



**NATIONAL FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY**

***“WITHIN 10 YEARS WE AIM TO DELIVER GREAT FOOTBALL FACILITIES, WHEREVER THEY ARE NEEDED”***



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## Foreword

*Football is an accessible, inclusive sport, with participation across all sectors of the population, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or social background.*

*It is played in environments from local parks to formal multi-pitch hub sites, on a range of surfaces and, when locally provided in safe, quality spaces, can be a lifelong component of an active community.*



*The FA, Sport England, the Government and the Premier League, have clearly identified the aspirations for football to contribute directly to nationally important social and health priorities. Alongside this, the strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game.*

*This facilities strategy represents the partners identifying a coordinated approach and it sets out a clear framework for very significant investment in football facilities over the next 10 years, alongside a step change in the capture and analysis of robust data to support understanding of progress and success. Supporting implementation is a facilities toolkit that encourages value for money and supports decision making on a coordinated local and national level.*

*Whilst the focus is inevitably on facility provision, the context in relation to workforce development, coaches, volunteers, officials, league structures, community initiatives, education plans and other related agendas will play a key role in achieving the overall aims of the partners.*

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## NATIONAL FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Within 10 years, we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed

### A shared vision and objectives for facility development...

#### Our Shared Objectives

Enabling local opportunities for everyone to be engaged in football, either as a participant, volunteer or official

Sustainable, high quality facilities encouraging participation, player retention and achieving potential

Harnessing the power of football to promote active lives and support wider social outcomes

#### How we will prioritise our investment against these objectives...

The partners will take a customer focused approach, based on local rationale and understanding, communicated via Local Investment Plans. Investments will be clearly linked to the objectives and success factors articulated in this strategy.

#### How we will measure success and learn from our investments...

All of our investments will be linked to a clear monitoring and evaluation framework, which is proportionate and flexible to reflect the diverse nature of the game. Our approach will focus on success measures in three key areas - customers, programmes and facilities. Articulating what 'high quality' means will be supported by a clear set of quality standards for the different facility types in which we will invest.

#### How we will use facilities to achieve the objectives...

- Innovative funding and partnership working to achieve maximum local and national impact from our investments;
- Improved utilisation of all natural and 3G artificial turf football pitches across the Country, with an increase in football related ownership of grass roots football facilities;
- Maximising grass roots use of football facilities on school sites;
- Protection and refurbishment of natural turf pitches to ensure a sustainable mix of natural and 3G artificial turf pitches;
- Ensure appropriate facilities are provided to support growth in women and girls and disability football;
- Improve access to indoor spaces for football development, including Futsal, walking football and other initiatives;



- Maximise the use of technological solutions to improve participant experience, data capture and understanding of our participants;
- Development and dissemination of best practice in programming, innovation and site operations.



## What will success look like? Our critical success factors...

A significant improvement in participant satisfaction will support retention and growth in participation across all football environments

Football 'branded' sites with appropriate indoor facilities, will be used to promote education and skills development, particularly in high need areas

Accessible spaces that encourage use by diverse communities, with no barriers to participation, will be available within 10-15 minutes of everyone's home

Investment in technology will support improved understanding of our customers, programmes and facilities



Facilities will be sustainable and flexible, with robust business plans and sinking funds in place to underpin long term provision

Every school will have access to good quality playing and support facilities, that are shared with the local community

Every affiliated club will have access to a 3G artificial turf pitch for training purposes and, where appropriate, for matches also

Every talented player, whether male, female or disabled, will have the opportunity to take part in more advanced training and competition

Active design and active travel principles are championed via local assessments, in facility toolkits and directly via major house builders, maximising opportunities to play

Return on investment from multi-sport environments will be maximised via cooperation with other sports to ensure facilities are sustainable and programmed in a complimentary manner



## Need for a Facilities Strategy...



### Why?

- 1.1 The provision of high quality facilities has a critical role to play in supporting the achievement of the FA National Game Strategy 2015-19, Sport England's Strategy 2016-21 - Towards an Active Nation and the Premier League Communities Strategy. Research has continually demonstrated the positive impact that high quality facilities, in the right locations, can have on participation and enjoyment.
- 1.2 The statistics present a mixed picture of challenges and opportunities - some 2 million people over the age of 16 take part in football at least once a week, but this trend that has remained relatively static for the past couple of years, with limited demonstrable growth in any area and perhaps decline in some. Within this, more than 100,000 disabled participants play football at least once a week, underlining the accessible nature of the sport. For 5-10 year olds, 1.3m young people took part in football in the last 4 weeks (as at March 2016, Active People data sources), but this masks a significant gender difference challenge, with female participation accounting for only 20% of this. For 11-15 year olds, football is the sport they are most likely to participate in, either in or out of school, but there remain significant gender differences and drop-offs at key life stages. Positively, research as part of the Premier League Kicks programme has demonstrated the impact of taking part on personal and social outcomes for participants, helping them to feel more confident, doing better with their school work and feel more optimistic about the future. Likewise, in relation to the power of football brands, the research uncovered very strong evidence of the value of both the Premier League and club brands in engaging and retaining participants.
- 1.3 Alongside this, qualitative research and player profiling has continuously highlighted issues associated with a lack of time and poor facility quality - our approach must therefore address these aspects through raising the standards of provision and ensuring opportunities to play are available in a number of different settings, at times that suit modern lifestyles and pressures.
- 1.4 Investing in facilities will be key to widening access, encouraging new participants, supporting clubs and providers, addressing drop out and retaining existing participants, and ensuring a quality experience for everyone involved in football. Sustainability will be a key focus for this strategy, given the pressures on public sector funding and the need for facilities to be self-supporting in the future. The power of the FA and Premier League brands, in particular, are key tools in ensuring awareness and building interest in participation, as part of encouraging behaviour change in inactive communities.
- 1.5 Our approach is to be outward looking, engaging with multi-sport and multi-activity offers where opportunities arise and enabling investment that uses football to tackle deprivation, especially issues around education, social inclusion and anti-social behaviour, as well as inactivity.





