



WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY 2020-2030 DRAFT STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2019

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd
Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF
T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@kcp.co.uk www.kcp.co.uk



WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

CONTENTS

PART 1: INTRODUCTION..... 1

- 1.1: Background..... 1**
- 1.2: Strategic context 2**
- 1.3: Approach 3**
- 1.4: Supply 5**
- 1.5: Demand..... 6**
- 1.6: Future demand..... 7**
- 1.7: Supply and demand assessment 8**

PART 2: HEADLINE FINDINGS FROM THE ASSESSMENT 9

PART 3: KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS 11

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

ABBREVIATIONS

BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAT	Community Asset Transfer
CC	Cricket Club
CPA	County Pitch Advisors
CW	Cricket Wales
ECB	England & Wales Cricket Board
FCC	First Class County
FIT	Fields in Trust
GCCC	Glamorgan County Cricket Club
HE	Higher Education
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
NGBs	National Governing Bodies of Sport
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
RPC	Regional Performance Centre
SW	Sport Wales
TGR	Team Generation Rate

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Wales Cricket Facility Strategy prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Cricket Wales (CW) and Glamorgan County Cricket Club (GCCC). It builds upon the preceding Assessment Report which contains the supply and demand assessment of cricket facilities across Wales which forms the evidence base for this Strategy.

The Strategy has been developed to cover a ten-year period to 2030 with a planned extensive review after five years. It covers all cricket facilities that are used by community groups across the whole of Wales.

It provides a framework for delivery which is also reliant on partnership work. Given this, there is a need to sustain and build key partnerships with cricket partners including Sport Wales, local authorities and education providers to support the delivery of its objectives.

1.1: Background

CW and GCCC are working together to develop a pan Wales Cricket Strategy that links both the recreational and professional game. Its Draft Strategy (2020-2024) identified the following objectives:

- ◀ Successful elite teams and international players.
- ◀ Fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure for cricket in Wales.
- ◀ An increase in the number of people positively experiencing cricket.
- ◀ A great player and fan experience at all levels
- ◀ A more sustainable game in Wales.

To support the delivery of these objectives a series of more detailed plans will be developed, targeted at specific areas of the game. The need for a facilities plan has been specifically identified within the overarching strategy to support the delivery of these objectives and the Steering Group, which comprises senior executives from both GCCC and CW, is committed to delivering a pan Wales Cricket Facility Strategy. Its purpose is, thus, to:

- ◀ Identify the facility needs for the game of cricket across Wales.
- ◀ Deliver the strategic aims and objectives of CW and GCCC
- ◀ Allow cricket to thrive enhancing the experience of all players, spectators and volunteers.

The strategy will be underpinned by a plan which identifies priorities for developing a fit for purpose infrastructure for the future of cricket to 2030.

Objectives

The objectives of the assessment and strategy are to:

- ◀ Establish the current quantity and quality of cricket facilities in Wales.
- ◀ Confirm existing sites and determine their sustainability for the future.
- ◀ Identify opportunities to improve existing facilities so they are fit for purpose and encourage growth in the number of players, volunteers and spectators.
- ◀ Identify potential to improve access to pitch sport sites to encourage greater participation.
- ◀ Establish what new facilities are required to meet existing and projected demand.
- ◀ Identify external partnership opportunities to enable effective and greater use of sites and the sharing of skills, expertise, resources and facilities.
- ◀ Identify collaborative working opportunity across the cricket family to maximise the potential of sites.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

- ◀ Identify potential venues to accommodate Glamorgan's cricket programme including out-grounds for first class cricket.
- ◀ Identify potential strategic facilities to aid talent pathway development, women/girls, disability and BAME communities.
- ◀ Inform the future development, and investment in cricket facilities across Wales, at all levels of the game.

Scope

The Strategy covers affiliated and unaffiliated usage and the assessment provided a picture of supply and demand for all community cricket activities. It does not include school cricket as this is the responsibility of the Welsh Government's Department for Education although it does encompass education sites that are used by the community. The Strategy does not, however, assess the facility needs of the sites that are exclusively for the use of schools. It covers the following cricket facility types:

- ◀ Turf pitches
- ◀ Non turf pitches
- ◀ Practice facilities – including both turf and non-turf
- ◀ Indoor facilities
- ◀ Pavilions and clubhouses
- ◀ Machinery
- ◀ Covers, sightscreens and scoreboards
- ◀ Groundsmanship.

It incorporates all cricket facilities that currently and potentially provide community and GCCC usage including sites owned and/or operated by:

- ◀ GCCC
- ◀ Community clubs
- ◀ Sports associations
- ◀ Charities
- ◀ Local authorities
- ◀ Schools
- ◀ Further education
- ◀ Higher education
- ◀ Independent schools

Please note that the cricket square at Sophia Gardens Stadium was not included in the audit as the site is elite stadia for professional and international sporting use. As a consequence, it is not readily accessible for community use other than *ad hoc* community cricket league finals.

