, including consultants. To register for the site visit <http://www.webreport.se/apd/login.aspx> to fill in an online registration form. Once you have completed the registration form, you will be automatically sent an email with a password and link to the site. There is a user guide manual for the site, along with a

step-by-step guide. These are accessed by clicking on the tab entitled 'how it works' on the left-hand side of the main screen.

Further assistance can be obtained either from the Active People helpdesk at activepeople@ipsos.com or from the Facilities & Planning Team at your Sport England Regional Office.

Sport England's planning tool relating to sports participation - building on the Active People Survey and combining this with other data - is called **Sporting Market Segments** (sometimes referred to as 'Market Segmentation'.)

This database divides the population as a whole into nineteen sporting segments or types according to attitudes and motivations.

The segments provide valuable knowledge as to the sports or activities, programmes and access policies that, if in place, are most likely to influence people to take part. Each segment can be explored at differing geographic levels. It is possible to find out what people's sporting habits are likely to be in a particular street, community, local authority or region. Developing new strategies is the perfect time to explore the market segments.

A **Local Area Segmentation Profile**, when used to complement information from local surveys, provides sports planners with a thorough understanding of potential demand for sport and active recreation i.e. who the potential customers are and what they may want in terms of sport and active recreation provision.

Once you have your market segmentation area profile, you may decide to develop your strategy around specific segments or on smaller geographic areas (for example areas of low sports participation and high rates of relative deprivation.) Combining this with local survey data and data on your area from Active People provides a strong evidence base for local strategic decision-making.

Sample Sporting Market Segment: *Leanne – a Supportive Single (AO4)*

Sporting Market Segment number four (of the nineteen) is '*Leanne - a Supportive Single*'.

Leanne is the name given to the least active segment amongst 18-25 year olds.

We know Leanne is likely to be single, living in private/council rented accommodation and will have a significant number of children. We now also know what motivates her, what brands she aspires to, how we can overcome things that stop her taking part in sport and how to get her involved in sports she likes - such as the gym and keep-fit.

From this we can work out which sporting interventions are likely to be more successful for Leanne.

By mapping the geographical distribution of Leannes (and of other sporting market segments with similar likes) against the locations of existing facilities offering gym and keep-fit, the evidence and needs base for facility options can be developed.

To download information on the Market Segments and obtain [a profile of your local authority area](#) can be found on the Sport England website.

It is desirable to also consider other sources of data on sports participation and trends relevant to the needs and evidence base from which to develop strategic options for future provision of sports facilities. Examples of other major data sources of potential relevance include:

- Governing Body of Sport participation data and trends at county, regional or national level. A limited number of sports Governing Bodies produce quality participation data at the sub-national level. Exceptions include the FA who through their County Administration System (CAS) produce annual [Local Area Data \(LAD\)](#) reports (by local authority) on clubs and team data. The RFU Community Website contains data on player numbers by club as do a number of other sports governing bodies. Some useful data may be found in the NGB '[Whole Sport Plans](#)' of within Sport England Information Packs for Key Sports. There is a Pack for most sports and comprise Primary Offer Data on trends in participation, bringing together data from the Active People Survey, the Taking Part Survey (see below) and Sporting Market Segments analysis, although this information is predominantly at national / regional levels.
- The [Annual School Sports Survey](#) Reports from 2003/04 - data and trends in participation in PE and sport by school age children. (Most Unitary LAs do Borough/County level analyses.)
- The [Annual Sports Market Forecasts](#) - trends in national spending on ten sports markets

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- The '[Taking Part](#)' Survey Reports 2005/06; 2006/07 & 2007/08 – national level data on participation in active sport and perceptions used to monitor progress against high level DCMS Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets

