

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Sports Facilities Strategy 2014-2019

Adopted – June 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 The council provides facilities and opportunities for sport and physical activity, both directly and by supporting others, in order to maintain and develop thriving communities and healthy lifestyles.

1.2 For the purpose of this plan, the borough council will adopt the following definition of sport (this is the Council of Europe's definition of sport which has also been adopted by Sport England):

'Sport' means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.'

1.3 The development of this strategy has been overseen by a Working Group established by the council's Policy Development Committee at the request of the Management Committee.

1.4 **The Council's Objectives for its Sports Facilities.** This strategy reviews a range information about the borough and wellbeing of its community and considers the aims and policy objectives of the many local and national organisations that have an influence on the provision of facilities for sport and physical activity. Having considered all these factors, the council will pursue the following ten objectives with regard to its sports facilities over the lifetime of this strategy:

General:

Objective A: Any decisions regarding the council's sports facilities will take account of their contribution to improving public health and wellbeing and the need to address health inequalities.

Objective B: As a general principle, the council will, wherever possible, actively seek to transfer the management and operation of its sports facilities (as set out in Appendix D) to the voluntary or private sectors in order to reduce the cost to the council and improve community 'ownership' of these assets. Any such transfers will need to ensure, where possible, that public access to these facilities remains affordable.

Objective C: That the council works with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other partners to develop the capacity of sports clubs to take on the management of sports facilities from the council.

Objective D: That the council investigates whether its current information base on sports facilities can be used to develop a full Playing Pitch Strategy with the assistance of Sport England – this can help with external funding bids for pitch improvements.

The Marsh:

Objective E: The transfer of areas of The Marsh to community management, without ongoing financial support from the council, will be pursued, given the initial expression of interest from current users.

Objective F: The athletics facility at The Marsh should be maintained to enable its use only for training and recreation and that any minor improvements should be taken forward in partnership with the athletics club.

Objective G: The council will develop a masterplan for The Marsh, through consultation with key users, strategic partners and the community, alongside the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. This masterplan should seek to address community safety issues and address the potential for a skate park and perhaps other facilities (such as BMX track or boxing club) aimed at specifically meeting the needs of young people. However, any proposals and fund-raising for new facilities (such as a skate park) would need to be driven by the community, with the council taking only a supporting role, and must require minimal reliance on the council for long-term maintenance and management.

Objective H: The council will facilitate liaison meetings between the main clubs that use both The Marsh and Weymouth Pool in order to develop stronger links and stimulate collaboration on projects that will benefit the site and promote greater community use.

Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre:

Objective I: By mid-2015, the council will investigate opportunities for the future management of Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre at a reduced cost to the council and options for external investment/funding of improvements to its plant and structure. This investigation of opportunities and options will result in a financial plan in order that the council can make firm decisions on the future of the Centre well in advance of the end of the current operating contract in 2017. The council will seek to engage with relevant partners in this process, including Dorset County Council, local schools and swimming clubs.

Harbourside watersports facilities:

Objective J: The council will help to facilitate collaboration between the key harbourside watersports clubs (including the Weymouth Sailing Club, Weymouth Rowing Club, Marine Society & Sea Cadets and the Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre) in order to secure improvements to the harbourside facilities, that may be shared, and which better provide for increasing levels of participation in their sports. This facilitation role will be overseen by the Harbour Management Board and be assisted by an assessment of existing capacity and future needs.

- 1.5 An action plan, indicating in broad terms when these objectives will be pursued and potential partners, is set out in **Appendix F**.

2. The need for a Sports Facilities Strategy

- 2.1 The council's adopted Corporate Plan includes an action to 'Develop strategic plan for sports facilities in the Borough by March 2014'. This action originated from member concerns about the future of The Marsh open space and athletics facility. Members also wanted to address the future of Weymouth Swimming Pool.
- 2.2 In broad terms, a Strategy is needed in order to guide the future management, enhancement, rationalisation or decommissioning of the borough council's sports facilities. The Strategy should also consider the council's 'position' with regard to the provision of sports facilities for the community, and how it can best help to sustain levels of physical activity in the borough.
- 2.4 This Strategy for sports facilities (indoor and outdoor), is restricted in its scope to those facilities that are **owned (or leased) by the council**. These fall into three categories:
 - a) Owned and operated by the council (including maintenance and taking bookings) – such as The Marsh and various tennis courts and pitches.
 - b) Owned by the council but operated by others on its behalf – i.e. Weymouth Swimming Pool.
 - c) Council-owned and leased to others – including: Redlands Community Sports Hub, Weymouth Squash & Fitness Club, The Front skate park, several outdoor and one indoor bowls clubs, and watersports club facilities (i.e. Sea Cadets and the sailing and rowing clubs).
- 2.5 The scope does **not** include beaches, parks, open spaces and play areas – although skate parks have been included as they host sports activities such as BMX.
- 2.6 In 2006, the council commissioned a detailed survey of all sport and recreational facilities and open spaces in order to inform the Local Plan. **Appendix C** provides a summary of just the indoor and outdoor sports facilities that were identified by this survey and highlights those that are owned by the council. This information has been updated following site visits and assessments in the summer of 2013. It now also includes watersports facilities, but this list is not comprehensive and is restricted to the main facilities on the harbourside in Weymouth.
- 2.7 Although this Sports Facilities Strategy is restricted to council-owned facilities, the wider audit of all facilities in the borough will help to indicate where there is either over-provision or under provision of the different types of facilities and thereby inform any decisions that the council will take regarding its own properties.
- 2.8 The council is also producing an Asset Management Plan for all its properties and the Sports Facilities Strategy will help to inform this Plan.

3. The importance of sports facilities to the community of Weymouth & Portland

3.1 There is good evidence that sport and physical activity provide physical and psychological health benefits, contribute to reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, have economic benefits and play an important role in improving social cohesion. In summary, sport and physical activity bring many significant gains across a wide range of public policy areas, including:

- *Learning* – research suggests that fitter young people achieve better academically and are less susceptible to truancy. Young people who are physically active have numeracy scores that are on average 8% higher than those who are inactive.
- *Healthy lifestyles* – those who take part in sporting activities significantly reduce their risk of heart disease and other serious conditions. Sport can also play an important role in maintaining a good quality of life in old age and helping to reduce obesity in people of all ages. Sport England estimates that the health cost of inactivity in Weymouth and Portland is at least £1.3 million per year.
- *Employment and economic growth* – sport is a catalyst for economic development. Sports facilities often provide considerable employment and training opportunities in both their construction and operation.
- *Community development* – sport and physical activity help to bring people together and overcome isolation. The operation of sports facilities through voluntary effort can contribute to community identity and cohesion. Sport provides one of the main opportunities for volunteering and, nationally, 52% of adults who volunteer do so through sport.
- *Tourism* – the availability of good quality and affordable sports and outdoor activity facilities can contribute to visitors' enjoyment of the borough as a destination. In particular, water sports are a significant attraction for the borough.

3.2 Sport and physical activity have an important role to play in the agendas and policies of many local, regional and national agencies. A list of these agencies and a summary of their key objectives are given in **Appendix A**.

4. Local context

4.1 **Population.** The 2011 Census data suggests that Weymouth has a population of 52,323 and that Portland has a population of 12,844. The combined population is 65,167. The population of the borough has grown by approximately 6% over the last 20 years. The Local Plan provides for between 3,240 and 3,580 more dwellings to be built in the Borough. A further 1,470 new homes are planned adjacent to the town of Weymouth (primarily in Littlemoor and Chickerell) by 2031.

4.2 Population data and projections for the period 2011 to 2017 suggest that the greatest changes in the demographic of the borough will be in the increase in people aged over 70, reflecting the countywide picture. There is also expected to be an increase in the number of children under the age of 15. These projections would suggest that any plans for sports provision in the borough need to take account of the increasing school-aged population and also the

importance of facilities and activities that are both accessible and appealing to older people.

- 4.3 **Health and wellbeing.** The health profile for Weymouth and Portland shows that for many indicators the population is similar to the national picture but, given the very significant areas of deprivation within the borough, there are specific locations where the health outcomes for the community are worse than the norm. For example, life expectancy for men in the most deprived areas of the borough is 9.2 years less than in the least deprived areas, and 6.2 years less for women.
- 4.4 The table below is based on data commissioned by Sport England from the British Heart Foundation. This provides an indication as to the cost to the community and public services of physical inactivity as a result of its impact on cancer, heart disease, diabetes and strokes. There are, therefore, very real financial benefits resulting from a more physically active population across all ages.

