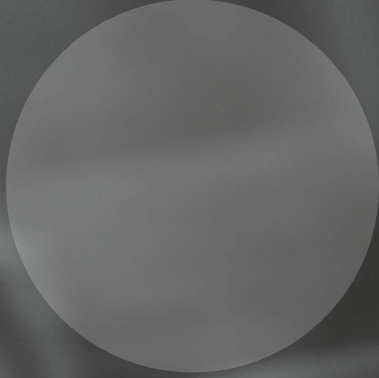
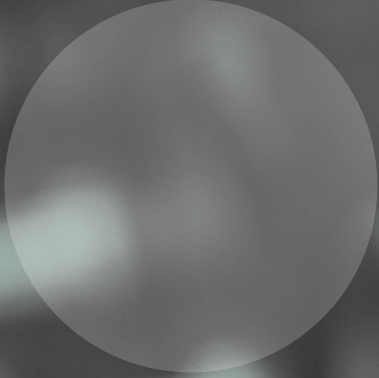
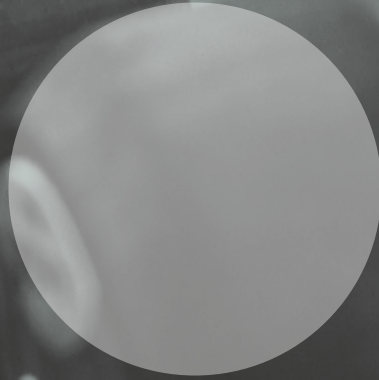


FACILITIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

A blueprint for sport and active
recreation in Wales





FOREWORD



THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015 CHALLENGES PUBLIC BODIES TO MAKE “TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE TO THE WAY THEY DO THEIR BUSINESS”, WITH “DECISIONS THAT FOCUS ON THE LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR ACTIONS”. ITS VISION IS “TO HELP CREATE A WALES THAT WE ALL WANT TO LIVE IN, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE”.

Sport and active recreation facilities are a crucial component of the offer to encourage and support healthy and active lifestyles but those facilities need to be ‘fit for the future’ – a future where the responsibility to provide appropriate opportunities is shared by the Voluntary and Private Sectors, Schools, Colleges and Universities alongside the long standing interventions by Central and Local Government.

The well-being and wellness of our citizens relies on their motivation, ability and opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis. The facilities that can provide those opportunities must be inclusive, attractive, accessible and efficient and they must be what people and communities need.

In a climate of reducing budgets, an ageing stock and increasing customer demands for a modern offer of quality and flexibility, providers face difficult challenges and decisions. Those decisions should be based on an understanding of the social, economic,

equality and sustainability factors they and their communities face now and long into the future.

This Blueprint has been designed to complement existing national and local capital investment schemes, initiatives like the Sports Facilities Capital Loan Scheme and the All Wales Artificial Turf Pitch Vision and Guidance. The intention is to provide a point of reference and support, to help inform responsible and sustainable decision-making on the design, provision and maintenance of sport and recreation facilities.

We have a collective responsibility to act now to help create a landscape of appropriate and resilient sport and recreation facilities for today and tomorrow.

KEN SKATES AM
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR CULTURE,
SPORT AND TOURISM





INTRODUCTION

THIS SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IN ‘FACILITIES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS – A BLUEPRINT FOR SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION IN WALES’ HAS BEEN COMPILED USING WHAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE PRINCIPAL MESSAGES, FOR THOSE INVOLVED IN FACILITY PLANNING FURTHER, MORE DETAILED INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO FULLY INFORM FUTURE THINKING AND ACTIONS.

The conclusions and recommendations are deliberately bold, designed to challenge and positively influence future decisions - securing a step change in the approach to facility provision.

This Blueprint has been produced by Sport Wales to support the Welsh Government’s drive to facilitate regular participation in sport and physical activity. It has been developed in consultation with key partners that include Local Authorities, Welsh Local Government Association, National Governing Bodies of Sport and Further and Higher Education. Sport Wales and the Welsh Government’s Sports Policy team will work with relevant stakeholders in the sector and across Welsh Government to consider how best to address the issues and recommendations.

The purpose of the document is to ensure a sport and active recreation facilities landscape that is fit for the well-being of future generations - modern, inclusive, attractive, accessible and efficient; meeting local needs; raising levels of participation in sport and physical activity and

contributing to greater success on the international stage. A future infrastructure where there is a collective responsibility and approach to provide appropriate opportunities - shared by a wide range of organisations involved in the planning, provision and management of sports and leisure facilities (Voluntary and Private Sectors, Schools, Colleges and Universities, alongside Local Government and other public sector bodies).

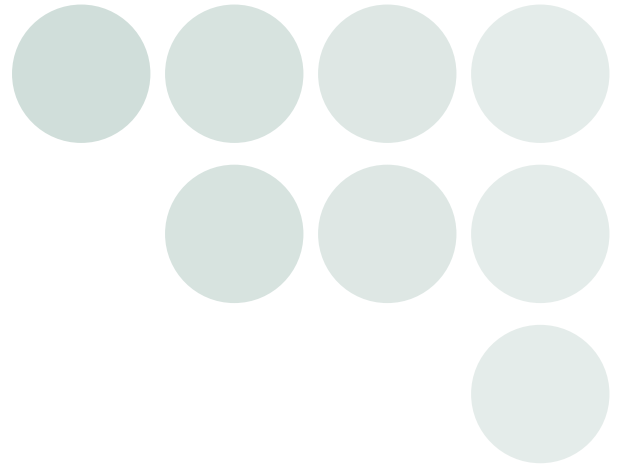
This document is designed to be an essential tool in helping deliver the goals and principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - informing ‘responsible and sustainable decision making’.