Strategy Development Stage	Use of Sport England planning tools
B. Sports and Participation Led - Assessment of Need	<p>Active People Diagnostic – use this tool alongside local surveys to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify which sports are most popular in a given area; • Analyse patterns of participation in sport according to age, gender, disability, ethnic group, socio-economic group; • Identify emerging trends in the above (based on first two years of Active People Survey); • Conduct local profiling; • Benchmarking participation in one area against others; • Consider ‘expected’ participation based on the area population profile to help determine area participation targets <p>Sporting Market Segments - use this tool alongside local surveys to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify who the potential customers are in a defined area (i.e. expressed and latent demand) • Analyse what people are most likely to want in terms of sport and active recreation provision within a defined area

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin an excellent sport and participation led assessment of need for community sports facilities, see [Section B of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#).

Plymouth City Council has used a variety of sources of population data (including the latest GP survey data) to determine age and social class across the City. The Council has matched the data from these to work undertaken against the Sport England Market Segmentation Tool 'Sporting Market Segments' to provide a complete picture of the population that it serves. As data has been held at different levels, (Super output areas, neighbourhoods etc), collating this information has been difficult, and they found that a neighbourhood analysis did not always provide the best basis for analysis. By using GIS to map populations of similar types against the distribution and offerings of the existing facilities, they are able to see how well populations are served for opportunities to participate in the type of activity that might best appeal to them.

C Use of Strategic Planning Tools and Data (Facility Supply and Needs Analysis)

Having considered sports and active recreation participation and potential future demand, the next stage is to **identify, map and assess the supply** (i.e. the facilities available for people to access and use). This requires a thorough audit of all the facility types included in the strategy as determined by the scoping.

The three golden rules for the facility audit are that it should consider provision...

- *In all sectors* – local authority, school, club, private/commercial, voluntary
- *Across borough / district boundaries* – provision in neighbouring local authorities used by your residents. (Top Tip - Having sports facilities mapped using GIS makes consideration of catchments and spatial relationships much easier)
- In terms of *quality and accessibility, not just quantity* - i.e. in line with PPG17 principles - informed by usage data, customer surveys, benchmarking, condition surveys, GIS mapping etc.

The Active Places database is available to *assist* in this local facility audit process across a wide range of facility types – Sports Halls, Swimming Pools, Playing Pitches, Indoor Bowls Centres, Indoor Tennis Centres, Athletics Tracks, Health & Fitness Gyms, Golf Courses, Ski Slopes and Ice Rinks. Although data on Active Places is checked once a year, it should always be validated prior to any use in modelling work.

For those facility types not covered by Active Places (e.g. for natural-resource based facilities and facilities for informal active recreation such as MUGAs and skate parks), the assessment will need to rely solely on local audits.

The next step in the process is the **analysis of the demand (participation) evidence against the supply (facilities) evidence, to identify facility needs and strategic options for consultation.** As with gathering the

evidence, the planning tools available to support the facility needs analysis process vary depending on facility type.

For a number of community sports facility types (i.e. sports halls, swimming pools, indoor bowls and playing pitches), Sport England has developed planning tools that analyse both supply and demand data sourced from local surveys and assumptions regarding targets for future participation, future population levels and scenarios for facility provision. These tools are the Facilities Planning Model (in respect of pools, halls and indoor bowls), and the Playing Pitch Model in respect of sports pitches.) Active Places Power, while focused in the main on supply data, also offers tools relating to demand and relative share, however these do not take into account the supply of facilities in neighbouring local authorities or issues of quality, and should be used for providing background information and not in assessing overall demand

Active People Diagnostic, Sporting Market Segments, the Sports Facilities Calculator are all tools that deal with demand only. For this reason, these planning tools cannot be used in isolation of other evidence to determine facility needs.

In the case of **all** the Sport England tools, they should always be used to support and assist in the analysis of locally sourced data - e.g. for demand, supply, targets and aspirations – never solely in place of this local dimension.

