



APPENDIX 1

Darlington Borough Council

Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Built Facility Strategy (BFS) Update



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Prepared on behalf of Darlington Borough Council

By WYG Environment Planning Transport Limited



Playing Pitch and Built Facility Strategy

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In May 2019, Darlington Borough Council appointed WYG to update the Sports Facilities Strategy that was previously published in 2014. This updated strategy gives consideration to both indoor and outdoor sports facilities (including playing pitches) and sets out the strategic direction and site-specific priorities for the future delivery of sports facilities across the borough until 2031. It will remain a valid document for the period 2020 – 2025.

Strategic Vision

1.1.2 The 2014 Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facility Strategy has successfully driven significant improvement and investment into the sporting infrastructure across Darlington Borough. Successes include:

- Provision of a new 3G AGP at Eastbourne Sports Complex in partnership with the Football Foundation
- Provision of new sand based AGP at Carmel College
- Provision of new football pitches at Staindrop Road
- Implementation of new Community Use agreements at key school sites
- Relocation of Darlington FC to Blackwell Meadows and drainage works completed to ensure facility is fit for purpose
- Investment into the improvement of bowling green quality following a successful Inspired Facilities Funding application
- Significant investment into the Dolphin Centre resulting in improving facilities and long-term sustainability.

1.1.3 This strategy seeks to build upon these successes and to deliver the sporting vision for the borough up to 2031. The vision for the strategy therefore remains the same, specifically:

'to develop a comprehensive, robust, up to date and user friendly assessment of sports provision and need in Darlington to ensure that the right amount and type of sports facilities are protected, and where appropriate enhanced to provide a range of quality, accessible and



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safe facilities, in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the community now and in 2031.

1.2 Key Drivers

1.2.1 The key drivers for refreshing the Playing Pitch Strategy are to:

- Inform the local plan (shortly to be examined) and to deliver the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 96 and 97)
- Ensure ongoing sustainability of the facility stock – ensuring that facilities are effectively managed and maintained and that best uses are made of existing resources
- Drive participation in sport and leisure within Darlington Borough.

1.2.2 The review of the strategy also considers the impact of the projected population growth in the borough.

1.2.3 The strategy has been updated to ensure that the audit of supply and demand reflects the current situation and that actions remain reflective of current need and take into account the changing ways in which sports are played, as well as the impact of changes that have occurred between 2014 and 2020. The final outcome is an updated project action plan. This action plan will be used to monitor the delivery of the required actions and will also be used to provide evidence on which to secure funding.

1.2.4 The above drivers continue to link to the planning objectives adopted by Sport England, which are illustrated in Figure 1.1. These objectives recognise the overarching benefits of providing sports facilities for a local community. Specifically, they seek to protect sports facilities from loss as a result of redevelopment, to enhance existing facilities through improving their quality, accessibility and management and to provide new facilities that are fit for purpose to meet current and future participation needs. Figure 1.1 illustrates how these components link together.



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Figure 1.1 – Key drivers



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1.3 Structure

1.3.1 This updated strategy considers the adequacy of existing provision to meet current and projected future need and sets strategic and site-specific priorities for a range of facilities including:

- Playing pitches for football, cricket, rugby and hockey
- Outdoor sports facilities including tennis and bowls
- Indoor built facilities including swimming pools, sports halls and community halls
- Specialist provision including golf courses, skateparks, athletics tracks and climbing.

1.3.2 This is the strategy document, which briefly summarises the key issues across Darlington BC and sets out the action plan for addressing the key issues. The accompanying assessment report summarises the data collated and sets out the evidence underpinning the recommendations and action plan.

1.3.3 The remainder of this strategy is therefore set out as follows;

- Section 2 – Methodology
- Section 3 – Context
- Section 4 – Action Plan, Implementation, Monitoring and Review



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2.0 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This update has been undertaken in line with guidance by Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; 2014) and 'Playing Pitch Guidance, An Approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy (Sport England 2013).
- 2.1.2 The key principles of the methodology and the tasks that have been undertaken to update the 2015 strategy document are summarised in the remainder of this section. The methodology has been tailored based upon detailed discussions with the project steering group, building upon the work undertaken to deliver the previous action plan, as well as local knowledge and a clear understanding of the patterns of sports participation.
- 2.1.3 As in the original strategy document, reflecting the compact nature of Darlington, the adequacy of facilities is analysed throughout this assessment at a Borough wide level. The steering group determined that patterns of facility usage mean that it is not appropriate to subdivide the area further. Site specific analysis and the location of each site within the town are however taken into account when evaluating the adequacy of provision, as well as during the strategy development and action planning process.
- 2.1.4 Further detail on the methodology can be found in the assessment report.

2.2 Methodology - Playing Pitch Guidance – An Approach to Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy

- 2.2.1 The Playing Pitch Guidance note sets out the requirement for the delivery of a playing pitch strategy for football, cricket, rugby and hockey. It advocates a 10-step approach, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.



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Figure 2.1 – Ten Step Approach



2.2.2 The tasks undertaken as part of this playing pitch strategy update were as follows.

Step 1 - Tailoring the Approach

2.2.3 The scope of the updates for each sport were defined with the Steering Group and Sport England and agreed individually with each National Governing Body. This ensures that resources are focused on updating information where it is most required.

Steps 2 and 3 - Gather Supply and Demand Information and Views

Supply and Demand

2.2.4 The previous PPS included a full audit of pitches and assessment of demand for each sport across the Borough. This was updated to reflect the 2020 position using the following methodology:



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a. Football

- Update of the existing supply audit using local knowledge and a small selection of site visits to ensure that pitch assessments are still relevant and to take account of known changes.
- Use of FA affiliation data (cross checked) to update demand data
- Review and integration of consultation undertaken as part of the recently completed Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP). Large clubs were also contacted to offer an additional opportunity to input any further thoughts or issues
- Additional consultation was carried out with Darlington Sunday Football League

b. Cricket

- Update of the existing supply audit using local knowledge and a full set of site visits carried out during the cricket season
- Consultation survey distributed to all clubs

c. Rugby

- Update of the existing supply audit using local knowledge and site visits carried out during the rugby season
- Use of RFU affiliation data
- Consultation with Darlington RFC
- Engagement with Darlington Mowden Park RFC as part of the discussions relating to a potential sports village

d. Hockey

- Use of England Hockey affiliation data to update demand figures
- Discussions at the quarterly hockey meeting that takes place between the club, Council and school used to inform the strategy update process.

Steps 4, 5 and 6 – Assessing the Supply and Demand Information and Views

2.2.5 The supply and demand information collated has been used, in line with the Sport England methodology, to update calculations undertaken in 2015 to:



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- Understand the situation at individual sites;
- Develop the current and projected future pictures for each sport; and
- Identify the key findings and issues that need to be addressed.

Steps 6 - 10 Develop the Strategy and Deliver the Strategy and Keep it Up to Date and Robust

2.2.6 The strategy and action plan use the updated issues identified to set out a strategic framework for the provision of pitches. Recommendations and priorities have been developed following extensive scenario testing and in conjunction with key stakeholders (both internal to the Council and external). The resulting action plan will be used to inform the delivery of the key priorities and to monitor the success of the strategy.

Non-Pitch Sports - Sport England (Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities; 2013)

Outdoor Sports

2.2.7 For bowls and tennis, the assessment stages (Phase A) of the Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide (ANOG) approach are as follows:

- Stage 1 – Prepare and tailor your assessment
- Stage 2 – Gather information on supply and demand
- Stage 3 – Assessment, bring the information together.

2.2.8 For both of these sports, an updated audit of existing supply and demand was developed and updated drawing upon local knowledge, as well as discussion with NGBs and the Parks Bowls Association.

2.2.9 The key issues identified underpin the action plan.

Indoor / Built Facilities

2.2.10 For indoor / built facilities, the strategy has been updated as a desk-based exercise. This has drawn upon the recently completed Sports Facility Planning Model (fpm) review which was completed as part of an assessment to examine the direct impact of growth as well discussions with key council officers, Sport England and relevant National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBS).



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- 2.2.11 The remainder of this document therefore provides an overview of each sport across Darlington Borough, outlining the changes that have taken place since the previous sports facility was produced and identifying the issues that need to be addressed.
- 2.2.12 Section 3 provides a summary of all of the key issues identified while section 4 summarises the actions that will be undertaken to address these issues.

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3.0 Context

- 3.1.1 This section provides a summary of the context for each sport considered within Darlington Borough and summarises the key issues that have been identified.
- 3.1.2 Full detail is found in the assessment report (under separate cover).
- 3.1.3 The recommendations and strategic priorities to address the identified issues are set out in Section 4.

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Table 3.1 – Summary and Key Issues for Football

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
<p>Supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88 pitches in total, the majority of which are secured for community use • Availability in education sector remains strong • Glebe Road, McMullen Road and Croft Working Mens Club have all previously contained football pitches but do not currently do so. There is also scope to mark out more pitches at other sites • There are three 3G AGPs, all of which are on the FA pitch register and can be used for both competitive fixtures and training. The pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex has been developed since the last strategy document • With regards quality, While most pitches remain in the standard category, it is evident that many are now towards the lower end of this category (ie. achieving scores of around 50%) and very few pitches achieved scores of over 60%. Site visits also reveal that some pitches have now fallen into the poor category. The categorisation of many of the pitches as approaching poor indicates that there is a real risk to pitch capacity in Darlington – if quality issues are not addressed and pitches continue to decline, quality will reach a point where site capacity will be reduced. • While some of the sites visited were in good condition for the time of year, there was evidence of heavy usage (compaction etc) on some of the more popular sites, as well as some drainage issues (which will be exacerbated by the compaction that is evident). In contrast, it was clear that some sites were benefitting from lower levels of play and quality was retained as a result • Clubs also raise concerns about deteriorating maintenance, poor pitch surfaces and wear and tear on pitches. There are also several sites that do have appropriate changing / ancillary facilities • There are three teams based in Darlington playing in leagues that form part of the higher echelons of the football pyramid – these clubs must adhere to specific regulations in relation to the standard of facilities in order to ensure that they are able to continue to play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darlington RA = requires pitch and surface improvements as well as refurbishment of ancillary accommodation. Pyramid club so important site continues to meet league regulations • Poor condition of facilities at Darlington Education Village – undulating surfaces and suffering from waterlogging • Wyvern Academy – pitches poor and impacting upon capacity. Undulating, uneven, poor quality goals and wet pitches • Eastbourne Sports Complex – PQS identifies poor surface, weeds and thatching - inadequate pitches that require improvement • Heighington Playing Fields - Recent PIP completed (2018). Compaction and uneven, poor drainage, one pitch frequently out of use due to quality. Pavilion requires upgrade. Issues still remained at time of site visit. • Tommy Crooks Park, poor drainage and surface, poor grass cover, surface debris. Site considered inadequate • Heavy usage evident at Longfield / Hummersknott • Priors Hurworth – requires ancillary facilities / clubhouse

