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Title of meeting:	Community Safety, Leisure & Sport Decision Meeting
Subject:	Sports and Leisure Update
Date of meeting:	09 July 2024
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lee Hunt
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by:

1.1 The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Leisure and Sport.

2. Purpose

2.1 To illustrate and review progress against the Council's Sports Facility Strategy 2017.

3. Information Requested

3.1 Strategic overview

3.1.1 The City Vision 2040 makes a commitment towards a happy and healthy city where *'we do everything we can to enhance wellbeing for everyone in our city by offering ... support that every individual needs for their physical and mental health'*.¹ This includes providing sports and leisure facilities that everyone can access, with easy reach provision of facilities to all corners of the city.

3.1.2 The Council's Corporate Plan includes a commitment to *'improve the health and emotional wellbeing of residents'* and sports and leisure provision plays a central part in this.² Our Public Health team's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2030 makes

¹ [The Vision - Imagine Portsmouth](#)

² [The Corporate Plan.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

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a commitment towards tackling health inequalities and part of this includes supporting a community response to local need³ (see Active Partnerships, below).

3.1.3 The Council's direction is also informed by insight from national strategy. This includes organisations such as Sport England and the Football Foundation, who are also critical grant funding bodies. The mission of Sport England's current strategy, *Uniting the Movement*, is to *'invest in sport and physical activity to make it a normal part of life for everyone in England, regardless of who you are'*. The Council has its own strategic document, the Strategic Outcomes Physical Activity Strategy⁴, which reflects on national strategy and provides the evidential basis for capital investment in sports and leisure facilities in the city, together with priorities for engagement with partners and the community.

3.1.4 The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), undertaken by Public Health, informs the Council regarding the extent of need in the city⁵. The JSNA from 2021/22 tells us that:

3.1.4.1 22.4% of adults in Portsmouth are physically inactive;

3.1.4.2 66.4% of adults in Portsmouth are overweight or obese

Access for all to sports and leisure opportunities is therefore vitally important.

3.1.5 In April 2024 Sport England published their Active Lives Adult Survey, covering the period November 2022 to November 2023.⁶ This confirmed that where a quarter of the population remain inactive, this activity level is significantly lower where individuals live in an area of deprivation.

3.1.6 This report provides an information update on key activity that the Council has undertaken in the past 7 years to deliver against strategic objectives to improve the city's sports and leisure offer. The capital spend undertaken and committed in this period is set out in the appendix.

3.2 Active Partnerships

3.2.1 Within Portsmouth are some neighbourhoods with very high levels of deprivation. 5 (12%) of Portsmouth's 125 Lower Super Output Areas (the smallest census population groups within the city) are within the most deprived 10% in England and Landport (within Charles Dickens ward) is amongst the 1% most deprived

³ [health-and-wellbeing-strategy-january-2022-accessible.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Strategic Outcomes Plan for Sport and Physical Activity in Portsmouth.pdf](#)

⁵ [Joint strategic needs assessment - Portsmouth City Council](#)

⁶ [Long-term increase in activity levels positive but further action needed to tackle inequalities | Sport England](#)

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neighbourhoods in England⁷. There is a close connection between deprivation levels, engagement with physical activity and health and wellbeing outcomes (Health & Wellbeing Strategy).

- 3.2.2 To this end, the Council is working with our Active Partnerships⁸, a nationwide sports and leisure network across the UK. As a place-based initiative, this means that locally the Council are working with Energise Me, to focus on the Landport area, working with colleagues in Public Health on a community focussed engagement programme to help more people in the area become physically active.
- 3.2.3 In Landport, Energise Me is leading on a 'Place Partnership' intervention with funding from Sport England. This is aimed at getting currently inactive people to do some physical activity. It is currently in the planning stage and will be engaging with stakeholders this year. This will not provide significant capital funding to build new facilities, but revenue funding to 'activate' existing sites.