The five steps in the process of developing a facility needs and evidence base and strategic options are set out below using the sport of **basketball** as an example:

Step	Basketball Facility Needs Assessment	Data Sources	Planning Tools
1	The <i>vision and rationale</i> for basketball facilities – what trying to achieve, why and how measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCS - LSP themes (e.g. young people) • Corporate plan and LAA targets • PESSCL plan and targets 	N/A
2	<i>Participation</i> in basketball in the local area now, and likely participation in the future (existing and potential demand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active People • School Sport Survey (e.g. PESSCL) • Teams and fixture records • Sports hall, MUGA, park based facility usage records • ONS census, Population Projections • One off sample surveys in the absence of any facility usage records (commissioned through the strategy process) of a range of relevant facility types in the local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active People Diagnostic • Sporting Market Segments • National Benchmarking Service & APSE <p><i>To benchmark basketball participation / demand against ONS 'near neighbours'</i></p>

3	Auditing the <i>supply</i> of basketball facilities in the local area (quantity, quality, accessibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Halls (local authority, schools and colleges including the independent sector, specialist club-based basketball halls), GIS mapping • MUGAs and Outdoor Basketball Initiative (OBI) facilities in parks and on housing estates, GIS mapping • Active Places (Sports Halls) • England Basketball database • Local directories • Quest assessment reports and customer satisfaction surveys • Condition surveys and audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Places Power <p><i>To benchmark sports hall facility provision / supply (for basketball) against ONS 'near neighbours' and regional average</i></p> <p><i>To determine travel time accessibility of existing sports halls used for basketball</i></p>
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4	<p>Use of <i>strategic data and planning tools</i> to identify policy framework for facility provision for basketball and to inform local facility options and priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Basketball strategy • School and Colleges Strategies for Change - sports halls, MUGAs • Regeneration Strategy - sports halls MUGAs, OBI facilities • Parks Strategy • Sports strategies of neighbour authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Places Power <p><i>To assess supply/demand relative share of existing/ proposed sports halls for basketball use</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Planning Model <p><i>National run analysis of current sports hall needs in the area</i></p> <p><i>Local run analysis of future sports hall needs testing local supply/demand scenarios</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Facility Calculator <p><i>Use to quantify total sports hall demand generated by population growth (e.g. a new housing area) NB. SFC takes no account of existing supply -, its spatial distribution, capacity or quality</i></p>
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5	<p>Consultation on basketball facility needs and strategic options and priorities arising from Steps 1-4 above)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Basketball Development Officer • Basketball Clubs • Sports Development Team / Park Rangers / School Sports Partnership • Housing / Residents Groups <p><i>Re: strengths and weaknesses in facility provision and impact on basketball development locally in terms of player recruitment, performance pathways, competition, coaching, volunteers etc.</i></p>	
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To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin excellent use of strategic planning tools and data in assessing need for community sports facilities, see [Section C of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#).

'Live' Survey Databases

For quick reference, the following is brief summary of the main 'live' (i.e. regularly updated) survey databases available from Sport England, what each can be used for to support local survey work in strategic planning for sports facilities, and how to access them.

Name	Sports Facility Types	Use For	How to Access
Active People	Participation by adults (16+) in sport and active recreation –therefore applicable to most facility types	i) Use alongside local surveys to identify expressed demand (actual participation) by area, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio-economic group. ii) Use alongside local surveys to identify trends in participation (<i>results available for 2005/06 and 2007/08 with the third year of the survey conducted between Oct 2008 and Oct 2009</i>)	Active People Free access to all
Active Places	Sports Halls, Swimming Pools, Synthetic Turf Pitches, Indoor Bowls Centres, Indoor Tennis Centres, Athletics Tracks, Playing Pitches, Gyms, Golf Courses, Ski Slopes, Ice Rinks	i) Use alongside local audits to identify existing facility supply by type, location, provider (i.e. club, school, public sector, commercial), age, size, opening hours, activities. All sites and facilities are checked at least once a year. <i>AP supply data is particularly useful in supporting and advising LA partners in voluntary and education sectors on their plans for new provision of changes to existing provision</i>	Active Places Free access to all

Strategic Planning Tools

The Sport England Strategic Facility Planning Tools and their applications in summary are...

