



FIT FOR PURPOSE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Producing a Sports Facility Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Sport in England finds itself in times of change, faced with both significant challenges and opportunities.

At national level Sport England has just published its new strategy under the banner, *grow, sustain, excel*, which will focus back on the strategic development of sport, working closely with national governing bodies and local authorities. Within the strategy a key strand of work, is a renewed focus on facility development and strategic planning.

This has been prompted by several national reports, most notably the 2006 Audit Commission Report, which challenged the sport sector to take a more strategic approach to the planning and development of sports facilities and criticism about the lack of a strong *needs and evidence base* for sports facility provision from various Government Departments.

Recent publicity surrounding the *run down* and closure of local sports facilities, highlighted in media campaigns around the condition of our local swimming facilities and the state of grass roots football provision, has fuelled the need to act.

The need for a renewed focus on facilities comes at a time when the stock of sports facilities across England is reaching a critical condition. A study carried out by Sport England in 2002 highlighted that the cost of replacing the existing stock would be £4.5billion with £550m needed in the next five years simply to ensure that existing facilities remain open. This was without any upgrading to take account of modern trends in sports participation, future levels of demand or public expectations for quality environments. More recent estimates in 2007 indicate that the backlog of investment is actually more in the region of £10bn.

Indeed of the 1,642 local authority owned or managed facilities in England, only 33% are under 20 years old. Furthermore, the average age of facilities across England is 25 years and yet their typical planned economic life is 25 years. Ageing stock leads to poor quality, reductions in attendance and participation and higher maintenance costs which in turn puts pressure on budgets and the ability to refresh facilities.

With diminishing lottery investment into sport and challenging targets of increasing participation by 1% per annum and widening access to target groups, the challenge for the sport is a significant one.

There is however opportunities to break this cycle the focus on sport through the catalyst of the 2012 Games and the national focus on the health and obesity epidemic provide sport with a platform for action. Sport is being urged to do things differently in the future in terms of provision of sporting opportunities. Local authorities must follow suit in terms of how they engage with new partners and opportunities, to ensure investment into sport is maximised to the full.

The new watch words already in common use are commissioning, innovation, partnership working, co-location, Social Enterprise, Building Schools for the Future (BSF), Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT), Public Private Partnership (PPP), Private Finance Initiative (PFI), Planning Gain Supplement (PGS). These and other transforming programmes, are the new opportunities for sport and leisure, but to maximise their impact sport needs to join-up and be clear about its needs. Developing a strategic approach to sport and leisure facility planning is critical to this.

The ability to influence investment through either BSF, LSC, LIFT or the planning system will be heavily dependent on local authorities having a clear strategic vision in terms of facility provision and a clear strategic view on priorities across the local authority area and as a consequence how opportunities presented by education or health partnerships can meet these identified priorities. Without this clarity of vision and priorities, sport and leisure, be it through the auspices of the local authority sport and leisure department, the County Sports Partnerships or Sport England offices will struggle to be effective in any discussions.

To support this strategic drive Sport England has launched the Facilities Improvement Service (FIS), which provides strategic planning support to local authorities in respect of its sport facility stock. This is a 3-year programme, which is being delivered regionally by Genesis Strategic Management Consultants. The role of Genesis is to work with authorities to increase skills and capacity and enable authorities to develop a robust needs and evidence base for sports facility provision in their area.

Over the 3-year programme Genesis consultants will provide *hands on* support to local authorities across England to ensure they have a strong *needs and evidence* base in place to underpin future facility provision. Over the 3-years Genesis will also deliver generic training and good practice guidance across the sector to raise the standards of facility planning for the benefit of sport. This assessment framework provides one of the key tools for the FIS service and is designed to help guide authorities through the strategic planning process.

Using the Assessment Framework

The framework will be used as a key tool for the FIS, to provide a consistent and robust approach to strategic facility planning work. The assessment framework will therefore be used by Sport England as part of the FIS to provide feedback and direct the work of authorities in the programme.

However it will also be used to provide feedback to *all authorities* involved in strategy development as the work progresses through phases of consultation prior to completion. You are encouraged to make wide use of the framework by asking your colleagues, peers and other partners to apply it and provide you with valuable feedback during the development of your strategy. The framework should ideally be used at the start of the process to help identify the work required however it can also be used as a review mechanism when the strategy reaches draft stage.

Using a matrix of criteria for assessment can be particularly useful. The matrix is designed to:

- Make assessment decisions quicker and easier, saving time and effort for all involved
- Increase transparency for all involved
- Facilitate moderation and discussion to further inform your work; and
- Enable you to generate thoughtful and constructive feedback from those who you would most value it from

The achievement of the middle assessment column *fair*, is seen as the minimum level of achievement for every decision to ensure the strategy can be deemed *fit for purpose*. Sport England will work to ensure FIS authorities deliver excellence and can this be held up as examples of good practice for the benefit of the sector as a whole.