All public bodies will be required to contribute to these goals when making decisions. This will require a transformational change to the way in which the public sector across Wales does its business – demanding that it thinks about the longer term impact of the decisions it makes now. Given their lasting legacy, the Act is particularly pertinent to decisions in respect of future facilities.



THE VISION

A MODERN, FIT FOR PURPOSE, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS WALES



Attractive and inspirational facilities that meet the needs of all our communities, raising levels of participation in sport and physical activity - contributing to greater success on the international stage.

To achieve this will require a collective responsibility and approach, with bold actions taken by a wide range of organisations involved in the future planning, provision and management of sports and leisure facilities.

The purpose of this Blueprint is to set out the challenges that lie ahead and identify the priorities for action, providing guidance and a framework to help inform future decision making.

The facilities framework provides a clear rationale for a built leisure infrastructure that is fit for purpose

and appropriate - reflecting future community needs and satisfying the demands of different customers.

The framework describes three levels of provision, with the overarching principles being the tackling of poverty and inequalities along with consideration of effective co-location of services appropriately applied to each level.

In the future it is expected that there will be fewer, large scale, stand-alone strategic centres and more, smaller, locally accessible facilities along with greater community use of inspirational activity settings in schools.

KEY MESSAGES



THE IMPORTANCE OF FACILITIES

High quality and fit for purpose sports facilities are an essential part of creating a healthy and active Wales.



DESIGNS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Whilst there are a number of good examples where investment in facilities has resulted in innovative designs for future generations, much of the current stock needs to be upgraded and rationalised, to deliver an inspirational and attractive infrastructure, all set in context with the current economic climate.



25 YEAR PLANS

There must be a long term approach, i.e. 25 year plans, such that facilities can fully satisfy community needs - taking account of how both adults and young people now live their lives, with decisions made that apply the goals and sustainability principles set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



INSPIRATIONAL SCHOOL FACILITIES

Inspirational school facilities are a key priority to ensure high quality 'first experiences' - motivating young people to participate in physical activity for life alongside providing long-term community benefit by being more widely available for out-of-educational-hours use.



INTEGRATED FACILITIES STRATEGIES

Local Government must establish fit for the future local and regional infrastructure plans that are, where appropriate, integrated with wider estates strategies and are supported or endorsed by others that might include Welsh Government, National Governing Bodies, Sport Wales, Education establishments and other facility providers.



A CHANGING UNIQUE ROLE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government needs to review 'its unique role' taking account of the many changes and a growth in other providers in recent years.



SOME RATIONALISATION TO SECURE IMPROVEMENT

In some instances, the case needs to be made for 'rationalisation' - where facilities have exceeded their beneficial life, are no longer fit for purpose, appropriately located or cost effective. Any 'rationalisation' should take account of both the scale and number of facilities, financial sustainability and duplication of provision within the 'catchment area'. This is a necessary step required to release investment, for a better, more sustainable future offer.



CLEAR RATIONALE FOR FUTURE PROVISION

Careful consideration needs to be given to the rationale underpinning future service priorities with a clearer distinction made between essential entitlement and intervention services set alongside discretionary, 'leisure choice' activities which can be delivered by others or in a different way.



SPORTS BODIES PROVIDING A LEAD

National Governing Bodies of Sport have a key role to play, providing appropriate leadership through 'fit for the future' growth, as well as sports performance, facilities plans.



REVIEW AQUATIC FACILITIES

A nationally coordinated review of aquatic facilities should be undertaken, to determine the optimum number of pools/pool capacity required across Wales.



CHALLENGE FINANCIALLY DRIVEN DECISIONS

Action is required to review the current momentum that has led to financially driven decisions in respect of future operating models- the principle motivation being based on securing immediate tax savings.



FIT FOR THE FUTURE FACILITIES AND APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT

A 'fit for the future' facilities review should be undertaken before a Local Authority sets a course to establish the best future management option for its leisure offer.



ASSET TRANSFER

If facilities are to be transferred by Local Authorities to a new community, or social enterprise, a prior review of facilities stock is necessary to establish: what is essential to support future needs; the potential for rationalisation and co-locations; the case for 'invest to save' models; the most cost-effective and economically viable solutions.



APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY MODELS

It is unlikely that the same model will deliver 'the best' outcome for all areas. Appropriate approaches, serving the needs of different communities, building on the strengths of each local catchment area, should be considered.



HIGH QUALITY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES

The provision of better facilities, on its own, will not secure the desired impact on activity levels - a high quality customer experience is as important as an attractive infrastructure.



DIRECT SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

National Sports Bodies and Local Authorities need to work together to deliver direct support to clubs and community groups, where appropriate, to help build 'capacity' to self-manage local sport facilities.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

The public are not aware of the costs, or the challenges, facing facility providers and a nationally coordinated awareness campaign is required.



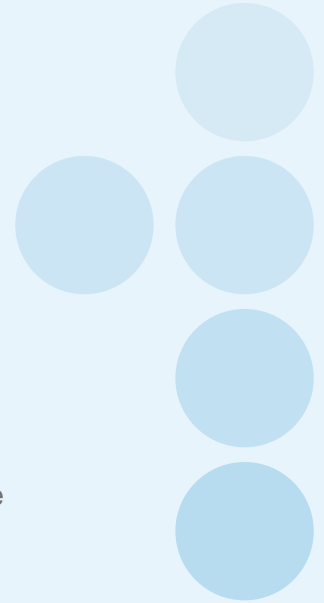
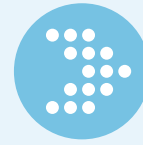
NATIONAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL DECISIONS

To support Local Authorities and key local delivery bodies make important, and sometimes difficult, future decisions, policy makers and funders at national level are encouraged to take account of and consider how this Blueprint can be best applied to future planning and decision-making processes.