## What?

- 1.6 This strategy sets out the aspirations and focus for investment in sustainable playing and support facilities, both indoor and outdoor over the next 10 years. It articulates the scale of the challenge, where known, but recognises the need for further research and insight to support prioritisation of investment through the next few funding cycles and continue developing our understanding of the customers.

## Who?

- 1.7 This strategy is the starting point for anyone interested in developing football-related facilities, including public sector authorities, schools, universities, clubs, health providers, charities and third sector organisations and private sector partners.

## How?

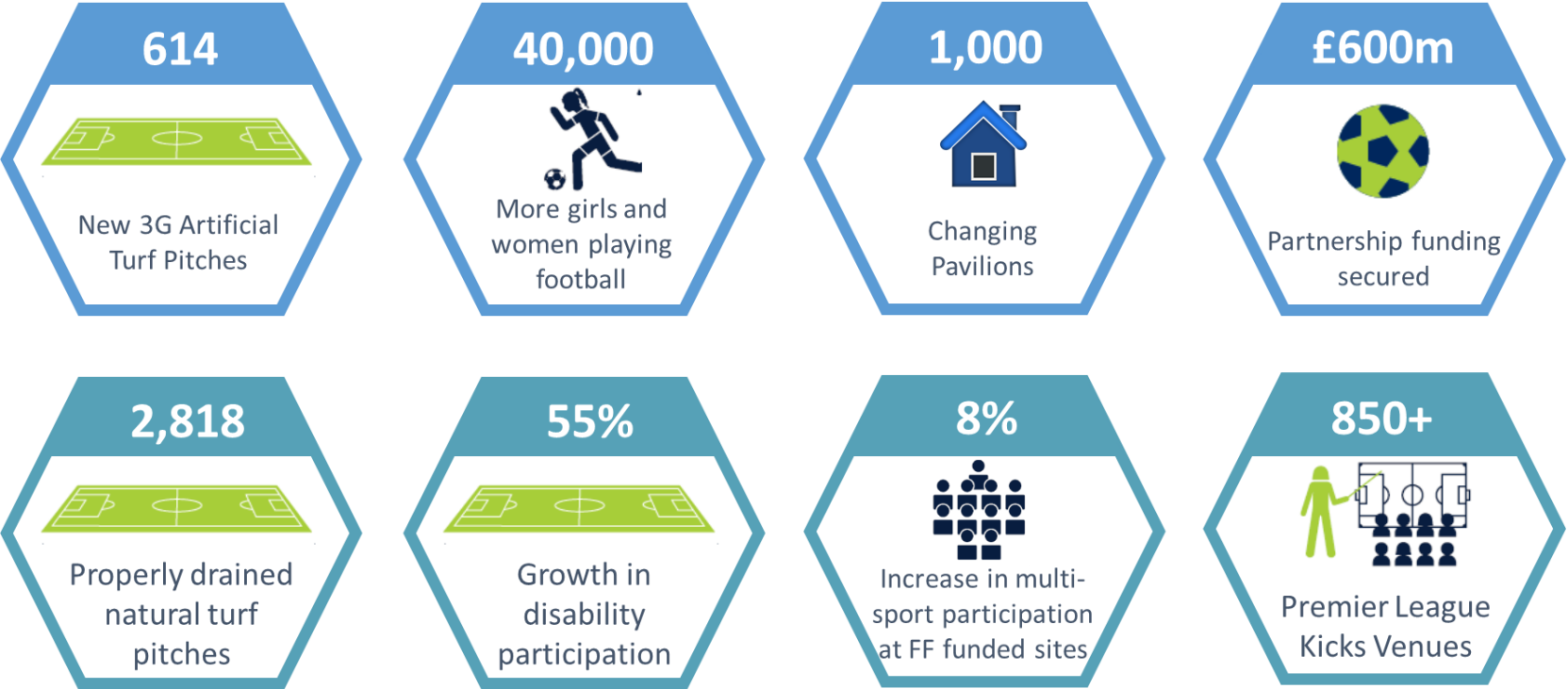
- 1.8 Delivering against the aspirations will require coordination of grant support through the Football Foundation (as Delivery Partner), with partner investment from the FA, Premier League and Sport England, and commercial opportunities, allied with coordination of investment and shared resource opportunities with related sectors such as education and health. Encouraging additional investment and coordination of resources will be essential to achieving the aims of this strategy.





# Building on Success...

2.1 The targets and aspirations set out in this strategy build on the considerable investment that has already been made into facilities through the Football Foundation by the Premier League, The FA, the Government and Sport England since 2000. Projects worth more than £1.3 billion have been developed, which have had the following impact:

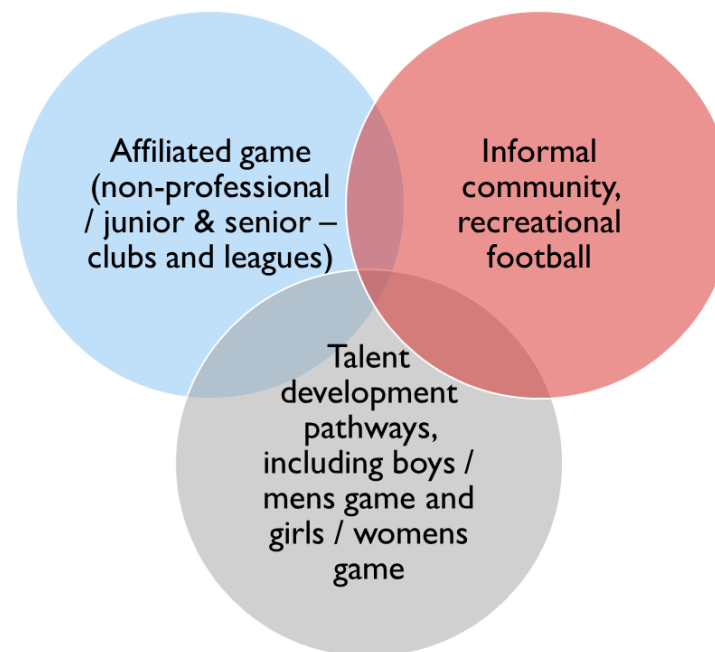


2.2 However, there is more work to do and the scale of the challenge for the next 10 years is articulated in this strategy.

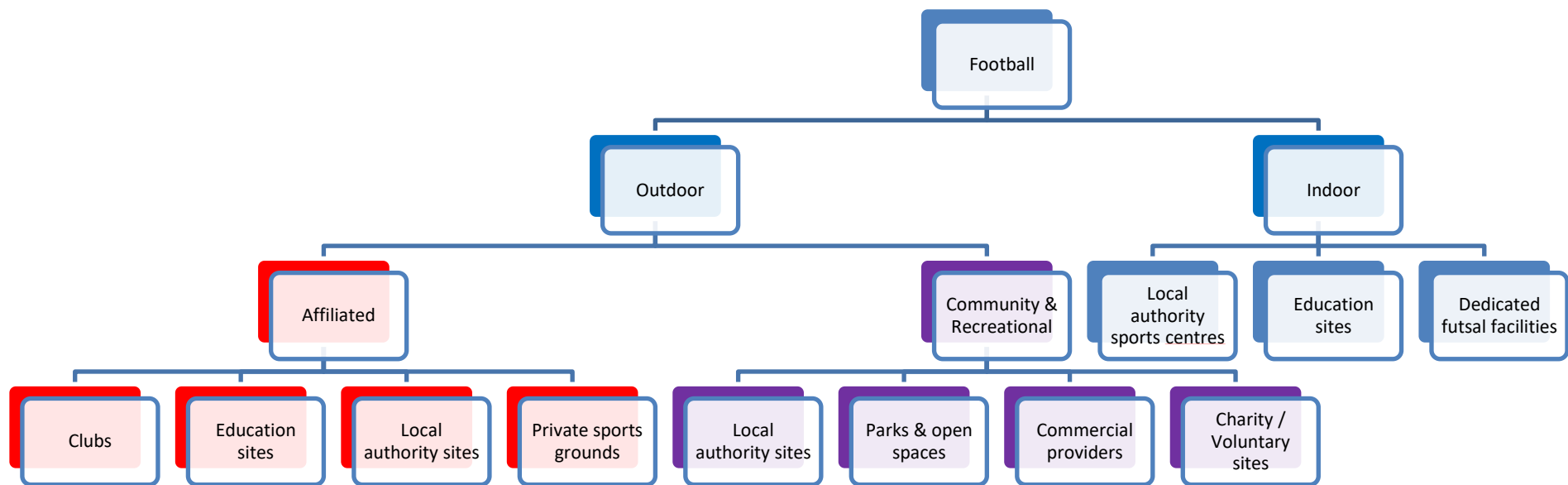


## Where are we now? A diverse game...

- 3.1 Football takes place in a variety of contexts, with different needs at the different stages of the player pathway - from initial engagement through to regular participation (formal or informal) and / or talent development.
- 3.2 The different environments are useful distinctions to support analysis of requirements - they are not unique, and a participant may be engaged in more than one area or may move between the environments during their life. Likewise, the different environments include both women and girls and men and boys.
- 3.3 Informal community, recreational football can include a huge range of aspects - from family kick about in the park to small-sided football in dedicated facilities. The breadth of this aspect of the game is a challenge for investment priorities, but evidence suggests that 'Play football informally with friends or family (kickabouts)' is a significant area of latent demand in terms of growing the game and in meeting the changing life style demands of customers. Linked to this the opportunities to influence delivery via planning applications, housing growth and new development is an important lever for external investment.
- 3.4 The fact that football is played in a myriad of different environments, makes coordination and consistency a key challenge. However, the breadth of football offers a unique opportunity for local delivery and accessibility, aligned with the stages of the player pathways and addressing the need for opportunities to play at times and in locations that fit with modern lifestyles. From a facilities perspective, developing a consistent approach to facility standards will be important, given the influence that good quality provision can have on participation and retention. The diagram overleaf identifies some of the main 'football environments', both indoor and outdoor, that this strategy seeks to influence.







- 3.5 Whilst the focus of investment is likely to be on outdoor sites, the opportunities associated with contributing to indoor provision are not under-estimated - in particular, futsal and initiatives such as walking football make excellent use of existing indoor spaces, where marked appropriately. Likewise, research into women and girls football and disability football has noted the opportunities for growth associated with indoor programming.
- 3.6 The customer focus of our approach and recognition of the benefits of different environments, means that flexibility will be a recurring theme, for example in relation to branding, marketing, programming and participant interaction - with a focus on customer needs to maximise growth and retention - but with an ongoing recognition of the importance of a consistent quality of facility provision.





## The scale of the challenge...

4.1 If we are to achieve the potential of football, across the various environments and against the key objectives already articulated, considerable investment will be required within the context of clear local planning.