Tips for people issuing the assessment matrix and receiving the completed feedback

1. Issues the assessment tool to a range of assessors who can provide different perspectives
2. Do not make judgements based upon one response
3. Keep your assessors informed of what you will do/have done as a result of their feedback

Tips for people completing the assessment framework

1. Use a highlighter pen to mark your choice and also write comments
2. Don't be afraid to mark *excellent* or *requiring attention*. Use the full range of criteria rather than opting for the (non-committal) *fair* option all the time

3. When you mark in the *requiring attention* column in particular, use the comments column to suggest what you think is needed to make improvements
4. If you do not understand a criterion or think it is irrelevant to you, leave it blank
5. Try to complete the grid by working in a pair with a colleague – explaining your thinking to others helps clarify your own understanding, thereby improving the quality and objectivity of your feedback

The framework should be read alongside the FIT FOR PURPOSE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK Producing a Sport and Active Recreation Strategy, which was published by Sport England in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University.

The framework is not intended to replace PPG17, the 5 step approach advocated in the Companion Guide of audit, consultation, development and application of standards and policy are central to the framework. Indeed authorities might decide as part of their PPG17 approach that they include indoor sport. The framework is designed to provide additional detail to the PPG17 framework for authorities wishing to undertake a more detailed facility strategy and attempts to guide more of the, *what and how*. Implicit throughout the framework and guidance are equity issues.

Section A. Vision and Rationale

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
A1. The purpose of the strategy is clearly explained	The purpose and benefits of the strategy and the changes it is aiming to bring about are persuasively set out	There is a clear statement concerning the purpose of the strategy	The purpose of the strategy is vague and/or confusing and/or has not been set out in a convincing or meaningful way	
A2. The scope (range of	The scope is clearly set out	The rationale for including	The scope of the strategy is	

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
provision covered) of the strategy is clearly set out with an explanation of the rationale	and the relationship of the strategy to other work e.g. PPG17 studies or playing pitch strategies is clearly explained and will result in a comprehensive local picture	particular facility types is explained however there still appears to be some gaps	not explained and only appears to deal with certain facility types without any clear rationale	
A3. The strategy deals with facilities across all sectors, not just Council provision	The strategy looks at provision across all sectors and makes recommendations across the whole estate (Council, private, education and voluntary sector), partnerships across the sectors are also emphasised and the potential for Community Sports Hubs and Sports Villages set out	The strategy considers provision in the private, voluntary and education sectors but only makes recommendations for Council facilities in isolation	The strategy only concerns itself with Council owned provision	
A4. There is a clear vision for sports facility provision, which is relevant to local priorities	There is a focussed and compelling vision of how things will look in a few years if the strategy is successful, which is clearly set in the context of local needs and priorities	A vision statement of the intended future provision is provided	The vision is vague and not forward looking and does not relate to the local area, current position or future challenges	
A5. There is a clear link to demonstrate how the strategy will deliver against the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA) Priorities	The strategy clearly demonstrates how future facility provision will contribute to the delivery of the priorities set out in the SCS and LAA	The strategy sets out the SCS and LAA priorities but it is not clear how the actions will deliver on these priorities	The strategy makes no reference to the Sustainable Community Strategy or Local Area Agreement priorities	
A6. There is a clear statement concerning; <i>where we are now, where we want to be and how</i>	The strategy clearly sets out; <i>where we are, where we want to be and how we will get there</i> and demonstrates the impacts of the journey	The strategy sets out the current and future position but is weak in terms of impacts	There is no clarity about the direction of travel or impact of the strategy	

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
<i>we will get there – and what impact the strategy will have</i>				

Section B. Sport and Participation Led

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
B1. The strategy is led by participation needs as opposed to facility needs	The starting point for the strategy is participation and using tools such as Active People and Market Segmentation the strategy clearly sets out how future facility provision will increase and broaden the participation base	The strategy references such data as Active People and Market Segmentation but does not demonstrate how the priorities will increase or broaden participation amongst certain groups	The strategy is facility led and does not consider the participation profile in the area	
B2. The strategy is people led and reflects	The strategy is led by the needs of the population and it is evident how the future	The strategy includes a demographic breakdown but does not relate the needs of	The strategy makes no mention of local demographics, deprivation,	

