



**ABERDEEN
SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY**

OCTOBER 2016

FINAL FOR ADOPTION BY ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

ABERDEEN SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

The formation of the Active Aberdeen Partnership [AAP] has been the catalyst for the production of this strategy. It is the first significant step in setting out the ambition of the AAP who have a very clear vision for the future Sport & Leisure facility requirements that will serve the City into the future.

Our vision is to create a network of high quality, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and wellbeing.

The members of the AAP have come together with the common purpose of working together in a collaborative and joined up way, with the clear understanding that delivering the vision of the strategy will only be possible if everyone shares the responsibility. This collective ownership will be fundamental in tackling the challenges that lie ahead, particularly in the context of securing the much needed investment.

There will be no easy solutions and as public sector finances become even more stretched, innovative approaches will be required for each of the proposals. It is also anticipated that priorities may change from time to time during the life of the strategy as it responds to the changing environment within the City, and as such it is living and working document. The AAP will also endeavour to maximise opportunities that may emerge, particularly those that could not have been envisaged at the time of launching this plan.

Active Aberdeen Partnership
October 2016

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aberdeen has a good network of specialist sports facilities which enable residents to access a wide range of sports participation and performance opportunities. However, the key challenge for the City is in relation to its community sports facility infrastructure which is ageing, limited in size, scale and offering and does not represent a modern sport and physical activity offer for the 21st century. This is not just a statement to elicit concern among Council leaders and stakeholders; it is a reflection of the research findings by sport and leisure consultants Knight Kavanagh and Page Ltd, who have undertaken comparable studies throughout the UK.

Therefore, the focus for this Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy is to identify where investment should be focused to achieve not only the best financial return, but also to deliver the outcomes of the City's participation strategy 'Strategy for an Active Aberdeen 2016 – 2026'. The Aberdeen Sports Facilities Strategy also recognises that it is not possible to consider the City as a blank page and identify a network of new facilities; there is a need to build on what is good or could be improved, maximise opportunities that we know are on the horizon, identify gaps that need to be filled and, where appropriate, rationalise facilities that are beyond their anticipated life expectancy. As such, this is an ambitious Strategy and one which reflects the need for the City to re-consider how it provides sport and physical activity facilities and opportunities for future generations.

Building on what is already in place, there is a need to undertake immediate investment in Northfield Swimming Pool, Jesmond Sports Centre and Sheddocksley Sports Centre in order to improve the quality of the health and fitness offer. Beyond these projects, there is a critical need to safeguard the long term future of the Beach Leisure Centre by developing it as a family leisure destination. There is also a requirement to establish a permanent Gymnastics facility, with the Alex Collie Sports Centre considered the ideal location.

In order to maximise known investment opportunities, this strategy advocates that partners learn from previous developments and build on good practice throughout the country and develop at least two community hubs in the north and south of the City. Where possible, these hubs should include extensive indoor and outdoor sport and physical activity facilities and a wider range of services such as libraries, health services, community facilities, etc. This will require the City Council and Sport Aberdeen to work with partners to deliver a new and innovative approach to service provision on these school campus sites.

The strategy research has identified a gap in sport and physical activity provision to serve the west end of the City. Addressing this need will be a longer term requirement, as will replacing Bucksburn Swimming Pool.

There is also a need to align indoor sports facility provision with addressing the deficiency in 3G floodlit pitches across the City. Consideration needs to be given to the best location for these along with the aspiration for an outdoor hub as phase 3 of Aberdeen Sports Village.

However, this ambitious Strategy can only be delivered if the City takes a different approach to the provision of community sport and physical activity facilities. Aberdeen needs a network of fewer, better quality facilities that offer a wider range of activities and programmes to get residents physically active. However, this can only be delivered if some of the existing poor quality stock is rationalised and available funds re-focused into newer, better quality facilities.

2. INTRODUCTION

This is the Sports Facilities Strategy for Aberdeen for the ten year period 2016 – 2026. The strategy recommendations are drawn from the Assessment Report, researched and prepared initially between April 2012 – January 2013 and then updated during 2015/2016 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP). The Assessment Report and Strategy have been prepared in accordance with industry best practice and in consultation with the members of the Active Aberdeen Partnership, **sportscotland**, and governing bodies of sport. In addition, the City Council's lead for sport and leisure development, Sport Aberdeen, has been a significant contributor to the development of the recommendations.

Aberdeen has an aspiration, and need, to consider its facilities planning particularly in the context of an aging stock of leisure facilities; future growth needs; changing economic and demographic profile of the City. The Council, in partnership with Aberdeen University has taken steps to address some of City's future needs with the opening of Aberdeen Aquatics Centre [at Aberdeen Sports Village] in 2014. This has complemented the other facilities available at the regionally significant venue.

However, the focus of this Strategy is to provide clear direction to all partners so that together they can plan and develop a more modern, efficient and sustainable range of Community based Sport and Leisure facilities that the City requires. This will ensure the City's residents have the opportunity to be physically active and healthier and where appropriate develop their sporting ambitions within their local community. The Strategy also considers the wider need for floodlit 3rd generation pitches (3G) and where these might need to be considered.

The consultant team is grateful to the project management and leadership of Sport Aberdeen and the contribution from all other stakeholders, namely the members of the Active Aberdeen Partnership.

2.1 Strategic context summary

At a national level the Scottish Government's vision is for a more active Scotland. One of the six outcomes of the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework is 'Improving our infrastructure – people and places'. This Sports Facilities Strategy is firmly embedded in supporting this outcome.

sportscotland's 'Raising the Bar', identifies that 'places' are one of five key pillars of an individual's sporting life with the other four being 'people', 'profile', 'participation' and 'progression'.

At a local level this Sports Facilities Strategy is a parallel strategy that will support the city's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy – 'The Strategy for an Active Aberdeen'; it identifies the sport and leisure facility requirements to enable Aberdeen to achieve the objectives set within it. The Active Aberdeen Partnership has updated The Strategy for an Active Aberdeen with the outcomes identified as follows:

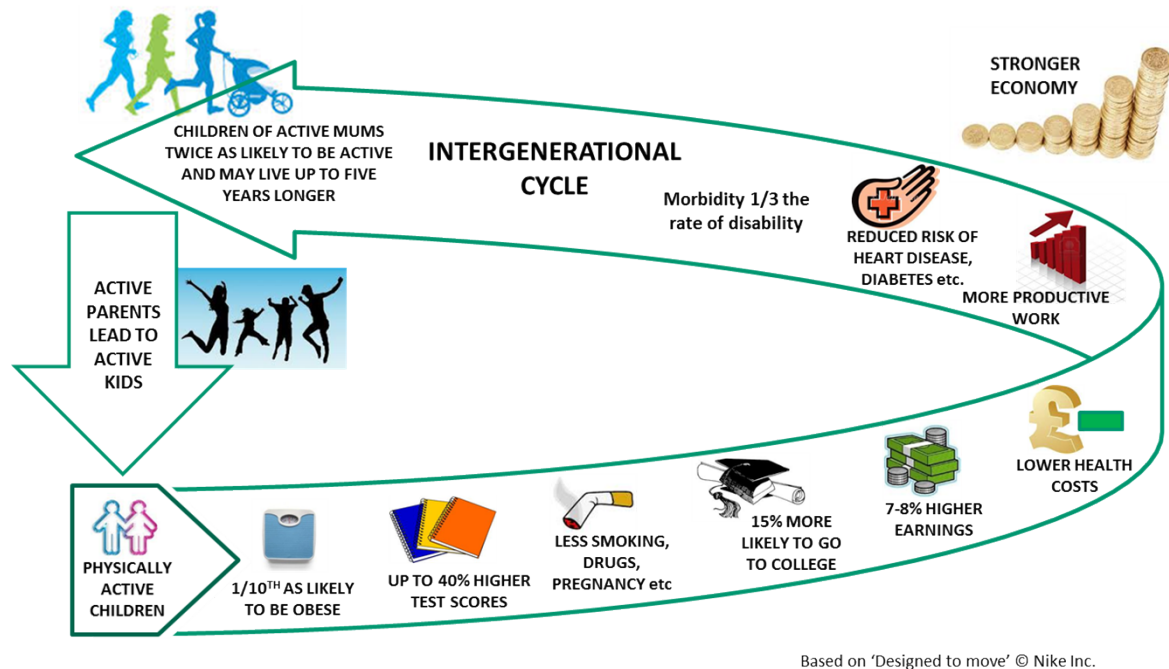
- ◀ **Increase** opportunities and participants in physical activity and sport;
- ◀ **Invest** in our infrastructure of people and places; and
- ◀ **Be Inclusive** so everyone has the opportunity to be and stay active.

It is clear that increasing participation in sport and physical activity and the health and wellbeing benefits that this delivers is the key driver for the Active Aberdeen Partnership; coupled with the

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need for facilities to be financially sustainable. The wider benefits derived from having a more active population are highlighted in the following intergenerational cycle which clearly demonstrates the impact beyond the sports field.

Figure 1: Intergenerational cycle



It is clear that having high quality and appropriate 'places to play sport and be physically active' are an integral part of the mix that delivers health and wellbeing benefits as well as wider economic gains to the City and as such should be viewed and valued within this context.

Therefore, high quality and appropriate 'places to play sport and be physically active' are important in delivering increased participation in sport and physical activity which is part of the foundation of improving health and wellbeing among the City's residents.

2.2 About Aberdeen

Aberdeen has a population of 228,990 [2014 estimates] which is anticipated to grow by 28% by 2037. Whilst overall levels of deprivation remain low, in 2012, 22 of the 267 datazones within Aberdeen were considered to be within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland. The City's most deprived areas are focused on key priority neighbourhoods including: Tillydrone, Torry, Middlefield, Woodside, Seaton, Mastrick, Northfield, Stockethill and Cummings Park.