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<p>Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of teams requiring senior pitches remains static since 2015, but there has been a clear increase in the number of age group teams (U17 / U18 / U19 / U21) and a decline in the number of open age teams • Participation has increased in the younger age groups. Large clubs have continued to grow in the five years since the previous PPS and there are very few single teams or small clubs now remaining. • There is no clear evidence of displaced demand in the Borough • As in 2015, many of the sites in Darlington Borough also function as public recreational areas. This impacts upon the quality of some pitches, particularly with regards dog fouling, which emerged as a key issue for many pitch users • Competitive play takes place on both grass and AGPs and almost all training takes place on AGPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFP highlights driving growth in female football as priority
<p>Adequacy of Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the week, there is a degree of spare capacity on most pitches. Wyvern Academy is the only site where all pitches are overplayed, but at least one pitch at Darlington Education Village, Hummersknott Academy, St Aidans Church of England Academy and Heighington Playing Fields is overplayed. At both Wyvern Academy and Heighington Playing Fields this can be attributed to the poor quality of pitches (which means they have lower capacity) while at other sites, overplay is generally caused by the large number of teams using the pitches as the site is a base for larger clubs; • The majority of sites are able to accommodate more play. 62 pitches (on 43 sites) are able to sustain additional play. There is spare capacity across all grass pitch types at Eastbourne Sports Complex (despite pitches also being poor) and Darlington RFC and good availability also at Priory Hurworth Albion. Pitches at Carmel College also receive no use, along with Tommy Crooks Park, Springfield, Red Hall Community Centre and Hurworth Grange Community Centre • Much of the other spare capacity is at primary school sites that receive no use. There is however scope to mark out more pitches at some key Council sites. • At peak time, spare capacity is more limited and the majority of sites accommodating large clubs have no spare capacity. There is space on pitches for match play on a Saturday afternoon (Longfield Academy) and later on a Sunday afternoon (Longfield Academy and Hummersknott Academy) to further increase the use of 3G facilities for match play, but limited room to create additional facilities • If excluding pitches that are of poor quality from having spare capacity, there is a significant reduction in the amount of spare capacity recorded. Across the week, spare capacity would reduce to 11 MES (senior), 1MES (youth), 6 MES (9v9) and 40 MES (7v7 pitches). At peak time this would represent spare capacity equivalent to 8.5 MES (adults), 1.5 (youth), 4 (9v9) and 9 (7v7) • FA data modelling suggests that assuming that there is a baseline total of 159 teams in Darlington Borough this would mean that there is a theoretical requirement for 4 full size AGPs. With only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darlington FC currently play at the Rugby Club, if they continue to progress major improvements would be required to meet with league regulations and a long term home ground would need to be identified • Modelling and capacity analysis demonstrates a potential requirement for a further AGP to meet current demand. In the event of the high population growth scenario, further provision may be required. The LFFP identifies either Eastbourne Sports Complex or Wyvern Academy as key priorities



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	<p>three pitches currently accessible in the Borough, this means that there is a deficit of one AGP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth in the baseline scenario will have no impact upon participation. In higher growth scenarios however there may be an additional 18 teams by 2036, focusing at the younger age groups. There is limited capacity in the existing infrastructure to accommodate growth in 9v9 and junior age groups. 	
<p>Key Issues for Strategy to address</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst capacity has improved, there is an ongoing need to protect existing provision and ensure long term access to all key sites; The poor quality at some sites is impacting on capacity – this is particularly evident at Wyvern Academy and Heighington Playing Fields. The evidence of heavy usage on many sites is evident – there is a need to ensure that maintenance programmes are sufficient to keep up with usage. At some sites, poor quality pitches are taken temporarily out of circulation and matches take place on other better pitches – this is then causing degeneration and compaction of the better pitches. These pressures are particularly associated with larger clubs. In general, there are several pitches that are of declining quality and where investment is required to ensure existing capacity is maintained. Issues include compaction, drainage and poor pitch surface. Scenario testing demonstrates the importance of ensuring that pitch quality does not deteriorate further. Facilities at Darlington RA continue to require upgrade (although capacity has improved since the previous PPS due to the creation of pitches at Staindrop Road) and there are also concerns that the progression of Darlington FC may be impacted by the availability of appropriate facilities in the Borough While there is spare capacity across the borough as a whole, this is largely spread out and generally at small / single pitch sites (that are often poor). There are few sites with significant capacity and indeed, several large clubs are close to capacity on their own sites. There are however some key sites with spare capacity which represent an opportunity – Carmel College, Eastbourne Sports Complex and Tommy Crooks Park in particular could all be better utilised (although improvements are required if these are to be desirable to potential users). Many of the facilities that are unused however are of poor quality and there is a need to enhance these sites if they are to become more attractive to potential users. These include Red Hall Park, North Park, Tommy Crooks Park, Red Hall Community Centre. Modelling suggests that there is a need to further increase the number of AGPs in the Borough (by 1) in order to accommodate training and this is reflected in consultation carried out with clubs, where it was identified that there are perceived challenges in terms of accessing provision at desirable times. Future population growth will see demand exceed supply for youth / 9v9 pitches. Additional capacity will be required (either through grass pitch provision or AGP). 	

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Table 3.2 Summary and Key Issues for Cricket

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are six facilities for cricket, meaning that provision is static from 2015 • All cricket grounds offer security of tenure except Haughton CC, which is leased annually from a local farmer • There were also two previously two cricket pitches at Hurworth House School and Land at Cumby Arms Playing Fields which has not been used for cricket since the club folded in 2007. The playing fields at Hurworth House School are now used by a football club. • There is evidence of significant investment in cricket since the 2015 strategy. Despite this, there remain some quality issues, with some improvements required at all clubs. Pitch quality is generally considered to be the key priority, particularly in relation to village clubs • There also concerns about the pressures on volunteers and the challenges associated with budgeting for maintenance. On-site training facilities also remain an issue for clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term security required for Haughton CC – currently on short term agreement • Cockerton CC – flooding / drainage requires improvement as priority. Site also offers no facilities for officials • Darlington CC – square requires relaying, there are also issues with the adequacy of cricket facilities • Darlington RA – non turf practice nets and a mobile cage identified as priority. Site also requires levelling • Rockcliffe Park – practice facilities require improvement, outfield also requires levelling • Haughton CC – training facilities are poor • Middleton CC – non turf practice facilities are poor and the pavilion is also limited
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in senior cricket participation at club level while junior cricket remains static • Cricket clubs continue to be used by informal / friendly teams although there are slightly fewer teams than there were in 2015 (8 compared to 9). Darlington CC also hosts some Durham County fixtures • Clubs highlight challenges in recruiting players at a younger age, in particular as a result of competition from other sports • Clubs primarily use indoor training nets during the winter months. The facility at Longfield Academy (4 indoor training lanes and specialist floor) is particularly popular with clubs and Darlington Education Village also offers cricket nets. a lack of good quality onsite training facilities was one of the key issues for clubs during the summer months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There remains no female cricket in the borough, although this is identified as a key aspiration for several clubs – with a particular gap in female participation it is now critical that targetted programmes are delivered



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<p>Adequacy of Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All active grass pitches are used regularly during the cricket season • There is slight overplay at both Rockcliffe Park and Haughton Cricket Club. The overplay at Rockcliffe Park can be attributed to high levels of demand, while the overplay at Haughton CC results from a small square (and usage of the facility by friendly teams as well as the cricket clubs own two teams) • All other sites are able to sustain more play, although there is limited scope for extensive growth at any club. Darlington Cricket Club, Darlington RA and Middleton St George are both able to accommodate circa one further adult team, while Cockerton Cricket Club could host 1 – 2 teams. This assumes that the quality of pitches remains standard. If pitch quality at Darlington RA, Haughton CC, Middleton St George and Cockerton CC improves to good, spare capacity would be increased. • Pressures for pitch access are also now starting to build on Sundays with youth fixtures competing with additional male teams playing due to lack of spare capacity on Saturdays • While using ONS population projections, the anticipated population growth will have no impact upon the demand for cricket, in the higher level growth scenario, there will be an increase of almost 3 senior teams (1.5 MES) equating to circa 34 games over the course of the season. With 60% of games anticipated at peak time and demand equating to 1.5 MES, one additional facility is likely to be required at peak time. There is no capacity within the existing infrastructure to accommodate this demand as all cricket grounds are currently at capacity on a Saturday afternoon. • Development initiatives seek to improve the number of participants in cricket across the Borough, focusing in particular on improvements at a junior level and amongst females. Not all clubs with aspirations to grow have sufficient capacity to do so. Development initiatives may not require space at peak time, but they place extra pressures on programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch quality is impacting capacity at Darlington RA, Haughton CC, Middleton St George and Cockerton CC • There are also quality issues at other sites which impact upon player capacity and capacity to accommodate onsite training • There is no remaining spare capacity at peak time in the Borough – this limits the growth of the male game • Population growth forecasts suggest that unmet demand will be generated by 2036 • There are opportunities to increase the appeal of the cricket through the provision of non turf wickets on public sites The impact of new initiatives such All Stars is not yet known, but these schemes place greater pressures on programming of pitches currently and are likely to result in increased demand longer term.
<p>Key Issues for Strategy to address</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to support long term access to facilities – existing sites need protecting and access to Haughton CC will need to be secured on a long-term basis • There is limited spare capacity in the existing pitch stock and no spare capacity at peak time - there may be a need to secure access to an additional pitch longer term • The quality of pitches is impacting capacity on some sites and this needs to be addressed – these sites are Darlington RA, Haughton CC, Middleton St George and Cockerton CC • There are also quality issues at other sites which impact upon player capacity and capacity to accommodate onsite training – qualitative improvements need to be prioritised - Darlington RA, Haughton CC, Middleton St George and Cockerton CC • There are also quality issues at other sites which impact upon player capacity and capacity to accommodate onsite training • Training facilities are also highlighted as an issue for almost every club. Key priorities include <i>Rockcliffe Park, Middleton St George, Haughton CC, non turf at Cockerton CC, Darlington CC</i> • The ECB are also seeking to develop cricket through the provision of non turf wickets on public sites in urban areas. Opportunities to provide this type of resource in Darlington Borough will need to be explored • While ongoing efforts to improve participation are important, there is a particular need to increase levels of female participation 	

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Table 3.3 – Rugby Union – Summary and Key Issues

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
<p>Supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 rugby union pitches in total. Two of the sites are owned and managed by rugby clubs – Darlington Mowden Park and Darlington RFC and represent half the total stock of rugby pitches in the borough • There are no issues with security of tenure • While pitches at the club sites are standard to good, there remain opportunities for further improvement of pitch capacity at the rugby club sites, particularly in relation to the maintenance procedures that are followed and the installation of drainage systems on pitches that do not currently benefit from this • All pitches at Darlington Mowden Park are floodlit, while only 1.5 pitches at Darlington RFC are floodlit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darlington Mowden Park - First team pitch good quality, others lower quality but standard. All pitches functional. Maintenance of pitches of a lower standard than previously • Darlington RFC - Maintenance focused on main pitch, pitches four and five have particularly limited maintenance. Second half pitch floodlit but portable floodlights are non-operational. Compaction evident on all pitches, particularly on the training pitch. Pitches 4 and 5 suffer from heavy waterlogging and there remain some drainage issues on pitches 2 and 3 despite installation of drainage systems. The first team pitch frequently suffers from wear and tear due to shared use with football. There are 10 changing rooms on site, 8 of which have communal shower and toilets. Ancillary building would benefit from refurbishment • Limited floodlighting at Darlington RFC