3.3 BH Live

- 3.3.1 Most of the sports and leisure facilities in the city are operated under a contract with BH Live (at the Pyramids since 2013 and remaining centres since 2017). Under this model, in return for an annual management fee, the sites are operated in line with Council strategy, including sports development as a key driver. As a charitable social enterprise, any surplus generated by BH Live is reinvested into the contract for the benefit of sports and leisure provision. Council officers monitor the performance of the contract against an agreed set of deliverables. It is noteworthy that during the pandemic both BH Live and the Council's monitoring team acted to maintain the delivery of sports and leisure, with a return to pre-pandemic levels faster than the UK average.
- 3.3.2 Following the commencement of this contract the Council and the leisure operator undertook a review of the condition of the leisure facilities and considered where partnerships with other stakeholders in the city could broaden access to leisure facilities for local people. This work was supported by Sport England and resulted in the Council's Sports Facilities Strategy (2017)⁹ and Playing Pitch Strategy (2018)¹⁰.
- 3.3.3 The sites under contract with BH Live include:
- 3.3.3.1 Charter Community Sports Centre;
 - 3.3.3.2 Wimbledon Park Sports Centre;

⁷ Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2020.

⁸ [Home | Active Partnerships](#)

⁹ [03.0 CLS - facilities report.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ [Playing Pitch Strategy report.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)

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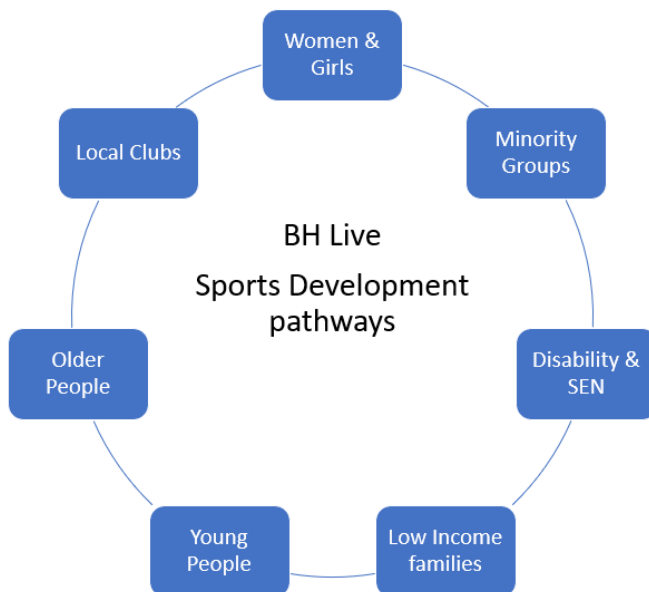
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- 3.3.3.3 The Pyramids;
- 3.3.3.4 Mountbatten Centre;
- 3.3.3.5 Portsmouth Tennis Centre; and
- 3.3.3.6 Portsmouth Gymnastics Centre.

3.3.4 The contract with BH Live includes the commitment by the Council to continue to offer free swimming to under 12s in the city. The contract also includes free swimming for schools.

3.4 BH Live and Sports Development

3.4.1 Sports development is a leading part of the BH Live mission. The development is structured across 7 areas as shown below.



3.4.2 *Women and girls*: the objective is to provide safe spaces for women and girls to access sports. Actions have included expanding the delivery of women and girls sports and fitness sessions and moving forward looking to work with Her Spirit, a community network promoting physical activity for women and girls.

3.4.3 *Minority groups*: the objective is to ensure that ethnic minorities can participate in sport on equal terms. This has included partnerships with organisations in the city such as City of Sanctuary, which has enabled swimming delivery for Muslim women.

3.4.4 *Disability and SEN*: the objective is to close the access gap and provide a positive environment for disabled and SEN individuals to access sport. There has been a

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growth of sessions for this purpose across gymnastics, Exploria and swimming, together with staff training so that more individuals with particular needs can access the junior gym.