1.2: Strategic context

The provision of high quality and accessible community outdoor sports facilities at a local level is a key requirement for achieving the targets set by the Welsh Government and Sport Wales (SW). It is vital that this Strategy is cognisant of and works towards these targets in addition to local priorities and plans.

Development of fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure for cricket in Wales is one of the five key objectives in the CW and GCCC joint cricket strategy. It also has a significant impact upon the Sport's ability to achieve the four other objectives. Facilities are, thus, a core focus for both organisations.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

High quality facilities are also key to achieving targets within the ECB's new Inspiring Generations strategy, particularly the potential for cricket to be inclusive, grow and attract new audiences such as juniors, women and girls and the wider non-cricketing communities.

Cricket is one of several sports in Wales that can contribute to achievement of the seven wellbeing goals identified in the Welsh Government Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015) and the Sport Wales Vision for Sport. This is especially the case with regard to healthier, more equal and more cohesive communities, echoing some of the aims of greater inclusion and community integration identified by the ECB's Inspiring Generations Strategy.

1.3: Approach

Study area

This assessment was undertaken in keeping with the principles outlined in the Sport England Guidance to Producing a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). A PPS is an evidence based document to guide investment, development and improvement in pitch sport facilities and meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework in England. A non-standards based approach, it provides a sport specific assessment of need and is a required evidence base for local authorities in the production of a robust Local Development Plan. It is also used to help determine planning applications impacting on existing or the need for new sports pitches and guide investment from a range of bodies.

Sport Wales (SW) does not publish specific guidance on the production of a PPS or needs assessments pertaining to local authorities or sites in Wales, hence the adoption of the much tested approach and guidance in place in England. The specifics in relation to cricket within the Guidance were developed and agreed in conjunction with England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

To assist the assessment the country is split into regions. The three CW area Boards (South East, South West and North) align to existing cricket structures; these are applied to the assessment. Further, it was also concluded by the Project Steering Group that local authority boundaries making up these areas should also be used given the importance.

The Cricket Wales North and South East area boundaries intersect both Ceredigion and Powys. For the purposes of population-based assessments, these local authorities have been considered within the North and South East areas respectively.

Table 1.1: Analysis areas

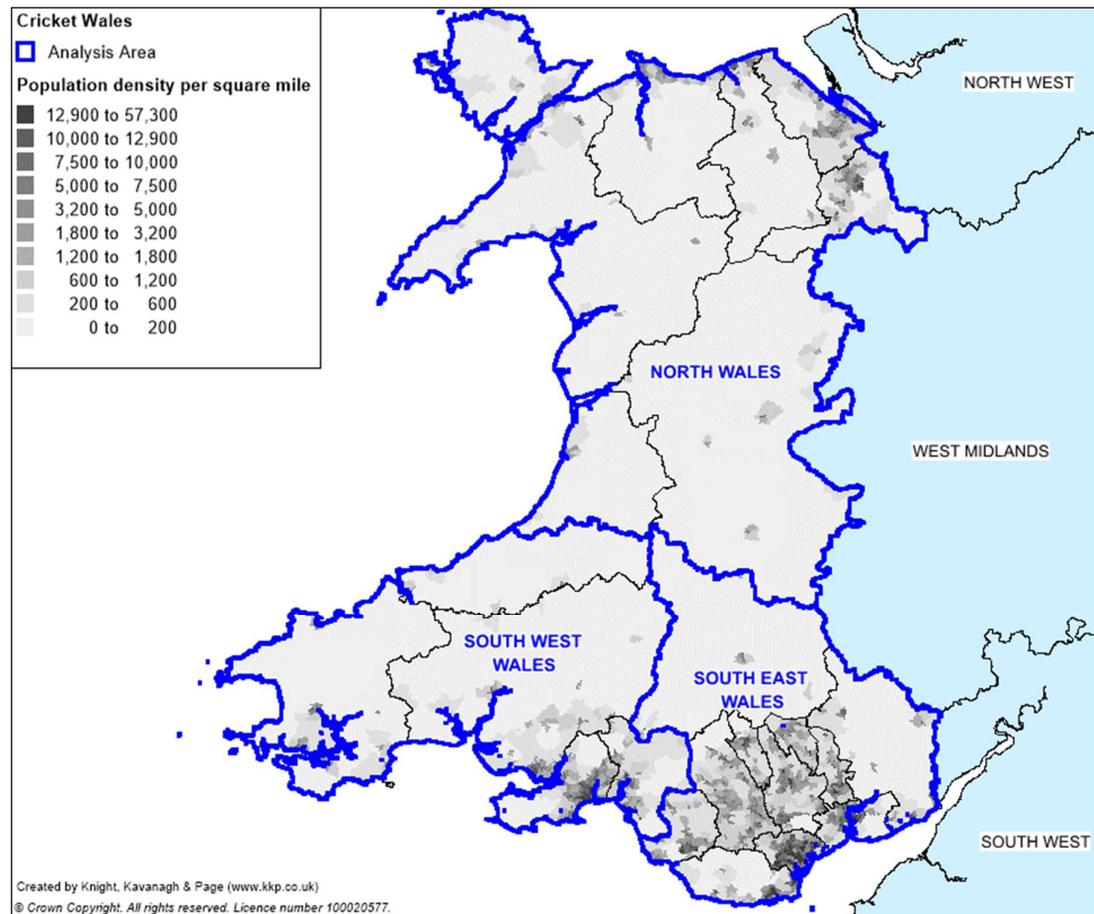
CW area and local authority	Population (2017 MYE)
North Wales	769,360
Ceredigion	73,076
Conwy	116,863
Denbighshire	95,159
Flintshire	155,155
Gwynedd	123,742
Isle of Anglesey	69,794
Wrexham	135,571