4.2 The starting point is an understanding of where we are now:

- There are more than 30,000 natural grass pitches across England, but we know (from pitch audits, participant feedback and Playing Pitch Strategies) that there are significant issues with the quality of these pitches - less than half of these pitches could be termed 'good quality' playing surfaces;
- Ancillary provision (changing, club houses, toilets, showers etc.) is poor quality or not provided in many instances, which discourages participation and retention, particularly for women and girls;
- According to Active Places data, there are approximately 750 large 3G artificial turf pitches across England, with an additional 2,000+ small pitches. However, only 638 feature on The FA Register and are deemed suitable for match play;
- Of the large 3G artificial turf pitches, more than 50% are on education sites, meaning that securing and coordinating long-term community and club access is a key priority in delivering the strategy, alongside ensuring sinking funds are in place and ring-fenced to secure ongoing provision;
- Whilst there are more than 5,000 sports halls across England, many do not have appropriate markings for futsal in particular and access at required times is problematic, with limited understanding amongst operators of how to develop leagues and programmes;
- There remains a significant reliance on local authority provision of facilities, with the associated risks of loss of public subsidy and loss of provision. Alongside this, revenues generated from football (particularly 3G artificial turf pitches / small sided pitches) are being lost outside of the game rather than being reinvested to support overall sustainability;



- 4.3 With regard to future investment, the strategy therefore identifies a number of targets, particularly in relation to improved access to 3G artificial turf pitches, improvements in ancillary facility quality, improvements in natural grass pitch quality, access to indoor spaces and local access to informal places to play. Research by the FA suggests that the equivalent of one full-size 3G artificial turf pitch per 42 affiliated teams is required to meet training needs within normal programming constraints (and taking into account training needs met by small sided pitches also). From a mini and junior perspective, the aspiration is to play the majority of mini-soccer and youth matches on 3G pitches, with the partners committed to ensuring at least half of mini-soccer and youth matches are played on high quality 3G artificial turf pitches within the life of this Strategy. Mapping this against existing provision identifies a need for more than 1,000 additional full-size 3G artificial turf pitch ‘equivalents’ to meet requirements (noting that a local solution is likely to include a mix of full size and small sided provision to meet a range of affiliated and informal, community needs).
- 4.4 Adequacy of pitch provision is informed locally by Playing Pitch Strategies (of which approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of local authorities have an up to date Playing Pitch Strategy - less than 3 years old), but a significant focus for the next investment cycle will be quality improvements and provision of ancillary facilities (particularly changing facilities and clubhouses that enable clubs to grow and become more sustainable). A consistent theme of recent playing pitch strategies is the rating of up to 50% of grass pitch stock as ‘standard’ or ‘poor’ - improving this to a position where the majority of pitches are ‘good’ will require investment in improving around 20,000 natural grass pitches. At a basic level we will continue to seek to protect locally needed grass pitch provision, as part of local planning.
- 4.5 Insight work in relation to small sided football has highlighted that ‘convenience’ (close to work / home, easy to book, easily accessible) is critical to encouraging participation. The context of providing local opportunities to play is therefore an important one and local plans will need to demonstrate accessibility to a range of informal and formal places to play, within a reasonable travel time of peoples’ homes and work places. The research was clear that we should not neglect open space, parks and informal opportunities to play and that there is an opportunity to be innovative in driving informal participation.
- 4.6 Analysis of sports hall provision across England has shown that 99% of the population has access to a sports hall within 20 minutes drive time of their home. Therefore, the focus for investment will be on ensuring the halls are accessible for community and club use and are marked appropriately for futsal.
- 4.7 In relation to talent development, facility need will be identified via regional and national development plans and investment priorities will be dictated by these, particularly in relation to supporting the player pathway for women and girls - a key growth target for football.
- 4.8 However, a key aspect of this strategy is also a recognition of areas in which we have insufficient knowledge and therefore in which further research is required to underpin future investment - this includes for example understanding barriers, motivations and behaviours to playing small sided and recreational football, and developing a greater understanding of pitch quality - plans are being put in place to identify alternative means of understanding and monitoring pitch quality, to enable a more proactive and responsive approach to improving quality. To support future insight, a digital working group has been established to coordinate the opportunities associated with using technology innovations.



## Our investment priorities

- 5.1 Our investment priorities can be broadly grouped into six areas, recognising the need to grow the game, support existing players and better understand the different football environments.
- ✓ Improve 20,000 Natural Turf pitches, with a focus on addressing drop off due to a poor playing experience;
  - ✓ Deliver 1,000 3G AGP 'equivalents' (mix of full size and small sided provision, inc MUGAs - small sided facilities are likely to have a key role in smaller / rural communities and encouraging multi-sport offers), enhancing the quality of playing experience and supporting a sustainable approach to grass roots provision;
  - ✓ Deliver 1,000 changing pavilions / clubhouses, linked to multi-pitch or hub sites, supporting growth (particularly in women and girls football), sustainability and providing a facility infrastructure to underpin investment in coaching, officials and football development;
  - ✓ Support access to flexible indoor spaces, including equipment and court markings, to support growth in futsal, walking football and to support the education and skills outcomes, exploiting opportunities for football to positively impact on personal and social outcomes for young people in particular;
  - ✓ Refurbish existing stock to maintain current provision, recognising the need to address historic under-investment and issues with refurbishment of existing facilities;
  - ✓ Support testing of technology and innovation, building on customer insight to deliver hubs for innovation, testing and development of the game.
- 5.2 In all instances where our investment provides opportunities for young and vulnerable people, a clear and robust approach to safeguarding will be an essential prerequisite.
- 5.3 In a number of areas, working in close partnership with other pitch sports will be critical to maximising return on investment and ensuring a sustainable solution is delivered.
- 5.4 The impact of this investment has been considered from three aspects - participation impact; education, skills & social outcomes; and economic benefits.



