

Future Planning

From: Williams, Catherine
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To: Future Planning
Subject: Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan 2025 Consultation

Sport is fundamental to the delivery of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. National policy places significant emphasis on the role of supporting public health, social cohesion, regeneration and the reduction of anti-social behaviour. It is therefore essential that sports facilities are fully integrated within the planning and development process.

Maximising investment in sport and recreation through the planning system is a key principle of Torbay's adopted Playing Pitch Strategy. The Strategy seeks to protect sports facilities from loss through redevelopment, enhance existing provision by improving quality, accessibility and management, and deliver new, fit-for-purpose facilities capable of meeting current and future demand. Therefore, there would be strong objection to the loss of any existing sports land or buildings, including playing pitches. While Torbay's Playing Pitch Strategy addresses pitch sports, tennis and bowls, there is currently no current assessment covering other key facilities such as swimming pools, sports halls and track provision. It is recognised to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council should ensure that supply and demand across all types of sports provision are robustly assessed and kept under regular review. The NPPF promotes sustainable development, it also provides vital clear protection for open space and land used for sport and recreation, including playing fields. Such land should not be developed unless it has been clearly demonstrated that it is surplus to requirements, that equivalent or better provision will be provided in a suitable location, or that alternative sports or recreational provision would deliver benefits that clearly outweigh the loss.

Consideration should also be given to the continued use of standards in determining the provision of sports facilities, including playing pitches. Whilst standards can assist in quantifying demand arising from development, they may present risks if applied without an up-to-date and locally relevant evidence base.

The use of planning obligations (Section 106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is strongly supported as a means of securing the provision of new or enhanced sports facilities, together with contributions towards their ongoing maintenance, where needs arise from new development. Residential development within Torbay during the plan period should contribute towards new provision or the enhancement of existing sports facilities, in order to increase opportunities for physical activity and deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Active Design extends beyond active travel alone. Active Design has an important role in improving health and wellbeing, supporting climate change objectives and encouraging active travel, including walking and cycling. However, Strong support the Active Design principles to encourage development to be designed to secure sustainable and health-promoting environments. This approach may be demonstrated through the use of the Active Design checklist.

Kind regards

TORBAY COUNCIL

Catherine Williams | Sports & Physical Activity Officer |

Culture & Events

4th Floor Torre Hill House, Torquay TQ1 3DR



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