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<p>Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the period 2015 – 2020 there has been an overall increase in participation and there are now 34 rugby union teams. The number of adult and mini teams has increased but there has been a slight reduction in the number of junior teams. • Both amateur clubs have a spread of teams across the age groups and are strong and stable clubs. There are also opportunities to participate at a variety of standards of play. • As is common with rugby clubs nationwide, and reflecting the situation in 2015, training takes place at the club bases. Training at DMP (excluding Elizabethans) equates to 6.5 MES per week, while there is 5.5 MES at Darlington RFC • The strong club base is underpinned by comparatively high levels of participation in schools, with all schools with a rugby union pitch playing rugby union at least during term time. All secondary schools enter schools rugby competitions each year and tag rugby is also played at several primary schools • In addition to the capacity pressures currently experienced, higher projected population growth figures suggest that up to 4 additional teams may be generated • County Durham PPS identified some rugby league activity taking place at Darlington RUFC. No rugby league was identified at this site at the time of the preparation of this PPS. Should this recommence, there is very little impact on the ability of the site to sustain rugby union as rugby league is played during the summer months, but the use of the pitches during the summer may impact summer renovation works. 	
<p>Adequacy of Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The single first team pitch at Darlington Mowden Park / Darlington Arena is just able to accommodate the match play and training demand from the two teams at Darlington Elizabethans. The strong quality / maintenance rating on this pitch is essential in this being achieved • There is however insufficient capacity on the remainder of the site to accommodate the teams from DMP RFC. Even without taking into account training requirements, there is overplay (2.5 match equivalents) and when training is also considered, this increases to overplay equivalent to 9 match equivalent sessions • Supply and demand is also tightly balanced at Darlington RFC. Pitches are able to sustain the required level of match play (even taking into account the impact of football and American Football Usage) (spare capacity 2.75) but when including the demand from training, there is overplay of 2.75 match equivalents. In part, this can be attributed to the poor quality and maintenance ratings of two pitches (which reduces capacity significantly) • With overplay already evident, the impact of additional population growth (4 teams) could not be accommodated without action • Both clubs also have significant aspirations for ongoing development and this would lead to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overplay at both sites (11.75 MES total) • Lack of access to appropriate training facilities for both clubs • Opportunities to improve maintenance regimes to enhance respective site capacities



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	further deficiencies in provision.	
Key Issues for Strategy to address	<p>Improvements to capacity are key priority for both rugby clubs. This may be generated through a variety of means, including AGPs, enhanced maintenance, floodlighting and new pitches. The key issues are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Darlington RFC currently has capacity for match play, there is a need to increase capacity to accommodate training. A minimum of 3 floodlit pitches are needed for training activity. With up to 17 MES demand projected across both match play and training, demand can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure but improvements are needed to enhance capacity. Club facilities are also highlighted as in need of refurbishment as they are dated and not meeting RFU requirements. The club are however keen to improve the facilities that they have through the provision of an AGP • At Darlington MP, excluding the needs of Darlington Elizabethans, at least four floodlit pitches of high quality (M3 / D3) are required (meaning that additional pitches are needed) and when taking into account population growth, this need will increase further. 	

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Table 3.4 – Summary and Key Issues – Hockey

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the 2015 PPS, a new sand based AGP has been provided at Carmel College. This is now the only sand-based facility, and therefore the only pitch suitable for hockey in the Borough Reflecting the recent installation of the new pitch, the quality of the pitch is good and the clubs are happy with the facility. Added to this, there is a strong relationship between the college and the school meaning that there are good foundations for the further development of hockey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key priority for clubs is ongoing investment into pitch maintenance to ensure longevity of pitch surface
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are two clubs playing in Darlington Borough and demand has increased significantly since the creation of the new facility Darlington HC are the largest club and they accommodate 3 male and 2 female senior teams as well as a large and increasing junior section Bishop Auckland HC travel from Durham to use the pitch at Carmel College and are displaced The club are also running Hockey Heroes, with a view to increasing participation in the junior age groups The club use training sessions at 4 hours per week and access to the pitch is required for 3 MES at peak time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop Auckland HC are looking to relocate to Durham if a new facility is provided (linking with priorities in the Durham PPS)
Adequacy of Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For training, the hockey clubs are given priority access to the facility on midweek evenings and there is therefore scope to increase the amount of hockey played at the site if demand increases At peak time, the facility is again dedicated to hockey and has capacity to accommodate 4 MES, and spare capacity therefore equates to 1 MES TGRs indicate that population growth alone is likely to generate very little additional participation. Instead, it is likely that club development activity will produce the biggest increases in demand. If England Hockey aspirations for growth are met, provision would be insufficient post 2029. These aspirations are however particularly high given the very recent significant increases that Darlington HC have experienced. The relocation of Bishop Auckland HC back to Durham would however generate additional capacity for Darlington HC to use at Carmel College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing facility adequate to meet current demand with some spare capacity for the club to grow Extensive growth in club participation would see additional capacity needed. This is likely to be post 2029 at the earliest
Key Issues for Strategy to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing facility is valuable for hockey and is required to meet long term hockey need Ongoing investment into pitch maintenance is seen as the key priority as this will ensure longevity of the pitch surface 	

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Table 3.5 – Summary and Key Issues for Tennis

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision remains broadly consistent with 2015 – there are 29 tennis courts on 10 sites available for public use and 40 courts across Darlington Borough in total. There remain 12 floodlit courts located at New Blackwell Tennis Club (4), Longfield Academy (5) and Darlington Education Village (3) Quality of tennis facilities is relatively static, with public facilities generally of poor quality and school facilities standard. The courts at Wellfield Tennis Club also require resurfacing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courts at Wellfield Tennis Club require resurfacing Quality of public courts require improvement if drive to increase participation is to be led by these sites
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTA insight developed since 2015 highlights the importance of parks courts in providing a rounded offer for tennis, indicating that it is in parks where most people start their tennis journey. In response to this, The LTA is now prioritising facilities in parks and is working to implement solutions across the country. They have successfully developed technology that improves the customer journey to court, which involves the use of an access gate with keypad entry that is connected to the Clubspark venue management system. Access to public facilities across Darlington Borough is currently free of charge and access is unmanaged and actual levels of participation are therefore unknown. Clubs believe that the limited public facilities negatively impacts on the number of tennis players in the Borough Both Stanhope Park and Brinkburn Dene are identified as having potential to meet significant latent demand for tennis as both have greater potential penetration of 1000 people or more within their catchments. Stanhope Park is identified as a priority site, ranked the 506th priority nationwide The same two tennis clubs evident in 2015 remain in 2020. LTA affiliation data suggests that New Blackwell Tennis Club has seen a slight increase in participation overall (although there has been a decline in the number of members between 2017/18 and 2018/19 seasons, while the number of members at Wellfield Tennis Club is static. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LTA see implementing new technological systems at public courts as a key way of increasing demand for tennis and ensuring that public facilities are sustainable and quality playing facilities can be provided for residents long term. Stanhope Park identified as particular priority



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<p>Adequacy of Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based upon current levels of participation, there are sufficient facilities to accommodate demand overall at a baseline level but insufficient if theoretical modelling levels are achieved. Both of these scenarios represent a significant increase on current participation in the borough. This is supported by analysis of the usage of existing facilities, which suggests that there are opportunities to increase the amount of people using both public courts and school facilities the slight growth in participation since the previous strategy has resulted in club bases now reaching their capacity. Consultation with the clubs highlights that this represents the actual situation, with clubs now struggling to accommodate all activity within their existing infrastructure. New players generated through population growth can be accommodated if existing participation does not increase, however if maximum participation scenarios are achieved, new facilities will be needed There is therefore scope to maximise the use of existing facilities before new courts are required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darlington Education Village / Longfield Academy offer particular potential to increase usage as their courts are floodlit, which increases the playing season Both existing clubs are at capacity. Scope to increase floodlighting (New Blackwell) or add floodlighting (Wellfield) to ensure members can be better accommodated
<p>Key Issues for Strategy to address</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to protect the existing stock of courts There is thought to be scope to increase the amount of usage of public facilities, with no proactive marketing or promotion and no monitoring of use. LTA insight also suggests that usage of public facilities increases when more structured access is provided (improving the customer journey through online resources, controlled access etc) and see improvement to facilities in Darlington as a key priority. This would require both qualitative improvements to the courts and the introduction of technological solutions to ensure that long term, residents have access to quality, sustainable provision While there is spare capacity at schoolsites, club bases are at capacity and there is little room for growth without compromising the player experience. There is a potential requirement for floodlighting at both club sites and courts at Wellfield TC also require resurfacing There is opportunity to tailor new programmes for tennis at school sites to increase usage of courts. The Education Village and Longfield Academy represent a particular opportunity as they have floodlit courts. Improvements may be required to school sites to improve desirability. Polam Hall School are also keen to grow the school facilities. 	



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Table 3.6 – Summary and Key Issues for Bowls

Summary	Assessment Findings	Specific Facility Issues
Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 7 sites containing functional bowling greens and one derelict green at South Park • Further improvements to facilities required at North Lodge Park, South Park and North Park • Self-management model working effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derelict green at South Park • improvements to facilities required at North Lodge Park, South Park and North Park
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All greens have at least one active bowls club • All clubs have capacity for new members and are actively recruiting • Sustainability remains key priority 	
Adequacy of Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no evidence of demand for additional facilities, as all responding clubs indicate that they have scope to accommodate existing members and participation remains static. This means that club membership remains only around average levels • existing infrastructure also sufficient to meet projected needs unless participation reaches highest target level in which more facilities may be required. Increases in number of players will improve sustainability of existing facility network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional greens required to meet demand, but all existing infrastructure important to retain
Key Issues for Strategy to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All existing active greens are required to meet current and projected future demand • Qualitative improvements are necessary if facilities are to continue to meet local needs • Clubs require support to improve participation and recruit new members. 	

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Table 3.7 – Summary and Key Issues for Indoor Sport

Summary	2015 Recommendations	Specific Facility Issues	Issues and Options
<p>Swimming Pools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient quantity of waterspace to meet the needs of Darlington residents now and in the future • The Dolphin plays a key role in swimming provision and the size, quality and location means it is well placed to do so • Continue to invest in the Dolphin Centre • Protect all existing provision • Education based should be protected • Seek to invest in the school pool network to facilitate greater community use and access • Co-ordinate usage and programming across pools and develop a joint approach to programming across the available waterspace • Maximize effectiveness of waterspace for different aquatic disciplines; particularly clubs, Darlington Swimming Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 FPM analysis confirms there continues to be a positive balance of supply exceeding demand • Increased usage at the pools from residential development, will however impact on swimming pools in the Borough, and the usage will add significantly to the management and maintenance costs of the public swimming pool sites • Capacity at pools will be more stretched • This is exacerbated as Wyvern Pool requires significant repair and is currently not being used • Hummersknott, Longfield and Education Village remain open, with increased hours • The 2015 strategy saw £900k investment in the Dolphin Centre • There are greater aquatic activities taking place across the stock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to maintain and Protect current swimming pool stock • Continued education access remains important; support Education Village, Humersknott and Longfield to maintain supply and demand balance and access • Increased pressure on the Dolphin centre means it will continue to be a priority for investment • Seek contributions from developments of 300 plus houses to enhance the swimming pool stock • Continue current strategy; programming will become increasingly important as pressure on capacity increases • Impact of Wyvern closure (200m2) will impact on the supply and demand in balance. • Growth will also impact on water space needs in the region of 73-186m2 • These two issues will mean waterspace needs will start to move into deficit • It will therefore be important to keep swimming pool needs under review and monitor the impacts of closure and growth in the long-term.