5.5 Analysis of previous investment tells us that investment in new provision and refurbishment of existing provision can have a significant impact on participation levels, including attracting individuals who were previously inactive.

5.6 FA insight suggests having good quality facilities is the biggest single issue for participants. For affiliated football especially the benefit in addressing drop off will therefore be significant.

5.7 Local plans for Football will need to consider displacement issues to avoid sustainability concerns at existing or new provision.

5.8 From a facility perspective, the mix of flexible indoor spaces with high quality outdoor provision is important - we know from our research that participants from Black and Minority Ethnic communities are most likely to attend programmes in youth/community centres. Participants from the 20% most deprived areas are most likely to attend sessions in high numbers at youth/community centres, but are also attracted to sessions in public parks.





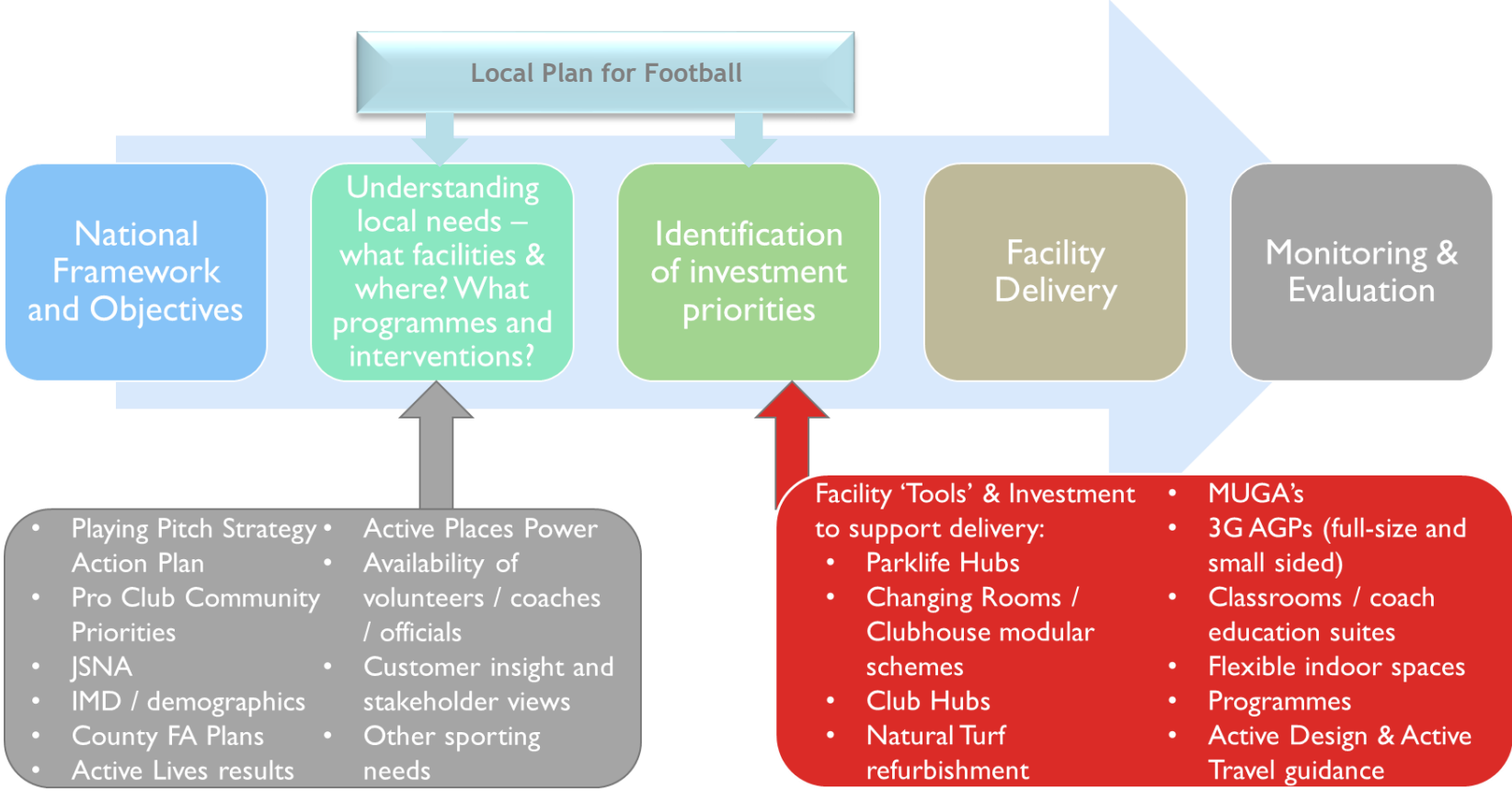
5.9 From an education, skills and social outcomes perspective, the combination of football-related programmes in high quality facilities can deliver significant benefits. Likewise, research has shown the considerable economic opportunities associated with investment in facilities.



# Supporting successful delivery at a local level...

## Introduction

6.1 Whilst outlining the scale of the challenge at a national level provides useful context, **delivery at a local level and understanding of local needs will be critical to meeting customer aspirations and maximising the positive impact of investment.**



6.2 'Local Plans for Football' will underpin investment decisions on a city or local authority area basis. As part of the toolkit associated with this strategy, a local plan framework is included to promote consistency of situation analysis and clarity of priorities. This will identify facility needs across the different football environments - for example 3G artificial turf pitches (full-size and small sided), grass pitch improvements, changing room / clubhouses, multi-use games areas, hub sites, indoor halls, education / classroom facilities and other recreational environments - and identify the needs of all stakeholders, including professional and community clubs.