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

CW area and local authority	Population (2017 MYE)
South West Wales	698,733
Carmarthenshire	186,452
Neath Port Talbot	142,090
Pembrokeshire	124,711
Swansea	245,480
South East Wales	1,657,072
Blaenau Gwent	69,609
Bridgend	144,288
Caerphilly	180,795
Cardiff	362,756
Merthyr Tydfil	59,953
Monmouthshire	93,590
Newport	151,485
Powys	132,515
Rhondda Cynon Taf	239,127
Torfaen	92,264
Vale of Glamorgan	130,690

Figure 1.1: Map of CW areas and local authority boundaries



WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

1.4: Supply

Quantity

With the exceptions noted above related to pitches at some schools', all cricket provision is included irrespective of ownership, management and use. Grounds were initially identified using SW data sets (Active Cymru), CW 2018 Club Audit and web-based information. CW Area Managers supported the process by checking and updating this initial data. This was then verified against club information from the consultation process.

Accessibility

Not all pitches offer the same level of access to the community. The ownership and accessibility of playing pitches also influences their actual availability for community use. Each site is assigned a level of community use as follows:

- ◀ **Community use** - pitches in public, voluntary, private or commercial ownership or management (including education sites) recorded as being available for hire and currently in use by teams playing in community leagues.
- ◀ **Available but unused** - pitches that are available for hire but are not currently used by teams which play in community leagues; this most often applies to school sites but can also apply to sites which are expensive to hire.
- ◀ **No community use** - pitches which as a matter of policy or practice are not available for hire or used by teams playing in community leagues. This should include professional club pitches along with some semi-professional club pitches, where play is restricted to the first or second team.
- ◀ **Disused** – sites that are not being used at all by any users and are not available for community hire either. If brought forward to be lost as part of a planning application, these sites have to be assessed using the criteria in paragraph 4.5 of Planning Policy Wales and SW would object to a proposed loss of playing pitches/playing fields without evidence that it is not required.

In addition, there is deemed to be a need to ensure, with a good degree of certainty, that the pitch will be available to the community for at least the following three years. A judgement is made based on the information gathered and a record of secured or unsecured community use put against each site.

Quality

The capacity of pitches to regularly provide for competitive play, training and other activity over a season is most often determined by their quality. As a minimum, the quality and therefore the capacity of a pitch affects the playing experience and people's enjoyment of a sport. In extreme circumstances, it can result in a pitch being unable to cater for all or certain types of play during peak and off-peak times.

It is not just the quality of the pitch itself which has an effect on its capacity but also the quality, standard and range of ancillary facilities. The quality of both the pitch and ancillary facilities will determine whether a pitch is able to contribute to meeting demand from various groups and for different levels and types of play.

The quality of all pitches identified in the audit and the ancillary facilities supporting them are assessed regardless of ownership, management or availability. Along with capturing any detail specific to individual pitches and sites, a quality rating is recorded within the audit for each pitch.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

The PPS Guidance sets out three levels related to assessment of the quality of cricket pitches: good, standard and poor. Maintaining high pitch quality is the most important aspect of cricket; if the wicket is poor, it can affect the quality of the game and can, in some instances, become dangerous.

These ratings are used to help estimate the capacity of each pitch to accommodate competitive and other play within the supply and demand assessment.

In addition to CW undertaking non-technical assessments at strategic sites (as set out below) to ensure that quality was consistent with pitch ability to be a strategic site, users and providers were also consulted on the quality of provision. Quality derived from consultation was also used to determine the quality ratings for all other cricket pitches in Wales.