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<p>Sports Halls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing levels of sports hall provision • future sports hall provision should set out a need based on sports development and NGB requirements as opposed to general community needs • Explore the potential to deliver more flexible activity spaces • Support the enhancement of the current network of sports hall facilities on an on-going basis • Explore the opportunities for enhanced community access at sports halls on school sites. Seek to enhance provision and access at key sites for community sport and club / NGB use e.g. Futsal at Longfield • Focus on Hurworth School and Darlington College. Sites where community use is currently limited • Carmel College sports hall is now over 40-years old and poor quality. Polam Hall School does not have a sports hall • Support upgrades to the community centre network to facilitate greater community use for sport and physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 FPM analysis reflects the 2013 work • There remains a positive balance of supply exceeding demand across Darlington Borough by 13.2 badminton courts • Halls are also well located to meet current and future demand • New demand generated by residential development up to 2036, can be met by the existing Darlington supply of sports halls • However there will be increase in usage/throughput across the sports hall sites, which will have impacts, the capacity at sports halls will be more stretched. This will be further exacerbated if school sports hall access is reduced • There is capacity to cope but there will be impacts, particularly at Dolphin Centre; <i>need for on-going investment and modernisation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to maintain and Protect current sports hall stock • Continued education access important Priorities (see next slide) • Continued priority on Carmel and Pollam • Priority to address community use issues at Hurworth • Increased pressure on the Dolphin centre; priority for investment • Seek contributions from developments of 300 plus houses to enhance the sports hall stock • Consider investment in community centre network and small studio spaces to deliver physical activity agenda, particularly as part of masterplanning for strategic growth sites
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<p>Indoor Tennis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no indoor tennis courts in Darlington • Darlington is a priority for indoor tennis development for the LTA • LTA also wish to see improvement to outdoor provision on park and community sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are currently no indoor courts in Darlington • The LTA have run a demand analysis of the catchment area using a twenty-minute drive time around a focal point in Darlington • The analysis demonstrates that there is a total population of 346,255 which provides a potential tennis demand of 54,435 • When developing a new community indoor tennis centre the LTA look for a minimum potential tennis demand of 12,500, therefore the potential demand in Darlington exceeds the threshold • Darlington has therefore now been identified as a strategic location to develop indoor courts as part of the new LTA 5 Year Strategy. One of 72 target locations • Local tennis clubs have an aspiration for indoor provision • Polam Hall School have also expressed an interest in developing an indoor tennis venue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirations from both clubs and the LTA to develop indoor provision in Darlington • Early discussions were held in the context of the Darlington Sports Village project about potential indoor tennis but affordability and viability concerns meant this was not progressed • There is a need to evaluate the feasibility / viability of any potential indoor tennis centres • There is also a need to focus upon the improvement of tennis development pathways and the outdoor tennis offer.
<p>Indoor Bowls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the current Darlington Indoor Bowls Centre (DIBC). 8 rinks. On rink per 14-17,000 people. • The current centre requires some refurbishment, with a need to incorporate new disability provision and improvements to changing and toilet provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England Indoor Bowls Association confirm that DIBC remains the only indoor centre in the borough • There are 4 other centres in 30-minute drive-time. • Membership is declining, there are only 178 members (well below the 54 members per rink average) • Centre meets current and future needs • Sustainability is a key issue, other sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to protect and enhance DIBC to support its long-term sustainability



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		in the catchment could potentially meet needs in terms of capacity	
Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect and Enhance Eastbourne Athletics Track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eastbourne Sports Complex offers an eight-lane, county standard, synthetic athletics track, with a full-range of track and field events, floodlighting and athletics equipment. Opened in 1999 Track and club has continued to thrive. The track is home to Darlington Harriers and is also use Darlington Quakers and Tri Club. There is also strong usage from the school sports partnership The Darlington Harriers is the 6th largest athletics club in the in the North East with 349 affiliated members. Important club in England Athletics eyes. Darlington has a strong athletics infrastructure The Eastbourne track is however ageing and is reaching the end of its useful life. Given the deterioration its main purpose is as a training venue Operationally the Eastbourne site has a number of challenges, which do not help with the sustainability of the track Eastbourne track is an important provision in the regional picture, any loss would result in a strategic gap in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council are keen to ensure any investment in athletics at Eastbourne maximises both the usage of the site and the long-term sustainability of the whole Eastbourne facility. The Council recognise that athletics in the town is strong and provision is required. The sport is well established in the town and there is no desire to see it stop, the Council are keen to find a solution. The sport can contribute to health and well-being outcomes, but there are questions whether a redeveloped 8-lane track at Eastbourne and the investment required would provide the best return to support Council Plan outcomes An options appraisal has been undertaken, which sets out a number of options Given the strength of athletics across Darlington a hybrid or compact option is not seen as a long-term solution. There is also questions about the compatibility of football and athletics provision at Eastbourne, in whatever form.



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		provision	
Golf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golf provision in line with national and local needs; prioritising practice facilities for beginners and learners to introduce people to the game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darlington Golf Club now have a fully operational 6 bay driving range following a successful Inspired Facilities application Dinsdale Spa have also developed their practice ground so more golfers can access it. A driving range would still be an ambition The quality of the courses has improved especially at Blackwell Grange but they are still to re-develop the clubhouse Clubs are struggling to retain members however and some are under threat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently there is sufficient golf provision and all clubs are committed to growing participation and membership Maximising use at existing provision still remains a high priority, particularly amongst key target groups of juniors and women and also ensuring that the game can be played quicker Darlington Golf club to potentially be re-located as part of the Skerningham sites development (which is now designated as a Garden Community site). It is anticipated that the golf course would be relocated after around 5-7 years of development commencing. Needs to be assessed at the time.



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4.0 Strategic Direction, Action Plans, Implementation, Monitoring and Review

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section builds upon the updated assessment and summarises the priority recommendations that will be undertaken to support the delivery of indoor and outdoor sports in the Borough. As in 2015, each recommendation will contribute to the achievement of the strategy vision, which is:

'to develop a comprehensive, robust, up to date and user friendly assessment of sports provision and need in Darlington to ensure that the right amount and type of sports facilities are protected, and where appropriate enhanced to provide a range of quality, accessible and safe facilities, in the right place at the right time to meet the needs of the community now and in 2026.'

4.1.2 The recommendations have been developed using those agreed in 2015 as a base, and taking into account the changes that have been made to the infrastructure and the new priorities that have arisen in the period 2015 – 2020. Together, these policies and recommendations guide decision making on the future delivery of indoor and outdoor sports facilities across the borough.

Strategic Direction

4.1.3 The strategy continues to be based upon the following principles:

- **Ensure any new or re-developed provision in the borough is developed in-line with the Sports Facility and PPS Strategy priorities and the needs and evidence set out** - Ensure planners adopt the evidence base as appropriate and the strategy and action plan directs funding
- **The strategy will focus on a hierarchy of facilities – prioritising strategic hub sites and supporting links between sports** – recognising the benefits and long term sustainability of larger sites and of those providing for multiple sports, the strategy will promote the use of larger facilities and the co-location of facilities
- **Focus will be placed on maximising resources** – the strategy will seek to maximise the capacity and function of facilities and to ensure that provision is adapted to meet



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with future requirements. This will include the continued use of school sites, which play a critical role in the provision of sports facilities in Darlington Borough

- **Sustainability is a key focus** – all recommendations seek to deliver new and improved facilities in a sustainable manner, focusing on large sites that are efficient and effective to maintain, maximising the capacity of sites, supporting well established clubs and promoting good practice
- **Quality of facilities is as important as the amount of provision** – the strategy seeks to ensure that the borough contains the right amount of facilities, of the right quality and in the right place. While it promotes protection of current provision, it recognises the need to improve the quality of existing facilities and the subsequent investment required
- **Investment will focus upon interventions that will have the greatest impact** – the strategy seeks to prioritise investment into sites where the highest impact will be felt and where high numbers of users will benefit. It will seek to increase participation in sport and activity in terms of both numbers and standards.

4.1.4 The strategy seeks to promote partnership working, not only between users and providers of facilities, but also between different sports. There are many benefits of joint working and knowledge sharing, and partnership working will be increasingly important if the needs of all sports are to be met.

Strategic Objectives

4.1.5 The objectives for the strategy document remain the same. In recognition of the increasing role that more informal, recreational based activity has to play in sports participation, an additional objective has however been added, which is to facilitate opportunities for recreational activity.

4.1.6 Based on the needs and evidence set out, for all sports, Darlington Borough Council and its partners will seek to:

Protect

- SO1: Safeguard all existing sports facilities in line with Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework, irrespective of ownership and the degree of access and use.



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This strategy will clearly define any facilities that are not required to meet current or projected future needs

- SO2: Protect access to sports facilities by promoting long term agreements with schools and other landowners to facilitate ongoing investment and improvement
- SO3: Maximise community use of indoor and outdoor sports facilities where this will benefit the overall facility stock.

Enhance

- SO4: Ensure that the quality of facilities provided is appropriate to the level and standard of play that is sustained and that it promotes participation in sport
- SO5: Ensure that sports facilities are accompanied by appropriate ancillary facilities (e.g. sports lighting and changing provision)
- SO6: Ensure that facilities are maintained appropriately for the activities that they are sustaining and to maximise long term capacity
- SO7: Work in partnership with key stakeholders and voluntary organisations to secure funding.

Provide

- SO8: Address existing deficiencies in provision
- SO9: Ensure that new developments contribute towards the provision of new sports facilities and the enhancement of existing facilities
- SO10: Support clubs in the management and development of facilities
- SO11: Support the creation of appropriate facilities in order to provide informal recreational opportunities.

Recommendations

- 4.1.7 The sport specific recommendations are set out in the Sections that follow. They link to the above strategic objectives and outline the key priorities for each sport.
- 4.1.8 For ease of reference, recommendations are summarised by sport and justifications for each recommendation, drawing upon the evidence presented in the assessment are provided.
- 4.1.9 An action plan setting out how the recommendations will be delivered and measured is provided later in this document.