Area	Health costs of physical inactivity	
	Total cost	Cost per 100,000 pop.
Weymouth and Portland	£1,312,730	£2,141,176
South West	£92,470,080	£1,756,799
England	£944,289,723	£1,817,285

- 4.5 Another significant health issue is that of obesity, particularly in the most deprived areas, and the table below provides data on obesity levels in Weymouth and Portland. This issue of obesity amongst both children and adults has been identified as a priority by the Locality Group of the Clinical Commissioning Group and will be a focus for action in coming years. The promotion of physical activity and involvement in sport can play a significant role in helping to promote healthy lifestyles and address obesity.

Area	Adult obesity	Childhood obesity
	Rate	Rate
Weymouth and Portland	25.9%	21%
South West of England	24.7%	16.6%
England	24.2%	19%

Source: Department of Health: Year: 2006-2008 (Adults) 2010/11 (Children)

- 4.6 **The community's participation in sport.** The following tables provide an overview of adult participation in sport within the borough (with regional and national comparisons) based on surveys undertaken by Sport England.

Adult (16+) Participation in Sport (at least once a week *) by year

Year	Weymouth and Portland	South West	England
2005/06	29.4%	33.8%	34.2%
2007/08	40.1%	35.5%	35.8%
2008/09	34.3%	36.3%	35.7%
2009/10	33.8%	35.5%	35.3%
2010/11	31.6%	35.7%	34.8%
2011/12	36.9%	36.2%	36.0%
2012/13	39.5%	35.4%	35.2%

*1 session a week (at least 4 sessions of at least moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes in the previous 28 days).

Source: Active People Survey, Year: 2005/06 (APS1), to 2011/12 (APS6), Measure: Adult participation.

Top 5 sports in Weymouth & Portland with regional and England comparison

Sport	Weymouth and Portland		South West		England	
	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate
Cycling	6.4	13.0%	428.0	10.0%	3,486.0	8.3%
Swimming	5.4	11.0%	546.1	12.7%	4,870.4	11.6%
Football	3.4	7.0%	259.1	6.0%	3,018.2	7.2%
Athletics	3.0	6.2%	301.7	7.0%	2,915.7	6.9%
Gym	2.8	5.7%	367.4	8.6%	4,475.7	10.6%

Measure: Participation rate of the top 5 sports and the number of adults (16+) that participate at least once per month.

Number of adults (16+) wanting to do more sport

	Weymouth and Portland		South West		England	
	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate	No. (000s)	Rate
Yes	22.8	46.8%	2,271.0	53.0%	23,335.6	55.4%
No	25.2	51.8%	1,979.6	46.2%	18,427.9	43.7%
Don't Know	0.7	1.4%	33.9	0.8%	390.5	0.9%

Source: Active People Survey 6, Population data: ONS Annual Population Survey 2012
Measure: Proportion and number of adults (16+) wanting to do more sport

Specific Sport(s) that adults want to do most

Sport	Weymouth and Portland	
	No. (000s)	Rate
Cycling	4.9	10.0%
Swimming	3.4	7.0%

Source: Active People Survey 6
Population data: ONS Annual Population Survey 2012
Measure: Top sport(s) in latent demand by adults (16+) based on proportion

- 4.7 Estimates provided by Sport England from its *Active People* surveys (based on wards) indicate that the areas with lowest levels of adult participation in sport and active recreation in the borough are Portland and the wards of Westham East and Westham West. The highest levels of participation can be found in the Preston ward.
- 4.8 **Community issues.** The borough council has focused much of its community development activities on the four most deprived wards in the borough (Melcombe Regis, Westham, Littlemoor and Underhill). Recent consultation activities in these areas has identified community aspirations and concerns across a range of issues, and those that are most relevant to sport and recreation are summarised in **Appendix B**. This information represents only a snapshot of community views but there are certain trends that can be identified, particularly the desire for more informal outdoor activities/facilities and affordable access to swimming.

5. The policy context

- 5.1 **National and local policies.** **Appendix A** provides a comprehensive list of the key local and national agencies with a specific interest in sport and recreation and it also outlines how this is reflected in their policies and plans.
- 5.2 This review of the policy context demonstrates broad recognition by local authorities, sports organisations and the health sector of the range of benefits that sports facilities bring to communities. Such facilities can promote healthier lifestyles to people of all ages, contribute to social cohesion and provide opportunities for volunteering.

- 5.3 The most relevant policies to the future of sports facilities owned by the borough council are the Local Plan, the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the council's own Corporate Plan.
- 5.4 **Whole Sport Plans.** The governing bodies for recognised sports have produced Whole Sport Plans (WSP) which are key to their relationship with Sport England (which provides funding) and clear as to both their priorities for investment and level of support for clubs. The current round of WSPs cover the period 2013-17 and the priorities for those sports most relevant to the council's facilities are as follows:
- **England Athletics** – a focus on promoting informal running and to make athletics the most popular individual sport in the county by 2017, supported by revenue grants for projects that increase participation. Capital investment to focus geographic priority areas, mainly specific cities.
 - **Lawn Tennis Association** – a focus on boosting participation in certain cities and making available certain 'products' that can be used by others to increase participation in the sport.
 - **England Hockey** – capital funding will be available to assist with the provision of new or refurbished artificial turf pitches. Revenue funding will focus on retaining players at key points in their life (to reduce drop out) and encourage lapsed players to return to the game.
 - **British Rowing** – a focus on encouraging more people to participate in rowing particularly young people and the disabled. Strategic development areas for capital investment in improved facilities may include the South Coast.
 - **Amateur Swimming Association** – a focus on more people learning to swim and then swimming regularly, and more winning more medals on the world stage. The ASA also seeks to ensure that swimming facilities are fit to help deliver these objectives.
- 5.5 **Funding and grant programmes:** For most type of sports facilities there are sources of capital funding for their improvement and, in some cases, there is revenue funding for specific programmes of activity. However, the availability of funding will always depend upon whether proposed capital improvements will genuinely bring about an increase in community participation in sport and contribute to the delivery of the Whole Sport Plans. The key funding programmes that are relevant to the council-owned facilities are as follows:
- **Sport England** – the Strategic Facilities Fund will direct capital investment into a number of key local authority projects that are identified through a strategic needs assessment and that have maximum impact on growing and sustaining community sport participation. These projects will be promoted as best practice in the delivery of quality and affordable facilities, whilst demonstrating long-term operational efficiencies. The fund will support projects that bring together multiple partners, including input from the public and private sectors and national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). The fund is also designed to encourage applicants and their partners to invest further capital and revenue funding to ensure sustainability. Sport England has allocated a budget of circa £30m of Lottery funding to award through this fund (2013-17) and applications will be invited on a solicited-only basis.

- **Football Foundation** - the FA and the Government (through Sport England) will be investing £102 million over the next three years into a new fund to be managed by the Football Foundation. The new fund will be called the "Premier League & The FA Facilities Fund" and will be open to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations to support the development of new or refurbished local football facilities.

The following National Governing Bodies (NGB) can offer some funding to local facilities and clubs as part of their Whole Sport Plans:

- **Rugby Football Union** has a Capital Investment Programme (CIP). This is the capital funding element of the RFU's Whole Sport Plan funding allocation secured from government (through Sport England) and investment will be prioritised on playing surfaces (natural & artificial) and in natural turf pitch floodlighting.
- The **Rugby Football Foundation** is a registered charity established by the Rugby Football Union. The purpose of the Rugby Football Foundation is to promote and develop community amateur rugby in England and has a small grants scheme *Helping Hand Grants* and a loan scheme for capital works.
- The **England Hockey Board** has a capital fund of £2m between 2014 and 2017 to invest primarily on the provision of new / refurbished AGPs focused on the formal club structure.
- The **Amateur Swimming Association's** Strategic Plan 2013-17 does not include a capital grants scheme. The ASA works in partnership with Sport England to help identify areas of need for investment and will support partners in accessing Sport England funding streams.
- The **Bowls Development Alliance** does not have a capital grants investment programme but does make small grants available to clubs to run BDA bowls promotion initiatives to recruit new players.
- The **Lawn Tennis Association** plans to make £4m capital investment between 2013 and 2017 largely focused in selected priority areas to address gaps or improve provision where critical to park or community programmes. Significant work is also planned to improve the monitoring, evaluation and follow up of facilities investment, as well as an increased focus on revenue investment alongside capital spend.
- **British Cycling** will invest £7m between 2014 and 2017 in 32 traffic free cycle sport facilities and / or off road cycling facilities in strategically identified areas
- The **England & Wales Cricket Board** plans to make £5m capital investment between 2013 and 2017 aligned across its 3 major participation programmes.