Strategic sites

A total of 50 strategic sites including outdoor and indoor provision types were identified across Wales based on these sites delivering priority activity for both CW and GCCC. CW area managers were asked to identify strategic sites based on the following criteria:

- ◀ All Glamorgan activity (1st and 2nd teams).
- ◀ Regional Performance Centre (RPC) programme and venues used.
- ◀ Wales team venues.
- ◀ Women and girls' hubs.
- ◀ Disability hubs.
- ◀ BAME hubs.
- ◀ Indoor centres that are considered regionally important i.e. ones that large numbers of clubs use or used by the representative teams.

All strategic sites received a non-technical site assessment to further evaluate their quality and accessibility.

1.5: Demand

Presenting an accurate picture of current demand for playing pitches (i.e. recording how and when pitches are used) is important when undertaking a supply and demand assessment. Demand for cricket provision tends to fall within the following categories:

- ◀ Organised competitive play (affiliated and non-affiliated play)
- ◀ Organised training
- ◀ Informal play.

In addition, unmet and displaced demand for provision is also identified on a sport by sport basis. Unmet demand is defined as the number of additional teams that could be fielded if access to a sufficient number of pitches (and ancillary facilities) was available. Displaced demand refers to teams that are generated from residents of an area but due to any number of factors do not currently play within the area.

The consultation process sought to capture supply and demand information and associated issues relating to all cricket clubs playing in Wales. A variety of consultation methods was applied to collate information including online surveys, telephone interviews and face to face consultation.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

Face to face consultation was conducted with key stakeholders identified by the Project Steering Group which included, for example, CW areas managers, area boards and staff, GCCC staff, SW and the Groundsman Association. This enabled collection of more detailed demand information and exploration and assessment of key issues.

The response rates covering main user groups and facility providers are as follows:

Sport	Total number	Number responding	Response rate	Methods of consultation
Cricket clubs	185	149	81%	Online survey, telephone
Cricket leagues	21	16	76%	Online survey, telephone
Local authorities	22	16	72%	Online survey, telephone
Universities	8	8	100%	Telephone

The response rate is considered sufficiently high (and therefore sufficiently robust) to deliver reliable results to inform assessment outcomes. Most clubs that did not respond to the survey are smaller with either one or two senior teams.

1.6: Future demand

Alongside current demand, it is important to assess whether the future demand for cricket provision can be met. Using population projections, and proposed housing growth (where available), an estimate can be made of the likely future demand for playing pitches. Information sources used to help identify future demand include:

- ◀ Analysis of recent trends in the participation of playing cricket.
- ◀ Analysis of All Stars Cricket trend based analysis.
- ◀ Feedback from cricket clubs on their plans to develop additional teams.
- ◀ Local and regional CW specific targets (e.g. increasing women and girls' participation).

Population growth

The current resident population for each local authority in Wales was identified and used to further understand the extent of population growth using Stats Wales Mid-2014 based Principal Population Projections by Local Authority and Year to 2030 (to reflect the five year strategy period).

Clubs were asked through consultation to identify future aspirations for growth in number of teams. Team generation rates (TGRs) were used to provide an indication of how many people it may take to generate a cricket team (by gender and age group), in order to help estimate the change in demand that may arise from any population change in each local authority area. Initial projections based solely on population change and club aspirations for growth were then qualified by local CW area managers so that aspirations accurately reflect NGB expectations with regard to deliverable growth.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

1.7: Supply and demand assessment

Supply and demand information gathered has been used to assess the adequacy of cricket pitch provision across Wales. It focused on how much use each site could potentially accommodate (on an area by area basis) compared to how much use is currently taking place.

Pitch capacity analysis

Qualitative pitch ratings are linked to a pitch capacity rating derived from ECB guidance. The quality and use of each pitch is assessed against the recommended pitch capacity to indicate how many match equivalent sessions¹ per season a pitch can accommodate.

As a guide, the ECB sets a standard number of matches that each pitch type should be able to accommodate without adversely affecting its current quality (pitch capacity):

Wicket type	Number of match equivalent sessions per season		
	Good quality	Standard quality	Poor quality
Grass wicket	5 per season	4 per season	0 - unusable (unsafe)
Non-turf wicket	60 per season	60 per season	0 - unusable (unsafe)

This is compared to the number of matches actually taking place and categorised as follows, to identify:

Potential spare capacity: Play is below the level the site could sustain.	
At capacity: Play is at a level the site can sustain.	
Overused: Play exceeds the level the site can sustain.	

Once capacity is determined on a site by site basis, actual spare capacity is calculated on an area by area basis via further interrogation of temporal demand. It is important to note that, although spare capacity may have been technically identified, it does not necessarily mean that there is surplus provision.

¹ A match equivalent session (MES) can be either a match or a training session

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

PART 2: HEADLINE FINDINGS FROM THE ASSESSMENT

The bullet points below further summarise the conclusions of the supply and demand outcomes identified in the preceding Assessment Report. They have been agreed by the project steering group to inform the development of the key strategic priorities to be addressed in the Strategy.