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4.2 Recommendations

Football

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites
SO1 (Protect)	1 Protect active stock of football pitches in Darlington through the inclusion of appropriate policy in the Darlington Local Plan. Any pitches which are not required to be retained will be documented in the site by site table at the end of this strategy.	There are existing and projected deficiencies in football provision and a consequential need to ensure that all facilities are available for future need.	n/a
SO2 (Protect)	2 Protect existing security of access with timely negotiation of community use agreements with schools and with landowners where appropriate. Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed. Secure community use at other key venues that currently offer community use without any long term guarantees	Existing school sites are central to the provision for football in Darlington. Loss of these facilities would generate significant issues	Maintaining relationships - Longfield Academy, Hummersknott Academy, Carmel College, Wyvern College, The Education Village Securing community use – Hurworth School, Gurney Pease Academy, St Aidans RC High School



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<p>SO8 (Provide)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Provide additional capacity in the Borough for training and match play through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that all 3G pitches remain on the FA pitch register Maximising the use of existing AGPs for match play as well as training the provision of one additional AGP. The new facility should meet with FA specification and constructed to appropriate standard for inclusion on the FA 3G pitch register pitch quality and maintenance improvements (see R4) additional grass pitch provision linking with existing clubs and / or new housing developments where explicit need is identified and where housing development is of sufficient size to provide on site facility (with appropriate ancillary provision) 	<p>FA demand modelling indicates that one additional AGP is required to meet current demand and this is reflected in the analysis of existing AGP usage, which demonstrates that facilities are at capacity.</p> <p>In addition, there is scope to accommodate further play on the existing AGPs. Longer term, population growth may generate further demand for an additional AGP and this should be monitored.</p> <p>While there are pressures on existing grass pitches, there are several unused sites and some scope to increase usage of other large sites.</p> <p>This should be considered prior to new provision being required elsewhere. The location of housing developments however may mean that new grass pitch provision to enable the set up of a new club is required to service the larger strategic growth areas</p>	<p>All pitches require regular testing to ensure that they remain on the FA pitch register. The pitch at Hummersknott Academy has recently been resurface to ensure that its registration is retained</p> <p>New AGP - LFFP suggests opportunity for second pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex or Wyvern Academy. Viability assessment required to determine most appropriate location. Hurworth School have also expressed an interest, however community use at the school site is currently limited.</p> <p>Work with sports clubs to maximise use of key sites – Carmel College has recently received investment to improve pitch quality and currently has no community use (although the site is available).</p> <p>Opportunity to provide small multi pitch site on strategic growth area in order to facilitate the creation of new local club from new population (and to mitigate the capacity pressures that the new population will generate).</p>
<p>SO4, SO5, SO6, SO7 - Enhance</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>Address current and potential longer term issues with the quality of football provision by initially improving the existing pitch stock as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving existing poor quality pitches (focusing on sites where quality 	<p>Capacity is limited by poor quality pitches and there is a real danger that more pitches will fall into the poor category, which will exacerbate existing capacity issues.</p> <p>Higher quality pitches have greater capacity to sustain play without deterioration. Scenario testing demonstrates that a reduction in quality (leading to a reduction in capacity) would exacerbate the existing pressures on pitches.</p>	<p>Key Sites; Impacting quality;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wyvern Academy (currently poor). Heighington Playing Fields (currently poor and one pitch frequently out of use), pavilion also requires upgrade <p>Sites where play is high / close to capacity;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darlington RA – Pitch Improvements



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	<p>impacts capacity, pitches sustaining higher levels of use and multi pitch sites). This should focus upon;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment into pitch maintenance, including engagement with FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) • Capital investment to address pitch issues identified through engagement with PIP • Improvement of ancillary facilities where there is an identified need • Supporting improvement to facilities required to meet pyramid clubs • Fencing pitches in public parks where quality becomes an issue due to public use • Resurfacing AGPs where required to maintain inclusion on 3G pitch register <p>Focus activity for competitive football on key hub sites and improve the quality of these facilities. This maximises the opportunities for large clubs. There is potential that this may mean that single pitch sites receive</p>	<p>Focusing upon larger, multi pitch sites ensures both a cost effective approach to provision, but also ensures that the needs of the larger clubs are more effectively met.</p>	<p>(surface is poor, compacted), ancillary facilities also require improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longfield Academy – Pitch improvements (showing signs of compaction, heavy usage, • Hummersknott Academy – pitch surface adequate but would benefit from maintenance improvements to ensure usage can be sustained <p>Multi pitch sites / sites that are valuable to football and / or offer potential to increase usage if quality was improved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Village (limited quality, uneven and undulating, deteriorated since previous PPS) • Eastbourne Sports Complex • HACSA Sports Field (grass cover / ancillary provision), no ancillary provision <p>Other opportunities – Tommy Crooks Park (currently limited use and large site). Pitch requires improvement alongside provision of new changing facilities.</p> <p>AGPs –All AGPs currently meet quality standards, but require ongoing maintenance and timely resurfacing to ensure that this is retained</p>
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		<p>less formal use longer term – these should instead be promoted for informal football opportunities.</p> <p>Opportunities for clubs to lease sites should be considered where this could bring overall improvements to quality.</p>		
SO9 (Provide)	5	<p>Identify a solution for the future of Darlington FC in order to secure the clubs’ long term future and ensure that participation and progression is not inhibited by facilities</p>	<p>While the club currently ground shares with the rugby club, significant works may be required if the team continues to progress through the football pyramid in order to bring the facility to the level required.</p>	<p>Darlington FC</p>
SO11 (provide)	6	<p>Proactively appropriate facilities to support recreational football. To maximise the sustainability and use these spaces, as well as the benefits to the local community, this action should be delivered as part of a joined up approach with other sports. This should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive identification of sites • Exploration of opportunities to effectively introduce football activity – for example gate technology on MUGAs, organised informal activity in partnership with other governing bodies. There is 	<p>Recreational football is becoming increasingly important and is now a key priority of the FF and FA. Football, linked with other sports, provides an opportunity to get increasing numbers of people active as well as to maximise the usage of some existing facilities that are under utilised.</p> <p>The governing bodies of each sport are all seeking to achieve the same goals – increasing activity and knowledge sharing would maximise the benefits of a partnership approach.</p>	<p>LFFP prioritise several grass pitch sites as offering opportunities for informal football. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Lodge Park • North Park • South Park • Coleridge Centre <p>There are also several floodlit MUGAs located across Darlington that would benefit from better utilisation, specifically;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firth Moor Community Centre • Middleton St George Community Centre • West Park Academy • Wyvern Academy • Carmel College



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		potential for MUGAs to support a partnership between football and tennis		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Park • Longfield School • Whinfield Primary • Red Hall • Darlington College • Skerne Park Primary <p>Opportunities at local MUGAs, as well as above sites should be explored for the promotion of recreational football. There are particular opportunities to explore a partnership with tennis.</p>
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Rugby Union

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 Ensure that both rugby clubs have access to sufficient facilities in the first instance by protecting existing sites and ensuring that any loss of pitches is only supported where an equivalent or better in terms of capacity is provided.	Both rugby clubs are thriving clubs and require effective facilities in order to continue their activity. Existing facilities are insufficient in capacity terms and the loss of further rugby pitches would be detrimental to rugby in the Borough.	Darlington RFC Darlington Mowden Park RFC
SO8, SO10 (Provide) SO4, SO6 (Protect)	2 Create additional capacity for both rugby clubs as follows; Darlington Mowden Park (DMP and Elizabethans) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve maintenance and invest in drainage to enhance existing pitches. 	Both rugby clubs are currently overplaying pitches. Pitch capacity can however be improved by enhancing maintenance and investing in drainage. Scenario modelling reveals that these improvements improve the current picture, but for Darlington Mowden Park, continue to result in insufficient capacity. For Darlington RFC, pitch improvements will enhance capacity and pitches will be able to meet current and projected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMP / DMP Elizabethans • Darlington RFC



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional pitch capacity to meet increased needs and accommodate all matches and training. This can be delivered in several ways; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum of 5 grass pitches of high quality (D3 / M3) and all with floodlights - 1 3G AGP, 2 grass pitches and 2 mini pitches – allows small amount of spare capacity on grass pitches but assumes that all rugby training takes place on the AGP. Any use of the grass pitches for rugby training would mean additional pitches are required. Four senior grass pitches (3 floodlit) and 2 mini pitches as a minimum are required in addition to an AGP if training takes place on grass 	<p>future demand.</p> <p>Any AGPs that are to be used for rugby union activity should be WR Reg 22 compliant, with retesting every 2 years to sustain certification.</p>	
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		<p>Darlington RFC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve maintenance to a minimum of D2 on all pitches • Support improvements to drainage to a minimum of D2 on all pitches • Provide additional floodlights – 3 floodlit pitches are required to effectively meet training needs <p>There is potential that an AGP available to both clubs could be created. While located at the home base for one club, this could be used for training by the second club, therefore reducing the demand for additional facilities. This should be explored further but should be considered separate to the proposed new AGP for football (ie. the new AGP for football is not able to cater for rugby need).</p>		
S05 (Enhance)	3	Support rugby clubs in the provision of appropriate ancillary facilities.	<p>Social facilities and appropriate changing provision are a key component of a successful rugby club.</p> <p>The RFU provides guidelines as to the facilities that should be expected and the specifications that should be met. Darlington RFC indicate that their existing facilities do not meet current needs and require upgrade.</p>	Darlington RFC



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Rugby League

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 There is no existing club activity for rugby league. The Durham PPS identified use of Darlington RFC but this was not evident at the time of the preparation of this PPS. New developmental activity has however started at Eastbourne Sports Complex in the last few weeks.	Rugby league activity only just started within Borough.	Monitor demand for rugby league and ensure access to adequate pitch provision if the need arises

Cricket

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 Safeguard all existing cricket facilities. All active sites should be protected. All former cricket grounds should be evaluated as to whether they provide an opportunity to provide additional facilities (See Recommendation 2)	Existing provision only just adequate to meet demand Former pitch sites	All sites



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<p>S02 (Protect)</p> <p>S08</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Ensure clubs have access to facilities required to sustain current activities by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Haughton CC to secure long term access to their ground Working with clubs at capacity to deliver additional facilities to meet current / projected future need 	<p>Haughton CC have only rolling annual lease on their ground. Loss of this pitch would see provision become insufficient. Lack of long term security also limits access to funding for the club.</p> <p>Cricket in the borough is becoming constrained by facilities. Darlington RA are close to capacity at the current time and their aspirations for growth cannot be met within the confines of existing provision.</p>	<p>New Lease – Haughton CC</p> <p>New provision (anticipated 1 pitch) to be delivered through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New pitch on urban extension Provision of facilities at a school site Reinstatement of facilities at former cricket ground. <p>Any new site, however delivered, should link with an existing club and function as a satellite facility. The club should be involved in the development of the site.</p>
<p>S04 (Enhance)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Work with clubs to prioritise improvements to the quality of existing cricket club bases. Key areas for improvement relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wicket and outfield condition (including drainage) surface levelling changing pavilions. <p>All pitches should be fit for the purposes they are intended and club bases should meet with NGB specifications.</p> <p>All sites for cricket should include</p>	<p>The need for pitches to sustain high levels of use means that quality is essential if resources are to be maximised. This will be particularly important if aspirations to increase participation are achieved. The capacity of wickets that are not good quality is reduced and this therefore directly impacts upon the number of games that can be sustained. There is a particular need to improve provision at Cockerton CC, Middleton St George CC, Haughton CC and Darlington RA.</p> <p>ECB Research demonstrates that ancillary facilities are as important as the actual pitch in attracting new players and retaining existing facilities.</p> <p>The quality of cricket facilities is essential in the enjoyment and delivery of the game.</p>	<p>Facility Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cockerton Cricket Club – flooding / drainage Darlington CC – root growth / poor bounce. Square requires relaying Darlington RA – levelling of outfield/ wear and tear Rockcliffe Park – outfield requires levelling Haughton CC – outfield is uneven <p>Ancillary Provision</p> <p>Haughton CC – pavilion in poor condition Middleton St George – pavilion in poor condition, windows and doors leak and no showers or heating provided Rockcliffe Pak – seeking standalone</p>