THE EVIDENCE AND CONTEXT

THE CASE FOR ACTION



THE IMPORTANCE OF FACILITIES

To increase activity levels and secure betterment, it is important to ensure facilities are both appropriate and fit for purpose. The physical activity world has changed significantly in the last decade, as well as which the current stock of facilities is becoming increasingly unsustainable – thus a clearer sport and active recreation business rationale for future provision is needed.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires a transformational change demanding that public bodies think about the long term impact and implications of the decisions they make now - preventing problems from occurring or getting worse.

In the future a more 'mixed economy' of facility providers will also demand that the public sector critically reviews and adjusts its own unique role.

Future approaches need to take account of changing needs and trends – for instance, Acting Today for an Active Tomorrow¹ highlights the need to respond to:

- ▶ People leading more demanding lifestyles and having less time - requiring a greater variety of ways to 'fight' for a 'slot in the diary', with easier to access 'doorstep' activities;

- ▶ Clients with higher expectations - a need for more 'commercial' approaches - more customer-orientated services as well as a higher quality infrastructure;
- ▶ A growing need to make increasing use of 'new technology' - engaging people through their 'screens'; connecting through 'social networks'; utilising motivational smartphone 'apps' such as scanning user data and monitoring personal health and performance trends.

Future approaches will also need to more effectively reach out to young people, providing:

- ▶ A broader offer, to meet their very diverse needs;
- ▶ More reasons for taking part that are relevant to young people's lives - benefitting them as individuals; helping them develop through what actually matters to them - not what matters to sport;

¹ Acting Today for an Active Tomorrow - trends which will inform Sport Wales. The Future Foundation for the Sport Wales Advisory Group. 2014

- ▶ What young people choose to do on leaving their school and family environment –competing, and connecting, with their changing interests and priorities.



THE FACILITY FACTS

There has been a significant growth in the built, leisure infrastructure over the last 40 years and whilst there have been some closures, many new facilities have been constructed, added to which, there has been an increase in provision in the commercial and education sectors. However, the maintenance and modernisation of the extant stock has tended to be less of a priority, with an ageing, as well as generally deteriorating infrastructure across the public sector becoming increasingly commonplace. Whilst some of these facilities have been innovatively refurbished to better serve future generations, and are now much improved, many still remain in need of significant modernisation, to better respond to market trends and attract increased footfalls.

In other instances there is a need for rationalisation, transformation or even closure - the facilities (outdoor as well as indoor) having exceeded their beneficial life, becoming financially unsustainable, being no longer fit for purpose, appropriately located or with the current scale (size or number) duplicating other provision in the catchment area.

The cost and ongoing maintenance of outdoor games facilities is another pressing issue, with consideration

of more sustainable future models becoming a priority for action. This might include: better use of appropriately located artificial surfaces; improved access to, and shared use of, school facilities; club management support to assist in the process of asset transfers.



SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

— A PRIORITY

Schools and colleges are the main priority for influencing long-term attitudes towards activity, behaviour and lifestyle patterns. Undoubtedly there is a need for a modern infrastructure to engage and inspire activity levels amongst young people.

This should be set alongside a stronger strategic lead, ensuring maximum use and avoiding duplication of education and community facilities. The 21st Century Schools Programme is critical to achieving this aim, and it is essential that Local Authorities and Welsh Government work together to ensure the programme is a success.

In particular, 21st Century school facilities need to be designed to cater for a wider range of interests, to provide the opportunities, and quality of experience, to motivate more young people, particularly girls.

There are over 200 secondary Schools and colleges in Wales. All are important providers of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Schools and colleges should be commissioned, and given greater support, to establish 'after hours' community bookings, particularly

for sports clubs, with greater use of ‘education sites’ forming an essential part of the future facilities mix. Such action will create the opportunity for Local Authorities to review and potentially rationalise the overall community infrastructure.

Therefore, a ‘stocktake of facilities’, taking account of schools/colleges/universities, as well as community and commercial provision, should be undertaken by Local Authorities in order to fully understand the ‘appropriateness’ of, and future demand for, the extant infrastructure.



OTHER IMPORTANT SPECIALIST FACILITY PROVIDERS

It is particularly noteworthy that investment in specialist sports facilities has continued across the Higher Education sector in Wales as well as there being a growth in private sector investment. Both Universities and the Private Sector, should be recognised, embraced and supported as a key future partner in providing specialist facilities for physical activity as well as sports training and competition.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONAL MATTERS



COMMUNICATING THE TRUE VALUE OF PROVISION ALONGSIDE THE CASE FOR RATIONALISATION TO SECURE IMPROVEMENT

Generally speaking, the public are not aware of the investment requirements, as well as management costs, necessary to provide and maintain facilities. However with the future increasingly becoming one where all expenditure has to be met by income, this perception will need to be changed to avoid widespread public dissatisfaction. The development of a communications plan that better informs the public about the value and true cost of leisure facilities should be considered.

The ‘communication’ should also recognise the case for ‘rationalisation’ in some cases, as a necessary step required to release future investment for a better, more sustainable offer – investment enabled, in part, by efficiency savings.