6.3 To support value for money and consistent quality of delivery, the partners have developed a toolkit of supporting information, covering:

- Parklife Hub site models - multi-pitch models, with commercial income streams and appropriate governance models to support sustainability;
- Premier League 'Club Hubs' models - emphasis on a multi-sport offer with other relevant training, education and outreach services, delivered within an informal, inspirational environment;
- Changing Rooms / Clubhouse modular schemes - with the aim of facilitating high quality ancillary facilities where required;
- Natural Turf refurbishment - recognising the issues with pitch quality and commitment to improve grass pitch provision;
- MUGA's / small sided courts - to encourage local accessibility for community and recreational football in particular, ideally linked to other provision to ensure sustainability;
- 3G AGPs - aligned with the national commitment to ensure at least half of mini-soccer and youth matches are played on high quality 3G artificial turf pitches;
- Classrooms / coach education suites in key locations - recognising the power of football in tackling deprivation and associated issues such as education, providing opportunities for those in greatest need;
- Flexible indoor spaces - encouraging growth of futsal and walking football and meeting identified needs for women and girls football;
- Programming and operations support to ensure local coordination and sustainability.

6.4 The components of the toolkit include capital cost guidance, revenue business plans, modular delivery schemes, procurement frameworks and links to guidance / best practice from other partners, such as Sport England's Club Matters.

6.5 Interested parties are encouraged to use these guidance tools once they understand the local need, to test and refine thinking in developing projects and understanding the feasibility and business case considerations involved in delivering new facilities.



## Targeting and prioritising investment...

- 7.1 Having articulated the scale of the challenge at a national level and set out the focus on local planning to ensure coordination and sustainability, the funding available in the next funding cycle will clearly not be sufficient to address all stated priorities. Therefore, priority will be given to those that:
- ✓ Are supported by a deliverable and sustainable business case, aligned with the priorities of the National Football Facilities Strategy;
  - ✓ Have clearly identified social outcomes and a framework for monitoring and evaluation of success;
  - ✓ Target increased participation from under-represented groups, demonstrating innovation in areas such as programming, marketing, pricing, partnership working;
  - ✓ Are clearly articulated within a local plan for football, supported by an up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy;
  - ✓ Are supported by all of the key stakeholders - the FA, Premier League and Sport England.
- 7.2 The partners will seek to work proactively with authorities and cities identified through the national mapping work as having the greatest deficiencies in facility provision. In broad terms, the roles of the partners at each stage of the process are:





- 7.3 The local authority and local partners will need to develop insight and customer understanding so they can identify the change they want to effect and outcomes to be achieved - this will be articulated as part of the local plan but may require early assessment to understand additional insight required, that can be gathered alongside or prior to the playing pitch strategy preparation.
- 7.4 With regard to 'readiness' to deliver local plans, only a third of local authorities have up to date playing pitch strategies in place, with a further 30% currently developing updated studies - these are critical baselines for the development of local plans and local authorities will continue to be supported in developing comprehensive playing pitch strategies, using agreed data sets.
- 7.5 Whilst the framework encourages a proactive approach to local planning and delivery, individual projects will nevertheless still be considered where a strong case exists, in line with the strategy priorities, demonstrating a clear need and sustainability.
- 7.6 For example, projects aimed at securing local accessibility for community and recreational football and using the power of football to address deprivation issues, will potentially come forward as specific opportunities or as part of community or place-based planning.
- 7.7 Sustainability, in the context of reducing revenue support availability, will be a core theme of future investment, with an area wide approach to using surpluses to support a coordinated network of facilities. Consideration will also be given to the most appropriate way of ensuring sinking funds are set aside and protected for future refurbishment, including local or national retention options.
- 7.8 On a similar basis, investment in site specific maintenance equipment and supporting maintenance equipment banks with a shared approach to delivery and improving pitch quality are likely to form part of local planning.



## Bringing it to life - what might a place-based solution look like?

- 8.1 Successful delivery in a local area, that addresses the needs of the different football environments, will include a number of different types of provision and intervention. From a facilities perspective, this could include investment in grass pitch improvements, development of hub sites, provision of education and skills opportunities, support for access to indoor facilities, protection of parks and open spaces for informal activity and so on, depending on local need and existing provision. Examples of successful projects include:

### Grass Pitch Improvement – Creasey Park, Dunstable

Objectives of the project were to deliver fit for purpose facilities to replace the existing tired facilities. The new facility provides a home for the Club, AFC Dunstable and caters for extensive community use. Facility mix includes - 106m x 71m floodlit 3G FTP, new changing room/clubhouse building, new grass pitches and pitch improvement works, plus a revenue award for the successful delivery of the football development plan.

Outcomes to date include - An increase of 100 football teams using the site; 587% increase in female football participation; Six new youth female teams, one female adult team; 762% increase in male football participation.

### Premier League Club Hub - Meriden Community Centre

The Centre boasts brand new facilities such as the 3G artificial grass pitch, male and female changing rooms and state of the art gym, as well as the revamped main hall, flexible space and café.

The new community hub is set to boost sports participation by 49% with the new 3G pitch to be used by a range of local grassroots clubs. The Centre will offer everything from 5-a-side to a Veterans League, while also equipped for table tennis, yoga, martial arts and dance. As well as sport, the Centre will offer areas for hire and a variety of activities such as, art class, music gym and social clubs. The Centre enables the Trust to connect with the local community, offering new opportunities for people both young and old to improve their skills both on and off the sports field.