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the demographic breakdown of the area now and in the future e.g. low car ownership, poor public transport	facility provision will contribute to meeting the key demographic and health challenges	the population to facility priorities	health indices etc	
B3. The strategy has clear links to any wider Regional or Sub-regional (CSP) facility strategy	The principles and specific priority developments within the strategy are clearly in line with the sub-regional and regional sports facility context	The strategy references the wider sub-regional and regional picture but the priorities are not in line	No mention is made of the wider sub-regional / regional sport planning context	
B4. The strategy has clear links to sport specific needs through the whole sport plan process	The strategy ties together local needs with the governing body priorities set out in <i>whole sport plans</i> and clearly articulates how particular sport specific needs can be delivered in partnership in the local area	Sport specific issues are raised but these appear to be based on local <i>wishes</i> as opposed to <i>whole sport plan</i> priorities	The strategy makes no reference to wider sub-regional or regional sports governing body needs	
B5. The strategy looks at future sporting trends and new activities and how access can be widened through alternative facility provision	The strategy fundamentally challenges existing facility provision and how this impacts on participation and recommends appropriate changes to the facility offer to deliver a new and broader participation base	The strategy considers new activities and different sports but not how these might be delivered through the facility infrastructure	The strategy merely looks at existing facility stock catering for current sports and activities	

Section C. Use of Strategic Planning Tools and Data

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
<p>C1. The strategy includes a robust audit which looks at all facilities across the Estate</p>	<p>The strategy is based on a full audit across all sectors in line with the agreed scope and utilises such tools as Active Places</p>	<p>An audit of Council facilities has been undertaken but there is no detailed analysis of provision across other sectors</p>	<p>The audit data on which the strategy is based is not set out</p>	
<p>C2. The audit considers, quantity, quality and accessibility issues</p>	<p>In line with the principles of PPG17 the strategy includes a full audit which takes account of quantity, quality and accessibility. Condition Surveys, financial review and benchmarked analysis of usage has been carried out to</p>	<p>Broad statements about general quality and access have been made but there is no detailed analysis of throughput or facility condition</p>	<p>There is no consideration of qualitative or accessibility issues</p>	

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
	help inform this			
C3. The audit looks across boundary at neighbouring local authority provision	Neighbouring provision is considered in detail and is integrated fully into the future strategic planning	Council owned facilities across the border are noted but there is little analysis of the impacts, future role and strategic options	No mention is made of neighbouring facilities	
C4. The strategy uses GIS to map provision and considers catchment areas and spatial relationships	Facilities are mapped with appropriate catchments; based on clearly articulated local data e.g. where current users come from, PPG17 standards or national rationale e.g. Audit Commission and GIS is used to test future provision scenarios	Facilities are mapped and an attempt is made to analyse the issues which arise, no explanation is given to the appropriateness of catchment areas	No mapping work has been undertaken	
C5. The strategy uses appropriate strategic planning tools e.g. Facilities Planning Model (FPM), Active Places	Sport England Strategic Planning tools; FPM and Active Places have been fully utilised to provide a detailed picture of quantitative surpluses and deficiencies and identify gaps in provision and priority areas	Tools have been used to identify surpluses and deficiencies but these have not been used in the right way and not in line with audit data	No tools have been used to provide and quantitative assessment of supply and demand and identify shortfalls	

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C6. All appropriate national and local data has been used as a basis for facility needs	Data from PESSCL and Year 9 survey have been used to understand young people's need; all existing Council and resident surveys have been utilised to provide evidence of facility needs	There has been some attempt to use existing data sets but this has not been systematic	No wider data or evidence has been used in formulating the strategy	
C7. The strategy is <i>future proofed</i> and future population and participation trends are modelled in the analysis	Different scenarios have been considered taking full account of population and participation trends; <i>growth area</i> hotspots have been considered and the implications factored in	Future population trends have been set out but these have not been taken account of in supply and demand analysis	Future population and participation have not been considered	

Section D. Effective Consultation

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
D1. There has been wider ranging consultation undertaken using a range of different techniques	The strategy has used a range of consultation techniques including primary and secondary research. The sample sizes used and the conclusions reached are robust	The strategy is based largely on face to face consultation; some survey work has been undertaken however the validity of this data is questionable	Very little consultation appears to have taken place in the formulation of the strategy	
D2. The consultation has involved all elements of the sporting network	All members of the sporting network including Sport England, the CSP, CSN, governing bodies and clubs have all been appropriately consulted	There is evidence of wider engagement with the sports network but there are gaps in responses and it is not a complete picture	The consultation has limited itself to local authority sports representatives	
D3. In line with the SCS and LAA priorities the consultation has involved appropriate non sporting organisation	Key agencies and potential partners identified in the SCS and LAA have been consulted and the potential for joint working fully explored	There has been some wider consultation but the picture is incomplete and some critical agencies do not appear to have been engaged in the process	There has been little or no consultation with any non sporting agencies	
D4. Public consultation has been undertaken as	Full and open public consultation has been undertaken including	Limited attempts have been made to consult with the public and obtain general	There has been no public consultation undertaken	