Local Authorities will not ‘naturally’ support a programme of facility closures, so where there is a clear rationale, vision and strategy for ‘betterment’, Elected Members need to be encouraged, and supported nationally, to make what are currently considered to be difficult local decisions. This Blueprint is designed to provide that encouragement and support.



NATIONAL GOVERNING BODIES PROVIDING A LEAD

Whilst Governing Bodies and sport should have a greater responsibility for the use and management of sports facilities, it is also recognised that they do not have the capacity to fill the gaps in provision, or indeed take responsibility, for providing specialist sports facilities, away from Local Authorities, the higher and further education or private sectors.

However Governing Bodies of Sport do need to establish clear, fit for the future visions regarding their sports' needs in terms of growth as well as national and regional facilities including: more collaboration between compatible Governing Bodies; spatial planning and new partnerships to maximise the use of available resources and secure more sustainable specialist facilities across Wales; more direct support, expertise and advice given to clubs to enable new ways of operating, sharing resources and working together.



A CLEARER RATIONALE FOR APPROPRIATE FUTURE AQUATICS FACILITIES

Whilst aquatic activities are popular and learning to swim is a requirement in the National Curriculum, public pools are expensive to build and extremely costly to maintain - with many now nearing the end of their 'beneficial life'. The current situation has led, quite naturally, to fears over the sustainability of the extant stock of pools, and there is a growing need for a fundamental review of the future rationale for the provision of appropriate, fit for purpose facilities. There are more than 190 pools in Wales and it is likely that if there were a coordinated and strategic approach to define, deliver

and manage the essential aquatic 'entitlements', the same number of facilities may not be necessary to satisfy future needs.

In the continually challenging financial climate, it is clear that Councils are no longer able to sustain the historic levels of swimming provision, and it is recommended that there should be a nationally co-ordinated aquatics review to determine the optimum number of pools/pool capacity required across Wales – how much water space is needed, where and for what purposes. Local Authorities should then be supported to undertake a 'swimming entitlement' analysis, before any future decisions are made concerning local aquatics provision.



SECURING APPROPRIATE FUTURE MANAGEMENT MODELS

A growing number of Local Authorities have transferred, or are considering the transfer of their facility management function to new, or existing, not for profit operating bodies/trusts or private sector management. This has secured some tax savings and benefits, alongside which externalised models may secure operator flexibility. However such decisions have not always been in the best long term interests of delivering an appropriate, future community sport and leisure 'offer'.

Action is required in respect of future operating models, to review the current momentum in primarily financially driven decisions - the principle motivation being based on securing immediate tax savings.

Furthermore, consideration, by a Local Authority, of the ‘best’ management approach, should only take place once agreement on the future 10-25 years infrastructure demands and changes has been established, thus a ‘fit for the future’ (sufficiency, sustainability and appropriateness) facility review should be undertaken by a Local Authority before it sets a course to establish the best future management option for its leisure offer.

Finally, given the wide variety of communities i.e. large urban areas; major towns; as well as many dispersed rural communities, it is unlikely that the same model will deliver ‘the best’ outcome for all areas. Appropriate approaches serving the needs of different communities, building on the strengths of each local catchment area, should be considered, i.e. local community approaches; large town/strategic centre models; all supported by well-defined central commissioning.



COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS

There are significant concerns in respect of the capabilities of community groups to manage and develop ‘assets’. These concerns are recognised by Welsh Government, who in February 2015 produced an online Community Asset Transfer Toolkit to help community groups understand and overcome some of the potential pitfalls. National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities need to work together to deliver direct support to clubs and community groups, to help build capacity to self-manage local sports facilities. This demands new skill-sets, experience and work priorities.

Furthermore, facilities need to be transferred in a way that is both ‘fit for the future’ and sustainable i.e. as an ‘asset not a liability’. Out-sourcing should only be considered when the ‘business’ is in good shape - the infrastructure appropriate to the needs of the community - and where delivery outcomes are known and can be measured. Therefore, if facilities are to be transferred to a new community or social enterprise, Local Authorities should first review the stock to: establish what is essential to support future needs; identify the potential for rationalisation and co-locations; make the case for ‘invest to save’ models; and explore the most cost-effective and economically viable solutions.



SECURING A HIGHER QUALITY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The provision of better facilities, on its own, will not secure the desired impact on activity levels - a high quality customer experience is equally important. Acting Today for an Active Tomorrow highlights the importance and demand for more customer orientated services as well as a quality infrastructure. The public have growing expectations demanding a greater focus on better customer care, alongside increasing demands for more innovative uses of new technology.

Providers should ensure facilities are well managed, sharing good practice and making use of quality standards and frameworks. National sports and leisure fora provide good support in this regard and in the future, key performance indicators should be established to monitor success both in respect of quality as well as efficiency measures. These should specifically link to the goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.



VISION RATIONALE AND FUTURE FRAMEWORK

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Undoubtedly future decisions must not be based on what we have today, but what will best serve future communities. The key to success will be getting the 'right facilities' alongside the 'best' management approach - but only once agreement on the fundamental business rationale, and purpose informing the next 10-25 year infrastructure vision, has been established.

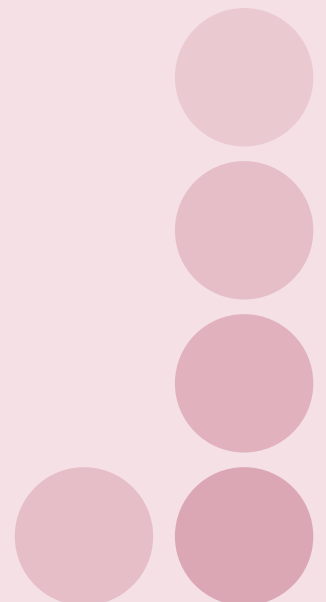
No longer is it feasible, or appropriate, to provide the same service for all.