- 3.4.5 *Low income families*: the objective is to ensure that low income families are not prevented from accessing sport and leisure. Under the BH Live contract, free swimming is offered to all Portsmouth residents at Mountbatten Centre and Charter Centre. The operator also supports the Council's Leisure Card scheme to provide discounted access at all its centres.
- 3.4.6 *Young people*: the objective is to build connection and resilience to encourage young people to access sport pathways. Projects have included engaging with schools for improved delivery and providing junior and family free activity taster events. Forward plans include working with partners via a multi-agency model to tackle anti-social behaviour and redevelop the young person talent pathway.
- 3.4.7 *Older people*: the objective is to build connection and ensure that older people are not excluded from accessing sporting opportunities. This has included expansion of The Over Fifty Fives club which already offers Walking Netball and Walking Football, to look at offering provision over further sporting opportunities.
- 3.4.8 *Local clubs*: the objective is to work with local clubs to develop talent pathways into sporting opportunities and participation. The intention is for all clubs that access BH Live facilities to work with BH Live as a sporting forum, to offer training opportunities. This has included a recent relaunch of the cycling forum.

3.5 BH Live Mountbatten Centre

- 3.5.1 As part of the commitment towards facilities improvements, several energy savings initiatives are underway at this site as part of the development plan.
- 3.5.2 Funds from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund¹¹ are enabling projects across the country such as installing of solar panels, pool covers, LED lighting and improved insulation. This is intended to help keep swimming centres open and reduce energy bills amidst funding challenges.
- 3.5.3 In Portsmouth the Sport England funding will be used to install solar panels at Mountbatten Centre on the pool roof together with new pool covers over the main pool, to minimise energy use to heat the pool.
- 3.5.4 The Council have invested capital funding for floodlights at the Mountbatten Centre, together with track resurfacing, to improve the usability of the all weather athletics track facility. Investment will also deliver a new roof to the original 'dry' side of the

¹¹ [Swimming Pool Support Fund | Sport England](#)



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centre, together with renewal of major mechanical and engineering plant, to secure the future of the building.

3.6 BH Live: other investment

3.6.1 In addition to the above, previous investment (2018) at BH Live sites has delivered:

3.6.1.1 New clip and climb facility

3.6.1.2 Improved studio space

3.6.1.3 New spin studio

3.6.1.4 Reconfigured health & fitness suite to increase numbers for cardiovascular equipment and dedicated space for activity such as stroke rehabilitation.

3.6.1.5 Reconfigured event and meeting space

3.6.1.6 New café and servery

3.6.1.7 New entrance with state of the art admission system

3.7 BH Live: Pyramids

3.7.1 In 2013 the Pyramids came under the BH Live contract.

3.7.2 The Pyramids had formerly been a leisure pool complex, but following extensive modelling and feasibility testing the Council took the decision to re-purpose the facility to a combined gym, fitness and soft play facility, 'Exploria', opening January 2022. Following the project to deliver the new gym and Exploria, a 10 year maintenance plan was produced for the period 2018-2028. This reduced the financial risk exposure considerably, due to the removal of associated costs of maintaining swimming pool plant and cleansing, even prior to the inflation and energy cost rises during recent years. Therefore the Council was able to continue to offer the Pyramids site in a new configuration, rather than closing down the offering in the south of the city.

3.7.3 Part of the continued development of Exploria at the Pyramids also includes a sensory room, to increase accessibility and inclusivity provision for children with particular needs. A changing places toilet has also been installed.

3.8 Sports Council

3.8.1 The Council facilitates a quarterly forum which enables club and community representatives to come together, share best practice and opportunities for collaboration in a supportive network environment. The Council welcomes interest from clubs and communities across the city. There is a small annual revenue grant that is awarded via the Sports Council.

3.9 Football Development

3.9.1 John Jenkins Stadium

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This stadium comprises the redevelopment of the former Moneyfields Football Club by Pompey In The Community, with the Council providing a project funding contribution. Community programmes will be operated by Pompey In the Community jointly with Moneyfields Football Club at the site, including Holiday Activity and Food programmes and education programmes for local schools. The stadium development will include artificial grass pitches for all weather play.