Name	Sports Facility Types	Use For	How to Access
Active People Diagnostic	Participation by adults (16+) in sport and active recreation –therefore applicable to most facility types	i) Use alongside local surveys to analyse expressed demand (reported participation) by area, by sport/activity, by adult age group, by gender, by ethnic group, by disability and by socio-economic group. ii) Use to benchmark against other areas and for target setting iii) Use to consider ' expected ' participation based on the area population profile to help determine area participation targets <i>N.B Please note that the participation rates on Active People <u>do not</u> necessarily translate readily into demand for a particular facility type</i>	Active People Diagnostic User registration – free access to all

Sporting Market Segments	As above	<p>i) Use alongside local surveys to identify who the potential customers are in a defined area (expressed and latent demand), and</p> <p>ii) To analyse what people are most likely to want in terms of sport and active recreation provision within a defined area</p> <p>iii) To assess the media most likely to attract latent demand</p> <p>(SMS divides the adult population of a defined area into 19 groupings defined according to sport & recreation behaviour & attitudes, taken from Active People & Taking Part surveys.)</p>	<p>Area profiles - free access to all;</p> <p>Raw data - free access to public bodies only.</p>
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Active Places Power	Sports Halls, Swimming Pools, Synthetic Turf Pitches, Indoor Bowls Centres, Indoor Tennis Centres, Athletics Tracks, Playing Pitches, Health & Fitness Gyms, Golf Courses, Ski Slopes, Ice Rinks	<p>i) Use to benchmark facility supply (provision) for example on a ‘facilities per 1,000 population’ basis against ONS ‘near neighbour’ authorities, or by region.</p> <p>ii) Use to analyse supply (provision) by age of facility (defined as data last refurbished)</p> <p>iii) Use to determine accessibility of facilities by travel time</p> <p>iv) Use to compare facility catchment characteristics and compare sites</p> <p>Data can be downloaded into corporate GIS for further analysis</p> <p><i>(NB. If have the resources, test facility needs APP outcome for pools, halls an indoor bowls by applying the Facilities Planning Model)</i></p>	<p>Active Places Power</p> <p>Access to local authorities and other public organisations via password protected site</p> <p>To obtain a password (see website)</p>
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Sports Facility Calculator	Sports Halls Swimming Pools Indoor Bowls	<p>i) Use to estimate total demand for sports hall (courts), swimming pool (lanes) or indoor bowls (rinks) created by a new community or major housing development.</p> <p>ii) Use to estimate capital cost of facility provision. <i>(NB. SFC is NOT suitable for facility needs analysis as takes no account of facility supply and its spatial distribution.)</i></p>	<p>Sports Facility Calculator</p> <p>Free access to all</p>
'Towards A Level Playing Field'- Playing Pitch Strategy	Playing Pitches (natural turf) for football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league; hockey and other pitch sports)	<p>i) Use 'team generation tool' to estimate pitch demand</p> <p>ii) Use 'pitch audit tool' to quantify and quality-rate existing pitch supply</p> <p>iii) Use to benchmark</p> <p>iv) Use for detailed supply and demand (i.e. pitch needs) analysis</p> <p>v) Use for scenario testing e.g. 'what if' the population increases in certain areas or changes in age profile, or participation rates (i.e. a change in demand), or 'what if' facility A closes, new facility B opens etc. (i.e. change in supply)</p>	<p>Towards a Level Playing Field</p> <p>Free access to all</p>