Given the budget savings demanded, it is recommended that careful consideration be given to the rationale underpinning future service priorities. An 'entitlement through to business' rationale is presented in the main document, as a means of helping define the scope of future provision. It identifies fundamentally different purposes to help inform the case for

provision. The approach involves the creation of a clear distinction between entitlement and intervention services - the unique/essential role of the Authority alongside the discretionary leisure choice/business activities which can be delivered by others or in a different way.

THE FRAMEWORK

The aim is to achieve a landscape of modern, fit for purpose, and sustainable sports and leisure facilities that deliver increased levels of participation and support sporting success.



The facilities framework is designed to provide a clear rationale for the built leisure infrastructure that is fit for purpose and 'appropriate', reflecting future community needs and satisfying the demands of different customers, i.e.:

- ▶ Delivering greater activity footfalls – accessible, attractive, 'fit for the future' and responding to customer needs;
- ▶ Inspiring future generations of young people to become more active adults;
- ▶ Securing specialist sports facilities that are appropriately located and essential to deliver performance outcomes;

- ▶ Tackling Poverty, as well as supporting the Economic Regeneration and Health agendas.

The framework describes three levels of facility provision but assumes, at each level, the appropriate application of the overarching principles of: tackling poverty and inequalities; along with consideration of effective co-location of services - i.e. facilities accommodating a greater number of services with a shared management approach, housed under 'one roof'.



FACILITIES FRAMEWORK LEVEL 1:

Very local, community facilities/hubs and sports clubs - essential to serve the needs of sport and 'doorstep physical activity' and facilitate daily active lifestyles

LOCATIONS: The local outdoor environment for 'green exercise'; multi-purpose halls; sports clubs; primary schools; parks; 'community centres'; health centres; libraries; and church and village halls

PURPOSE: To encourage the organisation of informal and formal, locally accessible sport and physical activity; to help tackle health and economic inequalities – through attractive, sustainable, appropriate community models as well as targeted interventions

EXAMPLE FACILITIES: Attractive and accessible outdoor green spaces for walking, jogging and off-road cycling; fitness trails; multi games areas; play zones; skate parks; pump tracks; fitness suites and activity rooms; sports clubs; 3G, 5-a-side courts etc.

REVENUE COSTS: Such facilities are expected to break-even/be self-sustaining.

Into the future it is expected that facility models will include fewer, large scale, stand-alone strategic centres and more, smaller, locally accessible facilities.

FACILITIES FRAMEWORK LEVEL 2:

Strategic, wider community facilities - i.e. Leisure Centres, Swimming Pools and Dual-use Secondary School/College/University Facilities - well maintained and upgraded to successfully attract new audiences, as well as providing sporting facilities for local participation.

LOCATIONS: Where appropriate, the 'best location' to satisfy this need will be, well-positioned (*) education facilities - a focal point for delivering services to young people and adults and a community hub for lifelong learning and intergenerational activity.

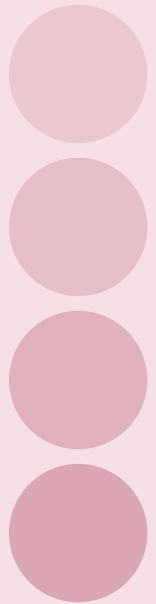
(* 'well-positioned' is considered to mean - easy to access, centrally located, serving a well-defined catchment, in the heart of the community, visible and easily reached by public transport.)

PURPOSE:

- 1: To inspire activity and young people
- 2: To serve out of hours community use where needed, particularly sport's governing bodies and club coaching and training

EXAMPLE FACILITIES (not in any order of priority): Dance Studio; Fitness Suite (no less than 30 stations); 3 or 4 court Sports Hall (flexibly designed to serve a variety of needs and activities); Gymnasium; Squash Court; 18-20m x 4 lane 0.9m-1.2m swimming pool for school/community learn to swim and training; "Combo Multi Sports Area" – 2-3, 3G, 5-a-side courts; 2-3 netball/tennis courts; ½ size ATP for Hockey training; 3rd Generation Artificial Turf Pitch(es); 1 Rugby or 1 Football pitch (natural turf); an artificial cricket wicket; space for a summer athletics track or Compact Athletics Facilities²; Cycling facilities i.e. off road bike trails; skate parks; pump tracks; other attractive indoor/outdoor activity spaces e.g. climbing walls; a recreation room – for lunch time and after school social/physical activity clubs or 6th forms and doubling up as a community club room - including kitchenette, table tennis tables, pool/snooker, dance floor; 4 good indoor and outdoor changing rooms, suitable for out of hour's access for public and club use; car parking; accessible reception & circulation areas.

REVENUE COSTS: To be determined locally, however, whilst the cost of providing essential learning facilities will be a publically funded service, discretionary community uses may be expected to break-even/be self-sustaining



² Compact Athletics Facilities - Sport England Guidance (2014) - Creating a sporting habit for life

FACILITIES FRAMEWORK LEVEL 3:

Large, strategic, specialist sport and/or leisure/tourist attractions – nationally or regionally significant – most commonly provided by Local Authorities, Universities, the Private Sector and some National Governing Bodies

Large scale specialist sport and/or regeneration/tourist facilities satisfying governing body or economic priorities i.e. visitor attractions.