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		full changing accommodation and shelter as well as appropriate parking.		clubhouse
S04 S05 S06 (Enhance)	4	<p>Support cricket clubs in the improvement of training facilities to enhance club sustainability and improve overall performance. This should include improvements (or provision of) both appropriate training nets and artificial wickets for all clubs. The aspiration is for all clubs to have;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one artificial wicket • Access to appropriate training nets 	Lack of training facilities negatively impacts upon the overall capacity of a club, the attractiveness of a club and the quality of cricket that can be played. Artificial wickets can be used for both training and junior match play, meaning that they improve match capacity as well as training opportunities. Artificial wickets provide an effective way of more easily and cost effectively managing junior fixtures.	<p>Cockerton CC – Non turf Darlington RA – Non turf. Review required to practice area Darlington RA Non turf practice nets and mobile net cage Rockcliffe Park –practice training facility Haughton CC – renovations to non turf wicket Middleton St George – non turf wicket</p>
S04 (Enhance)	5	Support clubs to obtain appropriate maintenance equipment to enable the improvement of quality issues and ensure the ongoing sustainability of cricket in the Borough.	Maintenance of pitches is a key component of quality. Without effective maintenance, capital investment is futile and pitches are unsustainable long term. Cricket in particular requires dedicated maintenance and technical competence. Technical reports have been prepared to support this assessment.	
S03 (protect) S07 (enhance), S08, S011 (provide)	6	Investigate opportunities to create a new informal cricket venue for public use in Darlington Borough.	<p>Current ECB priorities include the development of non turf wickets in order to generate interest in informal cricket. This may have a knock on benefit on demand for midweek and / or formal club cricket.</p> <p>Consideration should be given as to whether there is potential for joint working with other NGBs in the development of informal sport.</p>	Parks site required



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S04, S07 (enhance)	7	Support cricket clubs in the implementation of ECB participation schemes in order to enhance sustainability, as well as to address the existing gaps in participation.	The ongoing development of youth and female cricket is essential if cricket is to remain stable in the Borough. The importance of growing female cricket has now taken upon such importance given the existing gap in participation that clubs should be prioritised for facility improvements where they are able to demonstrate commitment to new participation initiatives.	All cricket clubs
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Hockey

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites	
S01 (Protect)	1	Ensure that existing sand based AGP at Carmel College is protected for use by hockey club	Site is important in meeting demand for hockey in the Borough	Carmel College
S04 / S06 (Enhance)	2	Ensure ongoing investment into appropriate maintenance procedures across the lifespan of the pitch to ensure that facility quality is maximised and to maintain the longevity of the new surface	Adequate maintenance will ensure the facility remains fit for purpose to meet the needs of the hockey club for years to come	Carmel College
S08 / S09 (Provide) S03	3	Continue to work in partnership to ensure that the club are able to access a high quality facility and that any issues with the facility are addressed swiftly. It should be ensured that hockey continues to be prioritised on this facility.	This is an important site for hockey. Existing working relationships are positive and should be continued.	Carmel College



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Tennis

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 Retain existing club based tennis courts and seek to improve capacity at these facilities through the addition of floodlighting	Both club bases are now at capacity with no remaining spare for further club members. Floodlighting adds capacity to the existing courts. These clubs deliver at least 50% of tennis in the borough and are therefore valuable in meeting current and future demand	Wellfield Tennis Club New Blackwell Tennis Club
SO4 (enhance)	2 Support clubs in the improvement of facilities where issues have been identified. Both clubs should include access to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • courts of an appropriate standard; and • adequate pavilion (including toilets) and shelter 	Quality of facilities is essential if tennis activity is to be sustained	Courts at Wellfield Tennis Club require resurfacing
SO1, SO2 (protect), SO4, SO5 (enhance), SO8 (Provide)	3 Seek to enhance the value of public tennis courts in the Borough by working alongside the LTA to implement new technological systems to improve the customer journey. In order to maximise the chances of success, the quality of courts will need to be improved - improvements to the court surface are particularly required. Following investment into the facilities, it is likely that targeted marketing and organised activities will be necessary to drive interest in	LTA insight demonstrates that public tennis courts are key to improving participation in an area and that new technological advances will help to improve the customer journey and enhance participation significantly. These systems are also able to manage the floodlighting of courts. Court quality is however essential if these initiatives are to be successful and existing parks sites will require upgrade. Demand modelling indicates that both public venues have a strong catchment area and therefore demonstrate significant potential penetration for tennis.	Stanhope Park (LTA modelling indicates that this should be priority) Brinkburn Dene



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		<p>the new facilities.</p> <p>Public courts would also benefit from the installation of floodlighting to extend availability.</p>		
<p>S01, S02 (protect), S04, S05 (enhance), S08 (Provide)</p>	4	<p>Protect school courts and ensure that they offer a clear prospect for community use through qualitative improvements. These should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvements (i.e. floodlighting) to increase the hours of community use, including those on school sites; • quality improvements to tennis courts to enhance the quality of play and skill development (e.g. resurfacing, deep cleaning); and • provision of improved changing and ancillary facilities. <p>There will also be a need to increase promotional activity (see Recommendation 5 below).</p>	<p>Longer term, facilities on school sites will be an essential part of the tennis infrastructure if supply is to meet demand.</p> <p>The Education Village and Longfield Academy both have floodlights and therefore offer significant opportunity to meet community as well as curricular need. The Education Village is located on the other side of town to the majority of courts and therefore offers potential to provide tennis to a different group of residents than is currently effectively served.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Village • Longfield Academy • All other school sites with tennis courts. Polam Hall School have recently expressed interest in working with the LTA
<p>S03 (Protect)</p>	5	<p>Increase promotional activity for tennis across the borough linking with school sites and promoting the availability of the public venues that are accessible free of charge. There are also opportunities to improve the opportunities for youth players to join clubs. This should include joint working between the Borough Council and LTA.</p>	<p>Opportunities to increase participation in Darlington Borough and existing sites have capacity to accommodate this additional play.</p> <p>The existing transition into clubs for younger players is poor and there are opportunities for the LTA to work with clubs to improve the offer.</p> <p>There is also a need to improve the visibility, awareness and offer at public venues.</p>	n/a



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<p>SO11 (provide)</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Deliver informal recreational opportunities to participate in sport, including tennis. To maximise the sustainability and use these spaces, as well as the benefits to the local community, this action should be delivered as part of a joined up approach with other sports. This should include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive identification of sites • Exploration of opportunities to develop hub sites for informal activity ofr example informal activity in partnership on MUGAs with other governing bodies • Sharing of learning, particularly around technology, with other NGBs 	<p>Recreational football is becoming increasingly important and is now a key priority of the FF and FA. Football, linked with other sports, provides an opportunity to get increasing numbers of people active as well as to maximise the usage of some existing facilities that are under utilised.</p> <p>The governing bodies of each sport are all seeking to achieve the same goals – increasing activity and knowledge sharing would maximise the benefits of a partnership approach.</p>	<p>Opportunities at local MUGAs should be explored, potentially alongside football. The Football Foundation / FA / DBC have identified Firthmoor Community Centre and Middleton St George Community Centre as key potential projects for investment.</p>
<p>SO8</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Work alongside the LTA to explore the LTA’s desire to provide an indoor tennis facility in Darlington. This is identified as a strategic target for the LTA.</p> <p>This should include detailed viability and feasibility work, demand modelling and consultation with local clubs and the tennis community.</p>	<p>Darlington Borough has been identified as a key priority for a new indoor tennis centre in LTA insight and is a strategic priority for the LTA. Further research is required to determine whether this facility is required and the opportunities to deliver such a facility sustainability and in a manner that positively impacts tennis in Darlington.</p> <p>Polam Hall School has recently expressed an interest in this opportunity. Polam Hall have identified the requirement for new sports hall provision to meet the needs of the curriculum going forward. Existing indoor sports provision on site is inadequate.</p>	<p>n/a</p>



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Bowls

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 Resist the loss of any club based facilities unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Former bowling greens that are now redundant are not required to meet current or projected future need.	All existing clubs have capacity to accommodate additional members. All current sites are however well used and the ageing population is likely to positively impact on demand for bowls. There is therefore a need to retain existing facilities and to promote access to these sites.	All clubs
SO4 SO5 SO6 SO7 (Enhance)	2 Support enhancements/upgrades to existing greens where there is evidence that the playing experience is currently impacted and where improvements would lead to increased community use and help to achieve financial sustainability by increasing membership. All bowling greens should include access to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A green of appropriate standard • Adequate pavilion (including toilets) and shelter 	The quality of bowling greens continues to represent the key priority for clubs.	North Lodge – key priorities include reroofing / internal refurbishment, enhancements to bowling green surface, ongoing maintenance North Park, refers to footpaths, ongoing maintenance of playing surface South Park – improvement to playing surface to address defective areas,
SO8 (Provide)	3 Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership. To maximise the sustainability of bowls as a sport, efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans. This is important for the sustainability of	Existing clubs have capacity for additional bowling greens and would benefit from higher memberships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •



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		existing clubs as well as the growth of bowls as a sport.		
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Indoor Sport

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Justification	Relevant Sites and Key Actions
SO1 (Protect)	1 Resist the loss of any swimming pool or sports hall sites unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Resist the loss of any other specialist provision unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Protect West Park Cycling Facility Protect Squash provision in the town Protect Gymnastics at Faverdale; improve facilities internally and support further phase developments Protect Boxing club provision.	All Swimming pool sites are well used and well located to meet current and future demands. The impact of any closures alongside growth would impact on the supply and demand balance. All sports hall sites are well used and well located to meet current and future demands. The impact of any closures alongside growth would impact on the supply and demand balance. Specialist sites are well used.	All Swimming Pools All Sports Halls All specialist indoor / built facility sites
SO2 (Protect)	2 Protect existing access to swimming pools and sports halls on education sites Ensure timely negotiation of community use agreements with	Existing school sites are central to the provision for swimming in Darlington. Loss of these facilities would impact on overall supply and demand balance Existing school sites are central to the provision for sports halls in Darlington. Loss of these facilities would impact on	Hummersknott Academy, Longfield and Education Village All School sports hall sites