Facilities Planning Model	Sports Halls Swimming Pools, Indoor Bowls, Synthetic Turf Pitches (available early 2009)	i) Use for detailed supply and demand (i.e. hall / pool needs) analysis . Takes into account size, age, location of facility supply, public access hours, 'drive to', 'ride by public transport to' and 'walk to' catchments and demand based on participation rates by age and gender. ii) Use for testing scenarios e.g. 'what if' the population increases in certain areas or changes in age profile, or participation rates (a change in demand), or 'what if' facility A closes, new facility B opens or facilities in the network change opening hours etc. (i.e. a change in supply)	LA area data from 'National Annual Run' of FPM available free of charge to all by application to Sport England Region. Costs for bespoke local areas runs vary depending on number of scenarios to be tested. Contact your local Sport England Region for details.
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Brent Council engaged with the Sport England FIS as a pilot authority in 2007. The 2006 *Active People Survey* had shown participation and volunteering rates in sport and physical activity to be low. Other drivers included increasing child obesity, an ageing sports facility stock and the development of the Local Development Framework. The Sports Service had in place a Sport & Physical Activity Strategy setting out priority actions aimed at driving up participation and volunteering through clubs and other sports development work. It had also made significant progress in ensuring the existing stock of sports centres was fit for purpose, notably through the replacement of the Willesden Sports Centre with the support of PFI credits. As a next step, the Council recognised a need to identify areas of existing deficiency in sports facility provision and to identify the future sporting infrastructure requirements of five population growth areas within the borough.

Initially, *Active Places Power* was used to give an understanding of Brent's existing provision of a range of sports facility types compared to other local authorities. The *Sports Facility Calculator* was also used to identify the potential demand for sports halls and pools likely to arise from housing development in the five growth areas. Having established through the use of these tools that the borough has sports facility deficiencies and that these are likely to increase as a result of new housing, the *Facilities Planning Model* was then used to quantify the deficiency and identify priority locations. FPM runs considered sports hall and swimming pool demand at both 2007 and 2016 population levels and assuming existing participation levels, and current supply taking into account halls and pools across borough boundaries. Sports pitches were also assessed as part of the FIS work using the *Towards a Level Playing Field* planning tool methodology.

D Effective Consultation

Effective consultation throughout the strategy development process is important to ensuring that the options identified and the final plan of action can be justified to the community the sports facility are there to serve.

Inevitably tough decisions will need to be made, as public sector resources are constantly under pressure from competing demands. There may need to be short-term pain (e.g. rationalisation of out-dated, poorly located and used facilities) to achieve long-term gain (modern, strategically planned and located sustainable facilities.)

Whatever is decided, it is inevitable that not everyone will be happy with all the policies adopted or actions to be taken over the term of the strategy. What is important is that consultation takes place at different stages of the strategy development and review process so that, at worst, there is knowledge and understanding of why unpopular decisions have been taken, and, at best, there is widespread support.

Effective consultation is also critical to use of a sports facilities strategy in support of funding applications and for use at land-use planning enquiries. In the Local Development Framework every local authority is required to produce a '*Statement of Community Involvement*' (SCI).

The Statement of Community Involvement shows how and when planning authorities intend to consult local communities and other stakeholders when preparing documents.

A key outcome of the SCI will be to encourage 'front loading' - meaning that consultation begins at the earliest stages of each document's development so that communities are given the fullest opportunity to participate in plan making and to make a difference. Every Statement of Community Involvement must provide open access to information, actively encourage the contribution of ideas and representations from the community and provide regular and timely feedback on progress.

So, in order for a PPG17 Needs Assessment or a Sports Facilities Strategy to be adopted as an SPD in the Local Development Framework for land use planning purposes, it needs to be able to demonstrate community involvement in reaching the policy outcomes it sets out and a clear link between the two.

Guidance on Statements of Community Involvement can be found on the [Planning Portal](#) website.

One way to 'front load' community involvement in the sports facility strategy development process is to consult with the members of your local Community Sports (and Physical Activity) Network (CSN or CSPAN) at the visioning stage so that the scope of the strategy reflects the views of the local sports community. A member of the CSN could also be invited to sit on the Strategy Development Steering Group throughout the process.

