

# North Somerset Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy 2020-36



# The Vision

To ensure that North Somerset has high quality, sustainable sport and leisure facilities offering a range of sports and physical activities in order to meet current and future levels of demand and provide wide opportunity for active participation and healthier lifestyles.



# Executive Member foreword

Welcome to North Somerset's Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy which has been developed from the firm belief that access to quality sport and leisure facilities, enabling physical activity opportunities is vital to ensuring that North Somerset residents enjoy the benefits of participation, which improve health and wellbeing (both physical and mental) as well as fostering a sense of community.

North Somerset recognises the significant benefits that the provision of sport and recreational activities and facilities can bring to our communities. Sport and leisure undoubtedly impact on the physical and social health of communities; they contribute to both the economic growth of areas and community cohesion. They can also engage those who are disadvantaged and raise achievement in our schools and colleges.

We are extremely fortunate that North Somerset accommodates a wide variety of access to sport and leisure facilities, clubs and opportunities. There are some challenges with an aging estate of council owned facilities and ensuring access to sports in geographically isolated areas, but our challenges are more about condition and investment than they are about access. However, the rising population and expansion of housing means that additional facilities will be required during the life of this strategy.



This strategy has been developed within the context of the council and its partners being committed to improving the health, wellbeing and aspirations of our residents within an environment of change and financial constraint. It is now more important than ever that we make the most of the resources we have together to provide services in new ways.

The strategy provides an essential background for officers, members and stakeholders, under which all actions can be placed and decisions can be made. It is especially important to ensure that future communities have the right infrastructure to lead active, healthy and fulfilling lives, and this document along with its supporting strategies form part of the council's development contributions supplementary planning documents.

## Councillor Solomon

"We want everyone in England regardless of age, background or level of ability to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented but most will not. We need a sport sector that welcomes everyone – meets their needs, treats them as individuals and values them as customers."

*Sport England, Towards an Active Nation, 2016*

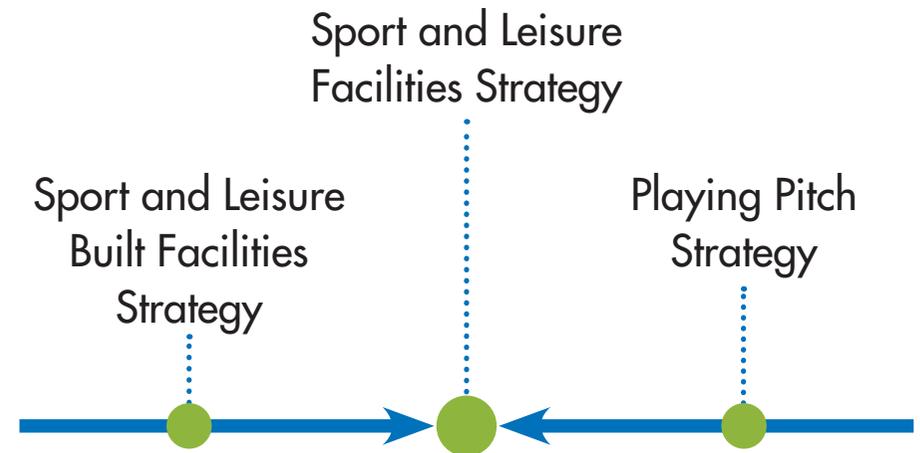


# Introduction

The aim of this strategy is to improve the quality of life for North Somerset residents by enabling access to sport and leisure facilities, to increase participation opportunities and physical activity. It is key that opportunities to take part in sport and leisure are available at all levels for all our communities to contribute significantly to the health and wellbeing of all residents.

The strategy supports the physical activity strategy being developed through the Health and Wellbeing Board and will be reviewed alongside this wider physical activity work.

It also sits alongside the council's corporate strategy and asset strategy to ensure that important corporate considerations including carbon zero, reducing inequality, maximising the value of North Somerset assets and other important priorities are integral principles in the way that leisure facilities are delivered, now and in the future.