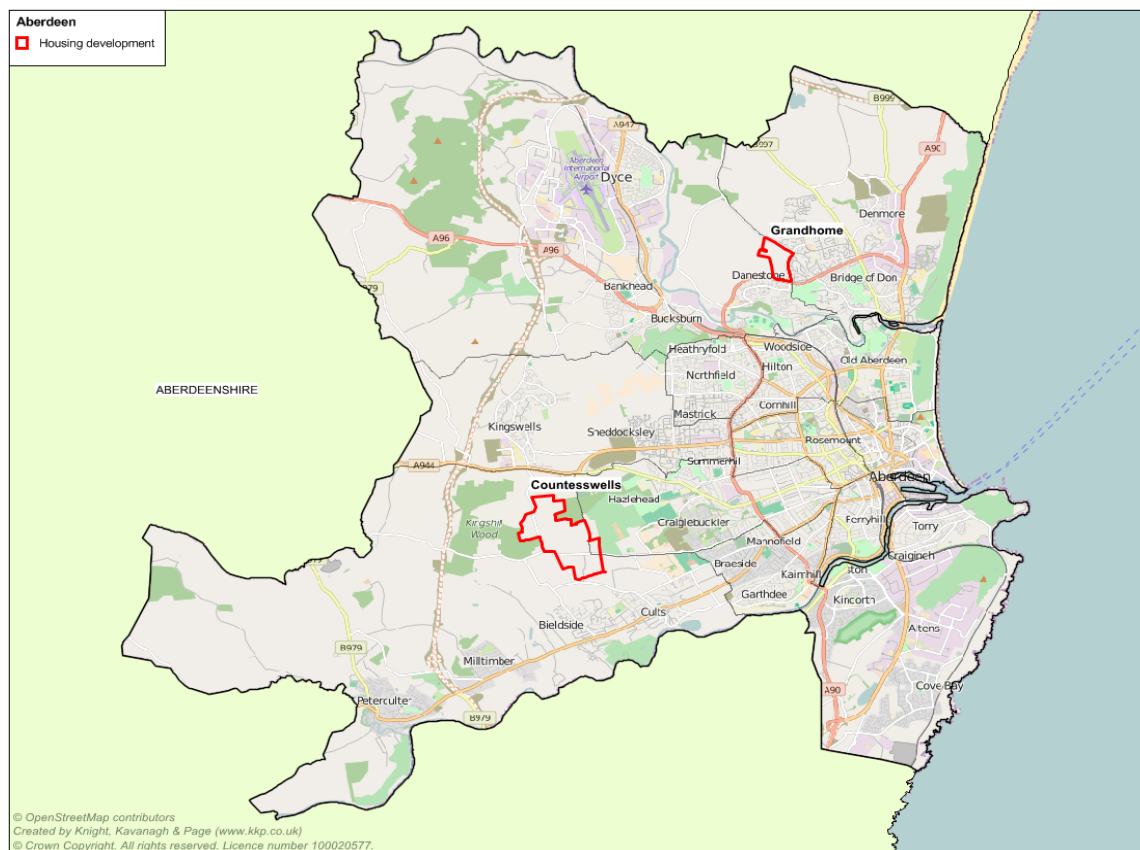
Aberdeen's unemployment rate is estimated to be at 2%, slightly less than the national rate of 2.3%. However, this masks the levels of deprivation across the City with 30% of households in Aberdeen in fuel poverty and 18% of children in Aberdeen are living in poverty. The majority of children living in poverty are living in a working household. Aberdeen is also in line with other major Scottish council areas with respect to the percentage of adults and young people who are overweight, obese or severely obese. This is a challenge throughout Scotland and is recognised at Government level.

The City Council has also identified within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016 – 2026 the roles that accessible facilities and access to opportunities to participate in a range of health and fitness activities can play in reducing the % of inactive adults and increasing physical activity by all sections of the population.

Aberdeen is experiencing significant housing and population growth. In addition to a number of smaller scale developments, Aberdeen has two main urban extensions which will see significant housing and population growth for the area. As part of the City Master Infrastructure Plan, there are a number of key road infrastructure projects [e.g. Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route] which will impact on the access arrangements across the City and how efficiently residents and non-residents can access the airport.

2.3 Main housing developments

Figure 2: Location of planned Housing growth



The City is also part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal which is a tripartite agreement between the UK Government, the Scottish Government and regional partners, including both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils and Opportunity North East. The City Region Deal will see circa £250 million invested in the region under the following categories: innovation, digital connectivity, the expansion of Aberdeen harbour and transport.

The above changes and aspirations for the City also need to be set within the context of future efficiencies that the Council is required to achieve. As an example, Aberdeen needs to deliver circa £26 million in efficiencies over 2016/17 and it is likely that this level of efficiency savings will be repeated in the coming years. Therefore, there is a clear need for all sport and leisure providers funded by the Council to deliver their contribution to these efficiency savings. In spite of the need for savings the Council also recognises that leisure facilities play a key role in increasing the levels of physical activity among residents, which in turn contributes to improved levels of health and well-being. However, the infrastructure needs to be efficient and demonstrate delivery of the Council's wider strategic vision:

'An even better place to live and work, where people can expect high-quality services that meet their needs'.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research for this Strategic Plan was undertaken in two separate phases, the most recent being between November 2015 – April 2016 by specialist sport and leisure consultancy, Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP). The research included the following key activities:

- ◀ Assessment of the quality, distribution and programming of facilities in the City.
- ◀ Consultation with facility owners and operators to identify needs and opportunities.
- ◀ Consultation with national governing bodies of sport, key stakeholders and clubs to determine the levels of demand for facilities in the City.
- ◀ Assessment of the strategic drivers and context for the City and its residents.
- ◀ Assessment of need and opportunity for new, refurbished and enhanced provision across the City.

KKP has an extensive track record of strategic planning of sports facilities throughout the UK and developed the most recent Playing Pitch Methodology on behalf of Sport England and contributed to its Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide [for non-pitch sports facilities]. Over the last 5 years, KKP has delivered more playing pitch and sports facilities strategies than any other company in the UK and brings a wide range of sector knowledge and contemporary thinking to Aberdeen's Strategy.

Therefore, KKP's commentary on Aberdeen's sports facility infrastructure and the Strategy to improve on the current position is informed by a clear understanding of the community sport and physical activity sector and knowledge of innovative solutions to meeting the needs of communities.

3.1 Aberdeen's sporting landscape

Aberdeen has a network of organisations responsible for delivering sport and physical activity opportunities across the City. The main organisations have come together under the banner of the Active Aberdeen Partnership, which includes:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| ◀ Sport Aberdeen | ◀ Aberdeen Sports Village |
| ◀ University of Aberdeen | ◀ Robert Gordon University [RGU Sport] |
| ◀ sportscotland | ◀ Aberdeen FC Community Trust |
| ◀ Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership | ◀ Garthdee Alpine Sports (Aberdeen Snowsports Centre) |
| | ◀ Transition Extreme |

There are a number of other charitable trusts and voluntary sector operators of community and specialist sports facilities in the City, such as Aberdeen Curling Centre [Curl Aberdeen] and Aberdeen Indoor Bowls Centre.

Over recent years there has been significant investment in new sports facilities within Aberdeen by a wide range of providers. These include:

- ◀ Aberdeen Sports Village & Aquatics Centre, a new regional sports facility, with national significance
- ◀ Transition Extreme – Centre of excellence for climbing and wheel based sports.
- ◀ The development of community sports facilities as part of Cults Academy.

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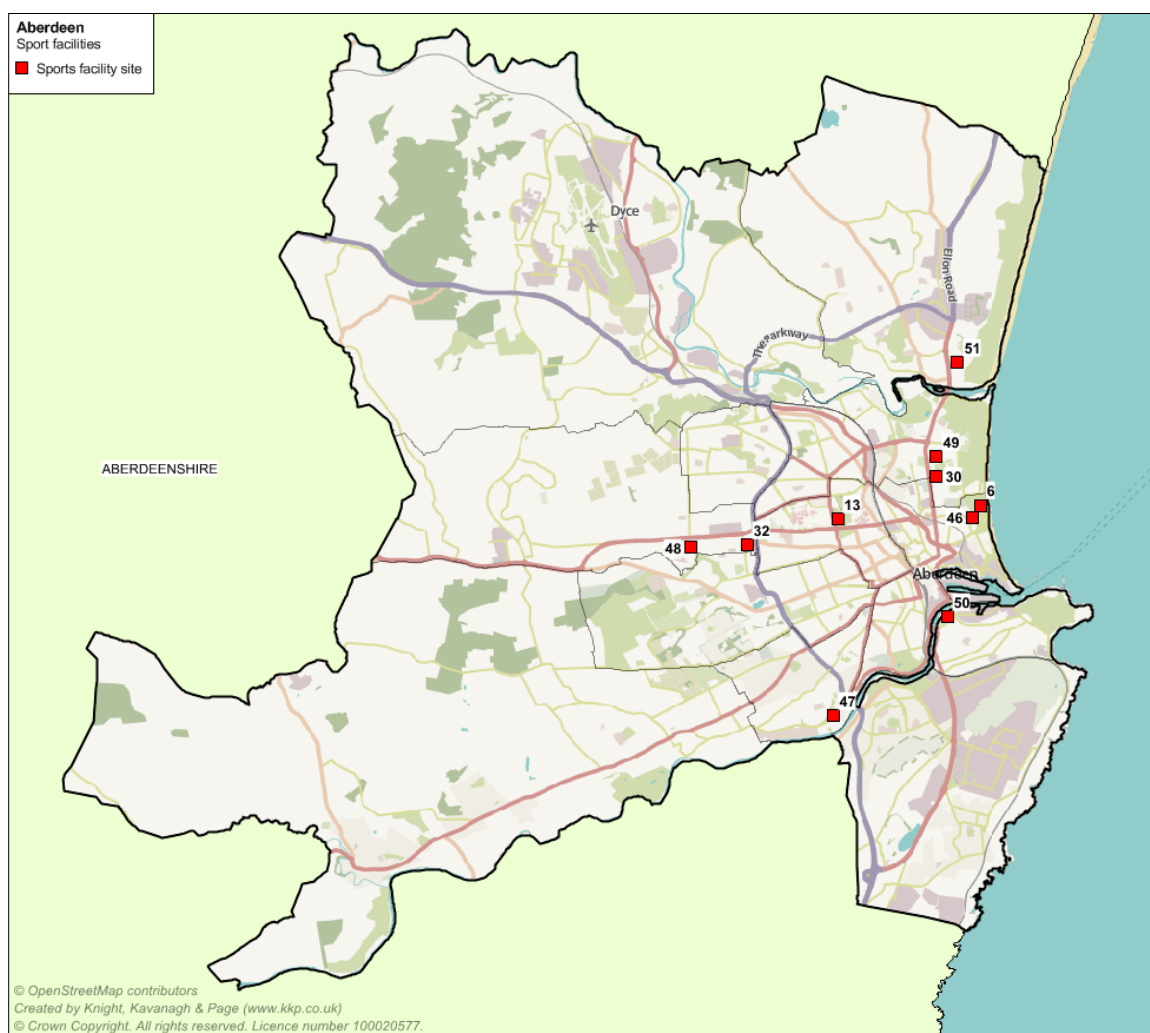
- ◀ Investment by a number of commercial health and fitness companies.
- ◀ The refurbishment and reopening of Tullos Swimming Pool.

This investment has enhanced the portfolio of sports facilities across the City, specifically in relation to the performance sport offer which enables residents to develop their expertise across a wider range of sports. It has also enhanced the mixed economy of health and fitness providers and provided facilities where residents had limited access.

3.2 Specialist sports facilities

Aberdeen has a good network of specialist sports facilities which enable residents to develop their specialist sporting ambitions at venues across the City. The current network represents a significant focus and opportunity for sports development and performance development across a number of sports. The current network of specialist sports facilities in the City is outlined in figure 3.