It may be appropriate to involve wider non-sports interests in the scoping - for example a Residents Panel - although this type of consultative forum is often reserved for 'higher level' scoping of strategic vision and

priorities, for example in helping to determine the Sustainable Community Strategy of the LSP or perhaps an area Cultural Strategy.

The extent and methodologies used for consultation in developing a sports facilities strategy will vary according to local circumstances and the resources available. The basic essentials can be summarised as follows:

- **Vision and rationale** - In drawing up the vision and scope of the facilities strategy, consult with members of the local sporting network and representatives of other (non-sports) agendas where sport and active recreation can and do make a strategic contribution.
- **Assessment of need** - In assessing priority facility needs, consult with members of both the local sporting network (including facility users) and with representatives of the wider sub-regional and regional sporting network (eg. neighbour authorities, County Sports Partnership (CSP), and Sport England Region Facilities & Planning leads). Also consult with representatives of other (non-sports) agendas where sport and active recreation make a strategic contribution and, if resources allow, with non-users or low users of existing facilities by means of targeted consultation techniques (e.g. focus groups.)

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- **Clear strategic plan** - In deciding on the options for addressing priority facility needs, consult as widely as possible with the above stakeholders (e.g. by producing, circulating and publicising a consultation draft for comment), and with the wider public (e.g. through use of Resident Panels, Neighbourhood Committees.)
 - **Policy and monitoring** – In driving the implementation of the sports facilities strategy, at regular intervals inform stakeholders and the wider public of progress and seek their views on how well the policy outcomes are being achieved (e.g. through use of borough magazines, websites and blogs.)

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin excellent consultation in the sports facility development process, see [Section D of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#).

Guidance on effective consultation techniques can be found in [Listen Up](#) (1999) a guide to effective community consultation and [Connecting with Users and Citizens – User Focus](#) (2003) providing case studies, both produced by the Audit Commission. A summary of consultation techniques can be found on the [IDEA](#) website

Brent Council's FIS Steering Group recognised from the outset that effective consultation is an essential part of the strategy preparation process. The Steering Group was keen for the consultation to be meaningful, but at the same time focused, and not to lead to 'consultation fatigue' among residents.

Since 2005, the Council has run annual Parks Surveys among 10% of households. Brent also conduct periodic focus groups with non-users of parks and sports centres, a Young People Survey and encourage regular feedback from sports facility users.

Additional consultation techniques used to gain residents' views on the options set out in the draft sports facilities strategy comprised:

A Sports Strategy Challenge Workshop with invited representatives of local groups and bodies centred around the local CSPAN (Community Sport & Physical Activity Network.) to help shape the options and identify priorities against a range of issues and themes

Circulation of the summary of the final draft strategy report to key stakeholders (including NGBs, developers, councillors and Sport England) for comments

E Strategy Development – A Clear Strategic Plan

Armed with a robust needs and evidence base and assessment of facility needs, the next critical stage in the process is to carry out a full and detailed **options appraisal** which balances all the pieces of evidence – including views expressed in community consultation – to make logical recommendations.

A weakness of too many strategies is that the thread linking the options arrived at (the conclusions) and the evidence gathered is too tenuous or cannot be easily followed.

To avoid falling into this common trap it is important to first set out clearly the conclusions of the Steering Group as to the gaps in facility provision (needs) and, against each gap, to identify the evidence that supports this conclusion e.g.