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		<p>schools and with landowners where appropriate. Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed</p> <p>Secure community use at other key venues that currently offer community use without any long-term guarantees.</p>	overall supply and demand balance	Securing community use at Hurworth School
S04 S05 S06 (Enhance)	3	<p>Support enhancements /upgrades to the existing built facility infrastructure.</p> <p>Enhance West Park Cycling Facility Enhance Squash provision in the town Enhance Gymnastics at Faverdale; improve facilities internally and support further phase developments Enhance Boxing club provision</p>	The quality of facility provision is a key priority.	All sites
S08 and S09 (Provide)	4	<p>Work alongside the LTA to explore the LTA's desire to provide an indoor tennis facility in Darlington. This is identified as a strategic target for the LTA.</p> <p>This should include detailed viability and feasibility work, demand modelling and consultation with local clubs and the tennis community.</p>	<p>LTA modelling demonstrates that Darlington is a key priority for indoor tennis – this is a strategic priority for the LTA.</p> <p>Polam Hall School has recently expressed an interest in this opportunity. Polam Hall have identified the requirement for new sports hall provision to meet the needs of the curriculum going forward. Existing indoor sports provision on site is inadequate.</p>	<p>Polam Hall School Any other potential sites</p>

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S08 and S09 (Provide)	5	<p>Seek investment to the swimming pool and sports hall infra-structure from major developments of over 300 houses</p> <p>Provide new provision to meet identified gaps</p>	<p>Supply and demand clearly illustrates that there will be impacts of the projected growth that will require financial contributions. This will be exacerbated if the supply changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polam School Sports Hall • Carmel School Sports Hall • Small flexible activity spaces • New athletics track at Eastbourne or elsewhere if track cannot be delivered at Eastbourne Sports Complex. 	<p>Dolphin Centre</p> <p>All other swimming pool and sports hall sites</p>
S08 and S09 (Provide)	6	<p>Support the improvement of the facilities for athletics to ensure long term sustainability of the sport within the Borough.</p> <p>Investment into the upgrade of facilities at Eastbourne Sports Complex is currently the preferred option</p>	<p>New facility required to ensure that athletics in the town remains sustainable. Existing facility no longer meets needs of athletics club</p>	<p>Eastbourne Sports Complex</p>



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4.2.1 In relation to both playing fields and built facilities, it is necessary to ensure that the process relating to S106 agreements is as streamlined as possible and maximises the effectiveness of contributions towards community sport. The below general recommendations therefore relate to the implementation of this process.

General Recommendations

	Recommendation	Justification	Key Sites
General 1	Adopt use of Sport England Playing Pitch and Facility Calculator in the approach to determining S106 contributions	Sport England Playing Pitch and Facility Calculator provide a robust and transparent approach	N/a
General 2	Review existing S106 process to maximise effectiveness for developing contributions to community sport		N/a

4.1 Implementation

- 4.1.1 As in the 2015 strategy document, an action plan has been developed to demonstrate how the action will be achieved, by when and by whom.
- 4.1.2 The plan is set out in the following pages. For the purposes of this action plan, short term is equal to 0-1 year, medium is 1-3 years and long term is 3-5 years.
- 4.1.3 Further information relating to the action plan can be obtained from Mike Crawshaw at Darlington Borough Council (01325 405703).

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Action Plan

Link to Strategic Objectives	Recommendation	Lead Partner Agencies	Timeframe	Measure of Success
S01	Protect active stock playing fields through the inclusion of appropriate policy in the Darlington Local Plan. Any pitches which are not required to be retained will be documented in the site by site table at the end of this strategy.	DBC Planning / Leisure NGBs, Sport England	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites should be protected, enhanced and any sites that are no longer required to meet current or projected future need. The loss of any site not required should result in replacement provision and the list should be regularly updated in line with strategy monitoring processes. S02
S09	Adopt use of Sport England Playing Pitch and Facility Calculator in the approach to determining S106 contributions	DBC Planning / Leisure / Sport England	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Sport England to discuss use of calculators Ongoing use of tool
S09	Review existing S106 process to maximise effectiveness for developing contributions to community sport	DBC Planning / Leisure	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting to discuss and agree revised S106 process Integration of proposed approach in policy and practice
S02, S08,	<p>Protect existing security of access with timely negotiation of community use agreements with schools and with landowners where appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed.</p> <p>Secure community use at other key venues (Hurworth School/ St Aidans RC school) that currently offer community use without any long term guarantees</p>	DBC Leisure / Children's Services	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Hurworth School / St Aidans RC High School CUAs are in place, kept up to date and are enforced through planning conditions



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S03	Work with schools and key sports clubs to maximise the use of school venues	DBC Leisure / Children's Services /	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of potential partner clubs for Carmel College • Strong usage of all large school sites
S04	Continue to operate the strategic hierarchy of pitch provision across the authority	DBC Leisure / Children's Services / NGBS	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All subsequent recommendations are undertaken with this strategic hierarchy in mind
S07, S04, S06	Work with providers to ensure that all 3G pitches remain on FA pitch register and that 3g Pitches continue to be promoted for competitive fixtures.	DBC Leisure, DFA / FF	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pitches retained on FA pitch register • Meeting with The FA / Clubs / Schools to promote use of AGPs • Meeting with clubs to maximise use of all accessible venues in the Borough
S08	Provide one new 3G AGP. The new facility should meet with FA specification and constructed to appropriate standard for inclusion on the FA 3G pitch register			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New AGP in Borough following viability assessment • Ongoing work with Teeside Youth Alliance to consider potential for new 3G pitch to be used as league central venue
S08	Support the provision of additional grass pitch provision, linking with existing or new clubs, where explicit need is identified and where housing development is of sufficient size to provide on site facility (with appropriate ancillary provision)	DBC Leisure / The FA	Medium - Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential new multi pitch venue located in strategic growth area
S04, S05, S06, S07 -	<p>Address current and potential longer term issues with the quality of football provision by initially improving the existing pitch stock as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving existing poor quality pitches (focusing on sites where quality impacts capacity, pitches sustaining higher levels of use and multi pitch 	DBC Leisure / FA / Grounds Management Association	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission of Pitch Improvement assessments (PIP) for priority sites that have not been assessed • Tailored maintenance schedules for key sites through work alongside providers • Improved pitch quality – to include no poor pitches



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	<p>sites). This should focus upon;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment into pitch maintenance, including engagement with FA Pitch Improvement Programme (PIP) Capital investment to address pitch issues identified through engagement with PIP Improvement of ancillary facilities where there is an identified need Supporting improvement to facilities required to meet pyramid clubs Fencing pitches in public parks where quality becomes an issue due to public use Resurfacing AGPs where required to maintain inclusion on 3G pitch register <p>Key priorities include Poor quality sites - Wyvern Academy / Heighington Playing Fields</p> <p>Sites close to capacity – Darlington RA / Longfield Academy / Hummersknott Academy</p> <p>Valuable Multi Pitch Sites – The Education Village / Eastbourne Sports Complex/ HACSA Sports Field</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in usage of poor pitches Successful funding applications Creation of leasing policy
SO10	Identify a solution for the future of Darlington FC in order to secure the clubs’ long term future and ensure that participation and progression is not inhibited by facilities	FA / Club	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of long term solution with club
SO11	Proactively identify appropriate facilities (for example MUGAs) to support recreational sport. To maximise the sustainability and use these spaces, as well as the benefits to the local community, this action should be delivered as part of a joined up approach with other sports. This should include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive identification of sites 	FA / FF / LTA / DBC Leisure / other NGBS	Short – Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of engagement plans alongside community based operators Established partnerships between NGBs Exploration of potential opportunities to use S106 funding to support key projects Increasing informal participation Introduction of relevant technology where appropriate.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of opportunities to introduce activity, including potential partnerships between sports • Consideration of use of technology – for example gate technology. <p>The Football Foundation / FA / DBC has identified Firthmoor Community Centre and Middleton St George Community Centre as potential projects for investment.</p>			
Rugby Union				
S08, S010 S04, S06	<p>Create additional capacity for both rugby clubs as follows;</p> <p>Darlington Mowden Park (DMP and Elizabethans)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve maintenance and invest in drainage to enhance existing pitches. • Provide additional pitch capacity through either; • Minimum of 5 floodlit grass pitches of high quality (D3 / M3) • 1 3G AGP (to be used for training), 2 grass pitches and 2 mini pitches • Four senior grass pitches (3 floodlit) and 2 mini pitches as a minimum are required in addition to an AGP if training takes place on grass <p>Darlington RFC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve maintenance to a minimum of D2 on all pitches • Support improvements to drainage to a minimum of D2 on all pitches • Provide additional floodlights – 3 floodlit pitches are required to effectively meet training needs 	RFU / Clubs	Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved maintenance regimes • Investment into pitch quality • Provision of additional floodlights • Additional capacity created (DMP) • Meeting to discuss joint working between two clubs.
S05	Support rugby clubs in the provision of appropriate ancillary facilities. Darlington RFC facilities require further investigation currently	Club / RFU	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgraded ancillary provision at Darlington RFC • Successful funding application



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Rugby League				
S010	Monitor demand for rugby league and ensure access to appropriate facilities if required.	DBC Leisure RFL	Short – Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in rugby league evident within the borough
Cricket				
S01 / S02 / S08	<p>Ensure clubs have access to facilities required to sustain current activities by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Haughton CC to secure long term access to their ground <p>Working with clubs at capacity to deliver additional facilities to meet current / projected future need. This may include new provision (anticipated 1 pitch), linked with existing club, to be delivered through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New pitch on urban extension Provision of facilities at a school site Reinstatement of facilities at former cricket ground. 	DBC Leisure / DBC Planning Durham Cricket Board	Medium – Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term security for Haughton CC New cricket provision Increase in participation
S04	<p>Work with clubs to prioritise improvements to the quality of existing cricket club bases. Key areas for improvement relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance procedures Wicket and outfield condition (including drainage) surface levelling changing pavilions. <p>All clubs require qualitative improvements.</p>	DBC Leisure / DBC Planning Durham Cricket Board	Short – Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission of Pitch Improvement assessments (PIP) for priority sites that have not been assessed Improved pitch quality – to include no poor pitches Successful funding applications
S04 / S05 / S06	Support cricket clubs in the improvement of training facilities to enhance club sustainability and improve	DBC Leisure / DBC Planning	Short – Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each club benefitting from non turf wicket Each club having access to on site training



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	<p>overall performance. This should include improvements (or provision of) both appropriate training nets and artificial wickets for all clubs. The aspiration is for all clubs to have;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one artificial wicket • Access to appropriate training nets <p>Key priorities include – non turf (Cockerton, Darlington RA, Haughton CC and Middleton St George) and practice nets for Rockcliffe Park / Darlington RA.</p>	Durham Cricket Board		<p>provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful funding applications
S04	Support clubs to obtain appropriate maintenance equipment to enable the improvement of quality issues and ensure the ongoing sustainability of cricket in the Borough.	Club DCB.DBC Leisure	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored maintenance schedules for key sites • Improved pitch quality – to include no poor pitches • Successful funding applications
S03 S07 S08, S011	Investigate opportunities to create a new informal cricket venue for public use in Darlington Borough.	DBC Leisure / ECB	Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New site introduced • Successful participation initiatives launched • Increase in participation
S04, S07	Support cricket clubs in the implementation of ECB participation schemes in order to enhance sustainability, as well as to address the existing gaps in participation.	DBC Leisure / ECB	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful participation initiatives launched • Increase in participation, particularly amongst youth and female groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hockey 				
S01	Ensure that sand based AGP at Carmel College is protected for use by hockey club and that hockey usage is prioritised.	DBC Leisure / School / EH	Short Term and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of sand based surface • Prioritisation of hockey • Increasing participation
S04 / S06	Ensure ongoing investment into appropriate maintenance procedures across the lifespan of sand based AGP at Carmel College, and continue partnership approach to facility management.	DBC Leisure / School / EH	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored maintenance plan that is adhered to