Figure 3: Location of specialist sports facilities network



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Table 1: Venue and sport[s]

Map ref	Venue	Sport
13	Westburn Tennis Centre	Tennis
30	Aberdeen Sports Village	Football, Athletics, Table Tennis
49	Aberdeen Sports Village & Aquatics Centre	Swimming, Diving, Synchro, Water polo
32	Aberdeen Indoor Bowls	Bowls
6	Linx Ice Arena	Figure skating, Ice Hockey, Synchronised Skating
46	Transition Extreme	Skateboarding, BMX, Inline skating, Indoor Climbing, High Ropes Climbing
47	Aberdeen Snowsports Centre	Skiing, Snowboarding, Tubing
48	Curl Aberdeen	Curling
51	The Gordon Sports Centre (temporary location)	Gymnastics
50	Aberdeen Boat Club, Aberdeen University Boat Club and RGU Boat Club	Rowing

A key challenge within the above network is that the City needs to find a suitable long term home for Gymnastics. The lease at the Gordon Sports Centre is fixed term, therefore an exit strategy needs to be considered as part of this strategic plan.

The City also has a very strong public golf offer, with clubs located at each of the municipal courses. Five are operated by Sport Aberdeen and one is leased direct to a club. The clubs aligned to the courses operated by Sport Aberdeen are facing a challenging time and sustaining membership is a real issue, something that is exacerbated by the decline in the club houses which are in need of investment.

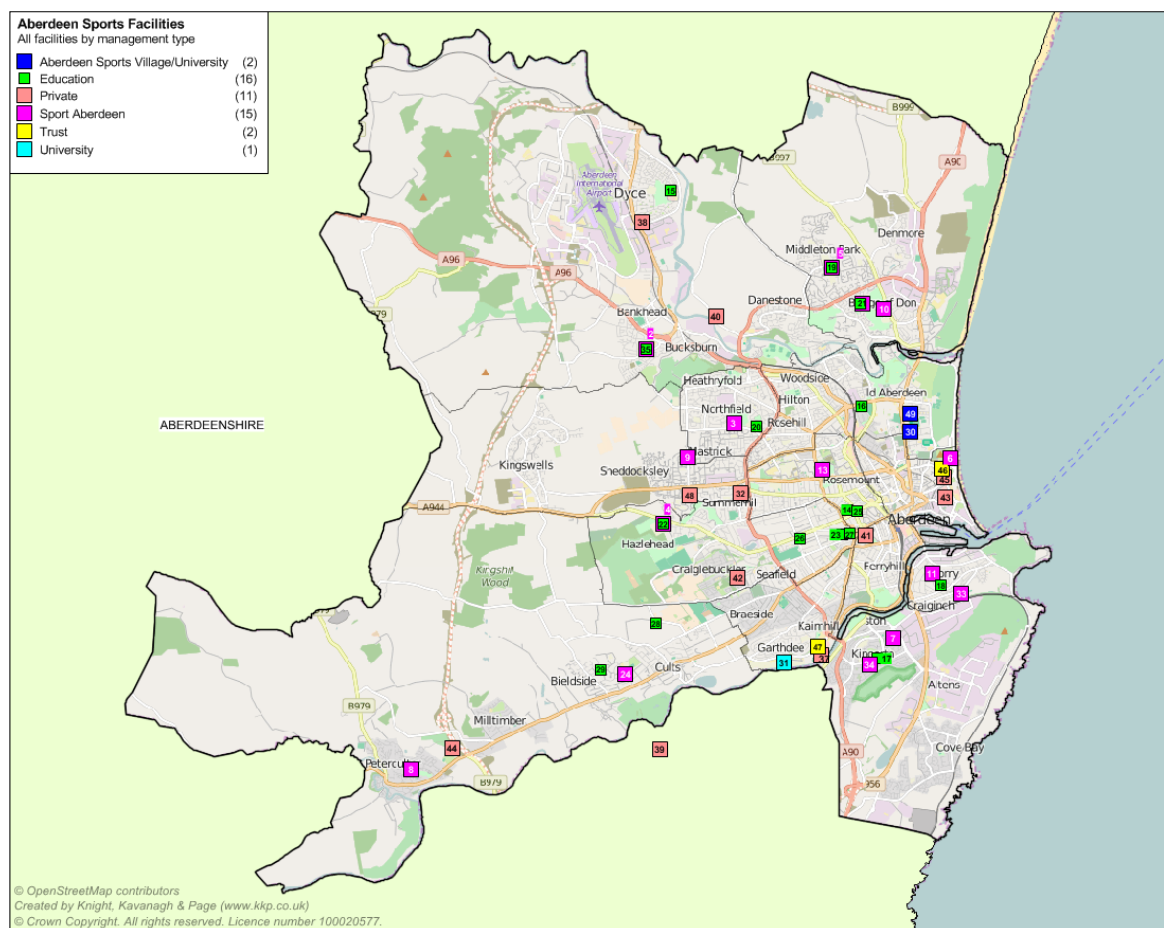
Finding a solution to the longer term requirements for each of the clubs should be considered within this strategy so that public golf is sustainable in the longer term.

Notwithstanding the above, the focus of this Strategy relates to the provision of community sport and leisure facilities and the need to develop an infrastructure that is 'fit for the 21st century' and one which enables Aberdeen's residents to be physically active and healthier. It also needs to be cognisant of the fact that the City is growing and there will be significant areas of housing growth alongside an increase in population.

3.3 Community sports facilities

Aberdeen's network of indoor sports facilities is significant with a wide range of service providers and facilities of varying degrees of size, scale and quality.

Figure 4: Indoor sports facilities network



The key findings from KKP's analysis of and research into the sports facility infrastructure across the City can be summarised as follows:

- ✦ In many instances the facilities are outdated, coming to the end of their usable life, have high maintenance costs and are operationally inefficient;
- ✦ There are too many small scale facilities of insufficient capacity, quality and scale to attract large numbers of users;
- ✦ As a result of their limited size, scale and quality, many facilities require significant amounts of deficit funding to keep them operational, which is potentially unsustainable within the current financial climate.

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- ◀ In relation to Aquatics provision across the City, the research identified the following:
 - ◀ Aberdeen has a significant number of swimming pools, many of which are beyond their anticipated life expectancy, are limited in size, with the majority located within/alongside schools with limited community accessible opening hours;
 - ◀ With the addition of the Aquatics Centre the City has a recognised over-provision of water space.
 - ◀ The above is reflected in the Aberdeen Aquatics Strategy which identifies that the City has an over provision of swimming pools and there is a need to develop an improved network of high quality pools which are programmed in a way that meet the needs of aquatic development pathways, physical activity programmes, community wellbeing and are economically sustainable.
- ◀ Much of the City's sports hall provision is located within schools and is predominantly used for football training, which in turn limits the development of other sports hall sports such as netball, basketball, badminton, volleyball, table tennis and trampolining, etc. This is a direct result of there being insufficient floodlit 3G pitches to accommodate the training requirements of clubs alongside a passive approach to strategic and dynamic programming.
- ◀ The current lettings process for community access to the school estate appears to be complicated, costly to implement and often does not meet the needs of community organisations or reflect the Council's wider strategic objectives.
- ◀ The City does not have any co-located services within its leisure facilities (e.g. health, libraries, etc.) which is an approach that has been successfully adopted by other Local Authorities across the UK.
- ◀ The design of the sports facilities developed at Cults and Bucksburn Academies have not enabled easy community use. Greater consideration needs to be given to creating more imaginative and relevant sport/leisure campus within future school developments in order to meet the community needs and expectations.
- ◀ The City's Universities are key sports facility providers and already offer community access. However consultation suggests that there is limited scope to accommodate additional community use given the high demand from the student population and present range of programmes that both operate.

In summary, much of the present public sport and leisure facility infrastructure is no longer fit for purpose. This is based on the fact that there are too many venues, which are too small, do not have the requisite activity areas, nor offer the quality of experience to meet modern day user expectations. They have limitations on the income they can generate and are subsidy dependant. With increased pressure on public expenditure a significant part of the network will be financially unsustainable in the future.

In addressing this challenge, there is a need for this Strategy to consider how Aberdeen reshapes its sport and leisure facility network by having fewer, larger, better quality facilities that are financially sustainable for the long term. Only by doing so can partners deliver increased opportunities for Aberdeen's residents to be more physically active and healthy.

3.4 Emerging opportunities

It is recognised that organisations do not stand still, and the network of sports facility operators in Aberdeen is no exception to this. Members of the Active Aberdeen Partnership are considering innovative ways to improve, expand, redevelop or replace their facilities and address some of the challenges identified from the research. As such there are a range of immediate investment proposals and longer term aspirations that have helped to inform the framework for this Strategic Plan. Some of these will require additional work to determine their feasibility, suitability or funding availability in order that they can be realised. However, they provide a clear starting point for the development of this Strategic Plan.

Sport Aberdeen is commissioned by the City Council to operate the majority of the public sport and leisure facilities within the City. Indeed, much of the strategic focus of this plan is directed at the modernisation and rationalisation of facilities that are within its portfolio.

One of the key drivers for creating Sport Aberdeen was to use the Leisure Trust model as a vehicle for enabling investment to assist with modernising the facility network. Investment would be enabled by the trust accessing various grant funds, using revenue to repay borrowing and reinvesting any surplus generated back in to services. It was foreseen that this would range from small scale refurbishments, to the development of new leisure complexes.

Sport Aberdeen has a number of immediate and longer term proposals, with the key focus in the immediate term to address the poor quality of its health and fitness offer. It has devised an innovative approach and partnered with Pulse Fitness [industry specialist] who will provide equipment and facility redevelopment expertise.

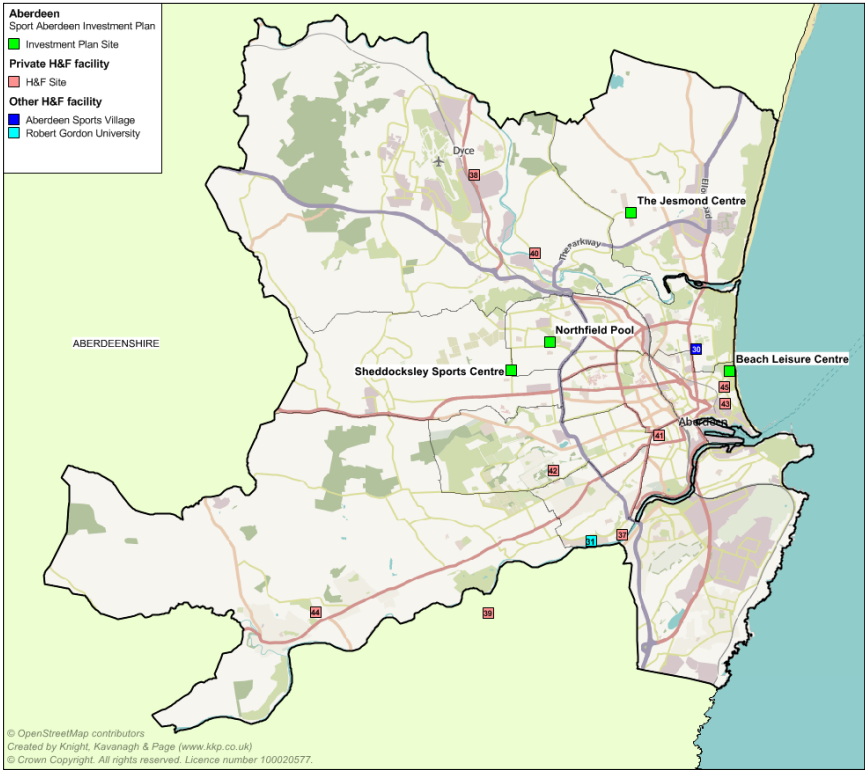
The rationale for investing in the identified facilities is reasonable given that they are strategically located and are generally the better quality facilities, suitable for refurbishment rather than replacement. Hence, they are unlikely to be rationalised or significantly altered in line with longer term developments across the City.