<i>Needs assessment conclusion</i>	<i>Supporting evidence</i>
<p>In five years time there will be a gap in provision for a community sports hall in an urban area of new housing development despite the opening next year of a new hall a mile away as part of the BSF.</p>	<p>Findings of local surveys into current patterns of use of existing sports halls, spatial mapping and quality audits of existing facilities (i.e. do NOT rely on standards - facilities per 1,000 population – to determine needs. Standards are too general and can only be applied to the population and not the level of demand within it, spatial interaction between areas or take account of the capacity and other characteristics of supply)</p> <p>Analysis of population projections and local housing commitments</p> <p>Facilities Planning Model run in the area based on projected population levels, and a scenario that includes the new hall in at the BSF school,</p>

indicated that levels of aggregated unmet demand in the new housing area would still support the addition of a further four court sports hall

Having identified the gaps together with the evidence, the next step is to develop solutions - i.e. options to address the gaps. These options should consider not just local authority sports facility provision but provision across all sectors – provision on primary and secondary school sites, on further and higher education campuses, at health centres, at adult social care and community centres, at voluntary sports clubs, at private and commercial sports venues.

The solutions need to be facility and location specific in order to be sufficiently robust to qualify as sporting infrastructure requirements as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Co-location of sports facilities with education, health and voluntary sector facilities should be considered as part of the options analysis as there are often benefits in this approach such as greater community appeal resulting from ‘critical mass’ and economies of scale in relation to staffing and other running costs (e.g. Sports Villages, [Community Sports Hubs](#))

Deliverability and sustainability should be the main criteria in developing the options and prioritised recommendations for action. In other words, sources of capital funding for the facility option – whether a new provision or a refurbishment of an existing facility - needs to be identified, together with any revenue subsidy required to sustain the facility option year on year.

The facility should also be deliverable in terms of land-use planning, other necessary consents and procurement within the timescales of the strategy.

At this point, and before taking the draft options and recommendations for action out to community consultation, it is worthwhile checking that these emerging options and recommendations remain consistent with the original vision and rationale for developing the strategy at the outset (see [Gateway 4](#) in Toolkit Section 6.)

A final strategy and action plan should be produced taking into account the views expressed in the consultation on the options presented.

The final strategy should set out clear, measurable, achievable and realistic targets for delivery of the prioritised facility options identifying who is responsible for ensuring these are met.

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin a clear strategic plan, see [Section E of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#)

An example of a Sports Facilities Strategy completed in 2008/09 following the Facilities Improvement Service (FIS) approach, is the Brent Sports Facilities Strategy 2009 - 2014. This document and an Executive Summary will be available for download on the Council's website in March or April 2009. www.brent.gov.uk

F Corporate Ownership and Application

To be effective, the Sports Facility Strategy needs to be endorsed at senior level by both the Local Strategic Partnership and the Council.

There should be a clear statement by a senior member of the LSP and/or senior Council members / officers about the importance of the strategy and its delivery to the wider vision and strategic outcomes of both the LSP and the Council.

Ideally, the strategy will have a foreword written by the Council member with portfolio for sport and leisure. As a matter of course, it needs to be adopted formally by a Council committee. This level of endorsement is critical to drive the delivery of the recommendations.

It is also important in ensuring all Council departments and partner agencies recognise the work as the needs and evidence base for sports facilities to be used in strategic commissioning of cross-department and agency outcomes and in preparing capital programmes and funding bids.

In terms of land use planning, the primary objective of the Sports Strategy Steering Group should be for the Planning Department to commit to use the sports facilities strategy as an evidence base within the Local Development Framework.

It is only in this way that Developer Contributions towards the cost of providing built sport facilities such as sports hall and swimming pools will be secured (whether as part of a Community Infrastructure Levy or another form of Planning Obligation.)

In those local authorities that have already adopted the Government's preferred approach to planning obligations – i.e. the Community Infrastructure Levy - the Assessment of Need for Built Sports Facilities (prepared in line with the PPG17 methodology) and the Sports Facility Strategy recommendations developed from this assessment of need and an options appraisal should form part of a single SPD setting out all community infrastructure needs i.e. along with housing, transport, schools, child care etc. or [integrated infrastructure delivery plans](#),

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin an excellent strategy in terms of corporate ownership and application, see [Section F of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#).

