Appendix B: Strategic Context in Detail

National Context

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport: Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation (2015)

This is a cross-government strategy which seeks to increase the levels of sport participation and reduce the high levels of inactivity in the country. It sets out a new direction for sport policy, aiming to change the way in which sport is considered, from simply how many people take part, to considering what people get out of participating and what more can be done to encourage everyone to have a physically active lifestyle. It recognises that while sport is an important part of getting people active, it is important to encourage physical activity in any form, for example, through recreational walking or dance. The strategy focuses on five key outcomes:

- physical wellbeing
- mental wellbeing
- individual development
- social and community development
- economic development.

In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver and government funding will go to organisations who can achieve some or all of the five outcomes. Funding will also be targeted at groups of people that engage in little or no sport and physical activity including women and girls, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people.

The strategy recognises that local government is the biggest public sector investor in sport and physical activity. Councils also have an important leadership role to play bringing schools, voluntary sport clubs, National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), health and the private sector together to forge partnerships, unblock barriers to participation and improve the local sport delivery system. Local authorities are seen as crucial in delivering sport and physical activity opportunities. Many councils have integrated physical activity into public health policy with the objective of promoting wellbeing and incorporated tackling physical inactivity into their Health and Wellbeing Strategies.

The strategy specifically states that support for sport and physical activity infrastructure is not restricted to pitches, sports halls and buildings. In future it should include all types of places where people take part in activity in both rural and urban environments. Providing people with the freedom to use existing facilities and spaces and keeping them in good repair, is seen as important as building new infrastructure.

The strategy seeks new ways of supporting local physical activity strategies in selected geographical areas, and expects Sport England, Public Health England and Health and Wellbeing Boards to work closely together on pilot projects. Collaborative and innovative approaches are also being encouraged at the very local level involving organisations such as housing associations and the police, and Lottery funding policies will be changed to more easily support such projects.

The remit of Sport England in broadened so that it is responsible for sport outside schools from the age of 5 rather than 14 to increase and maintain young peoples’ participation in sport.
Lastly, as government has redefined what success looks like it is also changing how it measures success and will replace the Active People Survey with Active Lives.

**Sport England strategy ‘Towards An Active Nation’ 2016**

Sport England acknowledges that achieving the outcomes the ‘Sporting Future’ strategy will mean significant change for the organisation and its partners. These include:

- Focusing more money and resources on **tackling inactivity** as this is where the gains for the individual and for society are greatest
- Investing more in **children and young people from the age of five** to build positive attitudes to sport and activity as the foundations of an active life
- **Helping those who are active now to carry on, but at lower cost to the public purse over time.** Sport England will work with those parts of the sector that serve the core market to help them identify ways in which they can become more sustainable and self-sufficient
- Putting **customers at the heart** of what they do, responding to how they organise their lives and helping the sector to be more welcoming and inclusive, especially of those groups currently under-represented in sport
- Helping sport to keep pace with the **digital expectations** of customers
- Working nationally where it makes sense to do so (for example on infrastructure and workforce) but encouraging **stronger local collaboration** to deliver a more joined-up experience of sport and activity for customers
- Working with a **wider range of partners**, including the private sector, using our expertise as well as our investment to help others align their resources
- Working with our sector to encourage innovation and share best practice particularly through applying the principles and practical learning of **behaviour change**.

It provides seven investment principles, which local authorities need to consider when making future bids:

1. A clear line of sight to the objectives in Sporting Future 2015.
2. Ensure investment benefits under-represented groups
3. Use behaviour change to make investment choices
4. Get maximum value from all Sport England’s resources, not just financial
5. Strike a balance between ‘bankers’ and ‘innovators’
6. Review our investment portfolio regularly and remove funding if an investment is failing and cannot be rescued
7. Encouraging increased efficiency.

**National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and more recently in February 2019. The NPPF states the planning system should enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs this includes the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities such as sports venues
- take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community
- guard against the unnecessary loss of facilities and services
• ensure facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community
• ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

The NPPF recognises the important contribution that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity can make to the health and wellbeing of communities. It states existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

• an assessment clearly shows they are surplus to requirements
• they will be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location
• the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreation provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate. The West Northamptonshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study completed by Nortoft is the key evidence base for the Local Plan(s).