3.9.2 King George V (KG5) Football Complex

Funding from the Parklife Scheme (Premier League, Sport England and Football Foundation) has enabled the delivery of a new complex in the north of the city at Cosham which opened in Spring 2024. The KG5 complex includes a newly provisioned pavilion, an increase in parking provision, artificial grass pitches and floodlighting for all weather play, together with a café offer, meeting space and purpose built changing facilities.. The Council has leased operation of the site to Hampshire Football Association to work with local leagues on football development. One of the principle aims of the new complex is to increase participation in football by underrepresented groups. In addition, the site will also be leveraged to engage with young people in the area and as such received a funding grant in part from the Youth Investment Fund.

3.9.3 Playzones

The Council have in recent months submitted an expression of interest to the Football Foundation that has been approved in principle, to move to the next stage to work up an application for funding. This funding will enable the development of refurbished mini kickabout pitches in urban spaces in the city which can be utilised for football or other sports. The sites will be focussed on areas of greatest need and priority¹².

3.9.4 Both the John Jenkins stadium, KG5 complex and Playzones look to deliver against the strategic case to provide more opportunities in Portsmouth for grass roots football.

3.10 Community use

3.10.1 Working with the University of Portsmouth, the Council secured agreement for several local schools across the city to use the facilities at the Ravelin Centre free of charge.

¹² [Football Foundation PlayZones Programme | Football Foundation](#)

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3.10.2 In line with the council's Sports Facility Strategy officers are working towards further Community Use Agreements with organisations (eg schools) across the city with a view to making indoor sports facilities available to the community.

3.11 Community Centres

3.11.1 The Council supports the running of several community centres across the city, through leasing buildings to community associations to run. Under service level agreements, the community associations are required to provide activities to the community including sports and leisure provision.

3.11.2 Several community centres have large multi-purpose sports halls or badminton court sized halls which are used to provide a range of sport and exercise activities. This includes boxing facilities at Paulsgrove Community Centre and The Omega Centre. John Pounds Community Centre and Fratton Community Centre also have equipped gym facilities.

3.12 Running

3.12.1 The annual Great South Run has been a flagship event in the city since the early 1990s. The primary event comprises a 10 mile run with side events including a 5k, junior (2.5k) and mini event (1.5K). This allows the event to encourage participation from those new to running, particularly young people or those returning to running, therefore aligning with the Council's objectives of a healthy and happy city. The run regularly achieves participation of around 25,000 capacity, as well as highlighting the city on the national and international stage.

3.12.2 The Council's events approval process also allows for community led running events to take place on public land. This includes Great Run Local in the north of the city, which encourages activity participation for 2k and 5k courses. The Park Run also operates weekly at Lakeside, Southsea and Great Salterns.

3.12.3 In support of athletics more widely, the Council has funded track resurfacing at Mountbatten and Bransbury.

3.13 Watersports

3.13.1 The Council are eager to utilise the unique positioning of the city along the seafront. The proximity of the city to the Solent provides an ideal opportunity to promote water sports.

3.13.2 In summer 2023 the city hosted the Formula Kite European Championships in collaboration with UK Sport, the International Kiteboarding Association, Royal Yachting Association, the council and The National Lottery. Whilst this event involved elite performances, part of the offering enabled 400 local school children,

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from some of the most deprived areas of the city, to attend the event beach club, to experience a taster of watersports activities. The event also provided the children with an opportunity to engage in STEM experiments connected to the event, look at marine biodiversity and try wingsurfing with the Andrew Simpson Centre. The children also participated in water confidence sessions with SwimSafe. Following the event, Formula Kite were awarded a Platinum Clean Regatta Award.

3.13.3 Following on from the success of the Formula Kite event, the Council are looking to bring more high profile events to the city. This includes working with Sail GP to bring Ocean Race Europe to Portsmouth, which would also look to expand opportunities for the city's residents to experience watersports.

3.13.4 The Council continue to invest in 3 splash parks across the city: Hilsea Splashpool, Southsea Splashpool and Canoe Lake Splashpads. These facilities are free to access and are popular with young families, enabling toddlers to access a water environment safely.

Andrew Simpson Centre

3.13.5 Prior to 2017 the watersports facility on the Eastern Road was managed as a profit centre. Following production of the Council's Watersports Strategy, the facility was re-procured in 2017 to a non-profit making trust, the Andrew Simpson Sailing Foundation. The vision for the centre is to facilitate wider participation in sailing, optimising the benefits that sport can deliver to young people and ensuring access to watersports free from burdensome financial barriers. The Council has also undertaken major capital works to the centre, to ensure its future.