6. The roles and contributions of our partners

This section outlines the roles that other organisations play in the provision of community accessible sports facilities in the borough.

6.1 Dorset County Council:

- Advising schools on the management of community access to their sports facilities.
- Investing in sports facilities for schools, which will also bring wider community benefit.
- However, the county council's role in schools' facilities is reducing as more schools convert to Academy status.
- Providing social and recreational activities for young people (e.g. STEPS and Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre).
- Commissioning recreational activities for older people and those with disabilities.
- Providing a strategic approach to sports provision across Dorset.

6.2 Schools. The following schools in Weymouth & Portland have sport facilities that are currently available to the public (see Appendix C):

- Wey Valley School & Sports College
- Westfield Art College
- All Saints

6.3 Weymouth College. The college operates Redlands Community Sports Hub for the benefit of the community and as part of its curriculum. The fitness facilities at the College's Cranfield Avenue campus are available to students and the community.

6.4 The private sector. The private sector operates a range of sports facilities and opportunities for both residents and visitors to Weymouth & Portland – these include:

- Fitness facilities
- Squash club
- Holiday parks and hotels – with leisure pools

6.5 The voluntary sector. There are many clubs that operate their own premises, some are council-owned (such as the Moonfleet 2000 bowls club). There are also other venues, such as community halls, that are used for sports and fitness activities that are either run by community groups or by independent instructors.

6.6 Provision in neighbouring local authorities

Residents in the borough also make use of facilities in West Dorset and Purbeck, some are council-run and some independent, particularly the Budmouth Community Sports Centre, Dorchester Sports Centre, Purbeck Sports Centre and Bridport Leisure Centre.

7. The role of the Borough Council

- 7.1 The council currently plays a major role in the provision of sports facilities in the borough and the main aspects of this role are as follows:

Role	Description
Owner and operator	The council directly operates sports pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens across the borough via the Open Spaces team.
Commissioner	The council owns Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre and has commissioned SLM Ltd to operate the centre until 2017.
Landlord	The council owns a variety of facilities which are leased to organisations and clubs – e.g. Redlands Community Sports Hub.
Planning Authority	Protecting open spaces, guiding the development of the built environment, negotiating with developers following planning policy.

- 7.2 The council's sports facilities play an important role in contributing to the aims of its Corporate Plan 2013 to 2017 by helping communities to develop and sustain recreational facilities and by providing opportunities for healthier lifestyles.

- 7.3 In summary, the council owns the following sports facilities:

- leisure centres (which include swimming pools, sports halls, fitness facilities and pitches)
- grass pitches
- tennis courts
- indoor and outdoor bowls facilities
- athletics track
- multi-use games areas
- golf course
- skatepark facilities

Full details of these and any management or lease arrangements are set out in **Appendix D**.

8. Priority issues for the borough council

- 8.1 Having considered both the range of facilities that the council owns or owns/operates, the maintenance and running costs of these facilities, and the results of consultation the following have been identified as key priorities for the council:

- a) The future of the Weymouth Swimming Pool building and its likely operating costs beyond 2017.
- b) The potential to transfer more facilities (e.g. tennis courts, bowls clubs and grass pitches) to community or private management / ownership without on-going council subsidy. The council's preference is to move towards

community/club management/ownership of facilities and away from the role of the council as both operator and manager.

- c) Identifying opportunities for the better use of areas of The Marsh for either sport or general open/green space or new activities such as a skate park and BMX track.
- d) Whether the current range of facilities meet the changing needs of the community and cater for newly emerging sporting trends or existing sports clubs looking for new opportunities.
- e) The development of improved and shared facilities for watersports clubs on the harbourside.

9. Research and consultation

9.1 In order to develop the above priorities (8.1) into objectives for the future, the following research was undertaken:

- a) A detailed condition survey of Weymouth Sports & Fitness Centre (Weymouth Pool) – to establish likely maintenance costs over the 10-year period following the end of the current operating contract in 2017.
- b) Establishing current and anticipated demand for the facilities – in particular a *Strategic Assessment of need for swimming pool provision in Weymouth & Portland* was produced by Sport England.
- c) Identifying demands for facilities for new activities that aren't currently catered for.
- d) Establishing the future capital plans (investment and disinvestment) of key local partners and providers.
- e) Establishing whether clubs and community groups are interested in playing a greater role in the management and operation of council facilities.
- f) Exploring the potential for greater collaboration between the watersports clubs located on the harbourside in order to develop joint plans for facility improvements.

9.2 The consultation undertaken for the development of this strategy comprised targeted, stakeholder consultation and widespread consultation. The stakeholder consultation involved meetings with the following key groups:

- a) Tenants and key hirers of The Marsh (i.e. Weymouth St Paul's Harriers & Athletics Club, Weymouth Cougars Youth Football Club and Moonfleet 2000).
- b) Key hirers - to discuss options for community transfer / management.
- c) Key hirers of Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre (i.e. swimming clubs and local schools in the Chesil Education Partnership).
- d) Strategic organisations – e.g. Weymouth College, Sport England, Dorset County Council, Public Health Dorset, Clinical Commissioning Group (Locality Group for Weymouth & Portland) and Active Dorset.

- e) The watersport clubs and organisations operating from the harbourside in Weymouth (e.g. Sea Cadets, Weymouth Rowing Club and Weymouth Sailing Club).

A summary report of these consultation meetings is available.

- 9.3 In addition, the consultation on the draft Strategy encouraged other sports organisations to come forward with plans for new facilities. For example, the Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club have expressed an interest in building a new club house on The Marsh, perhaps to be shared with existing users of the site. Such a development would fit well with the use of the site as a multi-sports 'hub' and compliment existing uses.
- 9.4 Following the stakeholder engagement, a programme of wider public consultation was undertaken on the draft version of this strategy – this included the following:
 - a) Online consultation and questionnaire via Dorsetforyou.
 - b) Emails and letters notifying of the consultation were sent to all the clubs and groups that operated from council owned/leased facilities, and also the governing bodies for sports, local strategic organisations and the community partnership.
 - c) Face-to-face meetings were arranged with key strategic partners such as National Governing Bodies (for swimming, football and tennis) and Dorset County Council. Local clubs and organisations also requested meetings, including Weymouth College, South Dorset Sports Trust, Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club and Weymouth Swimming Club.
 - d) A consultation meeting specifically with the key harbourside watersports clubs – including Weymouth Rowing Club, Weymouth Sailing Club, Marine Society & Sea Cadets, RNLI, Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre and Royal Dorset Yacht Club.

10. Analysis of issues

- 10.1 As a result of this programme of research and consultation outlined above, the following analysis can be provided for each of the priorities identified in section 8.1.
- 10.2 **The future of Weymouth Swimming Pool (Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre).** A detailed review of the current operation of the Centre in the context of other facilities in the borough is set out in **Appendix E**. This review indicates that it is a popular facility with high levels of participation and serves an important purpose in terms of teaching young people to swim. Its continued operation ensures that, together with Osprey Sports Centre, there is an appropriate level of swimming pool provision in the borough and within reasonable distance of most residents.
- 10.3 However, Weymouth Swimming Pool is old and, in particular, its internal equipment (both gas and electric systems) is not energy efficient nor is it economical to operate. With the current operating contract ending in 2017, the council will undertake an appraisal of the options for: external funding for investment in new equipment and general refurbishment; the likely payback of any investment as a result of reduced running costs; the potential for reducing council subsidy for its operation.