The proposed facilities identified for Sport Aberdeen's investment are highlighted in Figure 5. This demonstrates the reasonable spread of facilities in the north and central core of the City, and importantly in areas not served by high levels of commercial sector health and fitness operators. The immediate gap exists within the south of the city, but there are future opportunities which will enable this to be addressed.

Those opportunities which have been identified by other AAP partners delivering publicly accessible services have also been included in Figure 5.

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Figure 5: Sport Aberdeen’s investment proposals



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The following table provides an overview of all the current opportunities and strategic thinking to improve the portfolio of community and specialist sports facilities across the City.

Table 2: Emerging opportunities and strategic thinking

Partnership organisations	Facility	Opportunity on investment proposal
Sport Aberdeen	Northfield Swimming Pool	<p>Extension to the existing swimming pool to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 station health and fitness suite, free weights area and group fitness studio. New changing accommodation for health and fitness.
Sport Aberdeen	The Beach Leisure Centre	<p>Extensive refurbishment and redevelopment of the entire facility to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New 80 station health and fitness suite, free weights area and group fitness studios. Extensive indoor soft play Added leisure water features and changing village replacement Improved spa and wellness retreat Improved catering
Sport Aberdeen	Jesmond Sports Centre	<p>Extensive refurbishment and redevelopment of the internal layout to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 station health and fitness suite and free weights area and group fitness studio Hi-Tec interactive children and young people's activity zone. New changing accommodation.
Sport Aberdeen & Aberdeen FC Community Trust	Sheddocksley Sports Centre	<p>Extensive refurbishment and re-configuration of the internal facility layout to create:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 station health and fitness suite, free weights area and group fitness studio. New changing accommodation for health and fitness. Multipurpose studio/training suite. External changing accommodation refurbishment. AFC CT development base and offices. Training/Meeting room New entrance and car park upgrade 3G football pitch.

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Partnership organisations	Facility	Opportunity on investment proposal
Sport Aberdeen & Aberdeen FC Community Trust	Altens Playing Field, Kings Links 6 Hole Golf Course	Reconfiguration of the existing pitch and improvements to changing accommodation in order to improve the quality of facilities enabling additional use, including multiple Primary School football league matches. 6-hole golf course amended to accommodate a 'FootGolf' course, extending the golf offer.
Sport Aberdeen & Scottish Gymnastics	Dedicated Gymnastics Centre – Alex Collie Sports Centre	In order to address the needs of gymnastics in the City and resolve the issue with the temporary nature of the current base at the Gordon Sports Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a permanently laid out gymnastics facility at Alex Collie Sports Centre Retain community use and access for health & fitness. Develop a strategic partnership with Scottish Gymnastics for the development and operation of the facility.
Sport Aberdeen	Kings Links Golf Course	The potential exists to support the golf clubs at the Kings Links Golf Course with the development of a new club house and publicly accessible community golf facilities. This would include the rationalisation of separate clubhouses in order to achieve a shared development opportunity which will ensure the long term sustainability of the clubs and the course.
Sport Aberdeen, Tennis Scotland, LTA & Tennis Foundation	Westburn Tennis Centre	Tennis Scotland, The Lawn Tennis Association and the Tennis Foundation have identified the longer term aspiration to work with Aberdeen City Council and Sport Aberdeen to refurbish and extend the Westburn Tennis Centre. This comes on the back of the centre hosting the Davis Cup trophy and an increased interest in tennis aligned to extensive development work with schools throughout the City.
Aberdeen City Council [Sport Aberdeen]	City South – New Secondary School	<p>Aberdeen City Council is in process of developing a new secondary school to serve the south of the City. This will see the merger of Kincorth and Torry Academies to create a new single secondary school. The location is identified and there are plans to incorporate a community leisure offer within the school campus seeing the school function on a dual use basis.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to create something significant at the school, building on learning from other developments and aligning to good design practice [please refer to design model identified] which would reflect the ambitions of Sport Aberdeen as well as sportscotland and Scottish Swimming.</p> <p>Ideally the site could accommodate a stand-alone community health and wellbeing centre and swimming pool alongside a potential library and health facility. School access would be designed in such a way that it addresses safeguarding issues while facilitating community use. This kind of approach incorporated on a new school campus</p>

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Partnership organisations	Facility	Opportunity on investment proposal
		development would provide a city south community hub which would be a key point of contact for a range of services. It would provide a critical mass of community sports facilities which would serve the south of the City, enabling key strategic decisions to be made in relation to existing, run down and inefficient stock.
Aberdeen FC & Aberdeen FC Community Trust	New stadium, grass and 3G pitches for matches and training and associated supporting facilities, including training academy at Kingsford	Aberdeen Football Club has recently launched a consultation process, pending a planning application, for a new stadium development at Kingsford and a move from their current location at Pittodrie. The development permits the Football Club and its associated Community Trust to incorporate playing / learning facilities.
Aberdeen City Council [Sport Aberdeen]	City North – New Secondary School	The north of the City is the key area where a significant urban extension is planned and it is likely that the area will require an additional secondary school to accommodate the increased population. This will follow the development of the city school south and the opportunities available there could be replicated in the north. The lead-in period for this opportunity will be longer than in the south of the City; therefore, the opportunity exists to develop a holistic approach with other stakeholders including health, libraries, police, social services and other providers to maximise the potential of co-located leisure and public services. Aberdeen has the potential to create a community hub in line with the design model identified.
Aberdeen City Council [Sport Aberdeen]	Countesswells development	A new community is planned for Countesswells, to the west of the City. High level master planning of this area is underway and new school provision will be required in this new community. Given that this will be a stand-alone community rather than an urban extension the overall population of the area is likely to be smaller with less of a need for a large scale facility. The facility will however also serve the Lower Deeside and Kingswells communities.
Transition Extreme	Transition Extreme	Transition Extreme is the regional centre of excellence for climbing and wheel based sports. The organisation is continuing to look at opportunities to enhance and expand its offer in line with the strategic need in the City and region as a whole. It is the lead agency for extreme sports in the City and other smaller scale and more localised facilities need to align with it to develop co-ordinated pathways for participation across the City.

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Partnership organisations	Facility	Opportunity on investment proposal
Aberdeen City Council & Aberdeen Snowsports Centre	Aberdeen Snowsports Centre	<p>Aberdeen Snowsports Centre manages the City's artificial ski slope, which is one of two centres of excellence for freestyle snowboarding and skiing. The facility is however ageing and consultation has identified that the slope is perceived to be too short and the slope surface prove a barrier to recreational users. The centre has identified that it could be brought up to standard in the short to medium term; however, it is also recognised that the slope cannot be extended within its current location. The long term aspiration is to develop a new site with facilities to suit beginners to GB team athletes across a number of Snowsports disciplines – skiing, snowboarding and Nordic skiing. The opportunity exists to develop this potential centre for excellence in partnership with the city and the sport's governing bodies ahead of the Winter Olympics in 2018, at which the centre has medal aspirations. The centre has also identified that investment in the facility and in a new facility could mean the business becoming self-financing in the future.</p> <p>Upgrading of the 3G pitch is also an opportunity, as part of a city-wide proposals for new 3G pitch provision.</p>
Aberdeen City Council, University of Aberdeen	Aberdeen Sports Village – Phase 3	<p>Aberdeen Sports Village has aspirations to develop a third phase of its facilities with the creation of a new Outdoor Hub. Current thinking is that the hub will include the following facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ 1 x 3G football pitch. ◀ 1 x water based hockey pitch (existing). ◀ 1 x IRB compliant 3G pitch. ◀ Changing pavilion. ◀ Strength and conditioning facility. <p>It is also anticipated that the facility will be programmed and operated on the basis of 45% each for university and community sport with the remaining 10% for performance sport.</p>
Aberdeen City Council, Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen Snowsports Centre, University of Aberdeen	3G pitch developments	<p>The research undertaken for the City's Playing Pitch Strategy clearly identifies that there is a need for additional 3G pitch provision across the City. This has been reinforced by the Scottish Football Association and ongoing consultation by Sport Aberdeen with football clubs in the City. The development of additional pitches will enable the following key challenges to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ To provide appropriate high quality, floodlit training venues for football and rugby clubs across the City ◀ To reduce the need for clubs to access sports halls for training over the winter months, thus making these available for other sports and recreational opportunities. ◀ To enable league fixtures to be played on 3G pitches, thus minimising the number of cancelled fixtures and requirement to elongate the playing season.

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Partnership organisations	Facility	Opportunity on investment proposal
		<p>◀ To minimise the wear and tear on natural turf pitches, and as a result reduce the maintenance costs associated with them.</p> <p>Further consideration will need to be given to the most appropriate strategic locations for new 3G pitch developments across the City and how these will operate in order to deliver the above outcomes. This will also need to consider the aspirations of Aberdeen Sports Village [which will create three 3G pitches in a central location, but with limited community club access] and the immediate need to replace the 3G pitch at Garthdee [the City's first 3G pitch].</p> <p>At the same time as considering the needs of football, there is also a need to consider the needs of other sports eg rugby and hockey.</p>

3.5 Conclusions arising from the review of current provision

Based on the findings of the research and analysis of the current Aberdeen sports facility network KKP's commentary [based on experience elsewhere] can be summarised as follows:

- ◀ Aberdeen has a good network of specialist sports facilities which enable residents to develop their specialist sporting ambitions at venues across the City.
- ◀ The network of community sports facilities presents a real challenge for the City; this is specifically in relation to the following:
 - ◀ The size and scale of the offer; which is generally small and poor quality.
 - ◀ The complete lack of a quality health and fitness offer across the Council's facilities.
 - ◀ Too many swimming pools which are beyond their anticipated life expectancy and are limited in size, with the majority located within/alongside schools.
 - ◀ Too much football use of sports halls which limits the development of sports hall sports [basketball, netball, volleyball, etc] and is a direct result of the limited number of 3G pitches across the City.
 - ◀ Access to school sports facilities appears to be complicated, costly to implement and often does not meet the sporting priorities of the City.
- ◀ In short, the City's community sports facilities are not 'fit for purpose' for a modern 21st century leisure experience.
- ◀ The City has a number of short, medium and longer term opportunities to significantly change the community and sports specific facilities infrastructure in order to deliver an improved portfolio of centres over the term of this Sports Facilities Strategy.
- ◀ The above will require stakeholders to make tough investment and rationalisation decisions over the lifetime of this Sports Facilities Strategy in order to ensure that residents have as much opportunity to be physically active as possible.
- ◀ Central to these issues will be the need to consider transport, travel routes and active travel as part of strategic planning and decision making.

