

Case Study - Vision for the Development of a Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy for Southampton



Background and Overall Vision

The provision of suitable, accessible and readily available sports facilities underpins participation in sport and physical activity and helps to deliver the social and economic beneficial by-products that can be attributed to an active community.

Southampton City Council and its Active Southampton partners have made a commitment to undertake initiatives which increase overall participation in sport and physical activity by 1% per annum, and believe that the development of new and improved facilities forms a key action in addressing this objective.

This strategy work will contribute to Southampton Partnership's overall 2026 Vision for Southampton as a "centre of learning, with a varied and exciting cultural landscape and known for its innovative and creative businesses, leisure opportunities and fine parks and open spaces."

Current Status (Inputs)

Through the availability of nationally calculated planning tools such as Active Places Power, Southampton's Playing Pitch Strategy and the Sports Facilities Calculator, and local strategies and information tools such as the newly established 'leisure' layer on the Council's Geographical Information System, we are able to provide a case by case assessment about:

- how well the City provides for sport and recreation;
- the need for future provision;
- the opportunities for potential investment;
- influencing planning decisions which relate to sport and physical activity.

There is now a need to translate the vast research and information tools available into a strategy by which we can measure success and plan for the future provision of sports facilities in the City.

What are we going to achieve? (Outputs)

The project for which this Vision has been adopted seeks to achieve the following outputs:

- Establishment of a Steering Group and Project, led by Southampton City Council's Sport and Recreation Service, to guide an understanding of current facility provision and future facility needs for the City.
- A bringing together of the knowledge and data held by different services of Southampton City Council, to provide a comprehensive understanding of facility provision in the City.
- Use of this information to identify gaps in provision.
- Use of this information to identify future needs for increased or improved sports provision.

- Priorities for future development in facilities for sport and recreation.
- A strategy which can be adopted by the City Council and its Active Southampton partners to guide future investment and planning for sport and recreation facilities.
- An understanding of how a Sports Facilities Strategy fits within an overall strategic and policy framework for Southampton.

Why are we going to do this? (Outcomes)

Achieving the outputs listed above will potentially allow Southampton City Council and its partners to achieve the following outcomes:

- To guide potential investment available through new projects such as partnerships with new facility operators in the City.
- To inform Active Southampton partners of the key priorities for facility development in the City, supported by an evidence-based approach to identify need and demand for new or improved sports facilities.
- To demonstrate the need for new facilities when considering requests for investment from external funders.
- To promote and influence the provision of new sports facilities designed to meet community need through school capital developments such as the building of new Academies in Southampton and the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- To influence and benefit from new developments in Southampton by informing planning policy and allowing an update of supplementary planning guidance relating to the development of Community Facilities.

Ownership

This Vision has been approved by the Sport and Recreation Facilities Steering Group and Project progress will be monitored through key Gateways to ensure the established Vision is being met by the Project.