- 10.4 Given the statutory requirement in the National Curriculum for children to receive swimming tuition, it is clearly important that the review of the future of Weymouth Swimming Pool also involves Dorset County Council and local schools.
- 10.5 **Community management of facilities.** The current transfer of council-owned football pitches at The Grove to the local club is seen as an excellent example of the benefits of passing sports facilities over to community ownership and management. As the council's ability to fund the operation and maintenance of its sports facilities diminishes, such transfers would, without on-going council subsidy, be a far more attractive form of management. Clubs and community groups can often access funding programmes not open to statutory authorities and can harness considerable volunteer effort. Community 'ownership' of a facility, in the widest sense, may reduce inappropriate use.
- 10.6 It is proposed, therefore, that wherever possible the council should look to move its sports facilities into appropriate community management where this can secure long-term benefits for residents. However, there are risks associated with this approach, primarily due to the capacity of clubs to take on the financial and operational responsibilities that come with property management. In order to reduce these risks and help ensure the long-term sustainability of any arrangements, the council should work with the relevant governing bodies, such as the Dorset Football Association, to provide capacity building support in areas such as governance, funding and facility management.
- 10.7 **Opportunities for the better use of areas of The Marsh.** On the basis of consultation with stakeholders, some of whom are regular hirers of parts of the site, it is clear that The Marsh is a facility that performs a range of important functions for both the Westham area and the wider town. The Marsh provides facilities for indoor bowls (owned and managed by the Moonfleet 2000 club), football and athletics, in addition to being an important area of informal greenspace for the local community. Neighbouring organisations such as STEPS youth club and the Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre also benefit from their proximity to this open space.
- 10.8 However, it is clear from stakeholders that The Marsh is perhaps under-utilised and sometimes misused. There are problems with anti-social behaviour, dog fouling, inappropriate use of the athletics track and occasional congestion in the car parks that serve both the bowls club and pitches and the swimming pool.
- 10.9 As a result of stakeholder consultation it is clear that some of these problems could be resolved through better liaison between the key users (athletics, bowls and football) and this may also lead to collaboration that would help encourage the community to become more engaged in sport. It has also been suggested that the provision of new facilities at The Marsh that better provide for young people, such a skatepark or BMX track, could be beneficial in helping to reduce anti-social behaviour. The skatepark in Dorchester is seen as an exemplar. The relocation of the boxing club to The Marsh would fit well with the development of the site as a multi-sport 'hub'. Such new facilities would link well with the adjacent youth club, STEPS.
- 10.10 In recent years, there have been attempts to develop a high quality athletics facility in Weymouth with interest focusing on either The Marsh or Redlands. However, funding has not been secured and it is clear that the cost of maintaining and operating such a facility is beyond the capacity and budgets of the borough council. The nearest high quality facilities dedicated to athletics

are in Yeovil and on the eastern side of the county, although there are popular athletics clubs in Weymouth and Dorchester which compete at county and regional levels.

10.11 The current athletics facility is suitable only for training purposes and is regularly used during the summer by Weymouth St Paul's Harriers & Athletics Club. Although the redgra surface is liked by the athletes it is vulnerable to damage through misuse – typically as a result of bike riders. If it becomes rutted when wet, then it dries hard in this state and is not appropriate or safe for athletics. The open nature of The Marsh is not conducive, therefore, to a good quality athletics facility.

10.12 It is clear that substantial external funding for a new athletics facility is unlikely to be forthcoming and The Marsh is, in any case, perhaps not a suitable location given its varied use by cyclists, BMX and dog walkers.

10.13 Taking into account the above issues, it is proposed that the council facilitates the development of a masterplan for The Marsh that seeks to:

- reconcile the competing demands of its different users,
- identify the potential for community management of certain areas;
- develop the potential for new uses (such as a boxing club, skate park or BMX track) and possible sources of funding and community leaders to take such projects forward;
- address anti-social behaviour;
- maximise the site as a multi-sport facility, building on the existing clubs and key users.

10.14 **Changing trends.** The consultation undertaken to develop this strategy indicates that there have been changes in trends in the uptake of different types of physical activity. For example, in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in gig rowing (and racing) with thriving clubs along the south coast and the Weymouth Rowing Club now seeking improved facilities to cope with its growing membership.

10.15 More alternative sports for young people, such as skateboarding, scooters and BMX have continued to grow in popularity and specialist facilities (e.g. The Front and Portland skatepark) see high levels of use. However, the provision of skateparks in the borough is perhaps not sufficient (although robust measurement of supply and demand is not available) and the need for a facility to better serve the Westham / Chickerell area has been expressed by various groups.

10.16 **Harbourside facilities:** It is clear from discussions with stakeholders that the facilities on the harbourside in Weymouth do not adequately meet the needs of the key watersports clubs. In particular, the Sea Cadets (Marine Society & Sea Cadets) and Weymouth Rowing Club have inadequate facilities (e.g. storage, showers and toilets) to meet their needs. These groups, particularly the Rowing Club, have perhaps 'out grown' the facilities that are currently available. There are no specific plans to resolve these issues, however, it may be helpful to the clubs if the council were to at least lend its support to any proposals for improved facilities

10.17 **Health & wellbeing.** In terms of the policy context, it is clear that the heightened role of local authorities in promoting health and wellbeing should be a major influence on any decisions regarding sports facilities. There are significant health inequalities across the borough and specific issues, such as obesity, where physical activity can make a significant positive contribution.

When taking decisions on the future of the council's sport facilities particular attention should be paid to the likely impact of any changes on the health of the community.

10.18 **Participation.** The borough is fortunate in having relatively high levels of participation in sport and this may be a reflection on the good range of facilities available – although participation in running and cycling does not require access to specialist facilities. The challenge for the council will be to ensure that any changes it makes to its stock of sports facilities will not have a detrimental affect on participation levels and that greater community involvement in managing facilities strengthens rather than weakens the sports infrastructure of the borough.

10.19 **Objectives.** On the basis of the above analysis and following considering of the local and national policy context, the council has developed **ten objectives**, as set out in section 1.4 above, and which it pursue over the lifetime of this strategy in order to guide the future management of the sports facilities in its ownership.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix A** The national and local policy context for the Weymouth & Portland Sports Facilities Strategy
- Appendix B** Key themes / issues identified from the *Working With You* initiative in Weymouth & Portland.
- Appendix C** Audit of sports facilities in Weymouth & Portland
- Appendix D** Summary of council-owned facilities and options for future management / operation.
- Appendix E** Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre – review report.
- Appendix F** Action plan for implementing strategy objectives.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The following documents informed the development of this strategy:

- Sport England Local Sports Profile for Weymouth & Portland.
- *Strategic Assessment of need for Swimming Provision in Weymouth & Portland*. Sport England. October 2013.

APPENDIX A – The national and local policy context for the Weymouth & Portland Sports Facilities Strategy

The national policy context

The table below shows the main national organisations in sport nationally and outlines their key aims for the future.

Body / organisation	Key themes
HM Government and Mayor of London	<p>In 2014, the Government and the Mayor of London launched the campaign / manifesto entitled <i>Moving More – Living More</i>. This document reasserted a commitment to the promotion of sport and physical activity in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.</p>
Sport England	<p>SE invests National Lottery and Exchequer funding in organisations and projects that will grow and sustain participation in grassroots sport and create opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport. In 2012, the government published its new five-year Youth Sports Strategy – <i>Creating a Sporting Habit for Life (2012 to 2017)</i> which will guide the activities of Sport England in order to deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest around £500 million in 46 national governing bodies of sport • Offer every one of the 5,000 secondary schools in England a community sport club • Help secondary schools open up their sports facilities for local community use • Provide at least 150 further education colleges with a full-time sports professional • Give three-quarters of university students aged 18-24 the chance to take up a new sport • Encourage 2,000 young people on the margins of society to take part in sport • Establish enhanced England Talent Pathways in at least 30 sports • Invest in facilities for the most popular sports, building on the success of Places People Play legacy programme • Invest £10 million in projects targeting disabled people <p>In future, Sport England’s funding may be focused on helping to improve the sustainability of local sports provision given the financial pressures that local authorities are facing.</p> <p>Sport England’s <i>Inspired Facilities</i> funding programme will continue from 2013 to 2017 with an additional £40 million available for smaller capital projects (£20k-£50k for clubs and £20k-£150k for local authorities).</p>