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part of the process	household / resident surveys and public meetings / drop in sessions	views		
D5. Consultation has taken place at all stages of the strategy development process	Consultation has been undertaken at key stages in the process; all consultees have received feedback and opportunity to comment on draft strategies	Limited consultation, which only appears to have taken place at a moment in time; no feedback loops or opportunity to comment on drafts have been put in place	No organised or systematic approach to consultation	
D6. Consultation has been used to drive policy options	In line with PPG17 recommendations there is a clear link between the consultation findings and the strategy outcomes and this can be clearly evidenced and seen	The links between consultation and policy are not always drawn and are difficult to see	There are no links between consultation and policy	

Section E. Clear Strategic Plan

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
E1. A full and detailed options appraisal has been undertaken, which balances all the pieces of evidence to make logical recommendations	There is a clear link between the options and evidence gathered as part of the strategy work and the conclusions reached clearly relate to the fieldwork findings	The evidence has been used inconsistently to develop the options	The options appear pre-determined and bear little or no resemblance to the evidence base	
E2. The strategy clearly sets out gaps in provision based on the evidence and how these can be delivered by all partner agencies	Gaps in provision are clearly identified and solutions to meeting needs are identified across all partner agencies as appropriate e.g. school based provision via BSF	Gaps are identified but the solutions are focussed in the main around Council provision with little reference to partnership potential	The strategy only concerns itself with the development of Council provision and does not consider wider needs and deficiencies	
E3. The strategy recommendations are prioritised and phased	The strategy sets out priorities based on a clear set of criteria and is phased over a sensible timescale taking account of key factors such as building life, procurement timescales, service continuity	The strategy is prioritised and phased but there is no logic and rationale for the recommendations	There is no prioritisation or phasing of proposals	

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
E4. Deliverability and sustainability are key elements; and there is a clear demonstration of how the strategy will be funded	A full funding appraisal has been undertaken including all possible sources of funding and allocations have been made to demonstrate how specific projects will be delivered	The strategy includes information on general funding sources but does not relate this to particular priorities	No consideration of funding or deliverability	
E5. The targets are SMART	The targets clearly set out who is responsible for delivery and are measurable, achievable and realistic in their aspiration	The targets appear more of a wish list and it is unclear who is responsible and how the priority projects identified will be delivered	There are no targets	

Section F. Corporate Ownership and Application

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
F1. The strategy is endorsed at senior level by the Local Strategic Partnership and Council	There is a clear statement of intent at the heart of the strategy about the importance of the work by the LSP and senior Council members / officers	There is a foreword written by the portfolio holder for leisure	There is no reference to the LSP or senior Council endorsement	
F2. The strategy is recognised by all Council Departments and partner agencies as the key needs and evidence base for sports facilities	All Council departments and key partner agencies have signed up publicly to the strategy recommendations and have committed to support the delivery	Reference is made to wider support but no real evidence is set out	There is no evidence of wider support for the strategy work outside the actual authors	
F3. The policies and priorities are used consistently to inform all relevant policy areas e.g. BSF, capital programmes, funding bids	The strategy is being used as a key piece of corporate evidence to inform all relevant policy areas	Other departments are aware of the work but the strategy is viewed largely of interest to the sport and leisure team	There is no corporate ownership of the strategy and different departments are continuing to generate projects and work outside the identified priorities	
F4. The evidence is used to inform land use planning policies e.g. LDF	Planning are committed to using the strategy as a key evidence base within the LDF and will produce a SPD for indoor sport based on the recommendations	References of links to planning policy are made but there is no detail in terms of what this means as far as implementation is concerned	No links are made to planning policy implications	

Section G. Policy and Monitoring

Criteria	Excellent	Fair	Requiring Attention	Comments
G1. A Steering Group has been established for the strategy and its implementation	A steering group was established for the project, which included representatives from all relevant departments and external agencies, this group have committed to continue to drive the implementation of the work	Small steering group established with some crucial gaps in membership e.g. planning; no intention to continue to meet once strategy is developed	No steering group established	
G2. Clear roles and responsibilities are identified on the strategy team	The roles of the strategy team are set out and it is clear who is responsible for leading the work and driving forward the implementation	The strategy team members are listed but it is not clear who is responsible for driving the work forward	No reference is made to the strategy team members	
G3. Monitoring systems are in place with clear timescales and targets	Clear monitoring systems are in place, with targets, timescales and responsibilities clearly set out	There are some targets with vague timescales attached	No mention is made of monitoring arrangements	
G4. Clear dates are set out to show the life of the strategy and when and how updates will be delivered	The strategy has a clear timescale attached to it and a commitment to formal update and review at certain milestone dates	The strategy has a date but no formal review commitment	There are no dates attached to the strategy	

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