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4. MODERN LEISURE CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

In order to provide Aberdeen with a reference point of what other local authorities are developing in relation to their sports facilities networks; it is accurate to state that the majority are developing fewer, better quality facilities. Furthermore, many are looking to enhance their offer by developing a more 'commercial' range of facilities alongside a wider health and wellbeing service providers.

Recent developments of new community leisure facilities throughout the UK have followed three key themes within their design and offering, namely:

- ◀ Core facilities which meet local need and demand for sport and physical activity and enable the operator to deliver a cost effective service with minimal subsidy.
- ◀ Additional activity areas which provide a financial return by addressing a gap in the market or enhancing the core offer.
- ◀ Co-located with other service providers which enhances working relationships across 'civic' partners and improves service delivery to the community.

The following table identifies the types of facilities and activity areas included within each and the wider benefits that this delivers for the community.

4.1 Modern leisure facility considerations

Table 3:

Core facilities	Additional activity areas	Co-located services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 lane 25 metre pool Teaching pool) Sports hall (size depends on demand and programming) 80 - 150 station fitness suite 1x large group fitness studio 1 x small group fitness studio Catering hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full size floodlit 3G pitch 5-a-side pitches. Soft play (with catering & party space) Spa facilities Youth play facility (e.g. clip n' climb Interactive activity zones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of a school campus Library Health centre / GP surgery Pharmacy Police office Council contact point Meeting rooms
Benefits	Benefits	Benefits
<p>Enables operators to provide services at minimal subsidy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising income from health and fitness. Maximising income from learn to swim. Offering a range of community based activities. <p>Enables operators to contribute to the wider physical activity and wellbeing agenda by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering health based programmes within fitness suites & swimming pools Being a meeting point and social venue for outdoor physical activities. 	<p>Enables operators to maximise income to underpin the cost of the operation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking a more commercial approach to programming activity areas. Capturing data on users (e.g. parents) and using this as a way of cross selling core services (e.g. learn to swim). Providing a return on investment. 	<p>Creation of a community hub which enables operators to link with other services to contribute to wider physical activity and wellbeing agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering a wider range of services under one roof. Reaching residents who would not otherwise enter a sports facility. Offering programmes and interventions for specific client groups with health and other partners. Cross marketing and sharing of information to address local needs.

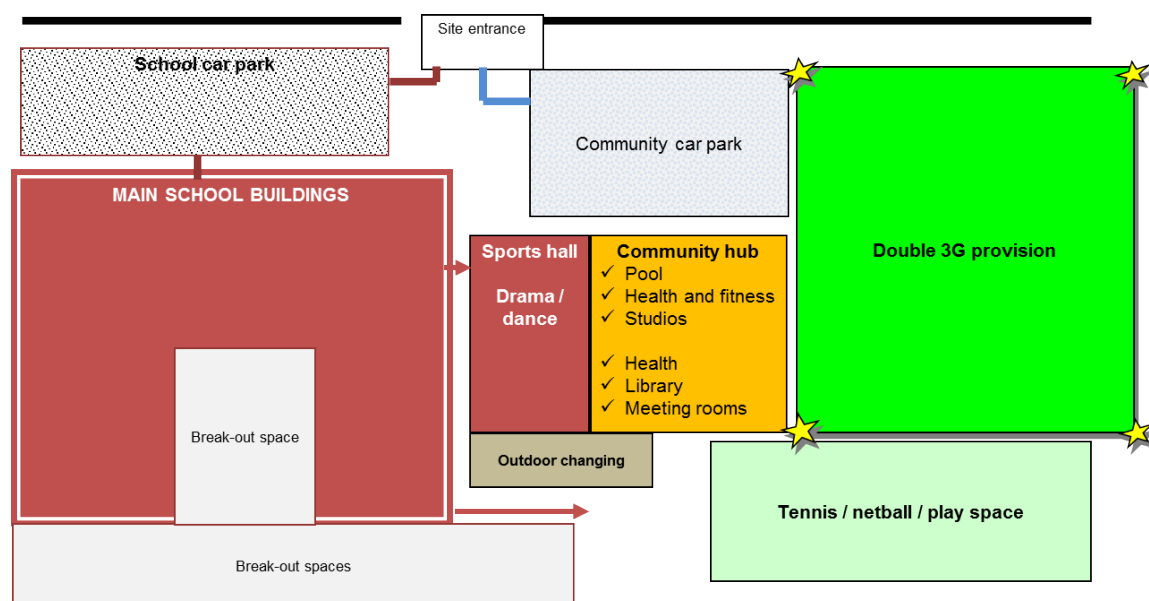
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Where facilities are developed as part of a wider school campus, consideration needs to be given to the layout, access arrangements and overall management of the site for the benefit of the school and community. The layout model below identifies the potential considerations within a co-located community hub on a school site. The main ethos behind this model is that alongside the core requirements for a school, the community hub can be expanded or contracted to meet the needs of the local community and partners.

Therefore, not all hubs will be the same, but the access arrangements for the school and community will be set out and agreed prior to development. As such, serious consideration needs to be given to the potential to develop such a model in Aberdeen and maximise investment in community infrastructure as a result of housing growth and redevelopment of schools.

4.2 Co-located hub site model

Figure 6: Key elements to consider when considering dual use



The key features of the above model are as follows:

- ◀ School access is designed in such a way that it addresses safeguarding issues and facilitates community use of facilities when they are not required by the school, thus maximising community use and minimising the revenue burden.
- ◀ The activity areas are designed and operated as community facility, with the new secondary school and local primary schools booking access as required.
- ◀ The building will operate as a stand-alone community health and wellbeing centre, with the school elements incorporated within this to facilitate community access at evenings and weekends.
- ◀ The Library, meeting rooms and health facility will be operated by their specific service areas; but it would be expected that joint working would be implemented to offer combined services and interventions as appropriate (e.g. targeted health promotion activities, etc.).
- ◀ In general, these types of facilities are located on or adjacent to arterial routes with good public transport access, significant visibility and presence within the area and seek to maximise the to and from work/education market.

5. FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY

The Sports Facilities Strategy has not addressed in detail how the following proposals and recommendations will be funded. It is anticipated that there will be no single funding source; rather a mix of sources and solutions will be required to deliver the vision and ambitions of the strategy. These solutions will include:

- ◀ Further development and implementation of a city-wide developer contributions process for part funding of new sports facilities within the catchment area of the new or enhanced facilities.
- ◀ Use of capital receipts from land disposal, where applicable.
- ◀ Asset rationalisation and use of revenue saving to pay back borrowing aligned to capital investment in other sites.
- ◀ Prudential borrowing where an 'invest to save' justification can be made, particularly for longer-term proposals which may be considered in light of the Council's future borrowing strategy.
- ◀ External funding sources aligned to specific facilities and/or sports [e.g. **sportscotland** grant awards, other charitable grant awards and funding streams].
- ◀ 3rd party borrowing where a suitable, robust business case exists [although this will be more expensive than prudential borrowing].

In general, the majority of new leisure centre developments elsewhere have been undertaken on the basis of rationalising one or two existing facilities and developing a new larger, better quality facility which is more economical to operate. Furthermore, the new facility mix enables the operator to deliver revenue efficiencies [i.e. operate the facility close to zero subsidy or better] which are often used to fund part or all of the capital repayment. A similar approach is undertaken for the refurbishment of existing facilities where increased income offsets the annualised cost of the refurbishment.

It is likely that a combination of the above approaches will be developed for the wide range of projects identified in Aberdeen. This will require a robust approach to business planning to ensure that all investment is financially sound.

Community Empowerment

As part of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, it is now simpler for communities to take over public sector land and buildings, supporting the empowerment of communities and strengthening their involvement in decisions and services that impact and are important to particular communities. Asset transfer, and their subsequent management, may be part of a solution to on-going sport and leisure facility provision and operation.

6. STRATEGY VISION AND HIGH LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the Active Aberdeen Partnership's vision for sport and leisure facility provision in the City. It builds on the conclusions identified in the Leisure Asset Assessment Report. This Strategy sets the vision and objectives for the City's physical infrastructure for the period 2016 to 2026. It considers all of the City's community sport and leisure assets required to ensure the City has a 'fit for purpose' network of facilities to enable residents to be as physically active as possible.

The Strategy does not solely focus on the condition, replacement and refurbishment of various leisure assets in the City; it also considers how these should be put to the best use in order that they contribute to the outcomes identified within the City's 'Strategy for an Active Aberdeen (2016 – 2026)', namely:

- ◀ **Increase** opportunities and participants in physical activity and sport;
- ◀ **Invest** in our infrastructure of people and places; and
- ◀ **Be Inclusive** so everyone has the opportunity to be and stay active.

Active Aberdeen Partnership's vision is:

To create a network of high quality, accessible and sustainable sport and leisure facilities, which offer inclusive services for all; enabling more residents to fulfil their potential by participating in sport and physical activity, thus improving their long-term health and wellbeing.

The following key recommendations have been identified to deliver the above vision over the period 2016 – 2026 [and beyond]. They provide strategic direction for the Active Aberdeen Partnership and other organisations which provide facilities and opportunities for residents to pursue sport and recreation as a means to engage in physical activity. The strategic objectives are as follows:

- ◀ **To develop a network of fewer, better quality facilities which fills any gaps in provision and takes advantage of Aberdeen's investment in new school stock.**
- ◀ **To maximise the opportunities to engage with other services and where possible create multi agency hubs through the co-location of services.**
- ◀ **Define the roles and functions for specific facility types across the City.**
- ◀ **Define and implement a city-wide community use policy**
- ◀ **Take a more strategic approach to facility programming on a city-wide basis.**

Each strategic objective is supported with a summary rationale and explanation of the key outcomes to be achieved from it. This will ensure clarity among key stakeholders and funding agencies as well as ensuring that the use of facilities is taken into account rather than just their quality and existence. A number of key recommendations are also provided for each strategic objective order to ensure it is achieved.