The strategy will be utilised as a tool to build healthy, safe and strong communities as well as supporting economic growth. It focuses on the council's position within the context of the wider community sports and leisure provision, and takes into account facilities owned by the council, its partners, community organisations, private facilities and schools when looking at levels of provision required.

This strategy is supported by two detailed facility-based strategies; the Sport and Leisure Built Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy. It sets out the council's aspirations to ensure high-quality built sport and leisure facilities, playing pitches and community buildings are available to local residents to access and identifies the future facility needs to support an increase in population.



## Purpose

North Somerset's Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy (including the Sport and Leisure Built Facilities Strategy and the Playing Pitch Strategy) identifies the facility needs of North Somerset's population up to 2036.

The strategy outlines what is required, and which areas of work need to be prioritised in order to meet this future need.

The strategy recognises that there are significant challenges with delivering the level of infrastructure required, and while the council has a role in championing and enabling the provision

required, it is not able to commit to delivering it. Innovative partnerships, cross-sector sustainable delivery and funding models, and a significant amount of capital funding will be required in order to achieve the level of provision that this strategy identifies as the need.





## Overview of the Sport and Leisure Built Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy

The strategies consider facility provision for both the existing and projected future population for North Somerset to 2036. They provide a comprehensive analysis of existing facilities and also future requirements, with existing and future shortfalls in capacity of clearly identified.

The analysis includes all existing known facilities, including private, council-owned and run, and run by third parties and include the following facilities:

- Swimming pools
- Sports halls
- Indoor tennis
- Indoor bowls
- Fitness gyms
- Community halls
- Gymnastics facilities
- Indoor athletics
- Dance studios
- Grass football pitches
- Rugby pitches
- Cricket pitches
- Hockey pitches
- Artificial turf pitches
- Outdoor bowls
- Athletics
- Tennis courts
- Multi-use games areas
- Golf

They form the basis for the future planning for facilities, whether new provision, replacement or refurbishment. They are key documents, which contain robust and objective evidence to support requests for on-site provision and contributions from developers and justification of need, within the council, following the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

These detailed strategies are important to secure the continued provision of valuable community assets as they can be used to support applications for grant funding for sport and leisure projects; not just by the council, but by others, such as sports clubs and schools.

The documents have been produced to the strict methodology produced by Sport England; which can be found here: <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/>

Production of these strategy documents included extensive consultation with town and parish councils, schools and sports clubs. National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport were consulted regarding the current club and facility provision for their sport and their aspirations were for the development of their sport within North Somerset in the future.

They contain high level, strategic priorities, which demonstrate the broad areas that the provision of sport and leisure facilities cover and the importance of ensuring that residents have access to accessible, affordable, quality facilities.

The strategies highlight a number of facilities which need either new provision, replacement or refurbishment, over the lifetime of the strategy. These are included in the strategic priorities highlighted in this Sport and Leisure Facilities Strategy.



# Strategic Core Objectives 2020-2036

The outcomes and recommendations highlighted within the strategies support three high level strategic priorities:

## 1. Sport and leisure facility priorities are aligned to and support the priorities for health and wellbeing

- To contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of North Somerset residents and reducing health inequalities through increasing physical activity and tackling childhood obesity



## 2. Assets that meet the current and future leisure and sporting needs of North Somerset's residents

- Promote and enable a portfolio of fit for purpose, modern, accessible and operationally effective sport and leisure facilities
- Promote and enable facilities which provide opportunities to participate, maintain and grow physical activity levels
- Promote and enable additional facility provision where need is evidenced e.g. as a result of population growth, and invest in refurbished/replacement facilities where needed
- Design in flexibility; future facility provision may need to be more multi-purpose in nature, reflecting changing participation trends and opportunities and unforeseen activities and management practices



### 3. Effective strategic and local partnerships delivering a sustainable community sport and leisure offer

- To work alongside key strategic partners to align priorities, resources and targets, and connecting partners and local deliverers with policy makers and investors in a co-ordinated way
- To review the council's current contracts and agreements with community sport and leisure providers to secure ways of working that provide a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable community sport and leisure offer
- Work with partners to enable opportunities for participation to be provided in a wider range of places and spaces, and particularly at a very local level, using e.g. community centres/halls



# Strategic priorities

## 1. Sport and leisure facility priorities are aligned to and support the priorities for health and wellbeing

### What do we know?

60.9% of North Somerset residents achieve the Chief Medical Officers target of 150 minutes of physical activity per week (North Somerset Public Health Report 2015), but it is clear that further work needs to be done to increase levels of regular participation amongst the 24.5% who are inactive.