### Parklife Hub (Sheffield)

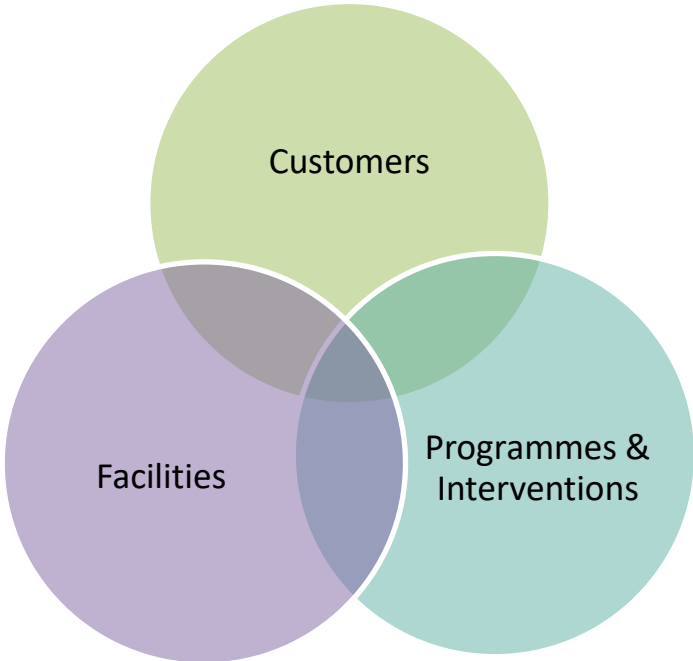
The Sheffield programme currently comprises of three hub sites across the city with two AGPs at each site and associated built facilities for coach education, changing provision and social space. One of the three sites has a gym and studio to improve financial returns, whilst also addressing a gap in local health and fitness provision. Each of the hub sites has a grass pitch offer and there is a multi-sport approach on two of the three sites.

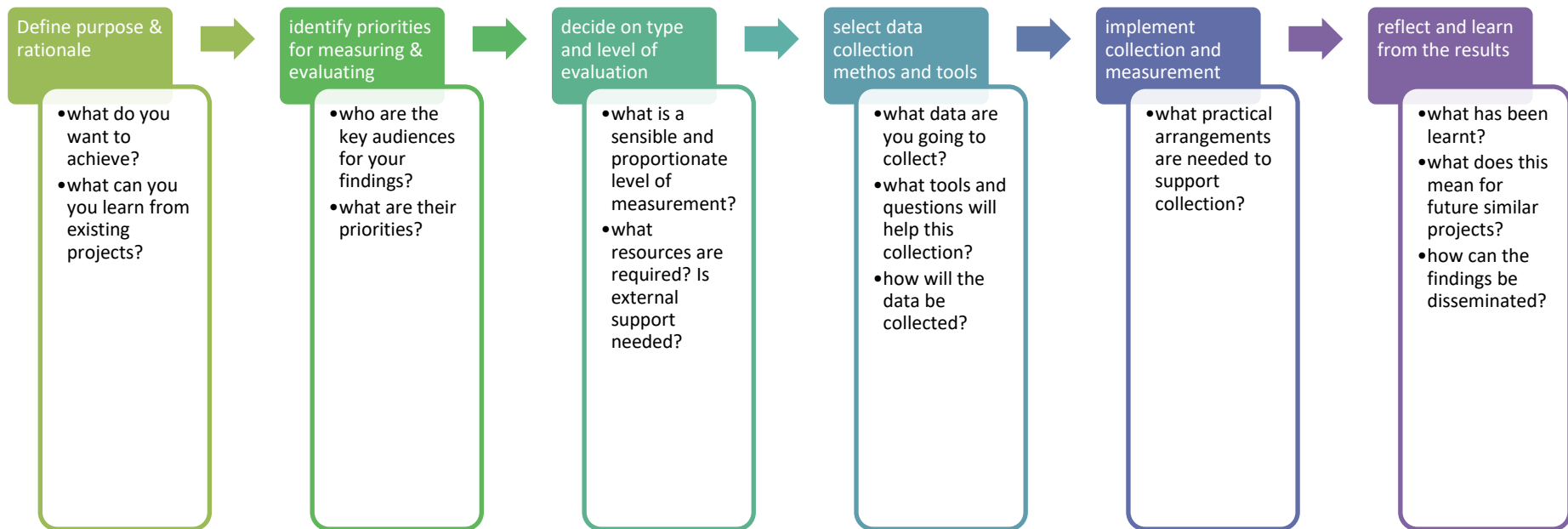
The commercial viability of the trust is important to deliver the overall Football Hub outcomes and help cross-subsidise future sites within the city. The project will use football to deliver outcomes related particularly to physical well being and mental well being, through alignment with the Council's 'Move More' physical activity strategy.



# Framework for monitoring & evaluation...

- 9.1 In order to understand progress against the objectives set out in this strategy, a clear monitoring and evaluation framework is critical. Our approach will be aligned to the Sport England evaluation framework. Data will be captured on an ongoing basis, against three key areas - customers, programmes & interventions and facilities.
- 9.2 Essential to delivery of this approach is a clear understanding of what the investment is seeking to achieve ('purpose') and how it is expected to work ('rationale'). Clarity in these aspects underpins the development of a monitoring and evaluation approach that is proportionate and focused on understanding whether the objectives of the investment are being achieved.
- 9.3 As part of the toolkit being developed to support implementation of the Strategy, a basket of measures will be identified that can support projects across the football environment. This will draw directly from Sport England's Evaluation Framework resources, with the addition of insight and learning from our own investments.
- 9.4 The diagram overleaf sets out the process to be followed in assessing and developing the monitoring and evaluation process required for each project. The FA and Premier League will work closely with Sport England to ensure the approach is clearly aligned with national thinking in this area and provide data that can support understanding of how football is contributing to the Government outcomes associated with Physical Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Individual Development, Social / Community Development and Economic Development.
- 9.5 In the first two years of implementing the Strategy, the partners will also invest in developing a coordinated approach to collecting a baseline set of customer data on all investments, covering as a minimum - name, gender, date of birth, postcode, and activity level.





