

Report of Consultation

Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 – 2029

October 2018

Introduction

The council has prepared and published the Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-29

The Consultation

The Draft Caerphilly Sport and Active Recreation Strategy was the subject of a ten week consultation exercise between 16th July 2018 and 21st September 2018.

The responses and how they are addressed

The report considers the comments made during the consultation

Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2019 - 2029

The Responses

Comments were invited on the Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy' in a structured manner,

A total of 711 responses were received to the consultation questionnaire with a further 20 written responses received.

The issues raised have been grouped under their respective section. An Officer response considers whether changes to the draft Strategy need to be made.

Equalities Impact Assessment

In line with the Council's Equalities Monitoring procedures, respondents were asked whether any of their answers to questions in the survey were impacted by any of the following (age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, religious belief or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality or responsibility for any dependents).

Key Outcomes

Three key outcomes for the draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy have been identified. These are:

- **Better Health**
- **Healthier and Prosperous Communities**
- **Securing a more efficient and financially sustainable future offer.**

Respondents were asked whether any Outcomes were missing and, if so, to provide details.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Proposal
A key theme highlighted in the comments around missing outcomes was that of ensuring that sport and active recreation is inclusive and accessible to all.	Under the Healthier and Prosperous Communities Outcome within the draft Strategy it was stated that this means “stronger, safer, and improved places to live, work and visit for all”. The draft 10 year Strategy reflects a fair and equitable distribution of resources. Agree that the intention to ensure that sport and active recreation is inclusive and accessible to all can be strengthened.	Second Key Outcome – Healthier and Prosperous Communities amended to make the intention clear. Other amendments made to the proposed draft Strategy to reinforce this aspect.
Provision should be accessible to those with disabilities, mental health issues and those of all ages.	Agreed.	No additional changes to the Draft Strategy proposed.
Need to ensure provision is accessible to those living in deprivation, making reference to the lack of availability of public transport and the additional cost of transport for those required to travel	Of the respondents to the consultation on the draft Strategy 68% indicated that they normally travel to the place where they take part in sport and active recreation by car, 23% walk, 4% cycle 4% use public transport. All future provision will be accessible by public transport and will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable,	No additional changes to the Draft Strategy proposed.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Proposal
further distances to access facilities.	<p>geographic coverage across the county borough. Implementation ensures a fair and just allocation of resources that will provide for continued sport and leisure provision into the future for the benefit of all.</p> <p>The draft Strategy proposes a financially sustainable vision to secure sport and active recreation provision in the county borough into the future. In doing so any financial pressure to increase prices for customers is reduced thereby promoting accessibility across socio-economic groups.</p>	
There is a need to provide support for those who wish to take part in a variety of sports.	Agreed. This is reflected in the draft Strategy.	No changes proposed.

Outcome 1: Better Health

Three actions have been identified as key to delivering the outcome of achieving 'Better Health':

- Inspiring our future generations to adopt healthy active lifestyles;
- Supporting and encouraging the provision of more opportunities for more daily active recreation in our communities and work places;
- Specialist interventions e.g. exercise referral, outreach work using physical activity.

Respondents were asked whether there are any actions missing and whether there is anything else we can do to support the outcome of achieving better health.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Comments under the “better health” outcome reinforced comments made in the previous section relating to missing outcomes.	Noted.	No changes to the draft Strategy proposed.
Promoting healthy living through education. This action is not just about increasing activity levels but ensuring a good understanding of role of diet and exercise.	Agreed - We have identified that in delivering the Strategy there is an opportunity to improve the awareness and marketing of the full sport and active recreation offer across the county borough including that provided by others. Supplementing existing delivery mechanisms such as National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) and Nutrition Complete	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.
Making better use of outdoor space and improving active travel routes	Although the primary purpose of Active Travel is for connecting people to places for a purpose it is important in promoting healthy	Text added at page 30 to expand upon the role of Active Travel and