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Tennis				
S01	Retain existing club based tennis courts and seek to improve capacity at these facilities through the addition of floodlighting	Club / DBC / LTA	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of floodlights
S04	Support clubs in the improvement of facilities where issues have been identified. Both clubs should include access to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> courts of an appropriate standard; and adequate pavilion (including toilets) and shelter Wellfield LTC is currently a key priority	Club / DBC / LTA	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resurfaced courts at Wellfield TC Retention of quality at New Blackwell Successful funding applications
S01, S04, S08	Seek to enhance the value of public tennis courts at Stanhope Park and Brinkburn Dene by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> working alongside the LTA to investigate new technological systems to improve the customer journey. Improving court quality Investing in marketing and organised activities Floodlighting courts. 	DBC Leisure / LTA	Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment into court quality Installation of new systems Successful launch of new participation initiatives Increased participation Identification of S106 funding to support upgrade of park tennis provision Installation of floodlights, linked with new technological systems.
S01, S04, S08	Protect school courts and ensure that they offer a clear prospect for community use through qualitative improvements. These should include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improvements (i.e. floodlighting) to increase the hours of community use, including those on school sites; quality improvements to tennis courts to enhance the quality of play and skill development (e.g. resurfacing, deep cleaning); and provision of improved changing and ancillary facilities. The Education Village / Longfield Academy in particular should be prioritised	LTA/DBC Leisure / Schools	Medium – Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in community usage of school tennis courts Introduction of tennis development schemes at key sites.



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S03	Increase promotional activity for tennis across the borough linking with schoolsites and promoting the availability of the public venues that are accessible free of charge. There are also opportunities to improve the opportunities for youth players to join clubs. This should include joint working between the Borough Council and LTA.	DBC Leisure / LTA	Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation
S08	Work alongside the LTA to explore the LTA's desire to provide an indoor tennis facility in Darlington. This is identified as a strategic target for the LTA.	LTA / DBC Leisure	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed outcome on potential viability and feasibility of new facility Progress towards new provision if deemed viable and required
Bowls				
S01	Resist the loss of any club based facilities unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. Former bowling greens that are now redundant are not required to meet current or projected future need.	DBC Planning / DBC Leisure	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of existing greens and sustainable bowls provision
S04 S05 S06 S07	Support enhancements/upgrades to existing greens where there is evidence that the playing experience is currently impacted and where improvements would lead to increased community use and help to achieve financial sustainability by increasing membership. All bowling greens should include access to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A green of appropriate standard Adequate pavilion (including toilets) and shelter Key priorities are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Lodge Park, North Park, South Park , 	Clubs / DBC Leisure	Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved facility quality Successful funding applications
S08	Support clubs to proactively increase participation and membership. Efforts should focus on recruitment of junior players as well as adult and veterans.	Clubs / DBC Leisure	Short Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation



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Indoor				
S01	<p>Resist the loss of any swimming pool or sports hall sites unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.</p> <p>Resist the loss of any other specialist provision unless replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.</p> <p>Protect West Park Cycling Facility</p> <p>Protect Squash Club provision in the town</p> <p>Protect Gymnastics at Faverdale; improve facilities internally and support further phase developments</p> <p>Protect Boxing club provision.</p>	DBC Planning / DBC Leisure	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of existing pool sites Retention of existing sports hall sites Retention of specialist sport sites
S02	<p>Protect existing access to swimming pools and sports halls on education sites</p> <p>Ensure timely negotiation of community use agreements with schools and with landowners where appropriate.</p> <p>Ensure that existing community use agreements are delivered and renewed</p> <p>Secure community use at other key venues (Hurworth School) that currently offer community use without any long-term guarantees.</p>	DBC Leisure / Children's Services	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to swimming pools and sports halls on school sites is protected and supported CUAs are in place, kept up to date and are enforced through planning conditions
S04/S05 S06	<p>Support enhancements /upgrades to the existing built facility infra-structure.</p> <p>Enhance West Park Cycling Facility</p> <p>Enhance Squash provision in the town</p> <p>Enhance Gymnastics at Faverdale; improve facilities internally and support further phase developments</p> <p>Enhance Boxing club provision</p>	Clubs / DBC Leisure	Medium – Long Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved facility quality Successful funding applications



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S08 / S09	<p>Work alongside the LTA to explore the LTA’s desire to provide an indoor tennis facility in Darlington. This is identified as a strategic target for the LTA.</p> <p>This should include detailed viability and feasibility work, demand modelling and consultation with local clubs and the tennis community.</p>	LTA / DBC Leisure	Short – Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of feasibility / viability work • Provision of facility if appropriate
S08 / S09	<p>Seek investment to the swimming pool and sports hall infrastructure from major developments of over 300 houses</p> <p>Provide new provision to meet identified gaps</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions secured towards built facility infra-structure • Development of new sports halls at Pollam School and Carmel
S08/S09	<p>Support the improvement of the facilities for athletics to ensure long term sustainability of the sport within the Borough.</p> <p>Investment into the upgrade of facilities at Eastbourne Sports Complex is currently the preferred option</p>	EA / DBC Leisure	Short – Medium Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade to the existing track at Eastbourne Sports Complex (or replacement facility elsewhere if this is not deliverable) • Creation of revised management / maintenance plan to ensure long term sustainability of facility



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- 4.1.4 Given the potential level of funding required, as in 2015, it is likely that investment will only be achieved through a combination of opportunities and funding sources as well as partnership opportunities.
- 4.1.5 Local authority finances remain under pressure and previous major national funding programmes are no longer available. Some funding opportunities, however, still remain. While the education capital funding programmes will continue to change over time, there will still be a need for investment to take place on school sites during the strategy period and opportunities for joint projects may arise.
- 4.1.6 The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic is also unknown, and with little activity during 2020 and early 2021, there are significant implications on finances at both national and local level and as yet, the recovery process and the opportunities that will become available are unknown.
- 4.1.7 As a result, the Council will seek to use assets innovatively and work on a multi-agency approach to address the facility requirements in the strategy.
- 4.1.8 The main funding delivery mechanisms for Darlington Borough Council and others in delivering this strategy are:
- Planning obligations– new development and population growth will generate demand for additional indoor and outdoor sports facilities. All new developments should contribute towards the provision of outdoor and indoor sports, whether through the provision of new facilities or the improvement of existing (see later in this section – this



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strategy now proposes the use of the Sport England Facility Calculator and Playing Fields Calculator)

- Capital Grant funding: From schools and national agencies such as Sport England
- National Governing Body (NGB) support
- Council funding: capital funding allocated to deliver facilities within the council's ownership, and potentially the use of capital receipts from the sale of existing assets
- Education and Further Education sector: while the previous sources of funding have changed and the scale of the education capital programmes have been reduced, the education sector is still likely to be a key funding stream.

New Facilities

- 4.1.9 In addition to the overarching strategy principles outlined earlier in this section, the following should be considered when providing any new facilities (or new sites to facilitate club relocation).



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- Location - When planning new facilities, the existing sporting infrastructure should be taken into account. In particular, club bases for cricket and rugby should be retained and the provision of single pitch sites with limited facilities should be avoided
- Quality - Any new pitch provision should meet with the design and quality standards guidance provided by Sport England and/or the relevant NGB (detailed below). The following general criteria must also be met:
 - A high standard of design, construction and maintenance appropriate to the standard of play
 - Adequate changing facilities that:
 - are flexible, fit for a variety of purposes;
 - fully comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - provide for a number of different groups to use the facility at the same time, in safety and comfort; and
 - meet current standards - Sport England & NGB guidelines
 - Managed community access
 - Accessible by public transport and by car
 - Sufficient car parking
 - Size of pitches and run offs complies with NGB specification
 - Security of tenure (at least 20 years) if a club is to be based at the site.

4.1.10 All new and enhanced sports facilities must be designed in accordance with the relevant Sport England and (where applicable) National Governing Body (NGB) design guidance in order to ensure that the facilities are fit for purpose and of a suitable quality.

4.1.11 To ensure sustainability, new sites should include a minimum of two pitches. New single pitch sites will not be supported and new provision associated with any development of insufficient size to warrant more than one pitch should be located off site as part of a multi pitch development.

4.1.12 Sport England's web site www.sportengland.org contains a range of current guidance documents which provide detailed specifications and information regarding the design of sporting and ancillary facilities.



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4.2 Evaluating the Impact of New Development

4.2.1 Sport England has developed tools for determining the impact of new development on demand for indoor sports facilities and playing fields and they should be used to guide the investment required in facilities from new development. These are:

- Sport England Playing pitch Calculator
- Sport England Facility Calculator.

4.2.2 The Council should work with Sport England in order to adopt a consistent process that is transparent and fair but maximises the opportunities for sport.

Monitoring and Review

4.2.3 The evolving context of participation in sport and active recreation means that monitoring and review of the strategy is as important as the initial preparation of the document to ensure it remains sufficiently robust.

4.2.4 Reflecting the importance of this phase of work, monitoring of the strategy is a key component of both the Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance (ANOG) and the Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (Sport England).

4.2.5 The 2015 Strategy was successfully monitored by Darlington Borough Council and it is intended that this next strategy will be monitored similarly. The steering group are therefore committed to keeping the strategy alive through:



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- Monitoring the delivery of the recommendations and actions and identifying any changes that are required to the priority afforded to each action;
- Recording changes to the facility stock and evaluating the impact of this on the supply and demand information;
- Assessing the impact of changes to participation and changing trends on the amount and type of facilities required;
- Assessing the impact of demographic changes and any changes to forecasted plans for housing growth;
- Ongoing consultation to understand the evolving needs of clubs and governing bodies, and any requirements for new or improved facilities in the area;
- Analysis of funding sources and new funding opportunities for the provision/improvement of sports facilities;
- Reviewing growth of emerging sports, their participation rates, facilities available for them and likely facilities necessary for their support and development; and
- Ensuring that the strategy continues to provide an up to date and robust evidence base to underpin CIL / S106 obligations.

4.2.6 The working group will continue to meet to review progress by all key partners on the strategy delivery and to discuss any issues arising.

4.2.7 Monitoring will be particularly important in this strategy, as the completion of the strategy mid way through the Covid 19 pandemic means that sport and recreation are facing unprecedented challenges, and the exact impact, both in terms of facility provision but also participation is unclear. The steering group are therefore committed to consulting with clubs at the end of the pandemic and sharing outcomes in order to build a full picture of the challenges that Darlington is facing. This work will then be fed into the regular update process that will be taking place.