Strategic objective 1:

To develop a network of fewer, better quality facilities which fill any gaps in provision and

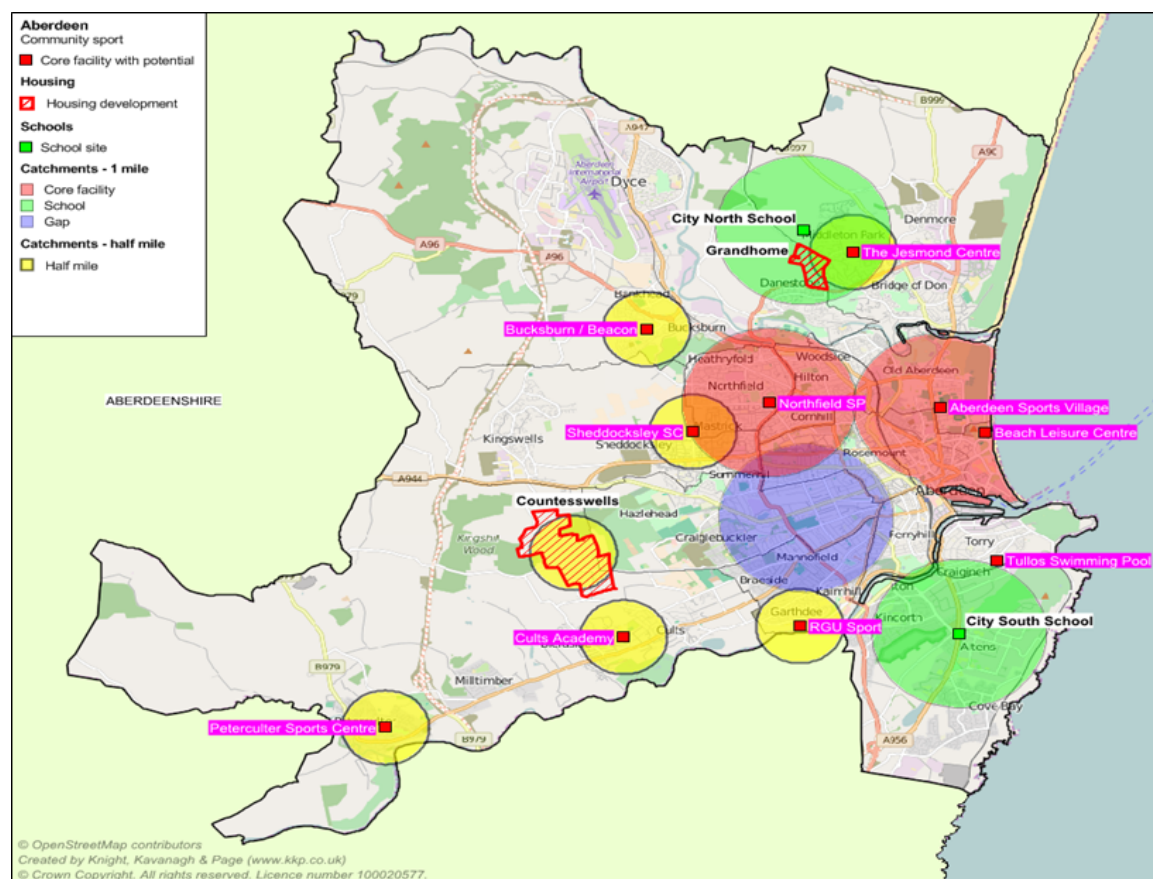
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takes advantage of Aberdeen's investment in new school stock.

All partners signed up to this strategy need to commit to developing a core community sport and leisure infrastructure which serves the needs of all key communities across the City. The context for the vision and recommendations identifies that there are a number of immediate and longer term opportunities for investment across the City's facility stock. This in turn reinforces which facilities will remain for the longer term and how a sports facility infrastructure delivery plan needs to be focused in order to fill any identified gaps in provision or to address the continually declining facility stock.

Figure 7 sets out the vision for the community sports facility infrastructure across the City and identifies where consideration will need to be given to undertaking immediate investment and longer term developments in order to deliver the vision. It seeks to maximise immediate investment proposals and build upon the planned infrastructure developments within the City's secondary school stock. The map also identifies a key potential gap in provision which will potentially need to be filled with an additional facility.

Figure 7: Aberdeen's proposed network of community sports facilities



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6.1 Building on the current infrastructure

The Active Aberdeen Partnership vision recognises the following existing facilities as part of the core offer in Aberdeen:

- ◀ Aberdeen Sports Village
- ◀ The Beach Leisure Centre
- ◀ Linx Ice Arena

It also recognises that there will be a range of existing sports facilities that will serve more localised communities. These facilities serve a smaller catchment given that they are either smaller in size with a limited range of activity areas or have restricted community access arrangements given their location within educational establishments:

- ◀ The Jesmond Centre [given the timing of other proposals in the north of the City, Jesmond will play a more significant role in the short to medium term].
- ◀ Sheddocksley Sports Centre
- ◀ The Beacon Sports Centre
- ◀ Cults Community Sports Complex
- ◀ RGU Sport [which has limited availability to accommodate more community use]
- ◀ Peterculter Sports Centre.

Given the combination of the current condition of some of the above facilities [namely those operated by Sport Aberdeen] and the potential opportunities that have been identified, there is a clear need to undertake immediate investment in order to make key facilities 'fit for purpose'.

6.2 Building on future school developments

Aberdeen will see the development of at least two new secondary schools in the City. These will be located in the south (as a result of school mergers) and north of the City [as a result of significant housing growth at the Grandholme development]; with a third school required to address the educational needs of the new Countesswells conurbation.

The first school to come on line will be in the south of the City. It is clear from the review of the sports facility infrastructure that there is a need for improved quality sport and physical activity provision to serve the needs of this area. However, it is unlikely that a development similar to other school developments across the City will be sufficient to meet the needs of this community. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to develop a co-located community hub at the new school to serve the needs of the community south of the River Dee [please refer to design model identified previously]

A similar approach will also be required for the new school in the north of the City. This development will have a longer lead in period with the potential for a wider range of services and stakeholders to be located across a new campus development.

The new community planned for Countesswells to the west of the City will be a smaller population and is unlikely to require a large scale development similar to those in the north and south of the City. It will however also be accessible to the Lower Deeside and Kingswells populations.

The key challenge for the City Council, Active Aberdeen Partnership and other stakeholders is to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved from the creation of new secondary school stock in the City. If this cannot be achieved the Council will need to fund additional community leisure facilities in addition to the facilities developed on school sites. This could potentially result in the duplication of facilities and investment by the City Council as well as additional ongoing revenue funding to manage community access to them.

6.3 Filling identified gaps in provision

Figure 7 demonstrates that there is a gap in provision serving the west end of the City. This area currently lacks any community accessible sports facilities of any quality and comprehensive availability. Therefore, there is an opportunity to address this with the development of a strategically located wet and dry sports complex to serve this community.

Picking up on the design and location factors for a modern leisure offer, this type of provision should have the following characteristics:

- ◀ Ideally be located on or adjacent to an arterial route in and out of the City.
- ◀ Have good public transport access
- ◀ Be visible from the road network and have a presence within the area.
- ◀ Be able to maximise the 'to and from' work/education market.
- ◀ If possible, the site should be sufficient enough to accommodate additional outdoor facilities (e.g. 3G pitch). 3rd Generation Artificial Grass Pitches [3G]

The research undertaken for the City's Playing Pitch Strategy identified that there is a need for additional 3G pitch provision across the City. This is reinforced by the Scottish Football Association and ongoing consultation with football clubs in the City.

Further consideration will need to be given to the most appropriate strategic locations for new 3G pitch developments across the City and how these will operate and be co-ordinated in order to deliver improvements for community pitch sport clubs. This will also need to consider the aspirations of Aberdeen Sports Village [which will create three 3G pitches in a central location, but with limited community club access] and the immediate need to replace the 3G pitch at Aberdeen Snowsports Centre, the City's first 3G pitch.

The requirements for rugby, hockey and cricket also need to be considered as part of the city's Playing Pitch Strategy.

6.4 Summary

It is acknowledged that in order to deliver the above facilities infrastructure vision, there will be a need for the City Council and its partners to make informed, but tough decisions on the potential rationalisation of the City's older stock, especially in relation to swimming pools. The rationalisation process will need to be phased in line with the development of new facilities; but there needs to be clarity about which older facilities will be replaced by the new fit for purpose stock.

7. SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

7.1 Immediate Priorities - Building on the current infrastructure

The following proposals are considered appropriate for key partners to develop within the early life of the plan [within first 18 months] because of the immediate need and/or opportunity for investment being available. The partners within the AAP should actively take forward the following projects;

- ◀ Upgrade and modernisation of Sheddocksley Sports Centre.
- ◀ In addition, the merits of investigating a joint venture between Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen FC Community Trust [AFC CT] be recognised and supported, with the focus being on increasing the level of investment into Sheddocksley Sports Centre, including a 3G artificial grass pitch, forming a long term partnership, along with providing an operational base for AFC CT.
- ◀ Extension of Northfield Swimming Pool to incorporate a health & fitness suite and activity studio, with a focus on community wellness.
- ◀ Investigate the feasibility of incorporating the operation and management of the 3G artificial grass pitch at Northfield Academy, along with the Northfield Outdoor Centre, within the extended Northfield Swimming Pool to make a more holistic community sports facility hub.
- ◀ Upgrade and extension of the health and fitness facilities at Jesmond Sports Centre, including forging a strategic linkage with the neighbouring health centre.
- ◀ Enter into a strategic partnership with Scottish Gymnastics to develop the Alex Collie Sports Centre as a dedicated gymnastics facility. Investment will support the recent upgrade to the fitness suite and should remain open for community access.
- ◀ Refurbishment of the existing 3G artificial grass pitch at Aberdeen Snowsports Centre.

7.2 Medium Term Priorities

The following proposals will require further consideration and feasibility assessment due to the scale and significance of each project. They are therefore envisaged to be taken forward during the mid-term stage of this plan [years 2 – 5].

- ◀ The complete modernisation of the Beach Leisure Centre to secure its long term future. Proposals should include focus on upgrading to a modern family leisure destination with the core components being improved health and fitness, soft play, activity studios, improved changing and enhanced leisure water play features. Consideration should also be given to the addition of a high quality Spa Retreat and Wellness Centre
- ◀ Enter into partnership with Scottish Tennis, the LTA and the Tennis Foundation, to undertake a refurbishment of the Westburn Tennis Centre, including outdoor courts. Partners should also consider the potential and benefit of extending the number of courts within the indoor facility.
- ◀ Support the clubs associated with the Kings Links Golf Course with the development of a new club house and publicly accessible community golf facilities. Partners should maximise the opportunity presented by the potential to rationalise the clubs owned clubhouse facilities to fund a new clubhouse facility.
- ◀ Maximise the potential of the City South School to develop a community health and wellbeing hub. This should be aligned to the design model opportunities identified within

this strategic plan. Although the exact size and scale of community sport and physical activity facilities will need to be determined, it is anticipated that the following core facility provision should be included:

- ◀ 6 lane 25 metre swimming pool
 - ◀ Teaching pool (with a moveable floor)
 - ◀ 80 station fitness suite.
 - ◀ 2 x group fitness studios
 - ◀ 4 to 6 court sports hall
 - ◀ 1 x 3G pitch (floodlit)
 - ◀ 2 x meeting rooms
 - ◀ Tennis/netball court area.
 - ◀ Ancillary facilities for school and community
- ◀ Consideration should be given to the potential development and impact of creating an outdoor artificial pitch hub at Aberdeen Sports Village alongside the need to create a network of community based and fully accessible 3G pitch facilities.