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
(specifically cycle networks and footpaths) to encouraging general fitness through incidental exercise.	lifestyles and is included in the Strategy. However, the links can be strengthened in particular in relation to the availability of the adopted Active Travel Existing Routes map as well as the delivery of kerbcraft and national standards training safely equipping and supporting children to lead more sustainable and healthy lives.	include the significant infrastructure that exists across the county borough.
Ensuring careful consideration of the importance of the sport and active recreation provision in the long term health of residents and ensuring that no changes result in poorer health outcomes for residents.	Agreed – Corporate Objective 5 ‘Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle’ is clearly articulated within the strategy. The strategy also recognises the broad spectrum of opportunities that exist to encourage residents to lead physically active lifestyles to reduce obesity and health inequalities across the county borough. Adopting a collaborative approach will be essential in supporting all stakeholders to deliver programmes / facilities that support the vision and key principles	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.
Strengthen reference to links between the outdoors and mental health.	The draft Strategy highlighted that physical activity has many mental as well as physical health and wellbeing benefits as well as the significant amount of green space that is available to promote wellbeing. Agree that there are opportunities to strengthen those links.	Text added at pages 15 and 20 to make it explicit that “wellbeing” encompasses both physical and mental health. Text also added to page 8 recognising the contribution to social connections, cohesive communities, and active citizenship.
Ensure physical literacy from preschool and through the school setting.	Agreed. Pre-school children are engaged through our Community Tots delivery which is based around fundamental movement skills and covers a wide range of sports and activities, the programme caters for children aged 2-6yrs. We are also piloting a preschool training offer to public and private providers to upskill their workforce. The Strategy commits to collaborating with schools to motivate children and young people to adopt and continue healthy active lifestyles, as well as restating the Council’s Wellbeing Objective to achieve a single, shared outcome of more young people becoming active adults.	Action added to the Healthier and Prosperous Communities Outcome in relation to pre-school activity at page 13.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Promote active workplaces.	Agreed. As detailed above the Strategy includes the action: Supporting and encouraging the provision of more opportunities for more daily active recreation in our communities and work places. The Council is showing leadership in this regard through its own Wellbeing@work Group.	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.

Outcome 2: Healthier and Prosperous Communities

Three actions have been identified as key to delivering the outcome of achieving 'Healthier and Prosperous Communities':

- Working with community sports clubs and their governing bodies to help our clubs become bigger, stronger and more sustainable;
- Reviewing the commercial business case and options for a new or improved leisure attraction in the south west of the county borough.

Respondents were asked whether there were any actions missing to support the outcome of healthier and prosperous communities.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Encourage and support local clubs and organisations to provide a range of activities including athletics, running, hockey, bowls.	Agreed. Within the draft Strategy under the Healthier and Prosperous Communities Outcome there is the Action: Working with community sports clubs and their governing bodies to help our clubs become bigger, stronger and more sustainable.	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy
The Council should work with other providers of sport and active recreation	Agreed. Our collaborative approach and desire to work in partnership with others is reflected in our current service delivery	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
within the county borough.	and the draft Strategy. We have identified that in delivering the Strategy there is an opportunity to improve the awareness and marketing of the full sport and active recreation offer across the county borough including that provided by others.	
Work collaboratively with other organisations to encourage community-led innovation and involvement.	Agreed – The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) Wales makes clear that public services should be working closely with other partners to secure future provision and explore a range of opportunities for innovation and involvement	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.
Community involvement and an innovative approach are key to achieve change.	Agreed – See point above	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.
Support local clubs and other providers.	Agreed. Within the draft Strategy under the <i>Healthier and Prosperous Communities</i> Outcome we have an action: Working with community sports clubs and their governing bodies to help our clubs become bigger, stronger and more sustainable	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.
Consider the links between sport and active recreation provision and crime and anti-social behaviour.	Noted the Strategy highlights existing delivery through the Positive Futures scheme supporting the approach of sport and active recreation as a mechanism for improving community cohesion. This work will be further supported by enhanced collaboration with a range of stakeholders including schools and local clubs / associations.	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy
Provision needs to be accessible and affordable to all.	Agreed. Accessibility and affordability are key drivers for the strategy.	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.