Through local and neighbourhood plans communities can identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them by designating the land as Local Green Space.

The latest NPPF reaffirms “Public bodies have a duty to cooperate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries”. This is a significant issue for South Northamptonshire in relation to the consideration of sport and recreation provision across West Northamptonshire.

**Planning Act 2008: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Pooling**

The Planning Act 2008 introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a planning charge to help deliver infrastructure to support the development in an area. The CIL regulations 2010 came into effect from 6 April 2015 and restricted the use of Section 106 agreements. Local planning authorities are now prohibited from pooling contributions from five or more sources for a particular item of infrastructure. Sport, recreation and open space are classed as infrastructure. Even though CIL is in place for South Northamptonshire it may still be necessary to request development specific planning obligations to mitigate specific consequences of a particular development. A planning obligation can only be sought when it is:

• necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
• directly related to the development; and
• fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

**Regional Context**

**West Northants Joint Core Strategy 2014 – 2029**

This sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of the area covered by Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils for the plan period up to 2029, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. The
WNJCS sets out the overall requirement for new development as well as identifying locations for large scale (strategic) growth for new housing and employment. The WNJCS is the Part 1 Local Plan for the District and provides the framework for the Part 2 Local Plan.

The WNJCS states that sport, recreation and open space are vital to the community and the local identity of an area. The plan area contains a wide variety of high-quality public open spaces, whilst further new spaces will be incorporated into the Sustainable Urban Extensions, providing residents with good quality access.

Each of the three Borough and District Councils in West Northamptonshire have produced Open Space, Sport and Recreation studies which are compliant with the former Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17). The studies provide detailed background information and recommendations for local standards of provision for both open space and recreation as well specific built facilities. The standards establish the minimum amount of space required together with the desired distance for accessing different types of facilities for all users. These standards should be incorporated into all new development.

Key improvements to sports facilities over the plan period to meet the needs of both the existing and future population levels have been incorporated into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These include:
- Rugby pitches and facilities across the plan area
- New sports hall with ancillary facilities such as netball courts in each of the authority areas
- Synthetic turf pitches in each of the towns.

Within the plan area there are many assets that provide recreational and leisure opportunities that are highly valued by residents, where possible these assets should be retained. The loss of such facilities, many of which do not operate commercially, is a particular concern, as they often provide vital voluntary services for disadvantaged sectors of the community. Meeting community needs may therefore require contributions from new development to assist in refurbishing, adapting or extending vital community assets; details of this approach will be provided within the Part 2 Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents (as necessary), which will also specify facilities that are considered to be "at risk".

As the area changes through new growth, the demand for cultural and community facilities will increase. Some new facilities may be provided locally, aimed at meeting the needs of local residents. Others may serve a wider area and will need to be delivered more comprehensively serving towns or even the whole of the plan area and beyond. New developments will be required to meet their own demands in terms of sporting, recreation, cultural and community facilities and to meet this demand either through on-site provision or through contributions as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery section of the WNJCS.

**Northamptonshire’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020**

This outlines the intentions of the Health and Wellbeing Boards. It provides the basis for improvements in the health and wellbeing of all people who live and work in Northamptonshire. The strategy is developed by the Board in collaboration with partners from around the county and is based on the available evidence locally, nationally and internationally. It takes into consideration local organisational health and wellbeing strategies, national priorities, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and health and
wellbeing trends in Northamptonshire. Three underpinning principles guided the selection of priorities for the strategy: those that can only be tackled by working together as a Board; those that will have a significant impact on health inequalities; and those that have a longer-term impact, beyond the period of the strategy. The strategy established four priorities:

1. Giving every child the best start
2. Taking responsibility and making informed choices
3. Promoting independence and quality of life for older adults
4. Creating an environment for all people to flourish.

The strategy acknowledges that targeted improvements in one area have positive knock-on effects for overall health and wellbeing, and the environments in which people live, work and play. The Board has therefore taken into consideration wider determinants of health and wellbeing such as housing in its strategic thinking.