- ◀ There is sufficient outdoor facility stock to service current and future demand for cricket across Wales, though capacity shortfalls exist in specific areas. Local authority areas with current capacity shortfalls provision are as follows:
 - ◀ Conwy
 - ◀ Flintshire
 - ◀ Gwynedd
 - ◀ Wrexham
 - ◀ Cardiff
 - ◀ Newport
- ◀ When accounting for future demand, 15 local authorities have a shortfall of provision for senior cricket, seven of these also have a shortfall of provision for junior cricket.
- ◀ The quality of squares is predominately viewed as being good to standard with only one site identified as poor across Wales.
- ◀ The quality of ancillary facilities, pavilions and clubhouses is more mixed with more facilities identified as standard and poor. This was supported by the independent assessment of strategic sites which identified 28% of facilities as poor and 56% as standard quality.
- ◀ From the strategic site assessments, most of the facility provision does not cater adequately for female participation in terms of flexibility or suitability.
- ◀ An increased number of ball strike issues are emerging nationally as a result of new housing developments nearby to cricket grounds.
- ◀ Wider planning issues related to the loss and mitigation of cricket provision have been highlighted whereby decisions could be based on better understanding local needs and maximising the benefit for sport. This also links to several disused cricket grounds that may be at risk from development in the future.
- ◀ Most outdoor cricket sites are managed by local clubs or local authorities (27% local authorities, 61% clubs). Just 2% are managed by schools, colleges or universities, whilst 10% of squares are managed by other organisations or information on management type is not known).
- ◀ Three existing outgrounds are used by GCCC; Newport International Sports Village, St Helens Rugby & Cricket Ground and Colwyn Bay Cricket Club. Notwithstanding some investment required, potential to host one day cricket is greater at Newport International Sports Village than the other current outground venues
- ◀ There is real merit in further exploring the feasibility of new out ground sites to better meet GCCC needs.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

- ◀ 185 cricket clubs provide 976 cricket teams playing in Wales; this comprises 469 senior (including three women's teams playing hardball cricket) and 509 junior teams playing competitive matches.
- ◀ In addition, there are at least 84 more teams identified as playing short-format cricket as part of midweek cricket leagues (unaffiliated).
- ◀ Midweek cricket leagues are presently unaffiliated and therefore cannot access CW support to facilitate further growth for the clubs participating within them. However, there are key challenges with the current affiliation process and its application to these leagues, with many made up of groups of individuals, often transient and without any form of club structure or organisation.
- ◀ Several clubs have no junior section and therefore their long term sustainability in terms of pathway and player pool is a concern, especially given the aging population within most local authorities. Sudden loss of players or interest could see these clubs become high risk of folding in the short to medium term.
- ◀ Population change over the next ten years is anticipated to result in growth in participation at just one or two age formats in five local authorities. However, aspirational growth reported by clubs is much higher with 89 clubs predicting growth, which would result in an additional 29 adult men's, 29 adult women's and 109 junior teams. This suggests that clubs are positive about future participation and are keen to grow further, although it can be considered somewhat unrealistic for all the expressed future demand to be achieved given current trends, with clubs often more aspirational than what is realistic.
- ◀ Through the club and local authority survey, a total of 102 indoor cricket venues were identified with usage reported at 81 of these. This is considered to be a high number of facilities which are accessed. There may also be other facilities available for indoor cricket activities that were not identified.
- ◀ Of the 81 facilities identified as being used by cricket clubs facility quality is rated as good at 18 sites, as standard at 35 sites and as poor at 28 sites.
- ◀ Less sites are considered to be poor quality in terms of ancillary provision, with 12 sites rated as poor, 39 as standard and 30 as good.
- ◀ From the strategic site assessments, the biggest issue identified with the playing areas was the lighting levels for cricket, with most sites being significantly below the current guidance. The second biggest issue identified was the quality of the netting and tracking systems.
- ◀ In terms of accessibility, most responding clubs (82) state they travel between 0-20 minutes to access their preferred indoor facility. A further 32 clubs state they travel 20-30 minutes whilst 16 clubs state that they travel in excess of 30 minutes.
- ◀ Most clubs (59% or 88 clubs) report that their primary indoor facility only meets some of their availability needs, whilst some (14% or 21 clubs) state that availability of this provision is insufficient completely. Access to quality indoor provision appears to be most challenging for clubs which could be due to seasonality of demand for cricket and competition with other indoor facility users.
- ◀ Only 11 clubs report that affordability of facilities is poor compared to 52 that report it to be good.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY

DRAFT STRATEGY

PART 3: KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

The following overarching key strategic priorities have been developed and agreed by the project steering group as falling out of the headline findings from the Assessment Report. These are the strategic priorities upon which the framework for delivery of the Strategy is built. Whilst all recommendations are primarily linked to the achievement of fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure for cricket, some will also contribute to delivering upon one or more of the five aims of the emerging joint Strategy for Cricket in Wales (2020-2024) are:

1. Successful elite teams and international players
2. Fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure for cricket in Wales
3. Increase in the number of people positively experiencing cricket
4. A great player and fan experience at all levels
5. A more sustainable game in Wales

The priorities identified in this strategy are key to delivering the emerging joint Strategy for Cricket in Wales (2020-2024) objective of *fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure for cricket*. They have been developed and agreed by the Project Steering Group emanating from the headline findings in the Assessment Report.