Outcome 3: A more efficient and financially sustainable future provision

Seven actions have been identified as key to delivering the outcome of achieving ‘A more efficient and financially sustainable future provision’:

- Maximising the use of all our community amenities and the local environment;
- Maximising use of assets through co-locations, invest to save models and the aim to reduce subsidy levels at our strategic leisure centres to between £1 and £1.20 per user;
- Creating more sustainable facilities by improving schools use agreements and investment in more attractive strategic facilities;
- Focussing our unique and essential role on providing specialist interventions in communities;
- Motivating young people - commissioning and supporting our schools to provide the right learning environment that is also available for community activity at appropriate times;
- Where there is a business case, we will invest in key, strategic facilities;
- We will ensure that strategic facilities directly operated by us receive the level of regular investment required to ensure that equipment and facilities are safe, functional, modern and inspirational.

Respondents were asked whether there were any actions missing to support the outcome of a more efficient and financially sustainable future provision.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Ensure opening times allow for access to facilities at times when they are needed (full time working people, shift workers and during the day).	Agreed and we currently offer broad opening hours for example: Caerphilly Leisure Centre, is open 7 days a week and from 6:15am to 10:00pm in the week; and likewise Newbridge Leisure Centre which is open 6:00am to 10:00pm in the week.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Ensure facilities provided are of a good quality (a number suggested that this was not currently the case).	The Strategy is, in part, a response to this very issue. The majority of facilities were built in the late 1960s, early 1970s. Despite significant investment the last service wide condition surveys undertaken in 2012 identified circa £3 million of category 1, 2 and 3 outstanding maintenance requirements. The Strategy proposes	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
	investment in more attractive strategic facilities where there is a business case and that they receive the level of regular investment required to ensure that equipment and facilities are safe, functional, modern and inspirational.	
Remove parking charges at country parks to support maximising the use of all our community amenities and the local environment	We do offer season tickets so that regular users of our Country Parks are able to do so for less than £1 per week. However, this concern is acknowledge and we will look for any opportunities to address this matter further in the face of UK Government's ongoing austerity measures.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Motivating young people beyond schools and education and inspiring future generations	The Strategy commits to collaborating with schools to motivate children and young people to adopt and continue healthy active lifestyles, as well as restating the Council's Wellbeing Objective to achieve a single, shared outcome of more young people becoming active adults.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Provision of alternative community health and leisure venues if local leisure centres are to close.	Noted – The draft Strategy makes clear that there is a mixed economy of provision within the county borough that supports a broad range of opportunity and access to sport and active recreation. Working collaboratively to support partners and unlock the available opportunities is a key and essential component of the Strategy's vision	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Explore ways to ensure viability of existing provision including community centres and shared school/leisure use facilities/church halls and other community assets – this includes promoting what is available.	Agreed – please see above point	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
There were mixed views in relation to the feasibility of using school facilities (access and capacity)	The role of schools from both an educational and facility perspective is a key tenet of the strategic vision. Supporting schools and associated governing bodies to maximise access to facilities that support delivery of sport and active recreation will	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
	increase opportunity and place schools and the heart of developing cohesive communities.	
Motivating young people beyond schools and education and inspiring future generations.		
Acknowledging financial pressures whilst questioning economic sustainability versus true sustainability (health and deprivation).	<p>It is agreed that sustainability is much wider than financial pressures, but it would be wrong to ignore and not plan for the reality of the financial pressures that we face. As stated in the Strategy, "We must achieve a healthier county." and Better Health is the first of three Key Outcomes that the Strategy aims to deliver. It is why the Strategy has been developed to set out a 10 year vision outlining how the Council will continue to have a major role in sport and active recreation for years to come.</p> <p>It is recognised that those living in our more deprived communities experience worse health outcomes and that health inequalities across the county borough remain. The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy aims to sustain countywide access to sport and active recreation opportunities. In relation to leisure facilities the Strategy proposes a fair and just distribution of resources including a strategic facility to serve the north of the county borough.</p> <p>As stated in the Strategy the Council promotes Positive Futures and Tackling Inequalities initiatives - benefiting children and young people from deprived communities through an inclusion programme using sport to engage young people - attendances have grown by over 1,200 to 9,000 in 2017. The Strategy also aims to build upon the "large scale change" collaborative programme aimed at getting females more active to improve health outcomes</p>	No changes proposed to the draft Strategy.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
	in the Heads of Valleys area and the Lets Go Girls Initiative.	
Removal of facilities from more deprived areas – cumulative impact.	Please see above.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Consider closer links and reference to Public Services Board Well-being Plan Action Areas (including, but not limited to, the Natural Environment, Volunteering and Good Health & Wellbeing) and other thematic areas such as Active Travel and Play	Agreed that there is an opportunity to be clearer about the links between this Strategy and the PSB's Wellbeing Plan. Our semi-rural environment is a significant asset, the Well-being Plan aims to increase the contribution our environment makes to health and well-being though the provision of good quality accessible green space. The Well-being Plan also aims to help residents manage their own physical and mental well-being by creating supportive environments to do this. Working in partnership with the rest of the public sector is intrinsically linked to how we will deliver sport and active recreation.	Additional text inserted at page 8
Linking with the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy – to consider delivery of services and natural/built infrastructure that deliver multiple benefits.	The Green Infrastructure Strategy has not yet been drafted, but the link is accepted.	Add reference to the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy at page 30.
Planning - consideration of usable sport and active recreation spaces at the planning stage of any developments, in particular, housing developments.	Agreed. This opportunity is recognised in the draft Strategy.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.