**NSport Physical activity and sport framework, ‘More Active, More Often’ 2018-2021**

This county-wide framework sets the objective to get ‘More People, More Active, in Northamptonshire’ by:

1. Reducing adult inactivity at a faster rate
2. Getting our children and young people moving more and forming healthy active lifestyles
3. Reducing the inequalities experienced by people in lower socio-economic groups and those with a limiting illness or disability.

It sets a target for 12,000 fewer inactive people in Northamptonshire by 2021.

The framework was adopted by the Health and Well-being Board in March 2018. By aligning with the framework, partners will be contributing to the achievement of the overall vision while tackling the particular challenges of their own communities. Collectively, NSport aim to ingrain active lifestyles more deeply into the life of Northamptonshire, making it innate in the lives of more and more people. By 2021 there will be “more people, more active, in Northamptonshire”, and the strategic framework sets out how this will be achieved. Three themes drive the design of the framework:

1. **Universal Approach, scaled to need**: Something for everyone, with a focus on those with greater needs. Investing resources with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of inequality.
2. **Whole System**: Involving multiple sectors in the solutions. Ensuring everyone, including policy makers, planners, community workers and residents play their part in helping people make healthy choices.
3. **Place Based**: Evidence-led action in localities, using insight to understand what needs to change and supporting the whole system to make those changes.

**Local Context**

**South Northamptonshire Council Business Plan 2019/20**

This plan has three high level priorities and some specific objectives under these directly relate to sport and leisure:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>Thriving Communities &amp; Wellbeing</th>
<th>Protected, Green &amp; Clean</th>
<th>District of Opportunity &amp; Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVES (relating to sport and leisure)</td>
<td>Improve leisure and community facilities</td>
<td>Protect our natural environment</td>
<td>Deliver the Local Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promote health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote tourism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide support to voluntary sector</td>
<td>Support community safety and reduce anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>Increase employment at strategic sites</td>
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<td>Support and safeguard the vulnerable</td>
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<td>Promote inward investment and business growth</td>
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<td>Enhance community resilience</td>
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<td>Promote Healthy Place making</td>
<td>Promote environmental sustainability</td>
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<td>Respond to the welfare reform agenda</td>
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**South Northamptonshire’s Health and Wellbeing Blueprint**

The council, in conjunction with the Nene Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and key partners from South Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Forum have set out a Blueprint for the future of Health and Wellbeing in the District. The Blueprint has three key priorities:

1. Preventing illness (physical and mental) by promoting healthier lifestyles and enabling access to support services
2. Enabling people to live independently and reducing demand for residential, social and health care services
3. Designing and developing infrastructure to support health and wellbeing

Delivery of quality sport and leisure services for all residents is essential to meeting each of these priorities.

**SNC Local Plan 2011 - 2029**

The Delivery Plan for South Northamptonshire is made up of a suite of statutory documents:

- The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2014) (WNJCS)
- South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan (once adopted; anticipated late 2019)
- Kislingbury Neighbourhood Plan
- Harpole Neighbourhood Plan
- Neighbourhood Plans (when ‘made’)

The Part 2 Plan builds on the policies of the adopted WNJCS and covers the whole of the administrative area of South Northamptonshire. The Plans have been established to reflect the evidence bases which have been prepared to ensure that there is detailed understanding of key issues affecting the District. The Part 2 Local Plan:
• Acknowledges that Planning has an important role to play in addressing the challenges of obesity, an aging population and mental illness, by helping to create safe, attractive, legible and adaptable environments that encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
• Acknowledges the positive impact access to open spaces can have on health and wellbeing
• Specifies that sports facilities, play and recreation opportunities must be provided in accordance with the standards set out within the plan and the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy
• Presumes that existing playing pitches will be retained and protected
• Supports in principle, the co-location of sports clubs and facilities in the Rural Service Centres of Brackley and Towcester.
• Allocates a development site located to the north of Towcester, adjoining the A43 and A5, provides for 35ha. of mixed employment generating development together with 6ha. of land for the creation of a Towcester Town Football Club home ground.