The strategic priorities are to:

- 1. Develop a network of high-quality cricket sites to suitably cater for all levels of talent development and performance**
- 2. Facilitate the growth of new markets for cricket**
- 3. Work collaboratively with key partners to develop facilities, participation and promote cricket to all**
- 4. Create sustainable facilities and environments for cricket**
- 5. Enhance the protection of existing cricket facilities and assets**

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

Key strategic priority 1: To develop a network of high-quality cricket sites to suitably cater for all levels of talent development and performance

Recommendations:

- a. Create a network of strategic outdoor cricket club sites to better align and service talent development and representative cricket programmes
- b. Create a network of high-quality venues across Wales to service Glamorgan CCC activities which meet player and spectator aspirations
- c. Create a limited network of high quality strategic indoor sites to meet the needs of the pathway and cricket clubs across Wales

a. Create a network of strategic outdoor cricket club sites to better align and service talent development and representative cricket programmes

Why: At present cricket club venues which support the talent pathway, regional and national squad programmes are not well aligned. In some cases, designation and status are based on local personal relationships, ease of access, availability or cost rather than optimal locational suitability or a preference to gain access to the highest quality available facilities to best develop high quality players.

Key benefit: More focused investment and return in terms of usage, as opposed to a diluted enhancement across a presently widespread range of sites.

b. Create a network of high-quality venues across Wales to service Glamorgan CCC activities which meet player and spectator aspirations.

Why: GCCC first and second teams presently play across five outground sites. These face varied challenges in terms of them being suitably retrofitted and enhanced to meet the requirements of modern-day elite cricketers and spectators.

Key benefit: This will improve key outground sites for GCCC first team and other squad play and accompany focused investment in talent pathway and performance-based provision.

c. Create a limited network of high quality strategic indoor sites to meet the needs of the pathway and cricket clubs across Wales

Why: Cricket clubs responding to the club survey currently identify over 100 venues used for indoor cricket, predominantly training facilities. Many identify issues with either playing and/or ancillary provision and in most cases are not specially programmed and designed cricket centres but multi-purpose local authority or school managed sports halls.

Key benefit: This will give cricket better and affordable access to the right indoor facilities and more influence over facility programming, ensuring that key activities are suitably provided for.

Key strategic priority 2: Facilitate the growth of new markets for cricket

Recommendations:

- d. Provide fit for purpose facilities to service growth areas including the women and girls game and All Stars Cricket.
- e. Create new facilities including community venues to support the growth of non-traditional cricket

d. Provide fit for purpose facilities to service growth areas including the women and girls game and All Stars Cricket:

Why: CW and the ECB highlight the growth of All Stars Cricket as a key priority in driving the wider growth of the game. This applies, in particular, to development of hardball junior cricket and the need to increase the total number of juniors playing to raise clubs' membership and player base sustainability. Development of female participation is also a key priority for cricket partners both *per se*, and as part of the All Stars Cricket programme.

In seeking to introduce cricket to new markets, there is a need to meet what are now generally higher expectations in respect of facility quality. This applies particularly to engaging women; both as participants and parents. ECB research confirms that provision that affects the quality of the player/parent/spectators' experience such as access to good quality toilet facilities and specific female changing influence female engagement and retention. Addressing this will help to sustain and/or increase female participation.

All Stars Cricket is just one of what are often numerous diverse activities attended by children. A good quality, hospitable environment will, animated by the right people who actively engage and include new and potential members ensure that clubs are perceived as welcoming and dispel some of the outdated images sometimes associated with cricket.

Key benefit: Better designed and managed facilities will enable clubs and others to provide good quality welcoming environments in which junior, adult, male, female and disabled players, parents, members and spectators will wish to stay and interact thus both enhancing recruitment to, and retention in, the game alongside the viability of clubs and premises.

e. Create new facilities including community venues to support the growth of non-traditional cricket

Why:

Midweek short format cricket is a key growth area which CW is presently unable to affiliate effectively via its current system. Much of it is played on local authority owned/maintained pitch and park sites. It is considered to have significant potential for further growth particularly in the BAME and South Asian communities of Wales's major towns and cities.

Many BAME-based teams are unstructured, not constituted and consultation suggests that they tend to have transient player bases. As a consequence, there tends to be greater reliance on external facility providers for access to squares and often limited capacity and ambition related to them taking on responsibility for self-managed or asset transferred venues.