More active lifestyles will continue to reduce health inequalities and benefit both individual and community health; although the health of North Somerset's communities is generally better than that of the region and England as a whole, there are some very specific factors to which the provision of quality, affordable and accessible sports facilities can contribute to:

- Maintenance of active lifestyles
- Maintenance of low levels of diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases; and
- Further reductions in levels of obesity (both adult and child obesity rates are currently lower than the national average, but the adult obesity rate in North Somerset is higher than the regional average).



### How do we meet future need?

The North Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed that a pattern of three topic investigations per year would be adopted to develop the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Recent workshops held with Public Health England to support a place-based approach to reducing health inequalities has developed some suggested topics for investigation based around the three priorities identified – healthy places, mental health and wellbeing and physical activity.

Sport and Leisure facility priorities, including action and delivery plans, will be developed and delivered in a way that supports priorities for health and wellbeing and reduces health inequalities.



## 2. Assets that meet the current and future leisure and sporting needs of North Somerset's residents

### What do we know?

#### Local Context

- The council currently own and operate six leisure centres via contracts
- Host over 1.4 million visits per year
- 9000 residents are members (4.5% of population)
- 3500 children are taught to swim every week
- Provide over 450 jobs
- Council provides 26.3% of the current fitness suite offer in North Somerset
- Community access secured on a number of school sites via community use agreements
- 118 grass sports pitches
- 18 multi-use games areas
- The area is home to a significant number of sports clubs from grass roots to elite athletes
- The area also has a good network of private health facilities, catering mainly for gym and exercise classes via monthly membership to suit a variety of budgets.

The value of council sport and leisure facilities to residents was seen in the results of the council's 'Your Neighbourhood' survey carried out in February to May 2020:

- 96% of residents, state that the council should provide leisure and sports facilities; with their reasons being to improve/maintain their health and affordable
- With 71% of respondents having used a leisure or sports facility in the last year
- 66% of respondents used a council leisure centre in last 12 months
- From the above users, 77% participated in swimming, 25% in fitness gym and 20% classes
- Affordability (49%), cleanliness (48%) and good quality facilities (39%) are most important aspects of a sport and leisure centre
- 42% of respondents want better pool facilities, more, bigger and fun
- 16% would use council facilities more if the quality was improved
- Demand for more outdoor sports facilities
- Improvements needed to existing grass pitches



## How do we meet future need?

- Promote and enable a portfolio of fit for purpose, modern, accessible and operationally effective sport and leisure facilities
- Promote and enable facilities which provide opportunities to participate, maintain and grow physical activity levels
- Promote and enable additional facility provision where need is evidenced e.g. as a result of population growth, and invest in refurbished/replacement facilities where needed
- Design in flexibility; future facility provision may need to be more multi-purpose in nature, reflecting changing participation trends and opportunities and unforeseen activities and management practices



### 3. Effective strategic and local partnerships delivering a sustainable community sport and leisure offer

#### What do we know?

North Somerset has a good range of resources including sporting clubs, businesses and voluntary organisations which operate in the area.

There is increasing appetite for aligning priorities, resources and targets and to connect these bodies and local deliverers with policy makers and investors in a co-ordinated way.

#### How do we meet future need?

- North Somerset Council is committed to supporting community sport and leisure provision. However, the financial context means that the council will need to work towards ensuring that partner organisations are financially independent and self-sufficient.
- The use of assets and land will be critical to achieving this objective. The council will support its partners to exploit the potential of the facilities and will take the strategic lead on innovative funding approaches to support future need.
- Work with partners to enable opportunities for participation to be provided in a wider range of places and spaces, and particularly at a very local level, using e.g. community centres/halls



# Next steps

In order to develop the identified priorities and support the council's commitment to provide spaces to make people more active, the following needs to occur:

- Production of an Action Plan with timescales
- Work with existing partners to identify options to meet priorities in existing facilities
- Identify new potential partnership working opportunities
- Establish the resources required to deliver the priorities, not just financial
- Investigate external funding opportunities
- Secure council/CIL funding towards larger strategic facility provision

The identified priorities will not all be delivered by the council, partnership working and access to external funding, will be key to achieving the outcomes, support from the council will available where possible and appropriate.