	For larger facility improvement projects Sport England is also operating the <i>Improvement Fund</i> until 2017 with grants between £150k-£500k. Other Sport England funds that provide capital grants include <i>Protecting Playing Fields</i> and the <i>Strategic Fund</i> .
Department of Health	The NHS has published strategies for various conditions these include; A Strategy for Cancer, the Mental Health Strategy and the Change 4 Life strategy (tackling obesity).
Fields in Trust (National Playing Fields Association)	Mission is 'To ensure that everyone – young or old, able or disabled and wherever they live – should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport, play and recreation.' Main themes of work include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding outdoor recreational space • Advice to those managing outdoor space • Campaigning to achieve greater statutory protection for a broad range of sites • Campaigning (including promoting greater use by the community of school fields) and planning.
Youth Sport Trust	Core work includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the PE experience for every young person • Using PE and sport to inspire learning and achievement • Enabling every young person to enjoy competition and providing support to the most talented • Coaching and volunteering (to create the next generation of volunteers in sport) • Connecting school and club sport (creating new clubs on school site, helping to 'open up' schools to their local community).
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS aims to help deliver the key sporting priorities in its Business Plan (2011 to 2015) in partnership with Sport England, UK Sport, UK Anti-Doping and the wider sector. These priorities are focused around creating a sporting legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.
Football Association	The FA is the governing body for football in England and its strategic plan (2011-15) with the key aim of 'football for everyone'. The FA runs programmes to promote both high quality football and wider community involvement in the game. Funding for facilities is provided via the Football Foundation.
Football Foundation	The Football Foundation is jointly funded by the FA, the Premier League and the government to offer grants of £30 million per year for facilities improvements in order to help the development of football at all levels. Its mission is to improve facilities, create opportunities and build communities throughout England. The two main grant schemes for local projects are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Build the Game</i> – a small capital grants scheme with two thresholds; upto £10,000 and £10,001 to £50,000. • <i>Grass Roots Facilities Fund</i> – a large grants scheme with a threshold of upto £500,000.

The local policy context

Body / organisation	Key themes
W&PBC Corporate Plan	<p>Vision: To be a forward-looking council, focused on efficient and effective customer-friendly services to support communities and businesses to meet their needs and aspirations.</p> <p>Priority B2 – Working with partners to improve public health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Priority B3 – Facilitating sustainable leisure, culture and community activities.</p>
W&PBC Draft Local Plan (joint with WDDC)	<p>The draft Local Plan (pre-submission draft) includes policies to retain existing open spaces and recreational facilities and to ensure the provision of new facilities where needed as part of developments.</p> <p>The policy recognises the benefits the recreational and sports facilities bring to communities in terms of improved health and by providing opportunities to meet and interact.</p>
W&P Partnership Community Plan 2013-16	<p>The aims of the Partnership include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote eating well, physical activity, play and access to nature as part of a healthy lifestyle. • To support and facilitate high quality outdoor, sporting and cultural activities. • To ensure that the full cross-section of our communities have opportunities to engage in cultural and sporting activities in the area.
W&PBC Sports Development Policy 2008-14	<p>The Policy sets out to achieve 5 Core Outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More people take part in sport and physical recreation. 2. People live a more active lifestyle and have improved physical and mental health and wellbeing. 3. Our local Communities are more cohesive through sports and recreational activities and opportunities. 4. People, groups and communities work together to deliver sport and recreational activities based on equality for all. 5. Improved physical sports infrastructures exist across the Borough and are accessible to all.
W&PBC Play Strategy	<i>In progress.</i>
W&PBC Asset Management Plan	<i>In progress.</i>
Weymouth College	<p>The College's vision mission includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With our partners we will continue to build on the legacy of hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games; • For Redlands Community Sports Hub to be recognised across Dorset as a Centre of Excellence for health, fitness and wellbeing.

Dorset Health & Wellbeing Board	<p>The Board has published a Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 which sets out the following priorities for action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing harms caused by diabetes; • Reducing the harms caused by smoking; • Reducing circulatory disease; • Reducing anxiety and depression; • Reducing harms caused by road traffic collisions; • Improving care for people with dementia.
Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)	<p>Top three priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Dementia diagnosis and services; • Reducing avoidable admissions; • Reducing preventable deaths.
W&P CCG Locality Group	<p>The top two priorities of the Locality Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obesity and healthy lifestyles – adults. • Children obesity and healthy lifestyles.
Dorset Children and Young Peoples Plan 2014-18	<p>A new Children & Young People’s Plan will be produced in 2014 by the Dorset Children’s Trust (facilitated by Dorset County Council). The Plan is likely to set out a range of priorities that aim to encourage partners to work together to encourage young people and their families to adopt healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The plan will also focus on improving the life chances of children and young people in and leaving care, those who are disabled and those with enduring needs.</p>
Dorset County Council	<p>The county council’s Physical Activity Strategy will be expressed as a ‘strand’ running through its new corporate plan. It will take a ‘life course’ approach and will focus on physical activity in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children, young people and families • adults and older people • transport planning • utilising the natural environment • leisure & sports • DCC as a workplace • public engagement and partnership working.
Dorset Playing Fields Association	<p>Areas of work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage provision of playing fields and their active use • Advice and guidance to local clubs • Promote increased sports participation in clubs and facilities.
Dorset Play Strategy	<p>Dorset Play Partnership (primarily comprising local authorities) has set out the following key priorities in its 2011-2015 strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of play • Embed opportunities for play in strategies and spatial planning • Improve access to high quality free play • Create play opportunities with balance of risk and challenge • Support the development of the workforce

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure children, young people and communities are able to participate in the planning and delivery of provision • Develop child-friendly communities • Deal with funds for play for the benefit of the county.
Active Dorset	<p>Active Dorset (a community interest company) is contracted by Sport England to provide a set of core services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic leadership and partnership development • Connecting National Governing Bodies for sports to the local area and local partners • Club, coach and volunteer development • Attracting external investment • Development of facilities • Networking, knowledge management and communication. <p>Active Dorset is a conduit for Sport England funding and leads locally on SE initiatives.</p>
Dorset Cultural Partnership	<p>Dorset Cultural Strategy 2009-2014 sets out the framework for arts and museum development on a more local level. Relevant aims and actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable people to engage in culture, physical activity and sport through working with a range of partners and organisations • Develop the opportunities and spaces for children to play and enjoy physical activities through work with the Dorset Play Forum building on the Playbuilder project • Achieve a cultural legacy from the 2012 games by working through the Dorset 2012 Legacy Board and the Dorset 2012 Cultural Framework Group; the Active Dorset Sports Partnership and the Dorset Physical Activity Alliance. <p>The Cultural Strategy is under review with the aim of developing a new strategy from 2014 onwards.</p>
Dorset County Football Association	<p>The DCFA's four year County Plan incorporates four key goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth and Retention • Raising Standards • Developing Better Players • Running the Game Effectively <p>Although the DCFA does not operate its own grant schemes, it does work to support the development of funding bids in order to improve facilities in the county.</p>

APPENDIX B – Key themes / issues identified from the Working With You initiative in Weymouth & Portland.

The following is a summary of key issues relating to sport facilities and activities as identified from community consultation events in the four most deprived wards in the borough. This should be seen as a 'snap shot' of issues and views and further ideas and proposals will continue to emerge from local communities.

Melcombe Regis

- More access to the local environment and nature sites needed – e.g. health walks and family activities at Radipole Reserve.
- Beach-based educational and physical activities – e.g. beach combing, fossil workshops, outdoor activities and watersports.
- Affordable access to watersports and other outdoor activities is needed – possible residents' discount and more availability of taster sessions for local residents.
- Beach Sports Arena had very limited access for local people, would like to see that expanded and possible allocation of area days – e.g. one day for Westham etc.
- Access to affordable swimming was raised as an issue in all four areas - for adults and children.

Westham

- Play space a major issue with improvements needed to existing sites (e.g. Lynch Road), strong desire expressed for a large park on the lines of Lodmoor Country Park with a trim trail, outdoor gym equipment, picnic area, good quality play equipment for families. Play equipment which is useable by both adults and children also favoured – along lines of Charlton Down Olympic Park, or wooden assault type courses. The Marsh area would be a good location for such equipment and could provide a focal point for outreach activities such as bushcraft, orienteering etc.
- Access to affordable swimming for adults and children.