High levels of demand and increasing pressure on local authority maintenance budgets, pose a critical strategic capacity issue. At present CW is not able to offer sufficient support (whether or not clubs and leagues affiliate) in terms of guidance or potential investment.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

NTPs are a potential solution to the issues of how to enable substantial increases in the volume of cricket played (in particular at local authority owned/managed sites but also at clubs and schools). They can also reduce the ongoing financial commitment to pitch maintenance. Popular parks and recreation grounds are a logical starting point as these can be easily accessed, even outside of the usual peak-time periods for cricket.

Key benefit: This will allow for more informal and mid-week cricket to be played and offer better and increased visibility for the sport. It offers parallels for MUGA development to enable informal play and to position short format cricket in non-standard locations, helping cater for towns/cities with smaller green spaces.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

Strategic priority 3: Work collaboratively with key partners to maximise benefit to cricket by sharing resources and expertise

Recommendations:

- f. CW should work with key partners in areas of limited capacity to develop and maximise access to facilities to meet current and future demand
- g. CW should collaborate with other sporting organisations to maximise investment, knowledge sharing and lobbying to benefit cricket and sport

f. CW should work collaboratively with key partners in areas of limited capacity to develop and maximise access to facilities to meet current and future demand

Why: There are other groups and organisations which are currently, or could in the future be, able to play a key role in the development of cricket. Local authorities, for example, are key asset holders and some are major contributors to outdoor and/or indoor cricket provision. They also play a role in developing participation and have sports development functions (with varying degrees of resource) to supplement CW's development work.

Although education providers control significant playing field stock, the recorded number of school sites used by cricket clubs for matches is low. (By contrast, the number of schools used by clubs for indoor training in some capacity is much higher). Schools are well positioned to engage a large number of children through curricular sport and better cricket facilities at schools' sites would both increase its attractiveness and provide better local facilities for local clubs to access.

Key benefit: This will allow cricket to be a sport which is flexible, solution-focused and which can lead and coordinate project development. It will also enhance the sport's access to indoor and outdoor venues while assisting partners to make facilities viable and to and positively tackle the budgetary and other issues that they face.

g. CW should collaborate with other sporting organisations to maximise investment, knowledge sharing and lobbying to benefit cricket and sport

Why: There are already examples of multi-sport share of local authority or sports club sites which need improved or redeveloped ancillary facilities, or where cricket and other sports share the same playing area and there are maintenance and remedial considerations relating to pitch quality. There may also be scope to maximise external investment via schemes which encompass collaboration with other NGBs enabling all parties to deliver on specified participation outcomes, such as the development and growth of women and girls' participation.

Key benefit: This will allow the NGB to take the lead to encourage cost-effective, multi-sport club/multi-partner based solutions to facility-based issues associated with venue quality and sustainability.

Strategic priority 4: Creating sustainable facilities and environments for cricket

Recommendations:

- h. Work with clubs and providers to develop/provide mechanisms for sustainability, guidance on upkeep and examples of best operating practice
- i. Support clubs and local authorities to, where appropriate, consider community asset transfer (CAT) alternative operating models

h. Work with clubs and providers to develop/provide mechanisms for sustainability, guidance on upkeep and examples of best operating practice

Addressing pitch quality issues

Why: There is a clear need for improvements to be made to existing facilities and in some cases for replacement provision. This links directly to the need to ensure that cricket facilities are regularly and correctly maintained to ensure their suitability for future use.

Addressing pitch quality issues does help to reduce levels of overplay at standard and poor-quality sites and should, in certain instances, alleviate it completely as capacity normally increases as a direct result. This is principally to ensure playability and the highest possible quality of match experience for players but is also important strategically to ensure that the quality of pitches do not deteriorate.

Existing technical advice and support should be promoted to provide further education and assist clubs to develop practical solutions to improve pitch surface quality.

Cricket has options, at local level, to collaborate with other organisations to improve pitch quality including NGBs in sports which share playing areas.

It is not uncommon for clubs to prioritise investment of time and resource in their pitch(es). However, pavilions also need to be regularly maintained and checked to ensure reasonable presentation, prolong life and limit unnecessary need for repair.

A substantial proportion of clubs and local authorities have either been unable, or have simply not continued, to invest in the maintenance and upkeep of pavilions and fixed bay net practice facilities. Grant funding for capital investment into pavilions/ changing provision in Wales is limited so it is vital that providers properly sustain the existing stock.