LOCATIONS: To ensure the right facilities are located in the right places, throughout Wales and serving a wide and significant catchment as well as visitor needs, the number and distribution of specialist facilities must be planned collaboratively and across Local Authority boundaries

PURPOSE:

A facility recognised by Welsh Government, the National Governing Body and Sport Wales as a national/regional centre i.e. the National Velodrome, and/or a facility provided for reasons of economic regeneration and the stimulation of commercial life, impacting on tourism

Serving sport at the highest level inspiring future generations and impacting positively on economic, socio-cultural, environmental and media profile, performance indicators for Wales.³ For example, successfully competing in, as well as bidding to host, major events i.e. the Commonwealth Games, demands the appropriate specialist facility infrastructure.

In the context of facilities of wider significance, other than strategic sports facilities, account should be taken of the business aspects, and whether the private sector would enter the market if the public sector were not providing the infrastructure.

REVENUE COSTS: Specialist facilities satisfying a national sporting or economic need may demand a degree of 'national subsidy'. However, any value for money judgement in respect of the provision will be based on the contribution to the improvement of performance on the international stage and/or regional economy, whilst also taking account of the efficiency of providing opportunities to local communities.

³ Event Wales: A Major Events Strategy for Wales 2010-2020

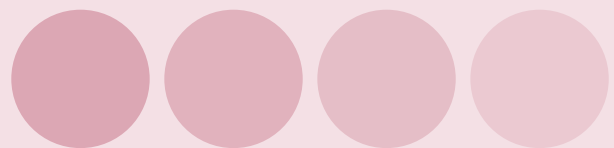
THE IMPORTANCE OF WALES' NATURAL RESOURCES

Welsh Government's 'Climbing Higher'⁴ and 'Climbing Higher – Next Steps'⁵ also prioritises the need to increase the availability of, and access to, high quality local green space, waterways and countryside.

The natural resources of Wales are vitally important for encouraging healthier and more active lifestyles, with the majority of people living in Wales taking part in outdoor recreation occasionally. There is however, a high level of demand to do so more often, with the activities sought becoming more diverse.

Natural Resources Wales has prepared an Enabling Plan which sets out its objectives. The overarching aim of the Enabling Plan is to achieve - a 'Wales where more people are participating in and benefitting from outdoor recreation more often.'

There is a need to determine the case for a multi-agency, shared vision and strategy for sport and active recreation in the natural environment, also linked to tourism and economic regeneration.



⁴ Climbing Higher - The Welsh Assembly Government Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity. January 2005

⁵ Climbing Higher - Next Steps - The Welsh Assembly Government framework document. July 2006



TRANSFORMING THE VISION AND FRAMEWORK INTO ACTION

APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK

To apply the framework demands both a top down strategic vision together with locality specific reviews taking account of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 sustainable development principles.

The recommended next steps are as follows.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACTIONS

Local Authorities should adopt a long term approach to planning (25 years), such that facilities can fully satisfy the wellbeing needs as well as expectations of future generations.

To achieve this approach, the principle actions should include:

1. Taking account of this national vision, framework and sports plans
2. Embracing all facilities and providers in their area
3. Establishing the rationale for provision – distinguishing between essential and optional requirements, clarifying the unique future role of the Local Authority
4. Reviewing all current and planned provision including School as well as College/University, Private and Voluntary Sector facilities
5. Agreeing priority facilities for retention and improvement, and where appropriate the need to rationalise in order to ‘modernise’
6. Establishing the above plans before determining the most appropriate future management/operating models
7. Recognising that a mix of appropriate models should be considered, ranging from local community, to larger specialist strategic approaches - including consideration of co-locations and joint management models.

Clearly Local Government has an essential role to play in providing the necessary local leadership essential to establish an integrated facilities vision and strategy for each area. However, it is also evident that Universities, Colleges, Schools and the Private and Voluntary Sectors must all be recognised and embraced as equally important opportunity providers.



The following flow chart summarises the sequence of necessary local actions.

STEP 1

- ▶ Take account of national/regional strategies and cross boundary collaborative views.
- ▶ Establish a clear single sport and leisure vision – aims and strategic outcomes.
- ▶ The future vision for the sport and physical activity infrastructure should be based on joining up the significant provision provided through Schools/Colleges/Universities and balancing all of that with the public offer, as well as factoring in voluntary and commercial sector provision.

STEP 2

- ▶ Establish a shared definition of the core purpose and rationale for the sport and leisure services (embracing education) and based on establishing the essential entitlements that must be provided by the Local Authority (i.e. Learning to Swim) and a clear understanding of the entitlement/business continuum.
- ▶ This should confirm the Council's unique role in delivering sports and physical activity through all of the built facilities, leading to the defining of an appropriate infrastructure.

STEP 3

- ▶ Carry out an appropriate facility infrastructure review embracing Schools, Universities/Colleges, public community offer, opportunities to engage with the commercial sector, opportunities for Prudential Borrowing and external funding etc.
- ▶ The reviews would also take into account the wider community needs so that the co-location of services is not forgotten - but most importantly the 'proposed infrastructure' should deliver 'proper service integration' rather than simply 'positioning different services within a leisure building'.