7.3 Long Term Aspirations

The following proposals will require more detailed analysis and will take longer to bring to fruition if both desired and feasible. As such they are anticipated to be future aspirations that the partners should aim for during the life of this plan. Typically, they should be brought into focus once the other element of this plan are either in place or are progressing. Partners should consider;

- ◀ A replacement for Bucksburn Swimming Pool given that it is no longer meets customer expectations; ideally any new provision should be integrated with the dry side facilities at the Beacon Sports Centre.
- ◀ The long term viability of all school swimming pools alongside the development of new community [and school] accessible swimming pools.
- ◀ The aspiration to relocate the Aberdeen Snowsports Centre in line with the need to lengthen the slope and enhance the offer across a wider range of snow sport disciplines.
- ◀ The potential to enhance the offer at Transition Extreme, reinforcing its position as the centre of excellence for climbing and wheel based sports.

7.4 Building on future school developments

- ◀ Sport Aberdeen and the City Council should work in partnership to maximise the potential of the City South School to develop a community health and wellbeing hub. This should be aligned to the design model opportunities identified within this strategic plan
- ◀ In line with the potential development of new facilities in the north and south of the City, the following should be considered:
 - ◀ To relocate the staff and funding currently in place at Kincorth Sports Centre to the new facility proposed in the south of the City.
 - ◀ To relocate the staff and funding currently in place at Bridge of Don Swimming Pool to the new facility proposed in the north of the City.
- ◀ Sport Aberdeen and the City Council should work in partnership to ensure that even though the facilities at Countesswells will be smaller scale; their design is as important to ensure ease of community use and the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation.

7.5 Filling identified gaps in provision

- ◀ Further investigation is undertaken to identify how the community in the west end could be best served by community sport and leisure provision.
- ◀ Consideration should be given to the potential development and impact of creating an outdoor artificial pitch hub at Aberdeen Sports Village alongside the need to create a network of community based and fully accessible 3G pitch facilities.

Strategic objective 2

To maximise the opportunities to engage with other services and where possible create multi agency hubs through the co-location of services.

Aberdeen has not at this stage sought to capitalise on the co-location of services alongside other partner organisations such as health, libraries, police, etc. This approach is being developed elsewhere in a bid to ensure that, where appropriate organisations can limit the range and number of buildings that they are required to heat, light and maintain. This approach also builds on the opportunity to cross fertilise services in order to ensure that they are reaching the right markets.

A key example of this is where health centres and leisure facilities are in a shared location creating the opportunity for physical activity interventions to be developed in partnership with health partners. In these circumstances health can specifically target or recommend activities for specific patient types, thus ensuring that the physical activity session is attended by the right client group. Similarly, health practitioners are able to deliver rehabilitation programmes within a leisure centre setting, minimising the challenge associated with getting people used to using leisure facilities.

Therefore, there is a need for Aberdeen to investigate the potential to develop these co-located opportunities within the refurbishment of existing facilities or the creation of new facility stock. These approaches can not only provide both revenue and capital savings for each of the stakeholders but provide a better range of services within a single contact point for residents.

The following recommendation should be considered to meet strategic objective 2

- ◀ **All members of the AAP develop strategic relationships with potential partners in order that opportunities for the co-location of services can be identified and potentially implemented.**

Strategic objective 3

Define the roles and functions for specific facility types across the City.

The intention is that sports facilities in Aberdeen will operate within a framework in which specific facilities have distinct roles and functions; carry differing levels of operational weight and related staffing. At the top level there are the regional centres which provide access to facilities in a regional basis (eg Aberdeen Sports Village).

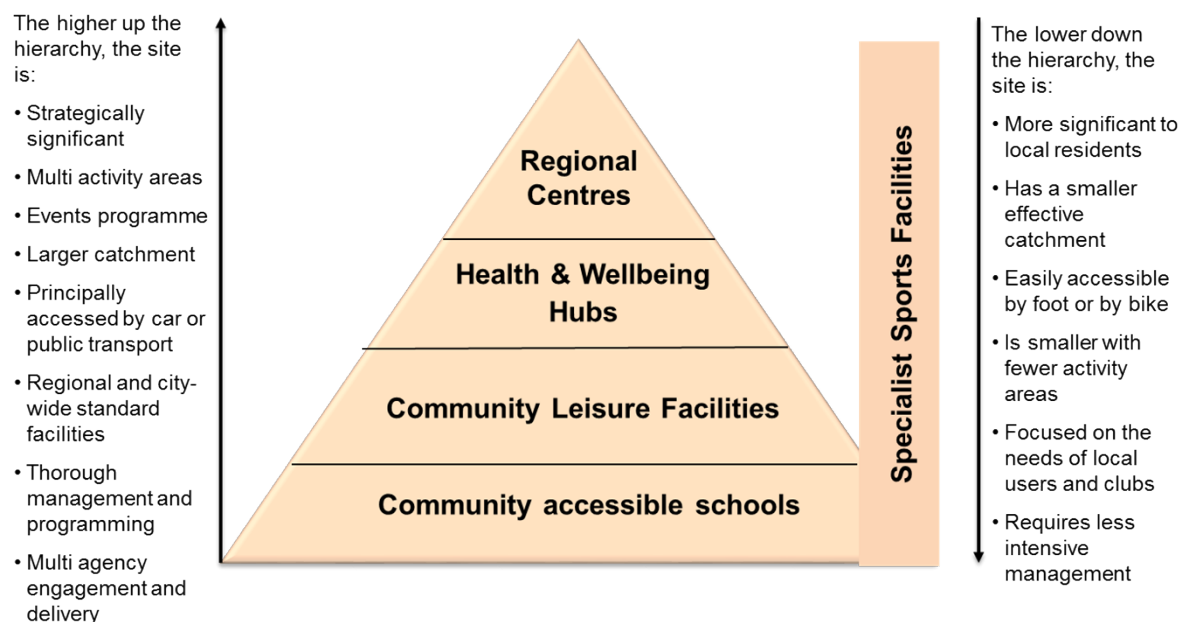
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It is important that facilities have a defined function from the user's perspective. Hence, health and wellbeing hubs and community leisure facilities deliver programmes and orchestrated physical activity geared to increasing participation and improving health. Community accessible schools deliver for localised communities and provide space for static groups which offer limited sports development value. It is also recognised that the range and mix of Aberdeen's specialist sports facilities are delivered across the full range of facility types; reflecting their individual origins and management arrangements.

Key principles are as shown in the table overleaf, whilst broad principles are illustrated in the hierarchy diagram shown below:

Figure 8: Facility hierarchy



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Table 4: Proposed facility hierarchy – role and function

Designation	Role and function
Level 1: Regional Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a regionally significant facility which accommodates a range of sports specific development pathways, from development through to high performance. A primary performance venue for a select number of sports. Provides a regionally significant facility which attracts events and visitors to Aberdeen. Provides a wide a range of opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in sport and physical activity, contributing significantly to the quality of life of residents across Aberdeen. Core venue for training and development of teachers, coaches, volunteers, officials and others in key sports organisations. Has a wider economic value to the City beyond the annual cost of operating it.
Level 2: Health & Wellbeing Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand-alone community health and well-being facility designed to meet the sport and physical activity and well-being needs of a bespoke segment of the City. Mix of wet, dry and fitness activity areas potentially with outdoor provision. Ideally co-located with other community services such as health centres, pharmacy, and library; potentially linked to major school developments. Provides as wide a range of opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in sport and physical activity contributing to the quality of life of residents across Aberdeen. Primary facility for the delivery of physical activity interventions in partnership with health. Core venue for health and fitness and learn to swim across the City. Highly visible and located to accommodate the access requirements of a bespoke segment of the City. Provides/programmes opportunities for local people to try new activities, develop their skills and progress to significant performance levels. Potential to accommodate a primary performance venue for 'secondary sports' or a secondary venue for 'primary sports'.
Level 3: Community Leisure Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes to quality of life of residents within the local community, and provides a range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. A combination of school based community sports facilities and smaller scale stand-alone facilities and partner facilities with limited community access. Provides a base from which local people have the opportunity to develop their skills and try new activities. Provides options for a range of sports organisations to develop skill, participate and compete within their chosen activity. Supports voluntary sports sector to raise standards with respect to coaching, coach education, administration and volunteer development in chosen sport. Facility use reflects demographic profile of the local community Provides a local base from which a range of targeted physical activity programmes can be developed within specific communities.

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Designation	Role and function
Level 4: Community Accessible Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to quality of life of the neighbourhood, accommodating a range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. • Predominantly sports facilities on school sites which operate within the City Council's lettings policy • Provides opportunities for range of sports organisations to participate, train and compete in their chosen activity. • Facility use reflects demographic profile of the local community.
Specialist sports facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a facility infrastructure which accommodates sports specific development pathways, from development through to high performance. • Is the primary training and development venue for the sport, but does not always need to be a competition venue. • Core venue for training and development of teachers, coaches, volunteers and officials within the sport.

The following recommendation should be considered to meet strategic objective 3:

- ✦ **The Active Aberdeen Partnership signs up to a city wide facility hierarchy model and seeks to deliver the appropriate range of opportunities across the City.**

Strategic objective 4

Define and implement a city-wide community use policy

It is clear that there are variable definitions of community use currently in play in Aberdeen by the range of operators of community sports facilities. Therefore, there is a need for the Active Aberdeen Partnership to take the lead in defining what community use should be and the objectives to be achieved from it. Therefore, the following definition of community use should be considered within the context of all community sport and leisure facilities in Aberdeen:

The efficient, effective programming and use of leisure facilities and services for the benefit of local communities so that their use directly assists the achievement of key (national and local) targets such as:

- ✦ *Improving the quality of life for residents in Aberdeen*
- ✦ *Connecting local people to local services to enable them to have a more fulfilled life.*
- ✦ *Contributing to people having a more active, less sedentary lifestyle.*
- ✦ *Increasing participation in sport and physical activity.*

By adopting the above definition and a related approach to managing facilities and services, this requires the Active Aberdeen Partnership to:

- ✦ Develop, use and apply their knowledge and understanding of the demographic profiles and needs of local residents.
- ✦ Develop and keep up to date, accurate knowledge and understanding of community need, via engaging and consulting on a regular basis with local representative agencies such as

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youth clubs, tenants and residents associations, older peoples groups, local pressure groups, etc.