Key benefit:

This will create better facilities to improve the experience of players and spectators by providing:

- ◀ quality playing surfaces achieved through better management and co-ordination of pitch maintenance,
- ◀ a more capable, skilled and well-equipped workforce to drive pitch quality standards to a higher level.
- ◀ high quality off-field environments to meet the expectations of players and equip clubs to increase and diversify participation.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

i. Support clubs and Local Authorities to, where appropriate, consider community asset transfer (CAT) alternative operating models

Why: Recent years has seen a trend of local authorities more actively pursuing Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of facilities in response to increasing pressures on budgets which in many cases have been felt heavily by parks, open spaces and street scene departments, and maintenance teams.

Many local authorities in Wales are considering new approaches to the operation of sport and recreation provision and how this is managed. Many are seeking to externalise assets (and liabilities) as part of processes to deliver cost savings.

Whilst CAT is a great opportunity for cricket clubs and organisations to take greater control and responsibility, it also poses threats in that cricketing assets could be transferred to other bodies (sporting or otherwise) which may present a plausible case for site sustainability but do not have the same interest in sport, or cricket.

A multi-agency approach might enable cricket clubs which otherwise may not be able to take on responsibility and maintenance of an asset to secure tenure. There are longstanding examples of cricket clubs being sections of wider sports clubs/associations, but there may be opportunities for clubs to partner with other clubs/community organisations to protect an onsite sporting presence to accommodate services such as nurseries, community cafes or meeting spaces and/or to facilitate investment in the improvement of facilities.

Key benefit: Greater control and influence over cricketing assets, reduced vulnerability to local authority operational pressures, opportunity for self-determination of local cricket clubs and chance to broaden the potential for external investment.

Strategic priority 5: Enhance the protection of existing cricket facilities and assets

Recommendations:

- j. Strengthen the planning role of CW to prevent issues from arising and help protect cricket sites.
- k. Protect the existing infrastructure of cricket facilities across the country through the planning process and ensure sites have appropriate levels of security of tenure.

j. Strengthen the planning role of CW to prevent issues from arising and help protect cricket sites.

Why: There are identified issues in the planning process for sport which challenge the strategic development of facilities. For example, there is no obligation or memorandum of understanding that requires Fields in Trust (which is sub-contracted by Sport Wales to consult on pending applications on its behalf) to consult CW or the ECB with regard to the impact of development on playing fields or sporting provision. As a consequence, opportunities to highlight any issues with planning proposals may be missed.

The ECB and CW are likely to have much greater specific knowledge of impacted clubs or user group in question and will, thus, have a greater understanding of the potential level of impact, as well as more detailed technical insight with regard to sport specific facilities. Similarly, opportunities where proposed development may present an advantageous position for the strategic development of said sport may not be able to be maximised.

It is possible that neither Sport Wales nor CW/ECB have sight of planning applications which may pose a threat, or complicate access arrangements, to existing playing field provision, limiting their ability to protect these important assets. Sport Wales is a statutory consultee only in respect of plans which will have an impact on playing field land (or supporting associated infrastructure) itself. Therefore, when an application comes forward for the development of adjacent land, the process is not undertaken and it is possible for no sporting body to be aware until such application has been granted and potentially impactful development is underway.

There is a general acknowledged lack of NGB involvement in the planning process in Wales. This has, on occasions, led to the development of sub-par facilities which end up being of limited or no practical value to sport. Early NGB engagement would help to promote optimal design and technical specifications as well as prompting CW and ECB grant funding support for planned new provision.

These issues are not exclusive to cricket and apply to all pitch sport NGBs in Wales individually and in the context of multi-sport sites and/or operating models.

Key benefit: Opportunity for CW/ECB to achieve greater visibility of planning issues and proposals including housing development, greater engagement and closer relations to local planning authorities. This should help to ensure the appropriateness of new provision for cricket and a stronger position from which to protect existing cricketing assets.

WALES CRICKET FACILITY STRATEGY DRAFT STRATEGY

k. Protect the existing infrastructure of cricket facilities across the country through the planning process and ensure sites have appropriate levels of security of tenure.

Why: Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states all playing fields (including supporting buildings and ancillary facilities) whether owned by public, private or voluntary organisations, should be protected except where:

- ◀ Facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
- ◀ Alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available; or
- ◀ There is an excess of such provision in the area.

At present, sites that formerly accommodated playing pitches but no longer accommodate formal or informal sports use are classed as disused although the lawful designation of these is still that of a playing field. When a disused site is being considered for alternatives it is essential that an appropriate assessment is undertaken to determine whether it is surplus to requirement.

Many clubs throughout Wales have lease agreements that are nearing expiry. Whilst many of these will be extended without any issues, some landowners are unwilling to provide new long-term leases as they may have other plans for their sites. It is generally recommended that clubs should have more than 25 years on a lease arrangement; for clubs with less than this, they should be supported by CW and the ECB to extend the agreement. If an extension cannot be granted, alternative approaches may be required.

Key benefit: Greater protection of current cricketing interests and provide long-term security across Wales, strategic decisions based on robust evidence and greater potential for external investment due to long-term confirmation of tenure for cricket.