# Next Steps – Process

## Sport and Leisure Facility Strategy

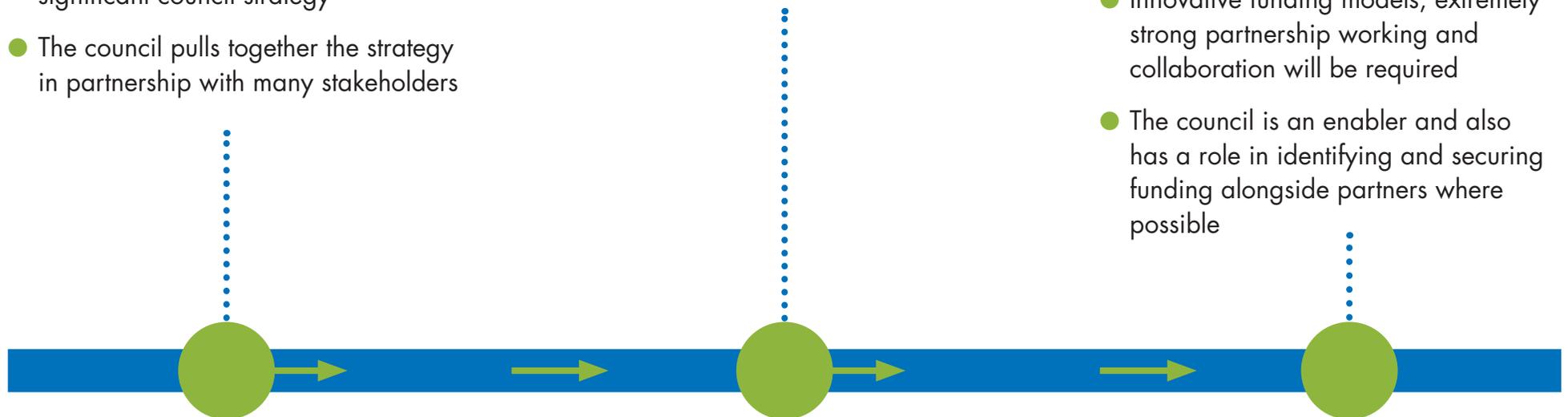
- Provides summary of need up to 2036 using technical analysis and consultation with partners and residents
- Sets strategic framework for providing this need
- Updated periodically alongside council corporate plan and other significant council strategy
- The council pulls together the strategy in partnership with many stakeholders

## Sport and Leisure Action Plan

- Action plan supports the strategy, identifying priorities for action and proposals for delivery
- This is a key document to identify how and when actions can be taken to meet the priorities in the strategy
- The council is an enabler and may lead on some actions

## Sport and Leisure Investment and Delivery Plan

- In order to deliver the strategy and actions required to meet the strategic objectives, significant investment will be required in facilities
- The delivery plan will sit alongside the action plan to identify how to deliver the actions
- Innovative funding models, extremely strong partnership working and collaboration will be required
- The council is an enabler and also has a role in identifying and securing funding alongside partners where possible



# Covid-19

Covid-19 restrictions saw the council's leisure facilities closed between March and July 2020. Phased reopening commenced in 2020 supported financially by the council.

Since reopening in July, demand has been extremely high, with some facilities already reaching capacity and demands for more services to be reopened.

There is some learning from Covid-19, which includes recognising that the business models for leisure providers depend on the facilities being open, and closure of some or all of the business seriously compromises the ability to deliver services. Provision of swimming space is at the most risk, as this is predominantly subsidised by other services on offer and if lost is unlikely to be re-provided commercially.





This publication is available in large print,  
Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require  
council information in languages other than English.

Please contact 01934 427 222