What Needs To Be Done

Corporate Policy

If respondents disagreed with any of the statements relating to Corporate Policy they were asked to suggest alternative ways forward.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Keeping costs down was a concern, in particular, ensuring that alternative and school-based provision does not cost more however, a number also suggested increasing charges could be a means of keeping facilities open.	Affordability is a concern and the Strategy aims to maximise sport and active recreation opportunities for all across the county borough. The proposed approach to facilities aims to allow for investment in high quality facilities, recognising that income is an important part of any business model, but avoiding excessive charges that would present a barrier to participation.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Making better use of a range of other venues was supported by many although smaller proportion of respondents supported joint school use. Concerns were raised over the capacity of schools to run facilities and restrictions on access to facilities (opening times, school holiday closures)	The Strategy recognises the importance of schools as an essential part of the future community sport and active recreation offer and the Council will work with schools to help them meet their needs and those of the wider community.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Ensuring a multi-agency approach that encourages healthy lifestyles beyond exercise.	The Strategy highlights the broad collaboration with our partners, but there is an opportunity to be clearer about the links between this Strategy and the Caerphilly Public Services Board's Well being Plan across health and well-being, social connections and cohesive communities, volunteering and active citizenship, culture, economic opportunity and the natural environment.	Additional text added at page 8.

Facilities

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If respondents disagreed with any of the statements relating to Facilities they were asked to suggest alternative ways forward.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of capacity of remaining facilities to support an expanding population; • The suitability of alternative facilities for certain activities • Ensuring a full cost benefit analysis is undertaken before any decisions are made • Specifically, there was opposition to the potential closure of Cefn Fforest and Pontllanfraith Leisure Centres. Proposed that alternative provision is available to meet the demand for services in the area e.g. swimming pool capacity at other leisure centres if Cefn Fforest is to close. 	<p>The draft strategy recommends adoption of the Welsh Government Facilities for Future Generations blueprint to support decision making in respect of the built infrastructure, across the lifetime (10 years) of the strategy. As the service evolves to the new model of delivery careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn. Any proposed changes to the existing portfolio will be subject to robust business cases at the appropriate time, considering the authority's unique position in respect of delivery and opportunity.</p>	<p>Text added at page 30 to confirm that careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.</p>