Blackburn with Darwen Council were a wave 4 Building Schools for the Future (BSF) authority. Entry into the programme prompted the need to undertake a strategic review of sport and leisure provision across the authority; to understand the current pattern of provision, gaps in the infra-structure and how BSF could potentially meet any gaps.

The strategy work was delivered through the PE and Sport Stakeholder Group. At the outset of the BSF process in Blackburn with Darwen the authority were committed to ensuring the PE & Sport work strand was developed on a strategic basis across the authority. Getting the right people round the table at the outset and engaged and owning the work was critical to achieving this. The PE & Sport Stakeholder Group had representatives from education, leisure, school sport, estates, individual schools, Sport England and Lancashire Sport (the CSP).

The County Sports Partnership (Lancashire Sport) also chaired the meetings and this external influence raised the profile and importance of the work and helped to emphasise the need for the authority and individual schools to look at the work strategically in terms of the opportunities for sport and leisure.

Central to the work of the group was the development of a strategic mapping and needs analysis report for the borough, which set out the quantity, quality and accessibility of facility provision across the whole estate. The work identified gaps in provision and where partnership working opportunities through BSF could meet these gaps on school sites. The work was robust and helped to provide a focus for the work of the group. The work was led by the leisure department but all partners, including Schools were also fully

involved in the development of the work and as a result *signed up* to the outcomes. Throughout the work of the stakeholder group there was effective consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.

This corporate commitment and external influence helped to ensure the resulting strategy was used across the authority not only to inform BSF but to support the authorities wider leisure vision and subsequent funding bids.

G Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The temptation once a strategy document is completed and adopted is to think the job is done and to disband the Steering Group.

Now the strategy is in place identifying future facility needs and options and setting out a series of recommendations for action, the final step is to carry out the recommendations.

This stage in the process is illustrated in the bottom layer of the triangle in the diagram below – i.e. the detailed feasibility studies to establish which of the strategic projects and options are deliverable and sustainable.

Guidance on project feasibility studies can be found at the following links:

[Modernising Community Sports Facilities](#)

[Schools and Building Schools for the Future](#)



If the strategy is to be delivered effectively and be a living document, a Steering Group needs to continue to meet at regular intervals to drive its implementation, to monitor progress against the targets and to ask the following question:

Is the strategy still doing what we wanted it to do or have there been changes that warrant a review of either the needs and evidence base or the recommendations?

A good practice approach to post project monitoring will provide for annual service plans to be developed from the Strategy identifying projects and feasibility studies to be carried out in that year.

The Steering Group then needs to monitoring progress against the annual service plan and review that the strategy recommendations and the needs and evidence base are maintained as ‘future proof’.

In terms of monitoring, an annual review should be timed to enable the contribution of the strategy to ‘high level’ outcome targets to be assessed and reported. (e.g. NI No.8 and other LAA targets assessed via Active People and the Annual School Sports Survey.)

An annual review process will also allow the Steering Group to consider any changing circumstances of relevance to the original recommendations and any new data that might have a significant impact on the needs and evidence base.

Significant changes could include a large population increase (e.g. as a result of designation as a Growth Point), or a major government policy change (e.g. introduction of free swimming for all resulting in a significant increase in demand and participation.) Other changes could be the closure or one or more facilities or the provision of one or more new facilities in the area that were not anticipated when the strategy was produced.

Strategy Development Stage	Use of Sport England planning tools
G. Post Project Monitoring	<p>Active People Diagnostic - adult participation, volunteering</p> <p>Active Places Power – facilities per 1,000 population, personal share of facilities, supply and demand, travel time to facilities</p> <p>Use these tools alongside local surveys and indicators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor impact of Sports Facility Strategy and Sports and Physical Activity Delivery Plan

To access a checklist of the key criteria that underpin an excellent approach to post project monitoring and review, see [Section G of the Fit for Purpose Assessment Framework](#).



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