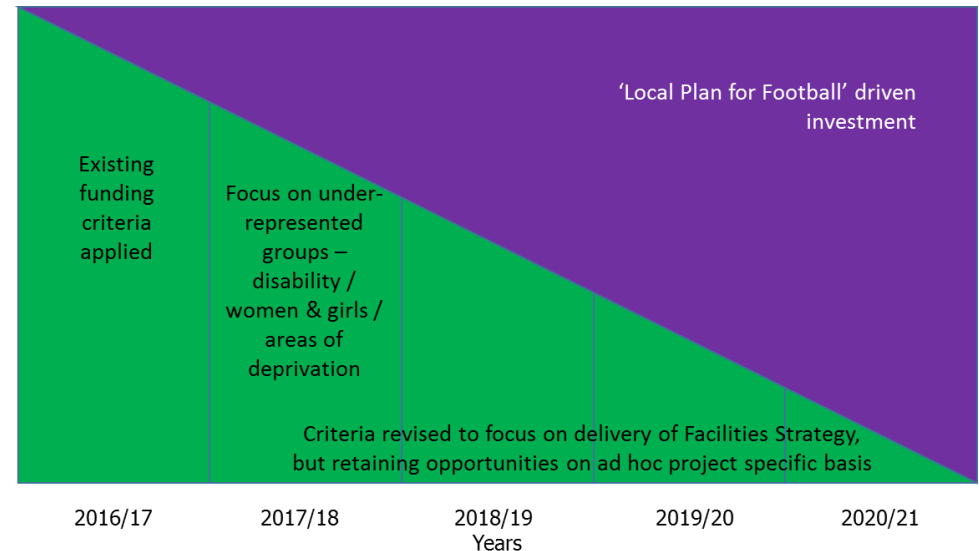
9.6 Collecting data and learning from the investments the partners make will be a central part of achieving the objectives outlined in this Strategy and therefore will be a core theme across all programmes and initiatives.





## Delivery Framework...

- 10.1 The vision, “*Within 10 years, we aim to deliver great football facilities, wherever they are needed*”, is a long-term one and it is recognised that actions will be phased against funding cycles and readiness of partners to deliver. Funding is currently identified in three-year cycles and action plans will be developed to support the priorities in each cycle, as progress is made towards the overall strategy objectives.
- 10.2 Project funding will be ongoing throughout the lifespan of this strategy and investment will be aligned with the principles of the Strategy, but with a recognition that it will take time to develop Local Plans for Football in all areas so a period of transition will be needed from existing funding criteria.
- 10.3 Likewise, there is a recognition that projects that meet the priorities of the Strategy will come forward in advance of local plans in some areas and these opportunities will not be disadvantaged simply because timescales have not caught up in relation to local plan development. Indeed, retaining flexibility to fund unique, innovative solutions remains an important aspect of encouraging growth in the different football environments.
- 10.4 By June 2017 (end of Year 1 of the current funding cycle), projects will cease to be assessed against existing funding criteria, with new assessment criteria in place, linked directly to the Strategy.
- 10.5 Year 2 is recognised as being a transitional period with a focus on local plan development. Nevertheless, the Partners are keen to maintain momentum, given the critical role facilities can play across the football environments. In this context, projects that prioritise and address the needs of under-represented groups (for example, women & girls / disabled participation / areas of deprivation) will form the focus for investment decisions in year 2.
- 10.6 The aim is that, by year 3, there are local plans in place in at least 50% of local authorities, driving local investment decisions, whilst by year 5, 90% of the investment will be driven by local plans (retaining on-going flexibility for investment in innovation or unique project opportunities).





## Further information and resources...

- 11.1 This strategy document contains references to a considerable amount of supporting information and resources - for further detail and to access the toolkit documents referred to, please visit:

### Insight and research

- <https://www.sportengland.org/research/>
- <http://www.thefa.com/my-football/more/facilities-home>
- <https://pitchfinder.org.uk/>
- <https://www.sportengland.org/our-work/partnering-local-government/tools-directory/>
- [http://localhealth.org.uk/#z=491542,200515,74905,42552;sid=493;sly=ward\\_2013\\_DR;l=en;v=map4](http://localhealth.org.uk/#z=491542,200515,74905,42552;sid=493;sly=ward_2013_DR;l=en;v=map4)

### Facilities Toolkit

- <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/active-design/>
- <https://www.sportengland.org/media/10590/london-parklife-prospectus.pdf>
- [https://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/\\_resources/assets/attachment/full/0/22846.pdf](https://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/_resources/assets/attachment/full/0/22846.pdf)
- <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/tools-guidance/design-and-cost-guidance/>

### Other publications and useful links

- <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/>
- <https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>



- <http://www.thefa.com/my-football>
- <http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/>

11.2 For support in developing local plans for football, the FA regional facilities representatives can be identified at <http://www.thefa.com/my-football/football-volunteers/runningaclub/yourfacilities/~ /media/A3458D0EEB29499FBCAD716319B1B033.ashx/131%20Regional%20Facilities%20Managers.pdf>.

11.3 For project development support, the Football Foundation provides both a library of supporting documentation and project-specific advice - their contact details can be found at <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/> .



*Football is an accessible, inclusive sport, with participation across all sectors of the population, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or social background. It is played in environments from local parks to formal multi-pitch hub sites, on a range of surfaces and, when locally provided in safe, quality spaces, can be a lifelong component of an active community.*

*This strategy is clear that traditional, affiliated football remains an important priority and a core component of the game, whilst recognising and supporting the more informal environments used for the community and recreational game. Addressing all these aspects will enable us...*

*WITHIN 10 YEARS TO DELIVER GREAT FOOTBALL FACILITIES, WHEREVER THEY ARE NEEDED.*