Respondents were asked to outline what they felt the impact would be on them of rationalising facilities so that the Council's Sport and Leisure service directly manages 4 strategic leisure centres located in Risca, Caerphilly, Newbridge and one in the Bargoed/Aberbargoed areas with other leisure centres either transferring to school management (if they are joint use facilities located on a school site, subject to governing body approval) or closing completely.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
<p>Increased travel time and distance for those who drive.</p>	<p>There may be an increased travel time and distance for some; this may be reduced for others.</p>	<p>No changes proposed to the draft strategy.</p>

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Increased cost of travel.	There may be an increased cost of travel for some; this may be reduced for others.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Concern relating to inadequate public transport provision to sites.	The locations of the 4 strategic leisure centres are all accessible by public transport.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Reduced availability and access to facilities (capacity and opening hours)	Careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn. Focussing on 4 strategic leisure centres directly managed by the Council's Sport and Leisure service will support investment in multi-functional facilities and allow opening hours to be maximised.	Text added at page 30 to confirm that careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.
Fair geographical distribution	Agreed - All future provision will be accessible by public transport and will ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, geographic coverage across the county borough. Implementation ensures a fair and just allocation of resources that will provide for continued sport and leisure provision into the future for the benefit of all.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Capacity of swimming pools for swimming lessons.	Noted - It is clear that we need to clarify our unique position in respect of aquatic delivery. Any changes to aquatic provision will be subject to robust business cases across the lifetime of the Strategy that support our unique position, the financial climate and the requirement to provide the appropriate facility mix to support a broad range of delivery options.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Support for development of strategic sites in Caerphilly and Bargoed.	The draft strategy clearly articulates the vision to maximise resources through the delivery of four strategically located leisure facilities that provide fair and equitable access to all residents. The anticipated population growth in the south of the county borough, along with the current condition of the existing facility and opportunity to develop a fit for purpose, better quality leisure centre that supports the Facilities for Future Generations blueprint, clearly	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.

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Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
	identifies that this area of the county borough is of significant importance. Further, delivering a high quality leisure facility that supports the north of the county borough, in partnership with Welsh Governments 21 st Century Schools programme is also a key aspiration	

If respondents indicated that the impact of rationalising leisure facilities will be negative, they were asked what could be done to mitigate the impact on them and their family.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
Ensure that alternative provision is in place before centres are closed	Careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn. Focussing on 4 strategic leisure centres directly managed by the Council's Sport and Leisure service will support investment in multi-functional facilities and allow opening hours to be maximised.	Text added at page 30 to confirm that careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.
Maximise the use of local assets (community centres, church halls etc) to provide classes etc	Maximising the use of all our community amenities and the local environment is an Action identified in the Strategy under Outcome 3: A more efficient and financially sustainable future provision.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Ensuring that there is adequate capacity within remaining facilities if leisure centres are to close	Careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn. Focussing on 4 strategic leisure centres directly managed by the Council's Sport and Leisure service will support investment in multi-functional facilities and allow opening hours to be maximised.	Text added at page 30 to confirm that careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.

Sport and active recreation outreach and intervention programmes

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If respondents disagreed with any of the statements relating to outreach and intervention programmes, they were asked to suggest an alternative way forward.

Issues Raised	Officer Response	Recommendation
A need to monitor and evidence the effectiveness of intervention programmes	Agreed, intervention programmes are evaluated.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Ensuring sustainability of provision when relying on volunteers or private companies moving forward	Agreed.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Considering the negative impact of rationalising leisure centres on local clubs who use these facilities	Careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.	Text added at page 30 to confirm that careful consideration will be given to opportunities for alternative provision before any facilities are withdrawn.
A need to work with parents to ensure they encourage and adopt healthy active lifestyles for themselves and their families.	Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our residents to be more active, more often.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.
Encouraging a Gwent wide approach with cross border access to facilities	The Council is playing a lead role in the regional Active Gwent collaboration programme to increase participation in sport and physical activity in a way that has the greatest impact in Caerphilly.	No changes proposed to the draft strategy.