Underhill

- Access to play and sporting facilities featured highly in the consultations.
- Victoria Park in a very poor condition and East Weares (play equipment had been removed without community consultation). Victoria Park is a key community space in the area (particular with new Officer's Field development and lack of outdoor space), there is a great need for good-quality play equipment, possible water play.
- Demand for soft play facility raised – possible at Osprey Sports Centre.
- Osprey Sports Centre also keen to develop a climbing wall – highlighted by young people as a facility they'd like in the area.
- Osprey Sports Centre is very keen to develop the Centre to meet community needs.
- There is a shallow outdoor pool in IPACA Junior School – community would like to be able to access outside of school hours (or at set times). Many families find Osprey Sport Centre pool too deep for their children and have found it's detrimental to their confidence when learning to swim. Osprey would be happy to help operate as an outreach activity. Potential scope to enclose the pool also. School may also move from that site as part of the future IPACA development. There has been some discussion over establishing the school building as a community service hub (GP, social services, care etc) if building does become available.
- Access to affordable swimming for adults and children.

Littlemoor

- Better community access to Top Club and facilities highlighted as a key issue.
- Potential to work more with Lorton Reserve on outdoor play activities, nature walks, orienteering, nature hunts etc – very popular pilots run in the area.
- Access to affordable swimming raised as an important issue - for adults and children

Appendix C attached separately

Appendix D - Summary of council-owned facilities and options for future management / operation.

Leisure centres				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council / finances	Future options
Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre (Weymouth Pool)	Main pool Small pool Fitness suite Exercise studios (2)	Owned by WPBC and responsibility retained for external maintenance. SLM having operating contract and responsibility for internal repairs. SLM operating contract ends March 2017. No lease. Building is over 40 years old (apart from fitness extension) and is in need of refurbishment.	Management fee paid to SLM: £292,030 – this includes £106,000 pa for utility costs.	A detailed options appraisal will be undertaken by mid-2015 to inform decisions about the future of the pool after the end of the current operating contract in 2017.
Redlands Community Sports Hub	Grass pitches Artificial turf pitches (2) Sports halls (2) Exercise studios Bar/social area	In 2011, a 25-year full repairing lease was given to Weymouth College for the site. The College has established a trading arm to operate the facility and manage community access. Community access is specified in the lease. The sand-based artificial turf pitch (hockey) is nearing the end of its life.	No on-going cost to the council. College have full repairing lease.	No need for change or demand for council investment. Pitches have Queen Elizabeth status and, therefore, have access to external funding for enhancements. Artificial Turf Pitch (sand-based) used for hockey may need replacement surface in next 5 years. This would be the tenant's responsibility under the lease.

Appendix D contd.

Recreation facilities and sports pitches				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
The Marsh athletics facility	Cinder track, long-jump pit and hammer cage.	<p>Council owned and managed.</p> <p>Covenant with National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust) agreed in 1964 for area fronting on to Knightdale Road known as 'Weymouth Athletics Centre'. Area of covenant needs clarification.</p> <p>The covenant requires the land to be used as a public playing field for organised games only and that it won't be used for other purposes without the approval of the Minister and the Association.</p> <p>Facilities in poor condition and are declared by governing body for athletics as being suitable only for training.</p>	Maintenance costs are circa. £60,000 p.a.	<p>The athletics facilities are suitable for training purposes only (not competitions) and funding for a replacement is unlikely to be forthcoming from the council or national sports bodies.</p> <p>The multi-use of area and free public access make the site unsuitable for high quality athletics facilities.</p> <p>Potential for greater community / club involvement in its management should be explored.</p> <p>The development of a more detailed masterplan of The Marsh is planned.</p>
The Marsh grass pitches	Approx. 4 adult pitches and 6 junior pitches (changes due to demand)	<p>Council owned and managed.</p> <p>Maintained and operated by W&PBC Parks service.</p> <p>Site traversed by public cycleways (DCC).</p> <p>Changing rooms form part of the bowls club building.</p>	Included in above figure.	<p>Well-used for football but there are problems with dog fouling.</p> <p>Clear potential for community / club management of pitches.</p> <p>Community / club management may increase access to external funding for improvements.</p>

Appendix D contd.

Recreation facilities and sports pitches				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
The Marsh – club house	Wooden hut (known as former Red Cross hut).	Council owned building leased to Cougars FC and Weymouth St. Paul's Harriers & Athletics Club.	Small rental income	Need to determine future lease arrangement and usage.
STEPS youth club	New indoor youth centre including: One court hall. Exercise studio.	Freehold owned by WPBC and leased to DCC for 25 years. Building constructed and owned by DCC.	No cost	Potential for users of the club to make better use of The Marsh and perhaps guide future improvements.
Weymouth Squash & Fitness Centre	Squash courts Exercise studio Fitness suite	Freehold owned by W&PBC. Leased to club. Approx 67 years left on lease.	Council receives rental income	The club has diversified its range of activities to include fitness classes.
Grove Road sports field, Portland	2 adult grass pitches and 2 mini pitches.	Council currently owns freehold.		In the process of being transferred to community ownership. Club being established as limited company and looking to take on 25-30 year lease.
Weymouth Rugby Club	Rugby pitches	Council owns freehold and leased to club for 50 years from 1985.	Council receives rental income from the club. No cost to council.	Concern over orientation of pitches and impact on residential neighbours.

Appendix D contd.

Bowling				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
Moonfleet 2000 – Indoor Bowls Club (The Marsh)	Indoor bowling club	The land is leased to Moonfleet bowling club until April 2099 and the club own the building. Club has shared use of car park and rights of access. Changing rooms for grass pitches form part of the building.	No on-going cost to the council. No rental income.	Club manages the facility very well. Club has concerns over impact of anti-social behaviour on its building and occasional congestion in car park.
Greenhill Bowling Club	Grass bowling green and pavilion.	Council owns freehold and leases to club. until 2027	Council receives rental income. No cost to council.	No issues.
Weymouth & Melcombe Regis Bowls Club	Grass bowling green and pavilion.	Council owns freehold and leases to club. until 2023	Council receives rental income. No cost to council.	No issues
Victoria Gardens Bowling Green and Pavilion	Grass bowling green and pavilion.	Green managed by council but club rents Pavilion from council. Council lease on land has expired. The council holds the land from the Crown and the club has the green and pavilion on licence from the council.	Council receives rental income from Pavilion. Council has a repairs liability.	In future, if club ceased to operate, then the land could be returned to its owner.

Appendix D contd.

Courts				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
Victoria Garden Tennis Courts	2 tarmac courts	Leased from the Crown and operated by council. Free to use.	Minor cost to council.	Council will incur costs in near future if resurfacing works are needed.
Greenhill Gardens Tennis Courts and Putting Green	4 tarmac courts.	Licence to the café operator has expired.	Has generated small licence fee for council.	In future, the site may be leased to a private investor, along with the chalets, from 2014. The future operation of the tennis courts will be decided by the tenant.
Radipole Park tennis and basketball courts	6 public courts (tarmac) 2 basket ball courts. 4 tarmac courts and pavilion leased to tennis club.	Public courts are council operated and free to use. Tarmac courts and pavilion leased to the club for 28 years from 2002	Council receives rental Income.	No issues. Possible future costs if resurfacing works are required for the council-operated courts.
Wyke Regis Gardens Tennis Courts	Single tarmac court	Operated by council. Free to use.	Minor cost to council.	Future viability questionable due to vandalism and court quality.

Appendix D contd.

Skate parks				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
The Front skate park	Pay-to-use wooden ramps and 'club house'.	Council owns freehold and leased to Weymouth Skatepark Association until 2031.	No cost to council and no income.	No issues.
Portland skate park Victoria Square Portland	New concrete skate park.	Council owns freeholds and manages the site. Free to use.	Minimal operating cost.	No issues – a very successful new facility.

Golf Courses				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
Weymouth Golf Club	18 hole golf course and club house.	The land is owned by the borough council and leased to Weymouth Golf Club Ltd (a private members club with public access) until 2086.	No on-going cost to the council. No rental income.	No issues.

Watersports				
Site name	Facilities	Property issues	Cost to council or income	Future options
Weymouth Rowing Club	Buildings and yard.	Council owns freehold and leases to club. Lease expires in 2017.	Council receives rental income.	Club is proposing extension to create shower block.
Weymouth Sailing Club		Council owns freehold for boat storage yard (leased to club) and club own building. Lease expires in 2018	Council receives rental income.	No issues.
Weymouth Sea Cadets	Store and moorings.	Council owns freehold and leases to Cadets.	Council receives rental income.	No issues. Possible link with rowing club regarding future extension.
Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre (Knightsdale Road)		Council owns freehold Leased to DCC until 2063.	Small rental income.	Have invested in current premises. WOEC would welcome improved facilities for watersports (e.g. changing rooms) on the harbourside.