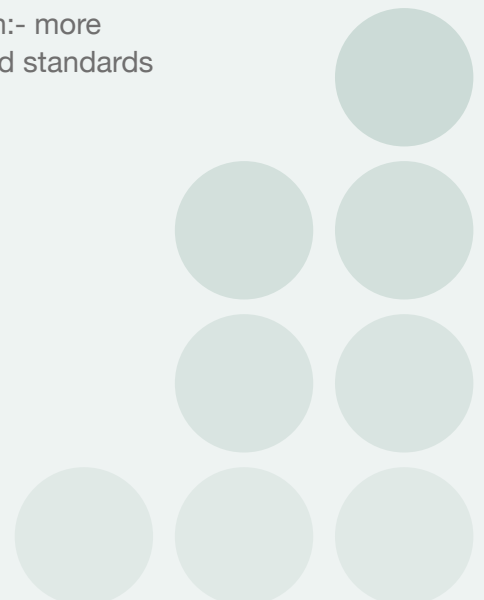
STEP 4

- ▶ The outcome – a new infrastructure map, setting out a 10-25 year transformation and investment plan, focusing on delivering a better landscape that is 'fit for the future'.
- ▶ To include a plan for inspirational facilities on education sites, to satisfy the needs of sport, and the wider responsibility to develop opportunities for participation/leisure.

RECOMMENDED NATIONAL ACTIONS

To support Local Authorities and key local delivery bodies in making important, and sometimes difficult, future decisions, it is important that policy makers and funders at national level consider how this Blueprint can be best applied to future planning and decision-making processes. The key actions are as follows:

1. The Blueprint principles and framework should be a point of reference, or embedded within specific guidance, informing future policies, investment programmes and decisions, that in full, or in part, affect the future provision of sport and/or active recreation facilities
2. To help inform important future decisions, consider how participation/activity surveys can gather evidence on the valuable role facilities, do, or do not, play in enabling people to be active
3. A framework for both quality and efficiency performance measures geared towards profitability, quality of infrastructure and impact on activity habits – particularly of young people, and specifically linked to the goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 should be considered
4. Undertake an aquatic facilities review to determine the scale and type of facility provision that Local Authorities need to provide or commission
5. National and regional sports infrastructure plans should be developed, where appropriate in a collaborative way, to:
 - a. establish a clear, fit for the future vision and set future priorities in context with the current economic climate informing future facility needs
 - b. deliver maximum impact in the most cost effective way, recognising that not all of the current specialist sports infrastructure may be sustainable
 - c. determine the most appropriate facilities necessary to enable sports to deliver both:- more growth, and improved standards of performance



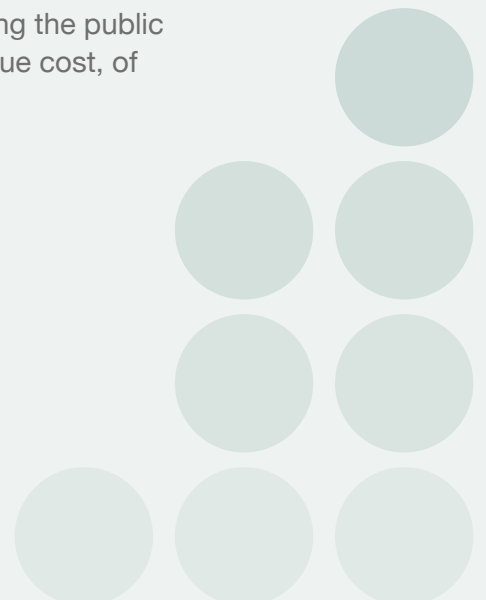
TRANSFORMING THE VISION AND FRAMEWORK INTO ACTION



6. Establish a sports vision and plan for each Local Authority or Regional area to:
 - a. identify which sports clubs and facilities are a priority for action i.e. improvement or retention
 - b. provide expert advice and practical support to clubs to enable 'adaptation to change' and, where appropriate, their involvement in future facility management. Establish a support network for voluntary sports clubs to undertake new ways of operating, as well as more sports clubs sharing resources, and working together
 - c. support local sports clubs or 'club federations' to enable appropriate future sport-led operating models.

Future approaches might include:

 - i. better/collaborative use of appropriately located artificial surfaces
 - ii. access to, and shared use of, school facilities
 - iii. club management support to assist in the process of asset transfer etc.
7. Determine the need for a multi agency, shared vision and implementation plan for sport and active recreation in the natural environment, also linked to tourism and economic regeneration (i.e. Led by Natural Resources Wales, the National Parks, Welsh Water and Sport Wales).
8. Consider commissioning the evidence and case for the impact and value of sport and leisure facilities on:
 - a. Health – how appropriate facilities can have a significant impact on health outcomes
 - b. Economic Regeneration - the case for leisure creating better places to live, work, invest and visit - stimulating the visitor economy and delivering regeneration.
9. Consider the best way of delivering a 'public communication' that raises awareness of the importance and impact, as well as helping the public better understand the true cost, of providing facilities.



TRANSFORMING THE VISION AND FRAMEWORK INTO ACTION



10. Consider future approaches to work with Schools and Colleges that:
 - a. Commissions and supports, the delivery of ‘inspiring active for life’ outcomes (as described in the guidance and framework in this document) by promoting the importance of inspirational facilities to ensure high quality ‘first experiences’ – motivating and engaging young people to participate in physical activity for life and influencing the future design of 21st Century facilities
 - b. Commissions and supports community access/sports partnerships enabling more dual use of ‘appropriate’ education facilities and supporting Schools and Colleges to determine the most appropriate method of ensuring their facilities are widely accessible to the community ‘outside of educational use’ hours.
11. Work with Planning Policy officers to:
 - a. Inform future Local Development Planning and Community Infrastructure Levy policies to encourage:
 - i. future facilities consistent with the guidance and framework in this Blueprint i.e. more doorstep activity zones, co-located with other services, as well as appropriate outdoor spaces
 - ii. transport and highways policies that encourage active living and links to physical activity hubs
 - iii. the future development and use of more outdoor spaces suitable for different weather conditions to enable all-year-round use, taking advantage of wide-ranging new developments in synthetic turf areas to:
 - lessen the demand on traditional grass playing fields
 - potentially release land for other priority uses
 - create more informal green spaces
 - improve the quality of existing natural turf pitches.
12. Work with finance departments and external bodies to explore ways of arresting the current momentum in financially-driven decisions that determine future operating models for community leisure facilities.