- ◀ Develop and maintain detailed knowledge and understanding of the whole sporting infrastructure across the City.
- ◀ Understand and appreciate the strategic definitions of 'need' applied across the City by key partner agencies such as health, housing, regeneration, etc.
- ◀ Commit to the achievement of strategic impacts and outcomes within the local area.

Adopting the above approach to managing facilities will enable partners to:

- ◀ Provide variety across the programme accommodating a broad range of sport and activity from recreational through to performance.
- ◀ Offer a combination of direct delivery and intervention via partners (e.g. sports clubs, health partners, NGB's).
- ◀ Collect management information and intelligence to underpin actions to extend the reach of the service, which will:
 - ◀ Introduce new people and communities to existing activities and club opportunities.
 - ◀ Introduce existing customers to new activities and club opportunities.
 - ◀ Enable operators to develop innovative programmes and processes to improve service impact among hard to reach groups.
- ◀ Continually re-present the sport and physical activity offer to local communities.
- ◀ Develop appropriate communication processes which enable local communities to make informed choices about being physically active.

The following recommendations should be considered to meet strategic objective 4:

- ◀ **The Active Aberdeen Partnership develops and signs up to a definition of community use.**
- ◀ **The Active Aberdeen Partnership uses the community use principles [or similar] to develop a benchmarking process which will seek to establish the reach of the Partnership.**

Strategic objective 5

Take a more strategic approach to facility programming on a city-wide basis.

It is clear that Aberdeen has a mix of approaches to programming facilities. Although this in itself is not a negative, the efficiency and effectiveness by which clubs, individuals and organisations can access facilities is a challenge. Within a climate of continual efficiencies and financial challenges, all stakeholders need to consider how facility access can be streamlined and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible. This is specifically relevant to the access arrangements for schools across the City, which are often resource intensive to operate for community use.

The following needs to be considered within this context:

- ◀ Review of the bookings and lettings policy and present approach
- ◀ Ensure that all facilities, including schools, are programmed to their maximum capacity reflecting local and city-wide need, to assist ACC to meet its wider strategic objectives.

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- ◀ Ensure that the operation of all sites facilitate the collection of management information and that this is used to inform strategic and operational decision making in the future; particularly in relation to the planning of service delivery.
- ◀ Develop an effective monitoring and evaluation process for all facilities on the back of being furnished with appropriate management information.
- ◀ Ensure, where possible, that all appropriate school sports facilities are accessible to the local community for as much time as is feasibly possible (i.e. a minimum of 20 to 30 hours per week).
- ◀ Ensure that the cost of accessing facilities is appropriate for different client groups and does not become a significant barrier to participation.

The following recommendation should be considered to meet the strategic objective 5:

- ◀ **The Active Aberdeen Partnership signs up to a strategic review of programming to ensure that programmes best meet the needs of community sport and physical activity in the City.**

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8 ACTION PLAN

The following action plan provides an overview of the priorities in Aberdeen and a framework for the Active Aberdeen Partnership to work with in order to deliver a network of sports facilities that contribute to meeting the wider needs of Aberdeen's residents:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 – TO DEVELOP A NETWORK OF FEWER, BETTER QUALITY FACILITIES WHICH FILLS GAPS IN PROVISION AND TAKES ADVANTAGE OF ABERDEEN'S INVESTMENT IN NEW SCHOOL STOCK				
Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.1	Undertake immediate-term investment in the development of new community health and fitness facilities at Northfield Swimming Pool, Jesmond Sports Centre and Sheddocksley Sports Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen develops detailed investment and business plans for each facility. Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council agree the capital investment plan. Sport Aberdeen communicates development proposals to the community. Co-ordinate centre closures to minimise disruption and maximise impact of developments. 	Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council	2016
1.2	In partnership with Scottish Gymnastics invest in the conversion of the sports hall at Alex Collie Sports Centre into a dedicated gymnastics facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen develops detailed design plans for the conversion in partnership with Scottish Gymnastics. Sport Aberdeen and Scottish Gymnastics agree an implementation and funding plan for the development. Sport Aberdeen and Scottish Gymnastics agree an operational plan for gymnastics at the centre and across other Sport Aberdeen facilities. Centre closes for conversion. 	Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council, Scottish Gymnastics	2016/17
1.3	Medium term investment is secured to safeguard the future of the Beach Leisure Centre and develop this into a family leisure destination with the core components being improved health and fitness, soft play and improved changing and water play facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen develops detailed investment and business plans. Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council agree the capital investment and business plans. Sport Aberdeen communicates development proposals to the community. Centre closure for works 	Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council	2017

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Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.4	Consideration should be given to the potential refurbishment and extension of Westburn Tennis Centre in partnership with Tennis Scotland and the LTA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen, Tennis Scotland and the LTA to develop outline plans for the development. Partners to develop and investment plan for the facility. Agree timescales for potential development and implications for the tennis community. Centre closes for upgrade and extension. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council Tennis Scotland LTA sportscotland	2016/17
1.5	Maximise the opportunities presented by the potential to rationalise the clubhouse facilities at Kings Links Golf Course and develop a new shared development which offers enhanced community facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with clubs to develop a rationalisation and investment proposal Work with City Council to determine the potential capital receipt from rationalised sites. Agree scope of works with clubs and other stakeholders 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council, Golf clubs, Scottish Golf Union	2017/18
1.6	Longer term consideration needs to be given to the future of Bucksburn Swimming Pool given that it is not meeting customer expectations; ideally any new provision should be integrated with the dry side facilities at the Beacon Centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify longer term options to replace the pool. Liaise with City Council representatives to identify an appropriate solution to the replacement of the pool. Keep a watching brief on the condition of the existing pool. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council	2026
1.7	Consideration should be given to the long term viability of school swimming pools alongside the development of new community [and school] accessible swimming pools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeen City Council and Sport Aberdeen to keep a watching brief on all school pools and determine when pools are no longer viable in relation to quality, cost and the development of new pools. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council	Ongoing

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Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.8	Consideration should be given to the aspiration to relocate the Aberdeen Snowsports Centre in line with the aspiration to lengthen the slope and enhance the offer across a wider range of snowsport disciplines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further feasibility is required to determine the potential site and suitability of this development alongside the financial viability. 	Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Snowsports Centre Trust, sportscotland	Ongoing
1.9	Consideration should be given to the potential to enhance the offer at Transition Extreme, reinforcing its position as the centre of excellence for climbing and wheel based sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further feasibility is required to determine the nature of this enhancement and financial viability 	Aberdeen City Council, Transition Extreme, sportscotland	Ongoing
1.10	Develop two community health and wellbeing hubs; one in the south and one in the north of the City. These should be aligned to the design model and wider co-location opportunities identified within this strategic plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen to be integrated within the design process for each school Aberdeen City Council to determine which of its services could form part of the hub. Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council to liaise with potential partners to determine their inclusion within the hubs. 	Sport Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council, Others as appropriate	2016-2026
1.11	<p>Although the exact size and scale of community sport and physical activity facilities will need to be determined, it is anticipated that the following core facility provision should be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 lane 25 meter swimming pool Teaching pool 80 station fitness suite. 2 x group fitness studios 4 to 6 court sports hall 1 x 3G pitch (floodlit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen and other stakeholders to determine the exact community sports facility need within the hub sites. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council Sportscotland NGBs	2016-2026

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Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x meeting rooms Tennis/netball court area. Ancillary facilities for school and community. 			
1.12	<p>In line with the potential development of new facilities in the north and south of the City, the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To relocate the staff and funding currently in place at Kincorth Sports Centre to the new facility proposed in the south of the City. To relocate the staff and funding currently in place at Bridge of Don Swimming Pool to the new facility proposed in the north of the City. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council to work together to ensure that rationalisation plans are handled sensitively and facilities close alongside new openings. 	<p>Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council Sportscotland</p>	Ongoing
1.13	Partners to maximise community use and efficiency of operation at Countesswells through an effective design process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen to be integrated within the design process for the development of community facilities for the area. 	<p>Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council sportscotland NGBs</p>	Ongoing
1.14	Further investigation is undertaken to identify how the community in the west end could be best served by community sport and leisure provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council to work together to determine the need and potential strategic location of a facility to serve the west end. Potential partners to identify funding opportunities to realise the development. 	<p>Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council sportscotland NGBs</p>	Ongoing

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Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1.15	Consideration should be given to the potential development and impact of creating an outdoor artificial pitch hub at Aberdeen Sports Village alongside the need to create a network of community based and fully accessible 3G pitch facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ All partners to develop a strategic plan for the development of 3G pitches across the City. ◀ Consideration needs to be given to the operation of these facilities and how they will address the clear challenges facing community pitch sports clubs in the City. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council University of Aberdeen sportscotland NGBs Aberdeen Snowsports Centre	2016-2018

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 – TO MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER SERVICES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, CREATE MULTI-AGENCY HUBS THROUGH CO-LOCATION OF SERVICES				
Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
2.1	Aberdeen City Council and Sport Aberdeen develop strategic relationships with potential partners in order that opportunities for the co-location of services can be identified and potentially implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Strategic partners from agencies such as health, police, social services, libraries, etc are engaged to determine their appetite for co-located services at two key locations. 	Sport Aberdeen Aberdeen City Council	2016

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 – DEFINE THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS FOR SPECIFIC FACILITY TYPES ACROSS THE CITY				
Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
3.1	The Active Aberdeen Partnership signs up to a city wide facility hierarchy model and seeks to deliver the appropriate range of opportunities across the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility hierarchy model is refined by the Active Aberdeen Partnership and all parties sign up to it. Model should be further refined as investment is delivered. 	Active Aberdeen Partnership	Ongoing

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 - DEFINE AND IMPLEMENT A CITY-WIDE COMMUNITY USE POLICY				
Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
4.1	The Active Aberdeen Partnership develops and signs up to a definition of community use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community use definition is refined by the Active Aberdeen Partnership and all parties sign up to it. Definition should be further refined as investment is delivered. 	Active Aberdeen Partnership	2016
4.2	The Active Aberdeen Partnership uses the community use principles [or similar] to develop a benchmarking process which will seek to establish the reach of the Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Active Aberdeen Partnership to agree which data will be shared within a joint benchmarking process. The reach and effectiveness of the Active Aberdeen Partnership facility network should form the baseline for future delivery. 	Active Aberdeen Partnership	2016

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5 – TAKE A MORE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO FACILITY PROGRAMMING ON A CITY-WIDE BASIS				
Strategic objective	Recommendation	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
5.1	The Active Aberdeen Partnership signs up to a strategic review of programming to ensure that programmes best meet the needs of community sport and physical activity in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic review of programming undertaken. Key actions on strategic programming or refining access to facilities should be implemented. 	Active Aberdeen Partnership	2017