APPENDIX E - WEYMOUTH SWIMMING POOL - REVIEW REPORT

1. Background

1.1 **Facilities.** The majority of the current building was constructed in 1975 and then extended in 2007 to accommodate a new fitness suite. In summary, the building, which is now known as 'Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre' (but which will be referred to in this appendix as Weymouth Swimming Pool), comprises the following:

- Main Pool - 25m long and 13 m (6 lanes) wide
- Small pool – 12m long and 7m wide
- Spectator seating
- Separate male and female changing rooms and separate disabled changing rooms.
- Upstairs studio – with air conditioning used for group exercise classes.
- Downstairs studio – with air condition mainly used for spinning classes.
- Fitness suite – air conditioned with 30 stations.

1.2 The centre is open from 9.00am to 9.00pm on weekdays and from 9.00am until 5.00pm at weekends. It is primarily a community facility but with regular use by local schools which is arranged and paid for by each school.

1.3 **Management.** In 2007 the council let an operating contract for the centre with SLM Ltd – a national leisure management company. The contract (which includes a licence rather than a lease) runs until March 2017 and requires SLM to maintain and operate the centre in accordance with a specification, which sets standards in terms of both the presentation of the facilities and levels of service offered to customers.

1.4 **Key Services.** The centre provides the community with the following services:

- Swimming
- Swimming lessons
- Fitness
- Group exercise classes (in the pools and in the studios)
- Pool hire – with the pools hired regularly throughout the week primarily by Weymouth Swimming Club and the Weyport Masters. The pools can also be hired by individuals for parties.

1.5 These services can be paid for either on a pay-as-you-go basis or through a membership contract (paid monthly). In accordance with the council's contract, the operator offers a range of concessionary prices to the community and free swimming to the disabled and to children aged four and under.

1.6 **Levels of use.** Based on information provided by SLM Ltd (the current operator) the Weymouth Swimming Pool experiences the following levels of use:

- In 2011-12, 26,149 people had an Everyone Active card issued by SLM, up from 19,872 at the end of 2010-11. All users are issued with a card whether they have a membership contract or use the centre on a casual basis. Out of these 26,149 cardholders, on average 14.52% were active at the centre more than once each week. At the end of March 2012, the centre had 879 fitness members and 1181 people on the swimming lesson scheme. During 2011-12, the centre saw a total of 17,347 attendances for its group exercise classes.
- In 2011-12, there were 126,682 attendances for swimming and 54,358 attendances for all fitness activities. In 2012-13, levels of attendance rose to 143,133 for swimming and 73,404 for fitness.

1.7 The teaching of swimming to young people is clearly an important function of the pool and one that is extremely popular with the community. At any one time there are now approximately 1400 children, young people and adults enrolled in the swimming lesson programme. The other main providers of swimming lessons in the area are:

- Dorchester Sports Centre - approximately 850 people enrolled on swimming programme with a waiting list in operation.
- Osprey Sports Centre – approximately 140 pupils enrolled on the swimming lesson programme. More classes will be added to the current programme which operates over 3 days per week – although the depth and temperature of the pool does not make it ideal for teaching young children.

1.8 In consultation with the Chesil Education Partnership it has been established that the pool is used regularly by at least 10 local schools for weekly swimming lessons.

2. Swimming Provision for Weymouth & Portland

2.1 The facility review undertaken to support the development of this strategy, highlighted the existence of several swimming pools in the Weymouth & Portland area with varying levels of community access (those facilities with very restricted or no general public access are not included). These are as follows:

Facility	Description	Community use
Weymouth Swimming Pool (Knightsdale Road)	Main pool (25m x 13m) and learner pool (12m x 7m) Total = 397sqm water area	Extensive community and club use throughout the day and throughout the year. Swimming lesson programme.
Osprey Sports Centre	Main pool (25m x 15m) Total = 363 sqm water area	Extensive community and club use throughout the day and throughout the year. Swimming lesson programme.
Hotel Rembrandt	Small leisure pool	Private facility accessible to the public via either monthly or day membership. No swimming lessons.
Riviera Hotel	Small pools – indoor leisure pool and outdoor lido.	Private facility accessible to the public. Some swimming lessons.
Moonfleet Manor Hotel	Two small indoor pools	Public access via membership scheme.
Holy Trinity school	Small outdoor pool	Just for school use.
St George's school	Small outdoor pool	Just for school use.
Radipole School	Small outdoor pool	Just for school use.

- 2.2 The two main swimming facilities in the borough are Weymouth Swimming Pool and Osprey Leisure Centre (owned and operated by the South Dorset Sports Trust). The small pools and outdoor pools at hotels and primary schools are primarily used for guests and pupils only and, in the case of the outdoor pools, only during the summer months.
- 2.3 **Sport England Facilities Planning Model.** In October 2013, Sport England produced a strategic assessment of swimming pool provision in Weymouth & Portland using its Facilities Planning Model (FPM). This model seeks to assess whether the capacity of existing facilities for swimming are capable of meeting demand from the borough resident population taking into account how far people are prepared to travel to swim. In order to do this, the model compares the number of swimming facilities (supply) within the area, against the demand for swimming that the population will produce (based on national surveys of swimming participation by age and gender) and the accessibility of pool facilities to the population (taking into account car ownership levels and facilities in neighbouring local authorities).
- 2.4 Given the restrictions on public access and seasonal usage, only the three indoor pools at the two main swimming facilities (Weymouth Swimming Pool and Osprey) were included in this assessment.
- 2.5 The results of the FPM for swimming provision in the borough identified the following:
- The population of the borough creates a demand for 3,990 swimming pool visits per week at peak period¹.
 - This demand equates to a requirement for the supply of 658sqm of water space.
 - At present (through Weymouth Swimming Pool and Osprey) the borough has 759 sqm of water space in total of which the model calculates that 696sqm is available for community use in the peak period.
 - As a result, the model indicates there is a slight supply surplus of 38 sqm – which suggests that there is currently an appropriate level of provision, particularly when future population growth is factored in.
- 2.6 In calculating this, the FPM takes account of the fact that 24% of the population in the borough does not have access to a car – this is higher than the countywide figure of 14.7%.
- 2.7 The FPM estimates that current pool provision in the borough satisfies 88.7% of residents' total demand for swimming pool provision. This is slightly lower than regional and national levels and in the mid-range for comparable local authorities.
- 2.8 As a result, 11.3% of demand is not being met (comparable to similar local authorities). However, this unmet demand is due to lack of access to a car. The FPM suggests that the highest levels of unmet demand are in the areas of Broadway and Weston.
- 2.9 However, if Weymouth Swimming Pool was not available then the FPM can be amended to estimate the impact that this would have on demand and supply. There would be a reduction in the supply of waterspace to just 363sqm (equivalent to 321sqm available for community use in the peak period) and reduce the supply per 1000 population to 5.5sqm (from 11.6sqm). As a result, the supply/demand balance (provision available compared to

¹ Peak Period is:
Weekdays 12.00 to 13.30; 16.00 to 22.00
Saturdays 09.00 to 16.00
Sundays 09.00 to 16.30

the minimum required to meet demand) would change from +38sqm to –337sqm. This figure represents a deficit greater than in comparable local authorities.

- 2.10 The FPM does not consider local demand outside the peak period for swimming lessons and, as is highlighted above, Weymouth Swimming Pool is clearly a significant provider of this important service to the community. The Osprey Pool has limited appeal for lessons due to the depth of the pool. The removal of Weymouth Swimming Pool from the supply of swimming pool provision in the borough would not only leave an undersupply relative to demand for community swimming in the peak period, it would also affect the ability of local schools to fulfil the national curriculum requirements for swimming education.