THIS VISION
& FRAMEWORK
IS DESIGNED TO BE
ASPIRATIONAL
& PROVIDE A STEER
& GUIDANCE
TO HELP INFORM
FUTURE PLANNING.

CONCLUSION



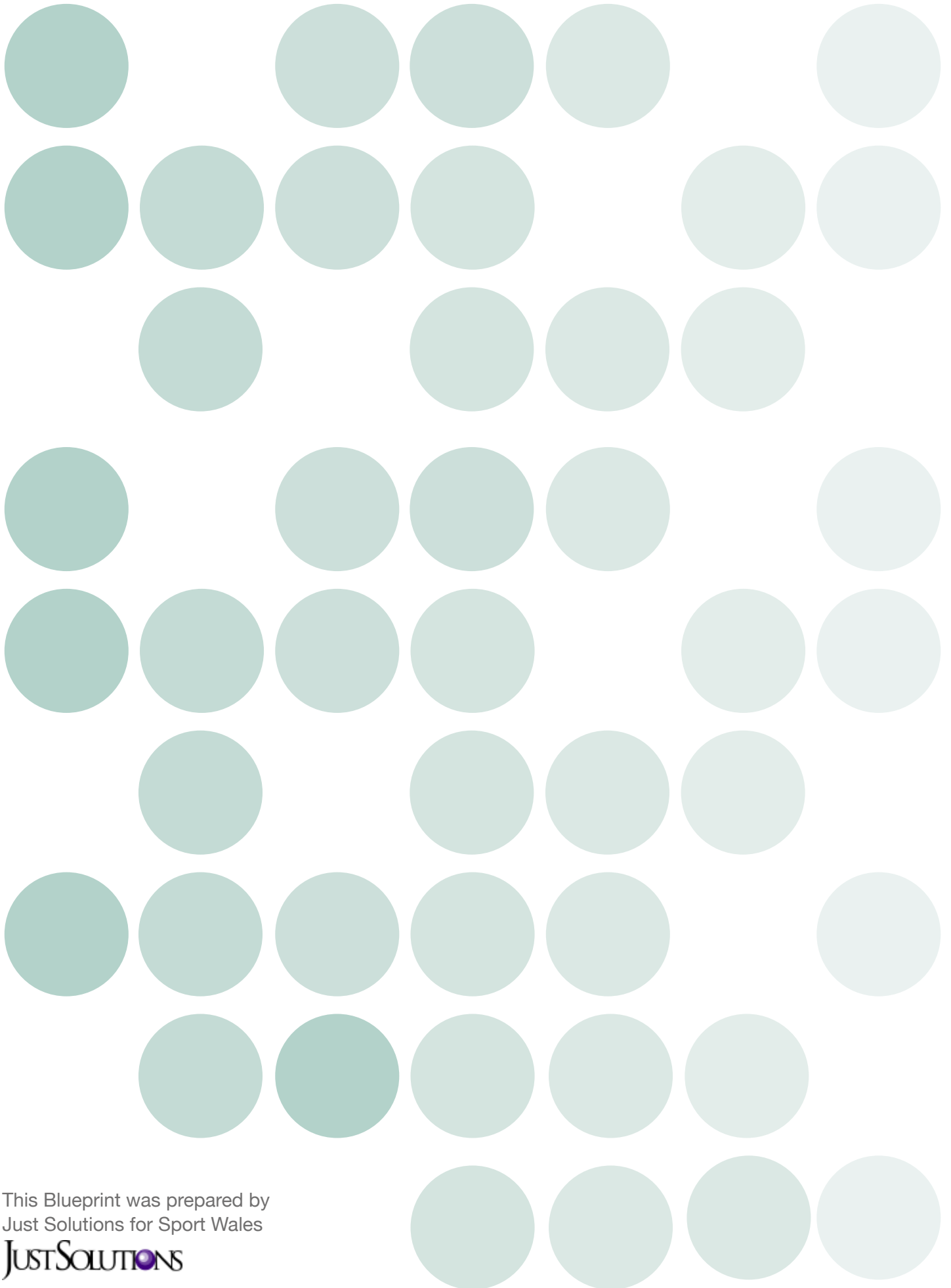
This vision and framework is designed to be aspirational and provide a steer and guidance to help inform future planning. It recognises the diversity of the many different communities across Wales and that the future approach to provision has to be more sophisticated - strategic, sports and population determined.

Solutions also need to be found for the management and maintenance of all facilities as part of a considered and wider approach to the future delivery of both indoor and outdoor services.

Finally, to achieve the vision demands a collective responsibility and approach, with bold actions taken by a wide range of organisations involved in the future planning, provision and management of sports and leisure facilities.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT IS NOT ABOUT WHAT WE HAVE TODAY, BUT WHAT WILL BEST SERVE FUTURE GENERATIONS.





This Blueprint was prepared by
Just Solutions for Sport Wales