Hilsea Lido

3.13.6 In 2021 the Council successfully made a bid to the government's Levelling Up Fund to deliver a wider project 'Hilsea Linear Park' in the north of the city. This project would encompass both support of the King George V Football Complex and wider schemes in the area, including the refurbishment of the Hilsea Lido which had not operated since 2020. The current development project plan is looking to refurbish the pool, reinstate the lagoons, improve the plant filtration system, upgrade site facilities and entrance points. The ambition is to complete the Lido project in time to open in summer 2025, in conjunction with the 90th anniversary of the site.

3.14 Skate Parks, BMX and Basketball facilities.

3.14.1 The Council has an interest in two sites in the city. Southsea Skate Park is situated at Clarence Esplanade on public land and run by a Trust. It offers a year round calendar of events to those new and experience in skateboarding. The Council has

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contributed funding to the Skate Park to enable roof repairs. The Council is also looking into the feasibility for a new roof at Southsea Skate Park.

3.14.2 The Council has also provided permission to Pitt Street Skate Park to utilise the former Sainsburys site at Commercial Road, to provide an all weather undercover skate park, under a meanwhile use agreement.

3.14.3 Funding has also been allocated by the Council towards the upkeep of BMX tracks across city sites including Kingston Park and Hilsea Pump track. The Council are looking at feasibility for a pump track at Baffins.

3.14.4 Investment into basketball courts has included refurbishment and resurfacing at Hilsea, together with the transformation of Orchard Park. The latter was a community based project, with funding provided by the Council, Sport England, Basketball England, Project in the Paint and crowdfunding.

3.15 Golf - Great Salterns

3.15.1 At the conclusion of the contract term in 2021, the management of Great Salterns Golf Course was brought back in-house to the Council. This enabled the Council to invest considerable capital funding in new machinery for golf course maintenance, undertaken by a full time golf team leader supported by green keepers.

3.15.2 A consistent maintenance approach has improved the course standard and has included opening up copse areas (previously overgrown), clearing out drainage ditches and maintaining the lake reed beds to improve drainage. There have also been gradual enhancements to the fairways. The income to the service has improved which has enabled reinvestment for further improvements to the course condition. Improvements in the condition are evident from the increase in rounds played:

3.15.2.1 In the 3 years prior to the course being maintained by the Council - average rounds played per year: 28,000

3.15.2.2 In the 3 years since being maintained by the Council - average rounds played per year: 38,000

3.16 Future projects and moving forward

3.16.1 The Council is committed to the development and construction of a new leisure centre at Bransbury. The centre will replace Eastney Swimming Pool which is no longer fit for purpose, at end of life and requires an ongoing financial subsidy to run. The new centre will combine a 'wet and dry' facility in one location and will be co-located with a GP surgery, supporting the national strategic position which is very much focussed on the co-location of health and wellbeing facilities. Alignment with the strategic position also enables access to Sport England funding for the project.



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A planning application for the development has now been submitted with determination anticipated in July 2024.

3.16.2 The success of the Bransbury development is contingent upon providing mitigation of the loss of courts at Bransbury. The Council have committed capital funding towards court improvements across the city, including improvements to the tennis and basketball courts at Baffins and the tennis courts at Milton. At Mountbatten, investment for improvements will include an overlay of netball courts over the tennis courts.

3.16.3 In consideration of the connection between health and wellbeing, culture and leisure services are engaging with public health colleagues, to enable local NHS services to develop social prescribing models for sport, leisure and wellbeing.

3.16.4 Whilst the development of the Pyramids from a leisure pool to a soft play and modern gym centre has been a success, consideration needs to be given to the future development of the Pyramids site. This will require external grant funding and a bid for a multi-purpose site, providing a broad range of health and wellbeing activity which might also include cultural engagement from other partners.

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Signed by
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Capital expenditure and committed capital funding for the period 2017 to date.

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location