3. Relevant Policies.

- 3.1 Appendix A of this Strategy sets out the broad range of local and national policies that are relevant to the council's sports facilities. With regard to the Weymouth Swimming Pool, the most relevant local policies are probably:

- **Draft Local Plan for West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland** (published 2013) – the chapter on Community Needs and Infrastructure sets out policies on the retention, enhancement and provision of sports facilities. In particular, this document sets out guidance on expected standards of community infrastructure provision including the recommendation that there should be a swimming pool within 15 minutes drive-time of most of the population of a large town. Policy COM.5 seeks to promote the retention of sports facilities and seeks to prevent their loss from re-development unless it results in an overall enhancement to sports provision or its can be demonstrated that the facility is surplus to requirements.
- **Dorset Health & Wellbeing Strategy**. This new strategy (published in 2013) sets out the priorities for action in order to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community. The Weymouth Swimming Pool provides a range of services to the community that can make a significant local contribution to the wellbeing of the community, across all ages and levels of ability.

4. Future issues: the building

- 4.1 In 2013, a detailed condition survey of Weymouth Swimming Pool was undertaken by the consultants GVA and this resulted in a Planned Forward Maintenance report setting out a recommended programme of maintenance and improvements for a 13-year period to cover the duration of the current operating contract and the likely duration of any subsequent contract.
- 4.2 Over the next 13 years, GVA consider that there will need to be substantial replacement of the pool plant, electrical systems and air handling systems, and some internal refurbishment. The total cost of this work is estimated at £921,525 (plus VAT and fees and inflation). However, some of these works will bring about considerable savings in terms of energy consumption and these savings will equate to the cost of installation within a 10-year period at most.
- 4.3 GVA also considered the cost of demolishing the current building and estimated this at £880,000 (excluding VAT and fees).

5. Future issues: management

- 5.1 The current operating contract for Weymouth Swimming Pool comes to an end in March 2017 and there are no provisions for an extension to the contract. If the council were to procure a new operating contract then it would most likely need to follow a formal procurement process that should commence in 2015.
- 5.2 However, the current contract requires a significant subsidy from the council (in the form of a management fee paid monthly and which increases each year in line with inflation) and the payment of all utility bills. In addition, the council is responsible for external maintenance.
- 5.3 In 2012-13, the management fee totalled £287,583 – this figure includes £106,000 contribution to the cost of all utilities. The management fee together with the trading income (approximately £720,000) covered the total cost of running the centre.
- 5.4 If the council, were to procure another management contract, then this process should commence in mid-2015 to allow sufficient time for a full tender process, contract negotiations and mobilisation.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 It is clear that Weymouth Swimming Pool provides an important service to the local community. The centre has a large population within its catchment, larger than many leisure centres in Dorset which are located in relatively small towns with rural hinterlands.
- 6.2 The Pool provides a range of fitness activities which are competitively priced and delivered professionally. However, there are other fitness providers in the town, primarily Redlands, Osprey and private operators.
- 6.3 A key function of the Pool is as a venue for swimming education. Weymouth Swimming Pool has a shallow, warmer pool compared to its main pool, and this dual indoor pool format is unique in the town. Although Osprey is an important facility, it only has one large pool (as a result of its M.o.D. origins). For this reason, Weymouth Swimming Pool has a popular swimming lesson programme and is used by many local schools. Its location close to many of the most deprived areas of the borough and in an area of low adult participation in sport, makes the services it provides important to the wellbeing of the community.
- 6.4 The most significant investment in the building over recent years has been the installation of new boilers in 2007 and the construction of a new fitness suite. However, the comprehensive programme of replacing of plant and systems, as indicated by the GVA report, highlights the need for a concerted programme of modernisation if the building is to continue operating into the next decade.
- 6.5 Given the above issues, it is proposed that the Council undertakes a detailed options appraisal for the future of the Weymouth Swimming Pool to include consideration of refurbishment and replacement options, capital financing and more sustainable revenue costs.

APPENDIX F – ACTION PLAN FOR STRATEGY OBJECTIVES 2014-2019

Timescale priorities: Short-term: (within first two years) Medium-term: (before end of year 4)
 Long-term: (on-going or by end of strategy period)

Objective	Partners invited to contribute	Timescale - priority	Reporting process
a) Any decisions regarding the council's sports facilities will take account of their contribution to improving public health and wellbeing and the need to address health inequalities.	Public Health Dorset and Clinical Commissioning Group locality group.	Long-term (on-going)	Normal W&PBC committee process.
b) As a general principle, the council will, wherever possible, actively seek to transfer the management and operation of its sports facilities (as set out in Appendix D) to the voluntary or private sectors in order to reduce the cost to the council and improve community 'ownership' of these assets. Any such transfers will need to ensure, where possible, that public access to these facilities remains affordable.	Sport England, National Governing Bodies, Active Dorset,	Long-term (on-going)	Report to W&PBC Management Committee as appropriate.
c) That the council works with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other partners to develop the capacity of sports clubs to take on the management of sports facilities from the council.	National Governing Bodies, Sport England, Dorset County Council and Active Dorset	Long-term (on-going)	Progress report to Briefholder and ward member as appropriate.
d) That the council investigates whether its current information base on sports facilities can be used to develop a full Playing Pitch Strategy with the assistance of Sport England – this can help with external funding bids for pitch improvements.	Sport England, National Governing Bodies, Active Dorset and local clubs.	Short-term	Report to Policy Development Committee as appropriate.

Objective	Partners invited to contribute	Timescale - priority	Reporting process
<p>e) The transfer of areas of The Marsh to community management, without ongoing financial support from the council, will be pursued, given the initial expression of interest from current users.</p>	<p>Local clubs, key users, the <i>Friends of The Marsh</i>, local community groups and trusts.</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Report to W&PBC Management Committee.</p>
<p>f) The athletics facility at The Marsh should be maintained to enable its use only for training and recreation and that any minor improvements should be taken forward in partnership with the athletics club.</p>	<p>Weymouth St Paul's Harriers & Athletics Club</p>	<p>Long-term (on-going)</p>	<p>Normal W&PBC committee process.</p>
<p>g) The council will develop a masterplan for The Marsh, through consultation with key users, strategic partners and the community, alongside the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. This masterplan should seek to address community safety issues and address the potential for a skate park and perhaps other facilities (such as BMX track or boxing club) aimed at specifically meeting the needs of young people. However, any proposals and fund-raising for new facilities (such as a skate park) would need to be driven by the community, with the council taking only a supporting role, and must require minimal reliance on the council for long-term maintenance and management.</p>	<p>Local clubs and residents, key user (e.g. Moonfleet 2000), STEPS, WOEC, Dorset County Council, Weymouth & Portland Partnership.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Reported to W&PBC Policy Development Committee and then Management Committee.</p>

Objective	Partners invited to contribute	Timescale - priority	Reporting process
<p>h) The council will, if needed, facilitate liaison meetings between the main clubs that use both The Marsh and Weymouth Pool in order to develop stronger links and stimulate collaboration on projects that will benefit the site and promote greater community use.</p>	<p>Weymouth St Paul's Harriers & Athletics Club, Cougars YFC, Moonfleet 2000, Weymouth Swimming Club, Weyport Masters, WOEC, STEPS.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Progress report to Briefholder.</p>
<p>i) By mid-2015, the council will investigate opportunities for the future management of Weymouth Swimming & Fitness Centre at a reduced cost to the council and options for external investment/funding of improvements to its plant and structure. This investigation of opportunities and options will result in a financial plan in order that the council can make firm decisions on the future of the Centre well in advance of the end of the current operating contract in 2017. The council will seek to engage with relevant partners in this process, including Dorset County Council, local schools and swimming clubs.</p>	<p>Amateur Swimming Association, Sport England, SLM Ltd, Weymouth Swimming Club, Weyport Masters, and local sports trusts and organisations.</p>	<p>Short-term</p>	<p>Reported to W&PBC Scrutiny & Performance Committees and then Management Committee as part of the Service Review Programme.</p>
<p>j) The council will help to facilitate collaboration between the key harbourside watersports clubs (including the Weymouth Sailing Club, Weymouth Rowing Club, Marine Society & Sea Cadets and Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre) in order to secure improvements to the harbourside facilities that can be shared and better provide for increasing levels of participation in their sports. This facilitation role will be overseen by the Harbour Management Board and be assisted by an assessment of existing capacity and future needs.</p>	<p>Weymouth Sailing Club, Weymouth Rowing Club, Marine Society & Sea Cadets, RNLI, Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre and Royal Dorset Yacht Club. In addition, Sport England and National Governing Bodies.</p>	<p>Medium-term</p>	<p>Progress reported to Harbour Management Board.</p>