

Future Planning

From: Gary Parsons [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 September 2026 13:07
To: Future Planning
Cc: Black, Phil; Williams, Catherine
Subject: Torbay Reg 19 Local Plan to 2045

Thank you for consulting Sport England on the above Local Plan Reg 19 document for the plan period up to 2045.

Sport England is the Government agency responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives. You will know that Government has designated us as a **Specific Consultation Body** in the plan making process. Maximising the investment into sport and recreation through the land use planning system is one of our priorities. You will also be aware that **Sport England is a Statutory Consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields**, recently reconfirmed after a review of statutory consultees.

1. Local Plan Evidence Base & Providing Sports Infrastructure

The National Planning Policy Framework (2026) has a national plan making policy HC1 planning for healthy communities. Sport England's view is that, in order to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), this should include a strategy (supply and demand analysis with qualitative issues included) covering the need for indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including playing pitches.

We note the Council's completed Playing Pitch Strategy in 2022 which covers pitch sports, tennis and bowls. **There is no current in date assessment for swimming pools, sports halls, golf courses, athletics tracks, cycling, equestrian, motor sports etc** which the Council may consider as a future phase of sporting assessment to provide evidence for the development plan.

The **Playing Pitch Strategy** (PPS) for 'in date' the data in studies should not be more than 3 years old (from the date of the data and not the adoption date). The Torbay PPS was completed in 2022 (4 years ago). A delivery group currently meets to discuss changes in the supply and demand data but the group needs to acknowledge the need for a full update of the PPS.

The **Built Sport Facility Strategy** for 'in date' the data in studies should not be more than 5 years old (from the date of the data and not the adoption date). **The study for the Council was completed in 2014 so 12 years old.**

The Local Plan plans for 8000 new homes but there is little evidence of proportional provision of new sports facilities. Nothing in the proposed allocations of Torquay Gateway or Collaton St Mary or Long Road/Yalberton or Inglewood or Town Centre sites. Major allocations should require playing pitches, sports facilities including indoor provision or MUGAs where evidence demonstrates need.

Action – Torbay to work on updating the Local Plan evidence base for sport to ensure soundness of the Local Plan (as advocated in the Plan). This will also provide for the new population with the planned growth of 8000 new homes.

2. Active Design

The Plan is notably supportive of Active Design principles
(<https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>)

However it does focus on ‘movement’ and gives less attention to co-location / active recreation destinations / everyday participation infrastructure.

Recommended Modifications:

Require all major applications to contribute to sports infrastructure based on evidence of need. The council will need to update the evidence of need – The Playing Pitch Strategy and Built Sport Facility Strategy.

Require all strategic sites to demonstrate compliance with Active Design principles.

Summary

Overall the plan demonstrates a strong commitment to active lifestyles, active travel and health. And contains positive protection policies existing sports land including playing fields.

However, it does not adequately demonstrate how sports infrastructure will be provided to support 8000 new homes and would benefit from a much clearer delivery framework linked to evidence and facility strategies.

If you would like any further information or advice please contact me at the address below.

Gary Parsons MSc MRTPI
Planning Manager

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Planning Manager



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